Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Framework

1. Introduction

As a higher education provider, the Institution is committed to ensuring their staff with academic leadership and those with teaching and supervisory roles in courses of study are equipped for their role including continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice that informs knowledge of contemporary developments in the discipline or field, and teaching, learning and assessment practices are relevant to the modes of delivery and needs of different student cohorts.

The Institution`s Strategic Plan 2024 – 2026 was developed using a consultative process to achieve the Institution`s vision to become 'Australia's leading industry-focused University College'.

University College is a specific higher education provider category under subsection B1(2) of the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021. 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, p.20).

The Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Framework ('Framework') aims to build a scholarship culture to support the Institution's vision to produce industry-focused quality education and student outcomes.

The Framework builds on and replaces the 2019 'Framework for Scholarship of Learning and Teaching at ICMS' to meet the requirements of University College standards and guide the implementation of scholarship related strategies and objectives of the Institution.

2. Scope and Objective

The Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Framework is intended for staff with academic leadership and course delivery roles irrespective of their type of contractual arrangement with the Institution.

The Framework informs scholarship related policies, procedures and decisions made by the Associate Dean (Scholarship) and the governance body, the Scholarly Practice Committee[1]. Its aim is to provide a systematic approach to scholarly activities at the Institution and guide academic staff in their scholarly pursuits that aligns with the Institution`s vision.

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[1] The Scholarly Practice Committee is a committee of the Academic Board. Its terms of reference are part of the Institution's Governance Charter.

Figure 1 illustrates the role of the framework in the Institution for academic governance and quality assurance and key scholarship policy and procedures including:

- Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Policy and Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Procedures
- Human Research Ethics Policy
- Academic Titles and Promotions Policy

Scholarship ultimately benefits students, the academia, industry and the community.

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 role of the Scholarship and Scholarly Practice Framework at the Institution
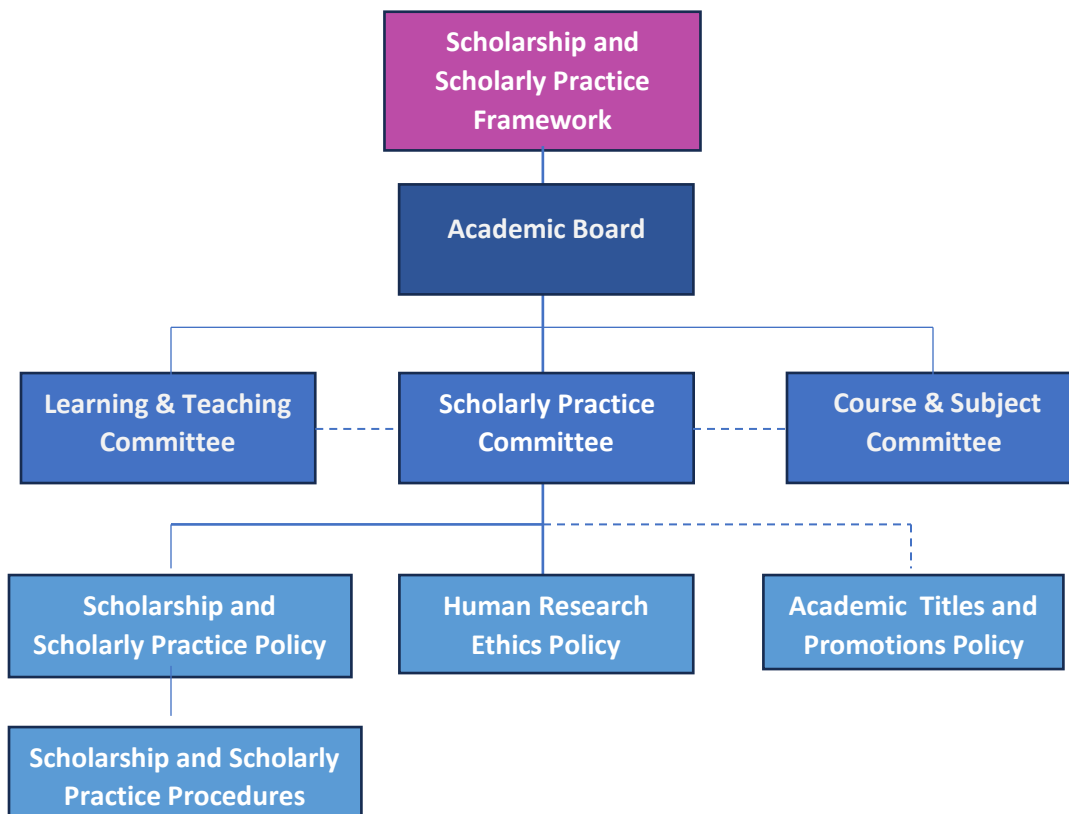
3. Scholarship Definition and Categorisation

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, p.1). The Institution, however, expands the parameters of this definition slightly further to include the **output** and outcome or **impact** of those activities as part of scholarship.
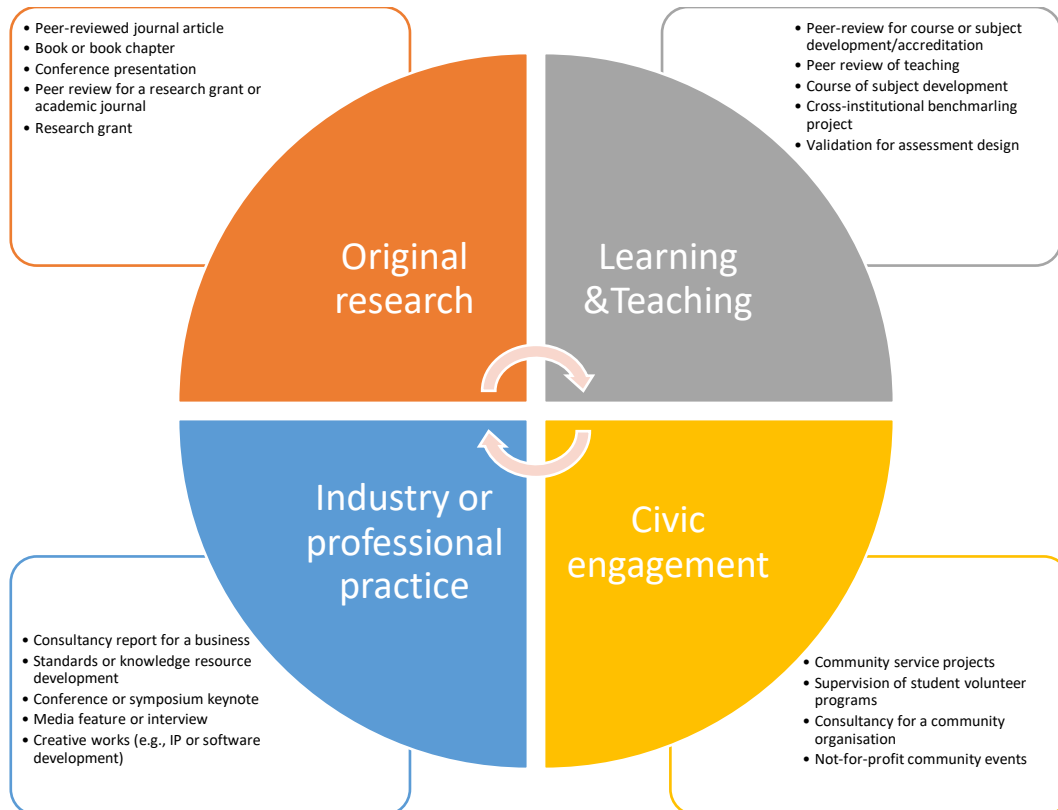
The term 'scholarly practice' refers to "*established patterns and emerging practices of knowledge building*" (Williams et al., 2013, p. 7).

There are four categories of scholarship at the Institution (Figure 2):

- **Original research** in or relevant to the discipline area/s that the staff member teaches at the Institution, which include business management, tourism, event and hospitality, sports, property development, investment and valuation, and information technology. The output can be in the form of, for example, peer-reviewed journal articles, books or book chapters.
- **Learning and teaching** – Outputs or activities that inform learning and teaching practices, including but not limited to curriculum and assessment design, student engagement, and academic integrity. The output or activity can be in the form of peer-review for course or subject development, peer review of teaching, course of subject development, validation for assessment design.
- **Industry or professional practice** –Scholarly contribution to industries that are directly related to the disciplinary areas listed above. It is particularly pertinent to the Institution's industry-focused strategy. The output or activity can be in the form of a consultancy report for a business, standard, guideline or knowledge resource development, conference or symposium keynote, and media feature or interview.
- **Civic engagement** – Engagement that involves conducting scholarship in collaboration with community partners to address community-defined challenges, generate knowledge, and inform community action. The output or activity can be in form of community service projects, supervision of student volunteer programs or not-for-profit community events.

Staff members are required to record their scholarly output or activity based on this categorisation in the Scholarly Output and Activity Register (SOAR), available in the Institution's human resources software, ELMO.

Figure 2. The four categories of scholarship at the Institution and examples of output and activity types

- Peer-reviewed journal article
- Book or book chapter
- Conference presentation
- Peer review for a research grant or academic journal
- Research grant

- Peer-review for course or subject development/accreditation
- Peer review of teaching
- Course of subject development
- Cross-institutional benchmarling project
- Validation for assessment design

Original research

Learning &Teaching

Industry or professional practice

Civic engagement

- Consultancy report for a business
- Standards or knowledge resource development
- Conference or symposium keynote
- Media feature or interview
- Creative works (e.g., IP or software development)

- Community service projects
- Supervision of student volunteer programs
- Consultancy for a community organisation
- Not-for-profit community events

4. Quality of Scholarship

The Institution believes good scholarship is both rigorous and impactful.

Impact is "*the good that [scholars] can do in the world*" or simply "*benefit*" (Reed, 2018, p. 13). The Institution recognises that, beyond the academia, scholarship can create outcomes with positive impact when put into place in the industry or community. Impact can be achieved in many different ways, for example, raising 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 outcome 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, pp. 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, p. 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 Scholarly Practice Committee 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 specify a number of standards (Part A) and performance 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).

Figure 3. The three-pillar scholarship strategy.
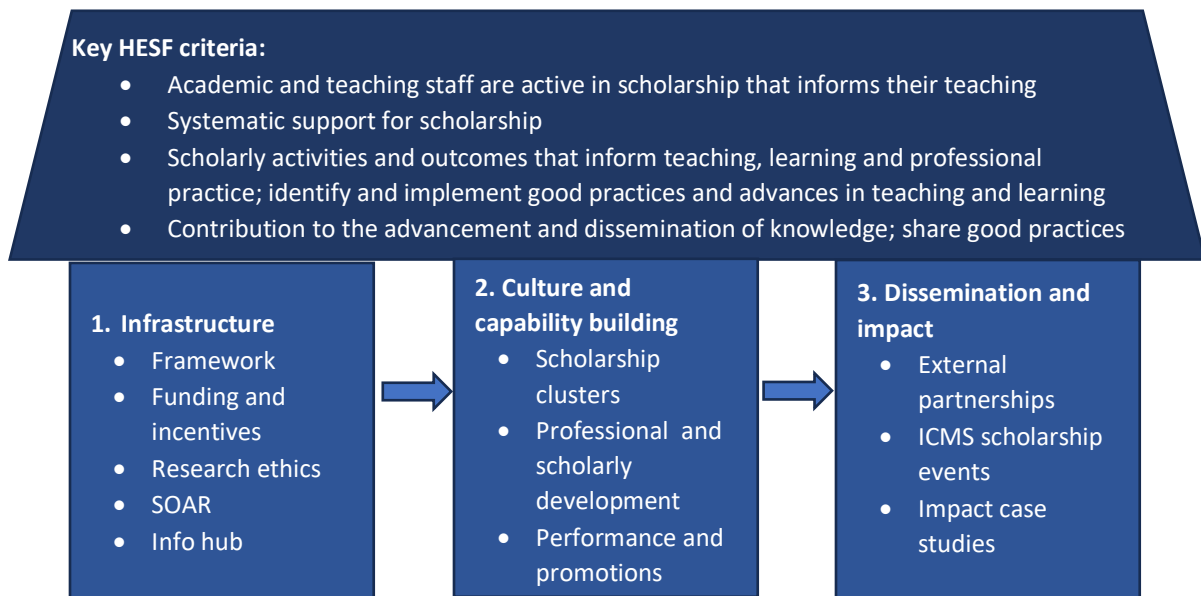
5.1 Pillar One: Infrastructure

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

- Providing strategic directions.
- Funding and incentive schemes to make undertaking scholarly projects and activities more encouraging and feasible (e.g., seed funding, workload relief, scholarly excellence awards).
- A non-HREC human research ethics approval process for lower risk scholarly research projects.
- SOAR to capture and report on outputs and activities. The reports in turn help the Institution review and identify improvement opportunities.
- An internal scholarship information hub where academic staff can obtain information on the above as well as interact with each other for projects and collaboration. The hub is hosted in the Institution's online Learning Management System (LMS) Moodle.

5.2 Pillar Two: Culture and Capability Building

While Pillar One provides the hardware of systematic support, such as systems and processes, Pillar Two is about the software, in other words the culture and staff's capability.

The academic staff at the Institution are diverse in their industry experience and discipline expertise with some more research focused than the others. This presents an opportunity for academic staff to complement each other in skills and experience through interdisciplinary scholarly activities or research.

To facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration between disciplines, the Institution has established 'scholarship clusters' where staff can exchange ideas, share resources and good practices, identify problems, and support each other to develop scholarly projects to find and implement innovative solutions. Through time, scholarship clusters cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and rigorous enquiries that are impactful. Scholarship clusters can evolve and develop sub-clusters according to changes in socio-economic, environmental, health, political and technological trends, and needs of the institution, its stakeholders and communities.

In addition to the scholarship clusters, capability building can also be facilitated by individual performance goal setting, performance appraisals and career progression through promotions. The 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 and/or roles.

Academic staff should set their performance goals at their annual performance appraisal and identify any skills or evidence gaps to achieve their career objectives. The Academic Staff Professional and Scholarly Development Guidelines provides a matrix for academic staff to develop a professional and scholarship development plan as part of their performance appraisal. Academic managers play a key role in supporting this capability building and the Institution resourcing.

5.3 Pillar Three: Dissemination and Impact

The third pillar addresses the dissemination of knowledge requirement. In addition to traditional dissemination channels, such as academic or industry journals, conferences and media, the scholarly outputs may be disseminated internally via presentations (e.g., Faculty Day) or externally via projects or workshops in collaboration with other higher education institutions, peak bodies (such as HEPP-QN, IHEA and HERDSA), industry and/or community groups. 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 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 activities and their growth, and evidence of impact.

The Academic Board is responsible for providing oversight and monitoring progress.

7. Conclusion

Scholarship is a long-term goal. The development and growth of a rigorous scholarship culture takes time. So, the success of the three-pillar strategy, depends heavily on sustained commitment from *all* academic staff. Such commitment should not be solely driven by *institutional* ambition, but all academic staff and their intrinsic motivation and values to make a positive impact with their scholarly work. That is the key to a sustainable and impactful scholarship strategy.

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