Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy
Education for Health

Introduction

As demonstrated in its second charitable object, research is fundamental to the organisation:

> *For the public benefit, to relieve sickness through the promotion of preventative measures and the provision of excellence in care, treatment and management of disease, and the carrying out of research into such diseases as the trustees of the Charity may at their absolute discretion from time to time determine;*

Since 2012, Education for Health has not had an active research programme of its own. However, particularly because of the activities of the CEO, it is actively involved with collaborative research projects and has a policy to support this and guide associated governance (Appendix 1)

More broadly, we strive to foster independent critical thinking in our students and seek to deliver education based on best evidence. We recognise that to maximise out market potential, having an academic profile increases our credibility as an education provider and also supports recruitment of high quality staff. Our students gain from the wider ongoing professional activity of their staff, many of whom are recognised as expert in their field. This benefit is explicitly stated to students, commissioners of our education and our partner institutions.

It is therefore important that we measure and make explicit the breadth of our research and scholarly activity, and that we support such activity appropriately.

Background

As a Higher Education provider, the organisation is required to demonstrate that those responsible for teaching our accredited portfolio are appropriately qualified and experienced and that their approach is informed by active participation in research or relevant scholarly, professional or consultancy activities as appropriate to underpin teaching at HE level. The QAA expectations for engagement with research and scholarly activity are outlined in the quality code for Higher Education.

Scholarly activity on the part of teaching staff is expected in an HE environment but there is no one definition which describes the activity and most are used in relation to a traditional university based setting and do not transfer easily to a diverse range of alternative providers. The importance of scholarly activity, professional development, the development of teaching skills and the development of communities of practice and teaching-related scholarly activity has also been recognised for environments delivering HE outside university (King and Widdowson, 2010).

Regardless of its diversity, scholarly activity should demonstrably:

- be intellectually rigorous
- extend the frontiers of knowledge
- be able to be documented
- be validated and shared by professionals

The requirements of professional regulatory bodies are also important in this context, ensuring that individuals are able to demonstrate that they meet the standards to practice in a particular profession. This means that nurses, along with many other professionals, need to focus on compliance and personal development. Additionally, nursing is particularly in the spotlight currently because of the new revalidation requirements.

The difference between CPD and scholarly activity is not always clear and there is an overlap in definition around for example: reading professional journals, attending conferences and courses. In HE there is an expectation that lecturers in professional fields engage with scholarly activity in the form of active research and CPD and that this is formally supported by the institution.
It should be noted however, that it is virtually impossible to demonstrate a direct link between research or scholarly activity, quality of curriculum and students' success rates. It is also recognised that measuring the impact of staff engaged in scholarly activity is challenging because of the subjective nature of the activities.

Current situation
Currently Education for Health teaching staff engage in scholarly activity in areas of both subject specific and pedagogic, including technological. There are a range of activities which include:
- Applied research
- Action research
- Conference attendance
- Poster and oral presentations
- Chairing meetings / seminars / symposia
- Workshop facilitation
- Consultancy
- Clinical work
- Curriculum development
- Subject updating including literature review
- Writing for publication
- Representing the organisation at subject networks and professional bodies
- Professional updating
- HEI working groups
- Subject specific national / regional working parties
- Clinical guideline development
- Reviewing abstracts / publications
- Journal club
- Research meetings

Adherence to the QAA requirement is achieved through standards systems and processes relating to recruitment and selection, the breadth of expected activity as outlined in the JD for education roles and a flexible and proactive approach to staff development and support for CPD. Relevant management information is collected and monitored by the executive team, academic board and trustees.

Moving forward

In view of the need to recognise the broader involvement of the team in research and scholarly activity the charity has adopted an approach which evaluates activity using Boyer's model (Boyer 1999) which assumes that teaching and learning is a central part of scholarship and sees scholarly activity as part of a spectrum of activities. More recently, digital scholarship has been incorporated (Rumsey 2011) and will be considered as part of the approach in this case. The model is represented in Appendix 2.

A qualitative approach will be taken to reporting achievement of scholarly activity, focussing on the differences such achievements will make to students and their studies. The annual report will be published during Q4 to include in the Charity's annual report, and to report to the December Trustees meeting, Academic Board and in the AMR.

A focus on mapping best teaching practice to be undertaken in 2017 will include evaluation of the approach to research and scholarly activity and how it is demonstrably underpinning best teaching practice.

The support offered by Education for Health for staff to undertake scholarly activity will continue to be incorporated into staff development activity. This might include:
- Funding for higher level qualifications
- Formal provision of conference opportunities / research leave or days for scholarly activity
- Support for collaborative work with other HEIs
- Support for clinical activity
- The development of a shared vision for research and scholarly activity
- Supporting study for higher degrees to update knowledge and gain familiarity with research skills and methodologies
- Design staff development activities and conferences specifically for HE teachers
- Establishing communities of practice to share ideas and approaches
- Links with teachers of similar subjects in other universities
- Encourage external examiner work and participating in external validations

November 2016
Julia Neal

Boyer, E. (1990) Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching:* Princetown, New Jersey.
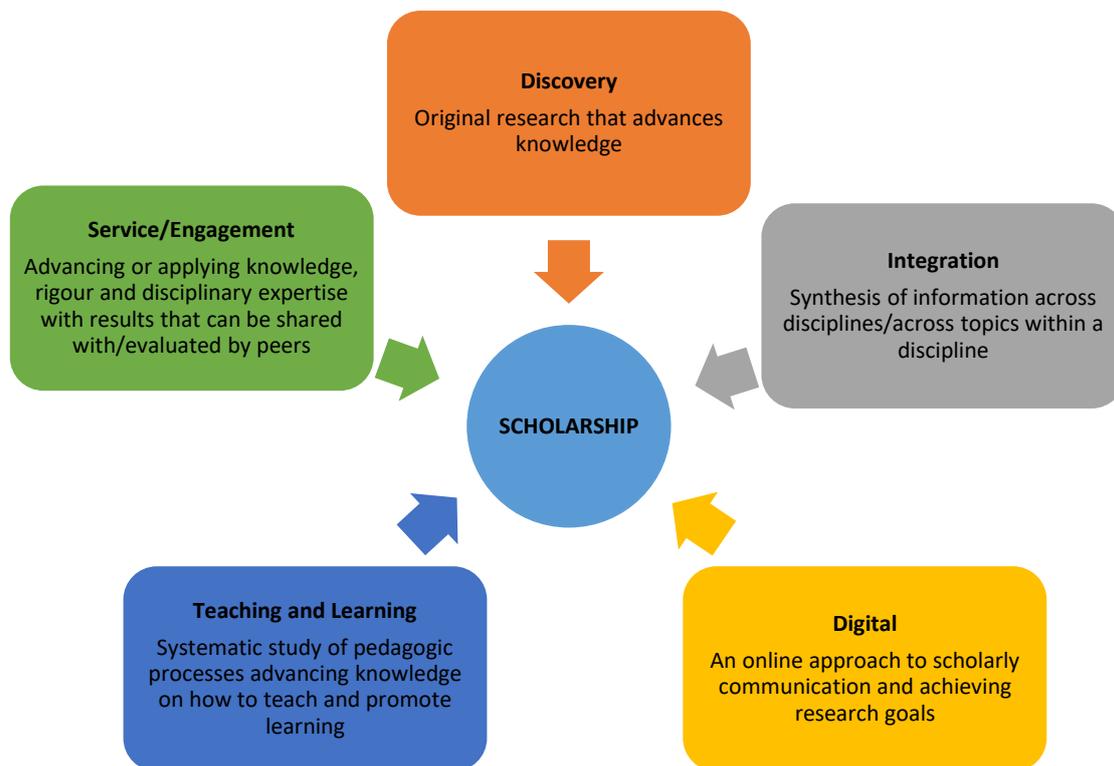
King, M. and Widdowson, V. (2010) Scholarly Activity in Higher Education delivered in Further Education *Mixed Economies*

Rumsey, A. (2011) New Model of Scholarly Communication: Road map for change *Scholarly Communication Institution 9.* University of Virginia

Appendix 1

Collaborative Research Strategy

Education for Health Research Model

Discovery
Original research that advances knowledge

Service/Engagement
Advancing or applying knowledge, rigour and disciplinary expertise with results that can be shared with/evaluated by peers

Integration
Synthesis of information across disciplines/across topics within a discipline

SCHOLARSHIP

Teaching and Learning
Systematic study of pedagogic processes advancing knowledge on how to teach and promote learning

Digital
An online approach to scholarly communication and achieving research goals

Adapted from Boyer (1990) and Rumsey (2011)

Appendix 2

Aspects of scholarship from Boyer's model	
Discovery	**Examples of relevant activity**
Build new knowledge through primary qualitative or quantitative research	- internally / externally funded empirical research projects - theory development and testing - working papers - peer reviewed journal articles - book chapters / books - creative activity - mentorship of colleagues in research or scholarship - recognition as a scholar in identified area - positive peer evaluations of a body of work - creating infrastructure for future studies - Grant awards in support of research or scholarship
Integration	
The integration of knowledge from different sources, presentation of overview of findings in a resource topic, brings findings together from different disciplines, identifying trends and seeing things in new ways	- professional development workshops - literature reviews - presentations of research at conferences - non-academic publications addressing discipline related concerns - meta-analysis - writing a textbook for use in multiple disciplines - collaborating with colleagues to design and deliver a course - published books - presentations - policy papers to influence organisations or governments - internal papers
Application / service engagement	
Discovery of ways that new knowledge can be used to solve real world problems and generation of new problems	- Presentations related to practice - Consultation reports - Reports compiling / analysing patient outcomes - Peer review of practice - Recognition as an expert practitioner - Professional certifications, degrees

	• Report of meta-analysis related to practice problems • Policy papers related to practice • Consulting activities serving industry or government, • Support or development of community activities in the field or industry • Formal development, oversight of partnerships on behalf of the university that connect students with the field / industry • The application of theory in the field to rea world problems • development of centres for study or service • media contributions • leadership roles in professional organisations • conference planning
Teaching and Learning	
The search for innovative approaches and best practices to develop skills and disseminate knowledge, informal and formal (teaching, advising, mentoring**)**	• Publication of findings in a pedagogical journal • Presentation at a conference with peers • Accreditation or other comprehensive programme reports • Successful applications of online pedagogies • Positive peer assessments of innovations in teaching • Published text books • Grant awards in support of teaching and learning • Design of outcome studies • Presentation related to teaching and learning • Development of new or substantially revised courses, curricula • Advancing learning theory thorough classroom research • Developing and testing instructional materials • Designing and implementing a programme level assessment system • Innovative teaching materials, strategies • Educational research projects resulting in findings disseminated at professional conferences / peer reviewed publications • Projects funded to support instructional activities • Production of videos for instruction • Publication of text books, teaching materials
Digital	

An online approach to scholarly communication and achieving research goals (Rumsey 2011)	- blogs / commentaries as communication in virtual spaces - online forums / webinars - tweeting - online peer review - open education resources - data visualisation and manipulation - meta data generation - digital publishing - Altmetrics