

Higher Education Scholarly Practice Guidelines

Approved by: Higher Education Academic Council

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Section 1. Purpose

1.1 The TAFE NSW Higher Education Scholarly Practice Guidelines complement the TAFE NSW Scholarly Practice Policy and align with the specific requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 (The Threshold Standards). These guidelines are designed to guide and support higher education staff in:

- a engaging in scholarship that informs and enhances the content and methods of their teaching;
- b staying well-informed about advancements in the discipline they teach; and
- c developing and maintaining an advanced understanding of their discipline, as well as teaching and learning practices within the discipline.

Section 2. Scope and Audience

2.1 These guidelines apply to:

- a academic staff teaching on TAFE NSW Higher Education courses of study; and
- b TAFE NSW managers and teams with responsibility for TAFE NSW Higher Education academic staff.

Section 3. Procedure

Principles

3.1 Scholarly practice encompasses professional learning activities that expand knowledge, encourage critical thinking and reflection, and contribute to shared understandings. Such practices aim to:

- a Maintain and build discipline expertise: Academic staff are expected to undertake scholarly activities that deepen their expertise and integrate the insights gained into their teaching.
- b Maintain and build learning and teaching expertise: Academic staff are expected to engage in activities that enhance pedagogical excellence and foster innovation in teaching practices.

3.2 Scholarly practice undertaken by TAFE NSW Higher Education academic staff will contribute to:

- a Expanding contemporary disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge that informs teaching and learning.
- b Promoting reflection and continuous improvement in pedagogical practices, informed by current literature and research.
- c Encouraging dialogue and collaboration with colleagues within and beyond the institution.

- d Strengthening engagement with relevant professional bodies and industries.
- e Developing the capacity to foster intellectual inquiry, critical thinking, creative reasoning, and learning with practical relevance.
- f Enhancing student achievement of learning outcomes.

3.3 The commitment to scholarly practice is a shared responsibility between individual academic staff members, their managers, and supervisors.

3.4 Academic staff are encouraged to actively seek opportunities for scholarly engagement both within and outside the institution.

3.5 TAFE NSW Higher Education is committed to fostering investigation, critical enquiry and innovation through scholarship, teaching and partnerships with business, industry, education and government.

3.6 Where appropriate, the outcomes of scholarly practice should be shared publicly, subjected to critical review, and made accessible to peers.

3.7 These guidelines should be implemented in alignment with the broader TAFE NSW performance development strategy.

Scholarly practice

3.8 Engaging in and advancing scholarly practice is a core responsibility of academic staff in higher education institutions. This practice:

- a Enhances the scholarship of teaching through active practice, inquiry, and research.
- b Expands knowledge and understanding within disciplines through inquiry and research.
- c Supports the continuous improvement of pedagogical and disciplinary practices.
- d Ensures consistent and sustained achievement of learning outcomes by students.
- e Builds awareness and understanding of evolving student learning needs.
- f Encourages ongoing interest and development in discipline-specific knowledge, higher education teaching practices, and reflective inquiry into personal teaching methodologies.

3.9 Academic staff will leverage the insights and understandings gained through scholarly practice to:

- a Create and synthesize new knowledge through research and professional practice.
- b Continuously reflect on and refine teaching practices to improve the achievement of learning outcomes.
- c Share and apply the outcomes of scholarly practice to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of pedagogical and disciplinary practices.
- d Disseminate theoretical and conceptual knowledge to benefit the pedagogical and disciplinary practices of colleagues.

3.10 While TAFE NSW Higher Education engages in applied research, its primary focus is teaching. Scholarship activities should prioritise improvements in teaching, student learning, industry currency in course development, and staff professional development.

3.11 Scholarly practice may be conducted individually or collaboratively with staff or students. The outcomes of this practice should be made publicly accessible and subject to peer review. These outcomes may be shared through:

- a Publishing papers in peer-reviewed journals, delivering conference presentations, and chairing relevant forums.
- b Conducting professional development workshops to disseminate new theoretical and practical knowledge.
- c Participating in and contributing to communities of practice to share methodologies and learnings.
- d Presenting public performances or exhibitions and documenting reflections and learnings from these experiences.
- e Demonstrating the application of scholarly insights to teaching and student learning practices.

3.12 Approval for specific projects will be given in consideration of their relevance to the institution's operational needs and the staff member's normal duties.

Scholarly practice activities

3.13 This section outlines the activities and practices recognised as scholarly practice for TAFE NSW Higher Education staff. Scholarly practice is essential for maintaining academic quality, fostering critical inquiry, and enhancing teaching, learning, and course content development.

3.14 Scholarly practice contributes to the advancement of knowledge in a discipline or teaching practice and informs and improves student learning outcomes. It encompasses three primary forms:

- a Discipline-Based Scholarship – Deepening expertise within a specific academic or professional discipline.
- b The Scholarship of Teaching – Developing higher education pedagogy through systematic reflection, study, and innovation.
- c Scholarly Teaching – Applying evidence-based approaches and reflective practices to improve teaching effectiveness.

3.15 Examples of Scholarly Practice Supported by TAFE NSW Higher Education

3.16 TAFE NSW Higher Education recognises and supports the following activities as evidence of scholarly practice:

- a Engagement in Formal Coursework, Conferences, and Seminars
Academic staff are encouraged to participate in workshops, training sessions, short

courses, and industry or academic conferences. These opportunities enable staff to engage with current knowledge, innovations, and debates within a discipline or teaching practice. Staff are expected to critically reflect on and share knowledge gained to inform teaching and learning practices.

Example: Attending a conference on digital learning strategies and subsequently integrating AI tools into assessment design to foster responsible AI use among students.

b Publications and Presentations

Producing peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, or conference presentations demonstrates critical engagement with disciplinary knowledge or pedagogy. These activities contribute to broader academic discourse and inform teaching and learning practices.

c Professional Practice and Industry Engagement

Participation in professional practice that contributes to curriculum design, delivery, and innovation ensures that teaching remains informed by current industry standards and practices. Activities might include consulting with industry stakeholders or engaging in applied projects relevant to the curriculum.

Example: Collaborating with industry partners to incorporate sustainability reporting standards into business course assessments.

d Curriculum Development

Involvement in designing and updating course materials, subject guides, and assessments to ensure academic rigour and industry relevance.

Example: Revising subject content to include carbon auditing activities, enabling students to evaluate household emissions and understand scope 1–3 emissions.

e Conduct of Original Research

Activities such as action research, applied research, or systematic investigation into educational practices generate new knowledge that can improve teaching methods or curriculum design.

Example: Conducting a study on the effectiveness of Moodle-based collaborative learning tools in improving student engagement.

f Achievement of Higher-Level Qualifications

Enrolling in postgraduate or professional programs aligned with the teaching field enhances disciplinary expertise and pedagogical understanding. Such activities must have direct relevance to the academic role to qualify as scholarly practice.

Example: Completing a master's degree in educational leadership to support the development of innovative teaching practices.

g Critical Reflection and Evaluation of Practice

Undertaking reflective and evidence-based evaluations of teaching methods, assessments, or curriculum, with outcomes documented and shared to support continuous improvement.

Example: Reviewing and documenting changes made to an assessment task based on student feedback and sharing these findings with colleagues.

h Engagement in Communities of Practice

Collaborating with peers through academic networks, disciplinary forums, or teaching-focused communities to share insights, innovations, and evidence-based practices.

Example: Participating in a learning and teaching community to explore AI applications in higher education pedagogy.

i Leadership in Scholarly Activities

Leading professional development initiatives, mentoring colleagues, or contributing to institutional scholarly practices aligns with TEQSA's emphasis on institutional scholarship and the dissemination of scholarly outcomes.

Example: Organising and leading workshops on learner-centred design assessments to mitigate academic misconduct.

j Benchmarking

Participating in benchmarking activities to compare institutional practices, course design, or teaching outcomes against sector standards ensures alignment with best practices and drives continuous improvement.

Example: Comparing assessment standards and graduate outcomes with other higher education providers to identify areas for curriculum enhancement.

Activities not considered scholarly practice

3.17 Scholarly activities must demonstrate a critical and systematic approach to teaching, learning, or discipline-specific knowledge. The following activities are not considered scholarly practice:

- a Personal or professional development activities that constitute lower-level training or are unrelated to the teaching role (e.g. Turnitin and Moodle training; undertaking training in an unrelated field).
- b Outdated or irrelevant scholarly activities that no longer inform current teaching practices or disciplinary knowledge.
- c Routine teaching practices without evidence of critical reflection or innovation.
- d Membership in professional associations without active engagement in scholarly activities.
- e Teaching or other activities below the AQF level relevant to the staff member's academic responsibilities.

Approaches to encourage and facilitate staff engagement in scholarly practice

3.18 TAFE NSW Higher Education will foster scholarly practice and activity through the implementation of strategies such as:

- a Programs and opportunities initiated by the Course Coordinator and Dean of Higher Education.
- b Teacher-identified programs, including pursuing formal qualifications in relevant disciplines and in teaching within Higher Education.

- c Engagement of teachers and managers with activities at universities or other Higher Education providers, including conferences and forums.
- d Participation of teachers and managers in industry and professional bodies and associations.
- e Pursuit of scholarships, grants, and other funding opportunities to support scholarly projects.
- f Arranging for visiting academics to teach, conduct workshops, review staff writing or performance as peer reviewers, and provide guidance in benchmarking activities.
- g Supporting curriculum development initiatives.
- h Creating opportunities for reflective teaching practice.
- i Promoting the application of relevant theoretical frameworks in practice.

3.19 Scholarly practice will be managed in accordance with the TAFE NSW Scholarly Practice Policy.

Section 4. Monitoring

- 4.1 These guidelines will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose and satisfies legislative and compliance obligations.
- 4.2 These guidelines do not replace or modify any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law.

Section 5. Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Academic staff	Responsible for identifying opportunities for, and engaging with and recording, scholarly practice as described in these guidelines.
Dean of Higher Education	Responsible for monitoring staff engagement with scholarly practice and providing an annual report of scholarly practice to the TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Council.

Section 6. Governance information

Governance	Details
Related documents	<p>These guidelines are to be read together with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TAFE NSW Scholarly Practice Policy - TAFE NSW Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education Policy - TAFE NSW Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure - TAFE NSW Higher Education Free Intellectual Enquiry Policy - TAFE NSW Higher Education Learning and Teaching Framework
Accountable Officer	Senior Manager Higher Education
Responsible Officer	Dean of Higher Education
Content Manager number	PROJ26/23
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Section 7. Definitions

Word	Definition
Course Coordinator	The academic manager of a TAFE NSW Higher Education course, who has overall responsibility for course and student management at the delivering campus.
Dean of Higher Education	Responsible for overseeing and reporting to the Higher Education Academic Council on a range of TAFE NSW Higher Education academic matters, student management, course implementation and professional development of staff.
Higher Education Academic Council (HEAC)	Responsible for academic governance of TAFE NSW Higher Education to ensure educational objectives are achieved.
Senior Manager, Higher Education	Overall responsibility for TAFE NSW Higher Education programs and point of contact between TAFE NSW and TEQSA.
TAFE NSW Higher Education	TAFE NSW Higher Education is the registered trading name of the Technical and Further Education Commission as a higher education provider.

Word	Definition
Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC)	The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) monitors the implementation of a TAFE NSW Higher Education course to ensure quality and consistency of teaching and learning across all delivery locations.

Section 8. Document history

No.	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
1	1 January 2026	Senior Manager Higher Education	Converted procedure to new format.