



# Guidance note

## Scholarship



Version 3.0 (4 May 2022)

*Providers should note that Guidance Notes 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.*

## 1. What does scholarship encompass?

In the context of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HES Framework), '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.

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 a key component is that scholarship:

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

TEQSA acknowledges that notions of scholarship may vary within and amongst providers and that the mission and category of the provider may influence the type of scholarship practised. 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 that providers may utilise 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 practised (e.g. suitable, recognised and current approaches or models for arranging scholarly activity).



## 2. What TEQSA will look for

The HES Framework requires TEQSA to consider a provider's engagement with scholarship at several levels. These include the following standards and criteria from the HES Framework:

| Part A: Standards for HE Providers                     | Key considerations   |
|--|--|
| 3.1.2: Course Design                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scholarship contributing to the design and delivery of particular courses of study</li></ul>   |
| 3.2.3: Staffing  |  |
| 4.2.2 (if applicable): Research Training               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scholarship associated with research and research training</li></ul>   |
| Part B: Criteria for HE Providers                      | Key considerations   |
| B1.1.2: Staff scholarly activity                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scholarship directly associated with informing teaching and learning, including disciplinary scholarship</li><li>Institutional encouragement and support for scholarship across all courses of study</li></ul> |
| B1.2.6 and B.1.3.9: Systematic approach to scholarship |  |

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

- institutional policies and operations
- institutional course design approval processes and evidence that course design has been informed by relevant scholarship
- staffing policies that recognise and encourage scholarship (e.g. recruitment, promotion, professional development)
- evidence that both staff with academic leadership and staff with course delivery responsibilities are involved in relevant, continuing scholarship consistent with the AQF level of the course(s)
- processes to ensure students are referred to, and engage with, relevant scholarship throughout their course of study
- resource allocation (e.g. journal access, scholarly library collections, conference attendance)
- institutional activities (e.g. seminars, workshops)
- requirements for the provider's category and self-accrediting authority.

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 collectively contribute to course development



- synthesising and communicating advances in evidence-based practice (e.g. presentations/podcasts/feature articles on current knowledge, practice, or teaching and learning in a field)
- teaching practice engaging 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.

Although performance or production can be evidence of scholarship, it is TEQSA's view that not all performance or production may constitute scholarship. To meet the HES Framework requirements the provider would need to demonstrate how the creative work meets the criteria for scholarship listed above where relevant.

## 3. Identified issues

Within the context of the HES Framework, TEQSA has identified a range of examples that do not represent sufficient evidence of 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. undertaking 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 or routine practice 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 AQF 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 apparently unrelated field/discipline and the scholarship informing teaching practice in the subject area being taught.

*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       | 4 May 2022       | Major revision.   |