



## Compliance Guide: *Scholarship*

Version 3.0 (DD MM 2021)

*Providers should note that Compliance Guides are intended to provide guidance only. The definitive instruments for regulatory purposes remain the TEQSA Act and the Higher Education Standards Framework as amended from time to time.*

### What does scholarship encompass?

In the context of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HES Framework), 'scholarship' means those activities concerned with gaining new or improved understanding, appreciation and insights into a field of knowledge, and engaging with and keeping up to date with advances in the field.

Engagement in scholarship can be considered:

- across a provider (e.g. policy frameworks, resource allocation, institutional expectations, staff development), or
- at the level of individual activity (e.g. part of an individual's personal professional development, teaching, research or professional practice).

Various aspects are relevant to higher education, but at its core scholarship:

- advances knowledge or professional practice in a field
- transmits advances through contemporary approaches to teaching and learning, and research training if applicable.

TEQSA acknowledges scholarship may vary within and between providers and that the mission of the provider may influence the type of scholarship practiced. TEQSA also recognises the diverse strategies used to develop, support and sustain scholarship, both at the institutional level and for individual staff.

TEQSA recognises there is no singular definition of scholarship and acknowledges providers may use various approaches to organise the full range of their scholarly activities. However, TEQSA requires evidence of a systematic approach to organising scholarship irrespective of the type of scholarship practiced.

### What TEQSA will look for

The HES Framework requires TEQSA to consider a provider's engagement with scholarship at several levels. These include:

- scholarship directly associated with informing teaching and learning, including disciplinary scholarship (Provider Category Criteria B1.1.2, B1.2.6 and B1.3.9, as applicable)
- scholarship contributing to the design and delivery of particular courses of study (Standards 3.1.2 and 3.2.3)



- scholarship associated with research and research training, if applicable (Standard 4.2.2)
- institutional encouragement and support for scholarship across all courses of study (Provider Category Criteria B1.1.2, B1.2.6 and B1.3.9, as applicable).

TEQSA will need to be satisfied that evidence of scholarship relates directly to advances in knowledge or approaches to teaching and learning in a field. To assess this, TEQSA may consider:

- institutional policies and operations
- institutional course design approval processes
- staffing policies that recognise and encourage scholarship (e.g. recruitment, promotion, professional development)
- resource allocation (e.g. journal access, scholarly library collections, conference attendance)
- institutional activities (e.g. seminars, discussions)
- requirements for the provider's category and self-accrediting authority.

Consistent with the relevant application guidelines for individual providers TEQSA will need to be satisfied that:

- course design has been informed by the appropriate level of relevant scholarship
- individual leadership and course delivery staff are involved in relevant, continuing scholarship at a level consistent with the level of the course(s)
- students are referred to, and engage with, relevant scholarship throughout the course.

In an environment of scholarly activity, TEQSA would expect a range of different forms of scholarship, such as:

- peer reviewed scholarly output/publication/communication (e.g. literature reviews, conference presentations, journal publications)
- scholarly review, original research or teaching practice that contributes to course development
- synthesising and communicating advances in practice (e.g. presentations on current knowledge, practice, or teaching and learning in a field)
- teaching practice engaged in the latest ideas, debates and issues (e.g. improved pedagogies, learning processes, curricula, academic policies and learning materials)
- contributions to relevant professional bodies or communities of practice (e.g. development of new standards, knowledge resources, codes of practice)
- active and ongoing involvement in relevant scholarly academic societies, editorial roles or peer review
- undertaking higher level qualifications that lead to scholarly activity, in particular higher degrees by research
- undertaking advanced specialised practice or scholarly secondments.



Creative works as scholarly outputs require a different approach. To assess the extent to which performance or creation of creative works constitute scholarship (e.g. music, drama, art and design) TEQSA will need to be satisfied that:

- scholarship informs individual teaching or supervision
- scholarship participation informs teaching practice as required by the HES Framework.

TEQSA's view is that performance or production alone may not constitute scholarship. The provider would need to demonstrate the work meets the other criteria for scholarship listed above where relevant.

## Common issues

Within the context of the HES Framework, TEQSA has identified a range of common issues which are indicative of insufficient scholarship. These include, but are not limited to:

- personal or professional development activities that constitute lower-level training or are unrelated to the teaching role (e.g. underaking a Moodle training session, attending an Emotional Intelligence training workshop, learning unrelated software, an unrelated research technique or taking a course in an unrelated field)
- membership on one or more academic governance committees
- dated or irrelevant scholarly activity (e.g. content or methods that are no longer employed in the field)
- unrelated research in disciplines/fields being taught (e.g. information systems teacher conducting research in art history)
- basic practice or routine that does not engage with advances in practice, or is unrelated to the discipline/field (e.g. an accountant preparing personal tax returns for individuals while teaching corporate finance or training in software use)
- involvement in professional/community groups or activities unrelated to the content or teaching methods of the discipline/field being taught (e.g. an engineering lecturer attending a literary discussion group)
- similar activities at a lower level (e.g. teaching in a related field at a lower level)
- attendance at conferences or membership of a professional body.

TEQSA recognises that scholarship can occur across disciplines in unrelated fields that inform and contribute to advances in knowledge and professional practice (e.g. a collaborative research project between arts and science on the impact of climate change). TEQSA acknowledges the benefits and value of multi-disciplinary scholarship.

However, it will be necessary for a provider to demonstrate the link between scholarship in an unrelated field/discipline and the scholarship informing teaching practice in the subject being taught (e.g. a teacher demonstrating the relevance of art history research to the teaching and learning outcomes of a finance management course).



TEQSA welcomes the diversity of educational delivery across the sector and acknowledges that its Guidance Notes may not encompass all of the circumstances seen in the sector. TEQSA also recognises that the requirements of the HESF can be met in different ways according to the circumstances of the provider. Provided the requirements of the HESF are met, TEQSA will not prescribe how they are met. If in doubt, please consult your TEQSA case manager.

Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0	26 May 2014	
2.0	19 August 2016	Updated for the HESF 2015 and made available as beta version for consultation.
2.1	20 October 2016	Additional resource added.
2.2	13 December 2016	Paragraph added relating to creative activity and scholarship.
2.3	4 September 2017	Clarification to differentiate and define 'scholarship' and 'scholarly activity'.
2.4	4 December 2018	Amendment to the end of the section on 'What does scholarship encompass?' in relation to the Boyer Model of Scholarship.
2.5	12 December 2018	Minor clarification added to the section on 'The intent of the Standards' on p.3 in relation to the intent of the criteria.
3.0	DD MM 2021	Major revision.