

A Guidance Note on Scholarly Activity

For staff and supervisors

Charles Sturt University

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What is scholarly activity in learning and teaching?

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) states that ‘scholarship’ refers to those 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.¹ It is important to note that the terms scholarly activity and scholarship are used interchangeably by writers, but broadly refer to activities that help staff broaden their knowledge and stay up to date.

Scholarly activity occurs on a continuum reflecting the multiple ways of scholarly knowing and doing within the university.² At one end of the continuum, **scholarly teaching** can involve educators engaging in activities such as:

- reflecting on student feedback, learning analytics, and other data,
- undertaking discussions with colleagues to get ideas on learning and teaching,
- engaging in calibration, benchmarking, or peer review activities,
- engaging with the literature to inform design, curriculum, or delivery improvements
- maintaining a reflective account of teaching.

At the other end of the continuum, the **scholarship of learning and teaching (SoTL)** involves a systematic approach to generating knowledge and opening it up to others beyond the local setting for peer review³. SoTL commonly involves educators:

- designing and implementing learning and teaching research/evaluation projects, and
- disseminating and communicating their work through presentations, publications, and other methods.

Regardless of where on the continuum scholarly activity is positioned all scholarly activity involves (to some degree):

1. engagement with and critical reflection on knowledge/evidence,
2. production of knowledge/evidence (including critical reflections),
3. sharing of knowledge and practice (the audience may differ depending on the activity)

¹ The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). (2022). Guidance Note: Scholarship. Version 3.0. <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note-scholarship>

² Godbold, N., Matthews, K. E. E., & Gannaway, D. (2023). Theorising new possibilities for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and teaching-focused academics. Higher Education Research & Development, 43(1), 92–103.

³ Tight M. (2018) Tracking the scholarship of teaching and learning, Policy Reviews in Higher Education, 2(1), 61-78.

Why is scholarly activity important?

At the individual level, scholarly activity is critical for maintaining currency in the discipline and in learning and teaching more broadly. Scholarly activity is also required for career development and advancement. At the institutional level, Charles Sturt University is required to demonstrate to TEQSA that it has a systematic approach to organising and practicing scholarship. The expectations regarding engagement in scholarly activity is articulated in various policies and frameworks including the Charles Sturt University [Enterprise Agreement](#), [Academic Staff Qualifications and Expectations Procedure](#), and [Teaching Capabilities Framework and Self-Assessment Tool](#).

In particular, the [Academic Staff Qualifications and Expectations Procedure](#) specifies that staff (including any casual academic staff member who teaches and assesses **without** close supervision) are expected to engage in ongoing scholarly activity to maintain currency of scholarship in their discipline and (if their position requires them to teach) in learning and teaching as a profession. Academic staff are expected to set annual scholarly goals, milestones and reflect on completion as part of their Performance Planning Development & Review (PPDR).

To enable scholarly activity, the [Enterprise Agreement 2023-2025](#) includes a sector leading workload allocation for scholarly activity (see below). This signifies how important scholarly activity is to the University and how it supports it.

- Teaching and Research/ Creative, Charles Sturt Academic Fellow, teaching and professional, Scholarly Teaching Fellow, and Research Focused - 5% of teaching allocation dedicated to scholarly activity. Full time staff in this category have a maximum of 55% (948.75 hours) of teaching workload. *This equates to approx. a maximum of 47.44 hours of scholarly activity per year for full time staff (to be reduced pro-rata for fractional staff and staff with higher duties or administrative loads)*
- Teaching Focussed staff - 10% of teaching allocation dedicated to scholarly activity. Full time teaching focused staff have a maximum of 80% (1,380 hours) of teaching workload. *This equates to approx. a maximum of 138hrs hours of scholarly activity per year for full time teaching focused staff (to be reduced pro-rata for fractional staff and staff with higher duties or administrative loads)*

What counts as scholarly activity?

The Academic Staff Qualifications and Expectations Procedure (clause 46) outlines a range of different types of scholarly activities, aligned to what TEQSA⁴ has identified as the different forms of scholarship. It is worth noting what TEQSA⁵ says about the intended impact of scholarly activity – their view is that ‘an activity classified as ‘scholarship’ should lead to an identifiable output or outcome that is relevant to the requirements of the Higher Education Standards (HES) Framework’ (p.4) – see below. This reinforces that the core purpose of scholarly activity is to inform and advance knowledge and professional practice.

1. Advances in expected learning outcomes for students and/or graduates (e.g. arising from improvements in course content, design, methods of participation/delivery, assessment or re-definitions of learning outcomes and the like).
2. Advances in the concepts and understanding of a discipline for staff and others (e.g. through seminal influential papers, scholarly reviews etc.) and/or influences on how the discipline is taught and learned (such as a new published pedagogy).
3. Advances in a creative field of endeavour (such as new insights, challenges to orthodoxy or innovative approaches to creative outputs).
4. Advances in professional practice (e.g. new ways of practice that provide better solutions to existing challenges) including innovations (e.g. implementation of new technology).

Where to set scholarly activity goals and report on completion?

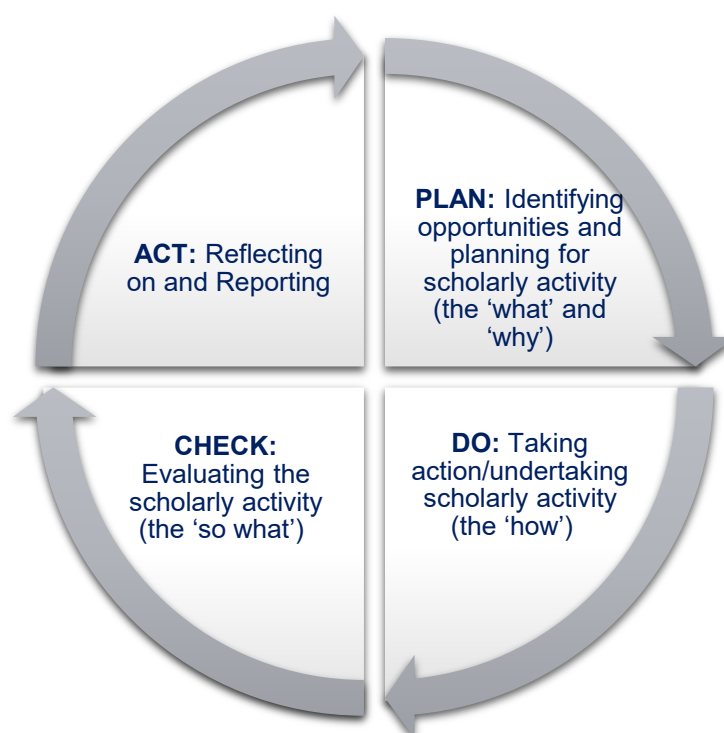
Staff are expected to set an annual scholarly goal and milestones as in the context of PPDR (within the TINA system). This goal should be recorded under ‘scholarship’ goals, which is available in the TINA drop-down menu for all strategic focus areas. At the end of each PPDR cycle, staff need to also report and reflect on completion of their scholarly goal in the TINA system. From 25 Feb 2025 onwards, the only artefacts that need to be entered into the Charles Sturt Research Outputs Repository (CRO), are research outputs associated with the scholarly activity (such as journal articles, chapters, conference, public reports, presentations etc).

⁴ The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). (2022). Guidance Note: Scholarship. Version 3.0. <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note-scholarship>

⁵ The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). (2020). Discussion paper: Making and assessing claims of scholarship and scholarly activity. <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/discussion-paper-making-assessing-claims-scholarship-and-scholarly-activity.pdf>

What does the scholarly activity cycle look like?

The scholarly activity cycle consists of four interconnected stages of Planning – Doing – Checking (evaluating) – Acting (i.e., reflecting and adjusting). Applying this framework to scholarly activity will help staff be more intentional about their scholarly activity.



Planning scholarly activity

In the planning stage, the focus is on setting scholarly goals that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely). In planning scholarly activity and setting an annual scholarly goal (in the context of the PPDR cycle), it is important to reflect on how the proposed scholarly activity is aligned and value adds personally and professionally, but also how it aligns with and supports School/Faculty/University strategic priorities or School or Faculty operational plans. Staff are advised to discuss the strategic alignment of scholarly goals with their supervisor.

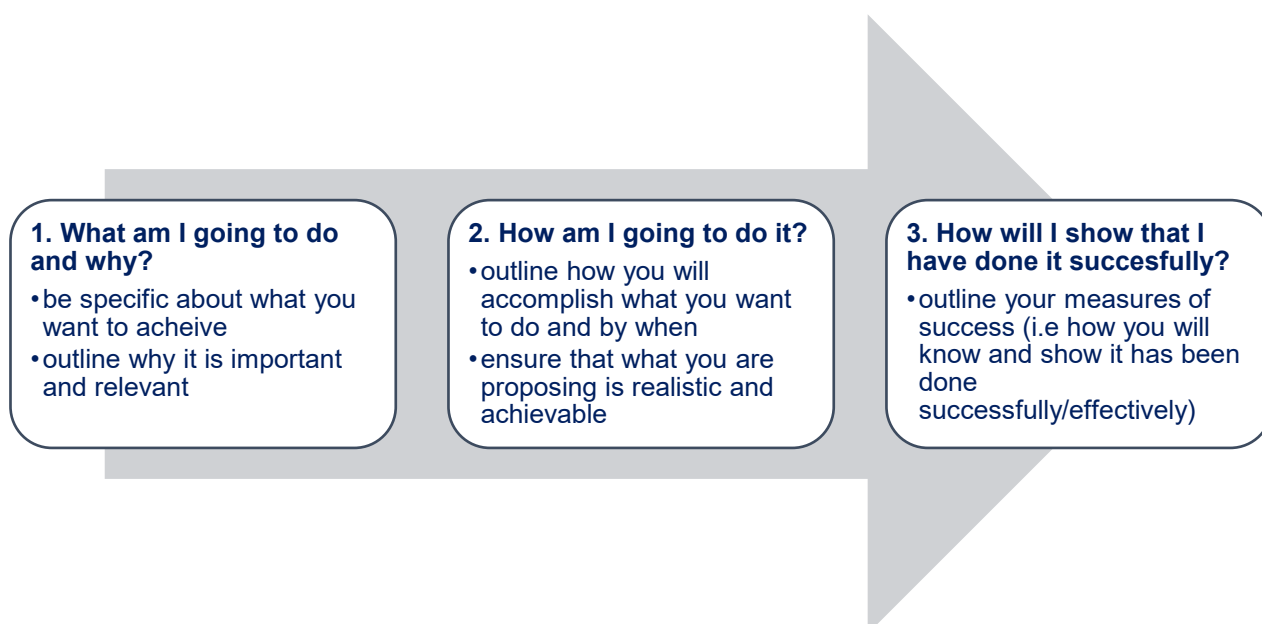
Key questions that staff can reflect on in identifying opportunities and getting inspired:

- What do you see and observe? (about your practice, career journey, and/or an area of need in learning and teaching in your subject, discipline, teaching context etc)

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- What do your students say?
- What do your colleagues or collaborators say?
- What do professional standards or accreditation recommendations say?
- What do the School, Faculty, University, health service strategic plans say?
- What does the literature say?

Staff are advised to use the three questions outlined below to assist with their planning and goal setting. [Appendix 1](#) provides several examples of scholarly activity plans set up using this structure.



Undertaking scholarly activity

In the doing stage, the focus is on undertaking the proposed activity as planned. There may need to be some adjustments made and it is important that staff are reflecting on and documenting any changes to the approach or process – this is part of the audit trail for the activity and also informs the reflections on completion at the end of the PPDR cycle.

Evaluating scholarly activity

The process of checking/evaluating the scholarly activity can occur during the activity and post-activity. It can involve reflection, engaging with data/analytics, obtaining feedback from students, colleagues, or others to gauge the success/effectiveness of the scholarly activity. Staff need to be reflecting on how the activity appears to be informing and advancing knowledge and professional

practice consistent with TEQSA's expectations about the intended outcomes of scholarly activity (see page 5).

Reflecting on and reporting on the completion of scholarly activity

This phase is about reflecting on the process and outcomes of scholarly activity. This assists with identifying how the activity has gone and ways to extend impact of the activity, areas in which further evidence may need to be collected to evidence impact, areas of future improvement, and ways in which to build scholarly partnerships and connections. A reflection on scholarly activity completion is required at the end of the annual PPDR cycle. A high-quality scholarly reflection should ideally cover the following points:

- A brief description of the nature of the scholarly activity (the 'what and how') - what was done, how, why was it important, what was my role in it?
- The impact of the scholarly activity ('so what') – what have been the outcomes of the scholarly activity? Consider impact relative to what TEQSA has identified as possible intended outcomes of scholarly activity (see page 5).
- The next steps associated with the scholarly activity (the 'now what') – what will I do next as a result of this scholarly activity? How will I continue to evaluate, monitor, adapt, and refine my scholarly engagement?

A note for supervisors/Heads of School

Supervisors are responsible for supporting their staff to set high-quality scholarly objectives and milestones and to reflect on and report completion in the context of the annual PPDR cycle. Heads of Schools are responsible for reporting on scholarly activity completion at the school level.

Resources

Division of Learning and Teaching: <https://www.csu.edu.au/division/learning-teaching/professional-learning/scholarly-activities>

Appendix 1 – Examples of scholarly activity

Three examples have been provided to highlight both the diversity of scholarly activity and how it can be planned by addressing three key questions.

What I'm going to do and why

Explore student engagement based on Student Experience Survey feedback that students feel disengaged in my online subject. I want to my students to feel engaged and connected to the curriculum and student retention is a key priority for the university.

How I'm going to do it

- Keep a journal documenting my observations of patterns of student engagement, and/or
- Explore learning analytics from my subject to understand patterns of engagement, and/or
- Discuss with a colleague about what they do to engage students online, and/or
- Review case studies available online about enhancing student engagement, and/or
- Attend a learning and teaching conference such as CSEdX to gather new ideas.

How I'll show I've done it successfully

- Reflections on Student Experience Survey data in QUASAR system, and/or
- Annotated list of case studies based on my investigations, and/or
- Report on analysis of learning analytics, and/or
- Reflections on attending CSEdX conference, plus a
- Engagement improvement plan for subject

What I'm going to do and why

Explore opportunities to embed peer learning/assessment opportunities into my third-year health subject based on feedback received during the course review and accreditation process. Peer learning/feedback supports students to learn with and from others, develop their evaluative judgement, and reflects the realities of professional practice

How I'm going to do it

- Analyse the subject outlines in other subjects within my course or school to identify examples of peer learning/feedback activities, and/or
- Undertake a mini review of papers on peer learning/feedback in my discipline, and/or

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- Share the findings of my mini-review and subject outline analysis at my teaching team meeting, and/or
- Draft a peer learning/feedback activity and get feedback from a colleague, and/or
- Implement the activity and gather student feedback on it, and

How I'll show I've done it successfully

- Report/presentation on the findings of literature review and subject outline analysis, and/or
- Resource e.g. tip-sheet or guidance document, and/or
- An implementation and evaluation report on how the peer learning/feedback task was implemented and the outcomes of it, and/or
- Proposal for a scholarly teaching and learning project on peer learning/feedback

What I'm going to do and why

Embedding work integrated learning (WIL) into my business postgraduate course based on student feedback about job preparedness and discussions with the WIL team. Employability is a core element of the Charles Sturt Education Strategy Vision.

How I'm going to do it

- Access a list of industry partners who support WIL placements in my School and contact several to discuss the contemporary nature of their work and industry engagement opportunities, and/or
- Working with subject convenors to map current industry opportunities across subjects and to design WIL experiences, and/or
- Participate in the Charles Sturt University Work Integrated Learning (WIL) community of practice, and/or
- Pilot the WIL experiences and collect feedback from students, staff and industry, and/or

How I'll show I've done it successfully

- Report on the areas covered in the industry partner discussions, and/or
- Curriculum map, and/or
- Curriculum resource related to WIL, and/or
- Implementation and evaluation report, and/or
- Showcase my approach at a learning and teaching forum within my School and/or beyond