

Scholarship can take on many forms

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*The very notion of **scholarship** (as distinct from research) can in fact take on many forms. From the outset it is essential to establish a clear understanding of what scholarship means in the context of a teaching and learning environment within the Higher Education Sector.*

What is scholarship

The national regulator (TEQSA) expresses the focus by means of the threshold standards and in particular Standards 3.1.2 and 3.2.3 suggesting scholarship informs course design and ensures that the content and learning activities of a course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry; *and* it is essential for staff to maintain knowledge of their field of teaching through continuing scholarship and that teaching and assessment are contemporary and relevant to the discipline. Using the published guidelines provides the opportunity for a provider to establish an understanding of scholarship.

See: [Guidance note: Scholarship, TESQA](#)

A clear understanding is essential

A clear and evident understanding of what scholarship means to staff is essential. This is best expressed in an *appropriate context* (the focus and nature of the institution) and *made available* to all staff on a regular basis – reminding them *what scholarship encompasses* and to *keep accurate records* leading to the annual harvest.

Scholarship versus research

Somewhere along the way a distracting view that only research papers count – this is clearly misinformation and has done much to dampen the enthusiasm of staff in non-research focussed environments. In truth scholarship can be many things as-long-as it relates to the business of teaching and learning - and within the scope of the discipline in which the staffer is involved.

Indicative scholarly activities

An indicative list of scholarly activities (*though not exhaustive*) might include activities such as:

- Publishing in peer reviewed forums
- Blogs
- Internal papers, articles and chapters articles
- Media presentations
- Producing creative works
- Recording
- Performing creative work
- Public performances
- Compositions
- Newsletters
- Attendance at Professional development days
- Exhibiting
- Creating learning infrastructures
- Literature reviews

- Textbooks or study guides
- Course design and collaboration
- Serving industry or government as external consultants
- Assuming leadership roles in professional organisations
- Advising student leaders
- Technical reports and presentations
- Speeches and keynote addresses
- Research on learning
- Developing testing materials
- Developing new teaching methods
- Mentoring postgraduate students
- Mentoring staff
- Designing and implementing assessment systems
- Accreditation or quality systems documentation

Relates to specific teaching and learning

The list is endless – as-long-as it *relates directly to the teaching and learning* of an individual staffer or the focus and intent of the institution. Leaders, for example, will focus on sector issues and contributions to the industry; arts staff will focus on the creative outlets and associated methodologies; education staff will focus on the current industry context; business staff on matters of currency and pedagogy; and so on.

Capturing the evidence

Mindful that these activities need to be captured on an ongoing basis and reported annually – a useful table will assist in the process of collection and recording – the recommendation is to locate the *harvesting tool* on your desktop and capture the activities as they occur. This will certainly make the reporting considerably easier and more accurate when the time comes.

At all times is it essential to be mindful that *all activities need to be directly related to the teaching and learning* of the staffer in the context of their current institution.

A sample, evidence capturing tool

The following table serves as a useful harvesting tool that records activity – preferably on an ongoing basis rather than at the point of request – and contributes to regular and an annual report of scholarly activity –

Positions held	
Memberships	
Conferences and Symposia	
Articles and papers	
Public performances/exhibitions	
Recordings	
Compositions	
Benchmarking activities	
Self-education	
Teaching at other like institutions	
Formal courses	
Other	

Remember – the key issues of relevance to a staffer’s current teaching and learning – and how the scholarly activities benefit currency and student outcomes – is vital.

Ideally staff are encouraged to be active across as many of the domains as possible – though it would be unrealistic to expect that all would be active in all domains – this would be simply unrealistic.

Ongoing celebration and sharing – developing a culture of scholarship

Ideally daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly and annual reporting of scholarship activities is embraced. It would celebrate success and develop a *culture of scholarship* – essential to success. The *daily* achievements can be in the form of an email – the *weekly* as a bulletin – the *fortnightly* as a Message/Newsletter - the *monthly* as a Scholarship Update - the *quarterly* acknowledgement as a preliminary annual report update - and the *annual* as a formal gathering/harvesting of the work during the year including a table of individual recognition.

Scholarship (in its many forms) is a vital aspect of the work of the contemporary academic (including those in leadership roles) and needs to be encouraged, celebrated and recorded appropriately. Developing a culture of scholarship is a time consuming and demanding exercise – but a valuable and required commitment.

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