

# Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Framework

## Executive Summary

This strategic framework was developed in response to the Institution's vision to become 'Australia's leading industry-focused University College'. It informs scholarship-related policies, procedures and decisions made in the Institution. The framework begins by defining the way scholarly outputs are categorised and assessed for quality and impact with the help of the literature. It then outlines a strategy consisting of three pillars (Infrastructure, Culture and Capability Building, and Dissemination and Impact), which addresses TEQSA's University College requirements for scholarship.

## 1. Preamble

As a higher education provider, the Institution has always been committed to ensuring their academic staff are active in scholarship that informs their teaching and creates a positive impact on our stakeholders. But June 2023 marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Institution as the Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan with the vision that the Institution would become 'Australia's leading industry-focused University College'. University College is a specific higher education provider category under the TEQSA Act. It requires the provider to demonstrate, among other things, "*systematic support for scholarship and demonstrate scholarly activities and outcomes that inform teaching, learning, and professional practice, and make a contribution to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge*" (TEQSA 2021:20). Hence, scholarship (the support, output, outcome and dissemination) is an important steppingstone to the goal of attaining the University College status.

Scholarship is not a new concept at the Institution. In 2019, the then DVC (L&T) and PVC (Scholarship & Innovation) put in place a 'Framework for Scholarship of Learning and Teaching at ICMS', which aims to "*develop a paradigmatic focus upon scholarship rather than research, [and] forge a tighter alignment with the relevant TEQSA guidance note [version 2018] ...*" (McNeill and Crossman, 2019:3). Such framework set the tone and direction for the Institution's Scholarship of Learning and Teaching Policy and Procedure, and the terms of reference of the then Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SoLT) Committee<sup>1</sup>.

Although the 2019 Framework provided a strong foundation and guidance for academic staff in the last few years, in light of the Institution's University College ambition and subsequent changes to TEQSA's guidance note on scholarship, a different framework is needed to address the new, strategic focus placed on scholarship and guide the implementation of the corresponding strategies.

## 2. Purpose and Scope of the New Framework

The new framework is a *strategic* one that was developed in response to the Institution's new goals and vision. It informs scholarship-related policies, procedures and decisions made by the Associate Dean (Scholarship and Civic Leadership) and the governance body, the Scholarly Practice Committee (SPC)<sup>2</sup>. Its

---

<sup>1</sup> Renamed the Scholarly Practice Committee in July 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The Scholarly Practice Committee is a sub-committee of the Learning and Teaching Committee. Its terms of reference are part of the Institution's Governance Charter.

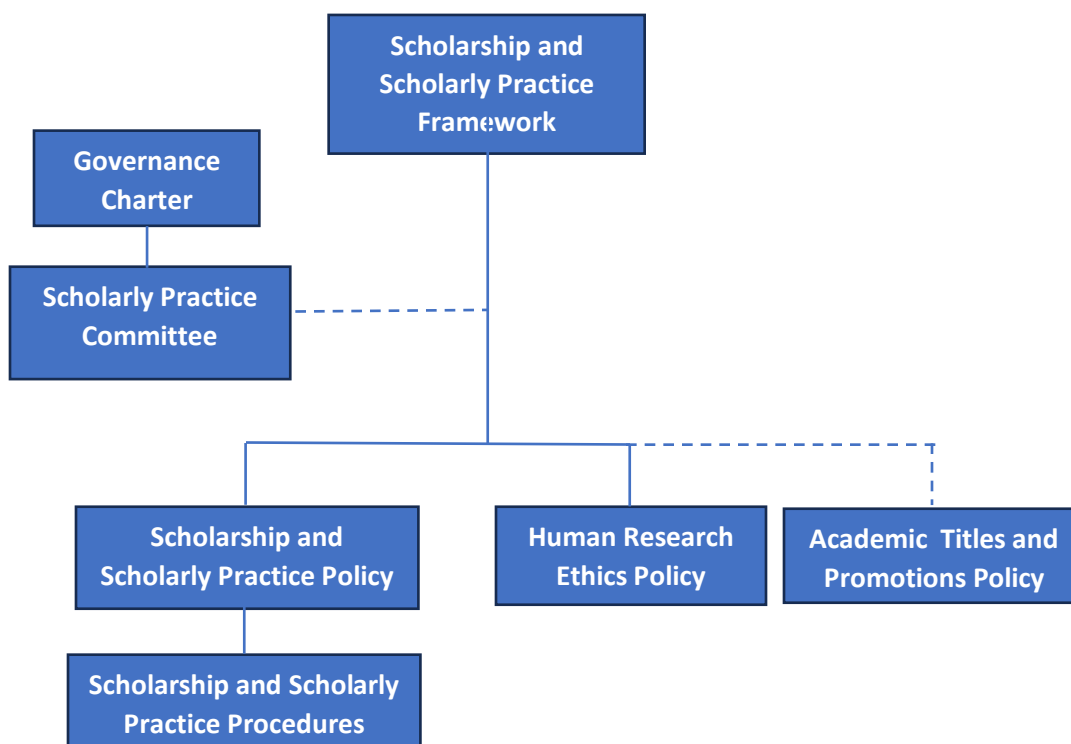
role is to provide directions for the College and staff rather than details on operationalisation. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of the framework with other Institution policy documents:

- The Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Policy and Procedures as well as the Human Research Ethics Policy directly support the implementation of the framework.
- The Academic Titles and Promotions Policy recognises and rewards staff who contribute to the Institution’s vision and goals, part of which is scholarship. Therefore, the policy incentivises staff to produce high quality scholarly outputs, and in turn, facilitates the implementation of the framework.

Scholarship output and outcome ultimately benefit students, the academe, industry and community. But the framework and associated policies are intended for academic staff (of all contract types) only.

With the help of the literature, the framework begins with defining the way scholarly outputs are categorised and assessed for quality and impact. It then outlines a three-pillar strategy that addresses TEQSA’s University College requirements for scholarship.

Figure 1: The relationship of the new scholarship framework and other policies



### 3. Scholarship Definition and Categorisation

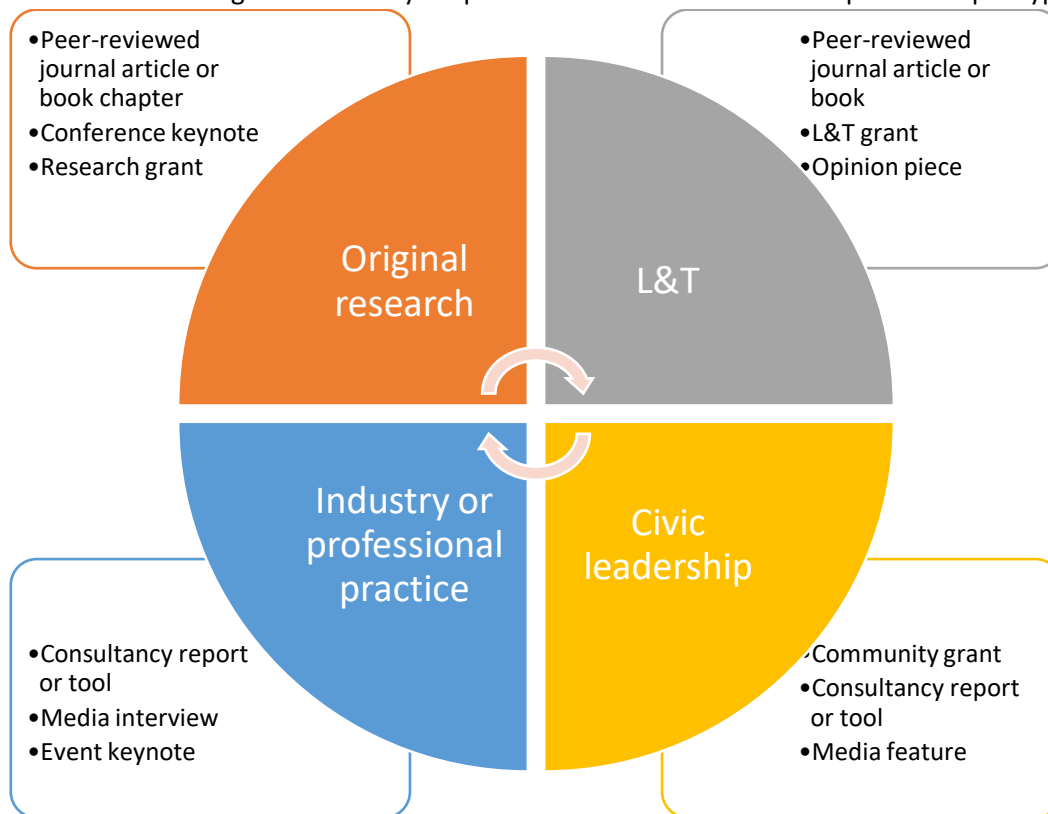
TEQSA defines scholarship as “*activities concerned with gaining new or improved understanding, or appreciation and insights into a field of knowledge, or engaging with and keeping up to date with advances in the field*” (TEQSA, 2022:1). The Institution, however, expands the parameters of this definition slightly further to include the **output** and **impact** of those activities as part of scholarship.

The term ‘scholarly practice’ is used to refer to “*established patterns and emerging practices of knowledge building*” (Williams et al., 2013:7).

There are four categories of scholarly outputs at the Institution, namely:

- **Original research** in the disciplinary areas that the Institution teaches, which include business management, tourism, event and hospitality, sports management, property development, investment and valuation, and information technology. The output can be in form of, for example, peer-reviewed journal articles, books or book chapters.
- **Learning and teaching** – The outputs would inform learning and teaching practices, including but not limited to curriculum and assessment design, student engagement, and academic integrity. They can be in form of journal articles, conference papers, sharing of best practices in internal forums or other forms of dissemination.
- **Industry or professional practice** – This refers to scholarly contribution to industry sectors that are directly related to the disciplinary areas listed above. It is particularly pertinent to the Institution’s industry-focused strategy. The output can be in form of consultancy projects and presentations at industry events, among others.
- **Civic leadership** – This refers to scholarly contribution to community groups or not-for-profits, such as presentations at community events and consultancy projects, where one would provide advice and insights in their field of expertise.

Figure 2: The four categories scholarly outputs at the Institution and examples of output types



Staff members are required to record their scholarly output based on this categorisation in the Scholarly Output and Activity Register (SOAR), a function currently integrated into the Institution’s human resources software, ELMO.

#### 4. Quality of Scholarship

The Institution believes good scholarship is both impactful and rigorous.

Impact is “*the good that [scholars] can do in the world*” or simply “*benefit*” (Reed, 2018:13). The Institution recognises that, beyond the academy (scientific knowledge), scholarship can create positive impact in many different ways, for example, understanding and awareness, attitudinal, economic, environmental, health and wellbeing, policy, other forms of decision-making and behaviour change impacts, cultural, and capacity or preparedness (see Table 1). Furthermore, the scope or reach of the impact of a scholarly output can be described as:

- Micro – subject or course level
- Meso – institutional level
- Macro – local industry or community
- Mega – national or international industry, community or disciplinary

Table 1: The nature and significance of impact articulated based on the Research Impact Typology by Reed (2018:18-19)

Type of impact	Definition
Understanding and awareness	People understand an issue better than they did before, based on your research.
Attitudinal	A change in attitudes, typically of a group of people who share similar views, towards a new attitude that brings them or others benefits.
Economic	Monetary benefits arising from research, either in terms of money saved, costs avoided or increases in turnover, profit, funding or benefits to groups of people or the environment measured in monetary terms.
Environmental	Benefits from research to genetic diversity, species or habitat conservation, and ecosystems, including the benefits that humans derive from a healthy environment.
Health and well-being	Research that leads to better outcomes for the health of individuals, social groups or public health, including saving lives and improving people's quality of life, and wider benefits for the well-being of individuals or social groups, including both physical and social aspects such as emotional, psychological and economic well-being, and measures of life satisfaction.
Policy	The contribution that research makes to new or amended laws, regulations or other policy mechanisms that enable them to meet a defined need or objective that delivers public benefit. Crucial to this definition is the fact that you are assessing the extent to which your research made a contribution, recognising that it is likely to be one of many factors influencing policy. It also goes beyond simply influencing policy, to enabling those policies to deliver public benefits. If the policy intervention would have had the same impact without the elements based on your research, can you really claim to have had impact? Contribution is therefore an essential part of demonstrating that your research achieved policy impacts.
Other forms of decision-making and behaviour change impacts	Whether directly or indirectly (via changes in understanding/awareness and attitudes), research can inform a wide range of individual, group and organisational behaviours and decisions leading to impacts that go beyond the economy, environment, health and well-being or policy.
Cultural	Changes in the prevailing values, attitudes, beliefs, discourse and patterns of behaviour, whether explicit (e.g. codified in rules or law) or implicit (e.g. rules of thumb or accepted practices) in organisations, social groups or society that deliver benefits to the members of those groups or those they interact with.
Other social	Benefits to specific social groups or society not covered by other types of impact, including, for example, access to education or improvements in human rights.

Capacity or preparedness	Research that leads to new or enhanced capacity (physical, financial, natural, human resources or social capital and connectivity) that is likely to lead to future benefits, or that makes individuals, groups or organisations more prepared and better able to cope with changes that might otherwise impact negatively on them.
--------------------------	---

The impact descriptors and typology above are applied in SOAR to help articulate the scope, nature and significance of impact from scholarly outputs.

To assess rigour, the Institution adopts Glassick’s (2000:879) six standards, namely:

1. **Clear goals** – The scholar addresses clear and important questions in the field.
2. **Adequate preparation** – The scholar shows an understanding of existing scholarship in the field and brings together the necessary skills and resources to move the project forward.
3. **Appropriate methods** – A fit-for-purpose and ethical method is applied effectively.
4. **Significant results** – The work adds consequentially to the field and opens additional areas for further exploration.
5. **Effective presentation** – Appropriate forums are used to communicate to the intended audiences; the work is accessible by other scholars for future studies and/or critique.
6. **Reflective critique** – The scholar critically evaluates their own work and brings an appropriate breadth of evidence to the critique.

These standards, among others, are used by the SPC to adjudicate internal grant and award applications. They should also be applied by academic staff whenever they undertake scholarly work.

## 5. The Three-Pillar Strategy

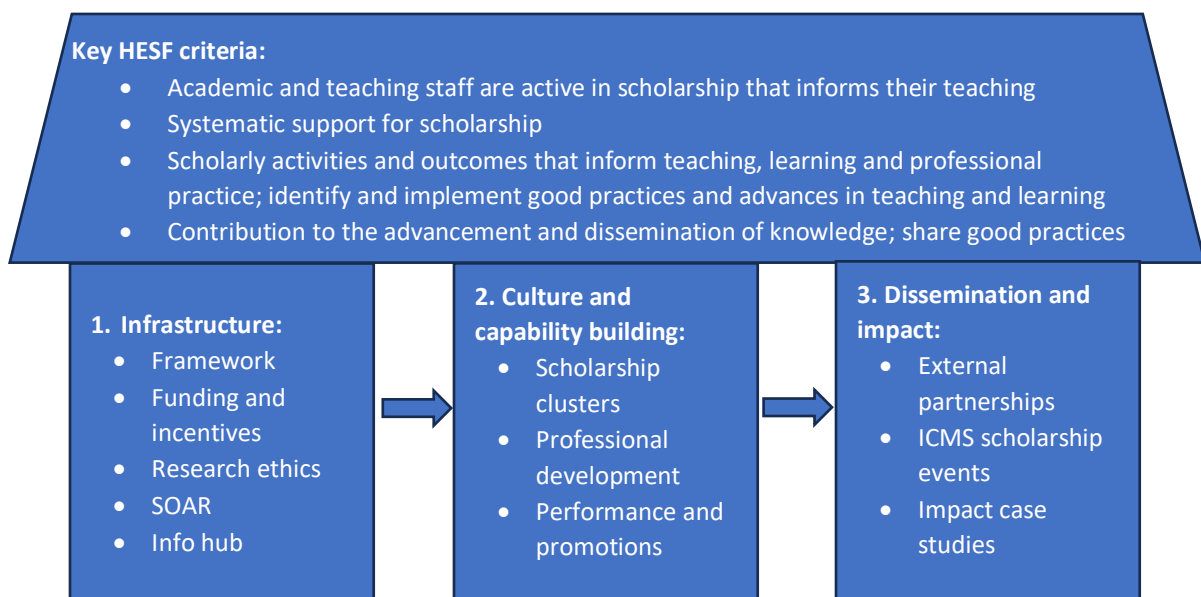
The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 stipulates a number of standards (Part A) and criteria (Part B) pertaining to scholarship (TEQSA, 2021):

- A3.1.2 The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes.
- A3.2.3a Staff with responsibilities for academic oversight and those with teaching and supervisory roles in courses or units of study are equipped for their roles, including having knowledge of contemporary developments in the discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice.
- B1.1.2 (Institute of Higher Education): Academic and teaching staff are active in scholarship that informs their teaching.
- B1.2.6 (University College): Demonstrate systematic support for scholarship and demonstrates scholarly activities and outcomes that inform teaching, learning and professional practice, and make a contribution to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge.
- B1.2.7 (University College): Identify and implement good practices and advances in teaching and learning, and share those practices with the higher education sector more broadly.

To address these requirements, the Institution employs a three-prong or ‘three-pillar’ strategy. While the three components are not mutually exclusive, they are sequential to a large extent. That is, Pillar One

needs to be in place in order for Pillar Two to function properly. Pillar Three, in turn, relies on the support of Pillar Two.

Figure 3: The three-pillar scholarship strategy



### 5.1 Pillar One: Infrastructure

The infrastructure pillar predominantly addresses the systematic support requirement. It is about putting systems and processes in place to facilitate scholarship for staff. It entails:

- This framework to provide strategic directions.
- Funding and incentive schemes to make undertaking projects feasible (e.g. seed funding and workload buyout), and to motivate staff to engage (e.g. awards and bonuses).
- A human research ethics approval process to enable negligible to low-risk projects.
- SOAR to capture and report on outputs. The reports would in turn help the Institution review and identify improvement opportunities.
- An internal information hub where academic staff can obtain information on the above as well as interact with each other for projects and collaboration. It can be hosted by the Institution’s Learning Management System (LMS).

### 5.2 Pillar Two: Culture and Capability Building

While Pillar One provides the hardware of systematic support, i.e. systems and processes, Pillar Two is about the software, i.e. the culture and staff’s capability. It also partially addresses the requirement of implementing good practices.

The academic staff at the Institution are diverse in their experience, with some having had more exposure to research and scholarship than the others. This presents an opportunity for staff to complement each other in skills and experience. United by their common intrinsic values, interests and goals (intended

impact), academic staff are asked to form *scholarship clusters* – a safe and autonomous space where like-minded people come together and support each other. Emphasis is put on banding together those who want to make similar, positive impact through scholarship – be it impact on students, the academe, industry or community. They may work on projects individually or collaboratively, share resources and give each other feedback. The clusters can also be incubators of ideas, where staff identify and discuss good practices, and encourage each other to trial or implement them. Through time, scholarship clusters cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and rigorous enquiries.

Furthermore, the clusters are a great vehicle for capacity building in that staff can learn from and build on each other's strengths. Additional professional development support or training can be provided to each cluster depending on their goals and needs.

Hence, on an institutional level, scholarship clusters are an instrument that serves many functions, from developing culture and capability to encouraging staff to implement good practices. But more importantly, the clusters collectively will enable the Institution to make a powerful and sustainable impact through scholarship.

In addition to the clusters, capability building can also be facilitated by individual performance goal setting, appraisals and promotions. The new Academic Titles and Promotions Policy and Procedures set out the key criteria for promotions as well as the types of evidence one needs to demonstrate to advance to the next academic level. Staff should set their performance goals at their annual performance appraisal based on that information and undertake professional development activities to fill in any gaps between their current and expected level of capability. Academic managers play a key role in supporting this and the Institution resourcing.

### **5.3 Pillar Three: Dissemination and Impact**

The third pillar addresses the dissemination of knowledge requirement. The scholarly outputs may be generated internally via the scholarship clusters or externally through collaborations with other higher education institutions, peak bodies (such as HEPP-QN, IHEA and HERDSA), industry and/or community groups. In addition to traditional dissemination channels, such as journals, conferences and media, staff can disseminate their outputs via scholarly events created or hosted by the Institution, for instance, discipline-specific seminars and symposiums, to establish presence and reputation in the higher education sector. Finally, evidence and narratives of the impact created by the scholarly outputs will be collected in form of case studies and reported by the Institution. The impact should be articulated using the typology in Table 1, involving the stakeholders who benefited from the scholarly work.

## **6. Governance**

The implementation of this strategic framework requires regular monitoring, reporting and review by the Associate Dean (Scholarship and Civic Leadership) and Scholarly Practice Committee based on set key performance indicators. Those indicators may include the proportion of academic staff who are scholarly active, uptake of funding and incentives, number of professional development activities, quantity and quality of scholarly outputs and their growth, and evidence of impact.



The Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board are responsible for providing oversight and monitoring progress.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

Scholarship is a long game. The development of culture, outputs and reputation takes time. So, the success of the three-pillar strategy, and ultimately, the Institution's ability to meet TEQSA's requirements for scholarship depends heavily on sustained commitment from *all* academic staff. Such commitment should not be solely driven by the *institutional* ambition, but by aligning staff's *individual* intrinsic motivation to make a positive impact with their scholarly work. That is the key to a sustainable and impactful scholarship strategy, and to becoming Australia's leading industry-focused University College.

## References

Glassick, C.E. (2000). Boyer's expanded definitions of scholarship, the standards for assessing scholarship, and the elusiveness of the scholarship of teaching. *Academic Medicine* 75(9): 877-880.

McNeill, M. and Crossman, J. (2019). *A Framework for Scholarship of Learning and Teaching at ICMS*. ICMS. Sydney, Australia.

Reed, M.S. (2018). *The Research Impact Handbook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Fast Track Impact.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) (2021). *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*. Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Canberra, Australia.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) (2022). *Guidance note – Scholarship (Version 3.0)*. 4 May 2022.

Williams, M., Goulding, F., Seddon, T. (2013). *Towards a Culture of Scholarly Practice in Mixed-Sector Institutions*. A National Vocational Education and Training Research Program Research Report. Department of Industry, Innovation Science, Research and Tertiary Education, Australian Government.

**Approved by Academic Board on 17 November 2023**