![Nottingham College logo]

DOCUMENT DETAILS

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Summary	This document sets out the college's ongoing strategy to promote scholarship and research in HE activities.			

DOCUMENT CONSULTATION & APPROVAL

Consultation person / body	Date passed
NA	

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IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A significant negative impact has been identified in the following area and a full impact assessment / risk assessment is available.

Equality & diversity	No
GDPR	No
Health & safety	No
Safeguarding	No

Friendly version of policy available	No

POLICY CHANGES

Key updates	Impact	Section reference
Removal of HE Scholarly Activity Action Plan	NA- This is now included in the HE Strategic Plan 2024-29	Previously Appendix 2
2025 Update of link to QAA Quality Code 2024	NA	4.1
Addition of The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) itself doesn't directly require a specific level of staff scholarly activity, but it does expect institutions to demonstrate how their practices, including scholarly engagement with their subject, improve the student experience and lead to positive student outcomes.	NA	4.3

1. **Introduction**
   This policy sets out a strategic attempt to realise scholarship as an expectation and duty of all HE lecturers and supports the delivery of outstanding programmes for students.

   The approach to scholarship identified within this policy offers a shift away from CPD and earlier approaches to scholarly activity, toward a broader and more cohesive scholarship in keeping with the unique provider context of College Higher Education (CHE). This approach is founded on Boyer's model of four scholarships: discovery; application; integration, and teaching and learning, which recognises the variety of practice that can support a higher education ethos and encourages best engagement from staff and students (1990). Examples of the types of activity that we would recognise as scholarship can be found in appendix 1.

   Nottingham College was a lead institution in the Association of Colleges' national Scholarship Project (2016-2019) which aimed to enhance scholarship in CHE and create a scholarship framework that can be adopted by all colleges delivering higher education. Nottingham College used the resulting framework to embed scholarship into learning and teaching, staff professional development, student and employer engagement, and quality processes throughout.

2. **Defining scholarship**
   For the purpose of this policy, scholarship is defined as:
   > *"An activity or activities with the potential to:*
   > - *Create or affirm knowledge and/or expertise of a subject or discipline*
   > - *Develop or enhance understanding of a subject or discipline*
   > - *Develop or enhance methodologies for the delivery of a subject or discipline*
   > *In order to be classed as scholarly activity, it must be shared with peers, disseminated across the institution and possibly beyond and used to enhance the student experience"* (see King and Widdowson, 2009, p.10).

3. **Underlying philosophy and objectives**
   - To promote and enhance a culture of scholarship based on collaboration and dissemination.
   - To fully integrate scholarship with learning and teaching.
   - To improve student academic and employment outcomes and raise aspirations for further study.
   - To recognise the value of scholarship for quality enhancement.

   To further develop research and scholarship, emphasis will be given to supporting continued research and advanced practice across the whole provision which directly enhances the HE student learning experience within the College. This will provide an opportunity for all staff to develop as researchers and will also encourage students as researchers.

4. **External drivers**

4.1 **QAA Quality Code**
   The revised Quality Code emphasises that scholarship and research are at the heart of higher education. Advice and guidance, particularly regarding teaching and learning, refers to scholarship, research and staff professional development (QAA 2024) https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code .

4.2 **UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)**

The UKPSF sets out to help individuals and higher education providers enhance the learning experience of their students, by improving the quality of their teaching and learning support. It defines four categories of the role, each with a set of statements outlining:
o   areas of activity undertaken by teachers and support staff
o   core knowledge needed to carry out those activities at the appropriate level
o   professional values that individuals performing these activities should exemplify (AdvanceHE 2021).

Staff who can evidence their use of the UKPSF are able to apply for professional recognition through the Advance HE (HEA) Fellowship scheme.

4.3 Higher Education White Paper(s) and TEF
The White Paper: Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice defines major reforms to the sector to be implemented through primary legislation. The White Paper indicates:
"the new arrangements will […] [encourage] more institutions to ensure their teaching is informed by the latest in scholarship, research and professional practice" (BIS 2016, p.25).

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) itself doesn't directly require a specific level of staff scholarly activity, but it does expect institutions to demonstrate how their practices, including scholarly engagement with their subject, improve the student experience and lead to positive student outcomes.

5.   Internal drivers
Internal drivers for the implementation of a new strategy for scholarship in the college are:
- Current strategies, that promote staff awareness of the need to pursue scholarly activity and research have provided only indirect guidance, rather than a specific scheme which could effectively record and monitor scholarly activity as distinct from CPD.
- The desire to uphold explicit guidance on sector expectations and indicators, both through the QAA Quality Code advice and guidance and the UKPSF (UK Professional Standards Framework).
- This College's historic involvement as a lead college in the AoC's national Scholarship Project offers focus on methods and resources to reconfigure approaches in line with agreed sector aspiration. The ETF now publishes all materials relating to this, of which this College was a contributor.

6.   Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)
In all aspects, this scholarship policy presents opportunities to maintain, enhance and strengthen the ability of HE staff to deliver highly effective teaching, learning and assessment. Staff will be encouraged to engage with the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in order to develop effective, HE pedagogies.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment will be evaluated and developed by:
- Peer reviews (peer observations of teaching).
- Opportunities for shared teaching across disciplines.
- HE specific training in response to staff requests.
- Formal application of college wide agreed teaching practices and adoption in HE sessions, where appropriate.

7. **College-wide opportunities for scholarship**
   It is the responsibility of all staff and managers involved in the delivery of HE learning, teaching, and assessment to promote scholarly activity and professional reflective practice.

   The College will encourage and support staff to gain HEA Professional Recognition with AdvanceHE.

   With further initiatives to confirm:
   - A minimum of one HE specific conference/ event per academic year.
   - HE Development with regard for, and recognition of, scholarship.
   - Employer events to open avenues for research focussed problem solving in workplaces.
   - Scholarship events to share, collaborate and disseminate.
   - Encouragement and financial support, where appropriate, for staff wishing to complete higher level qualifications such as undergraduate and post-graduate qualifications.
   - Support for any staff wishing to attend conferences as delegates or as speakers.

   Students will have opportunities to engage in scholarly pursuits as part of their course of study, for example: by working on live briefs from industry; attending conferences and seminars; presenting their work to peers; and collaborating with students from a range of courses.

8. **Monitoring, review and dissemination of scholarship**
   Implicit in this strategy is the desire to systematically record, monitor and evaluate scholarly activity and scholarship. The following are important processes to achieve this, through recording:
   - Individual staff profiles of HE scholarship, classified according to the four dimensions of Boyer (1990) as mentioned above.
   - Continual synthesis of records of CPD, PDRs and scholarly activity, centrally by Staff Development teams, Heads of Faculties and the Assistant Principal of HE.

   And through monitoring by:
   - Continual appraisal and auditing of staff interaction and development towards enhancing forms of scholarship that are seen as more agreeable to the College's expectations.
   - National student data on experience, satisfaction and engagement such as NSS and Unistats.
   - Student evaluations of experience and engagement on courses.
   - Peer reviews (peer observations of teaching).

9. **Ethics**
   Scholarship and research will be characterised by the highest standards of integrity and ethical behaviour. Everyone involved in scholarly activity – staff and students – must adhere to the following basic ethical principles of:
   - Minimising the risk of harm
   - Obtaining informed consent
   - Protecting anonymity and confidentiality
   - Avoiding deceptive practices
   - Providing the right to withdraw

   The College's *HE Academic Governance Framework* includes an Ethics Committee with remit to oversee and scrutinise student and staff research to uphold ethical integrity

against these five overarching principles and through a dedicated Ethics Policy [for Research] – a copy of which can be found in Appendix 2.

10. References:

AdvanceHE (2021). *UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)* [online]. York: HEA. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/ukpsf

Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. New York: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

[BIS] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, (2016). *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*. London: HMSO

King, M., and Widdowson (2009). *Scholarly activity in higher education delivered by further education: A study by the mixed economy group of colleges*. York: HEA.

OfS (2021). *About the TEF: Guidance for Providers* [online]. London: OfS. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/about-the-tef/guidance-for-providers/

QAA (2018). *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* [online]. London: QAA. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

Appendix 1 – Examples of scholarship

In conjunction with the theoretical foundation of the AoC's Scholarship Project[1], Nottingham College explores scholarship using Boyer's four overlapping dimensions (1990). Namely:

Discovery:	When producing new knowledge or original research for publication or review
Application:	When using knowledge to solve problems in the real world, such as in industry or vocational areas
Integration:	When making connections across organisations, disciplines or subjects through knowledge sharing
Teaching:	When the enhancement and improvement of pedagogy including learning and assessment is central

The following examples are not exhaustive but may form the basis of wider dialogue about what constitutes scholarship in Nottingham College:

Exhibiting artistic/creative work	Consultancy to industry
Working with a community group on a social action project	Contributing to an online professional discussion board
Supervising student dissertations or substantial research and creative projects	Performance of musical or dramatic work
Reading journal articles and creating an indicative reading list	Writing a letter or article for a newspaper or magazine
Planning or running a staff development activity or event	Presenting at a conference
Maintaining membership of a professional body or special interest group	Curriculum design, development, validation
Industrial updating through reading, placement, visits	Working with an employer to create a live brief for student assessment
Participating in a webinar	Carrying out and disseminating results of action research
Practising or developing a new specialist skill	Peer review
Completing an accredited course related to learning and teaching development	Mentoring new colleagues
Peer coaching	Writing a review of a book or article

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[1] See https://www.aoc.co.uk/enhancing-scholarship-in-college-higher-education-the-scholarship-project and https://scholarship.excellencegateway.org.uk/ for further details.

Appendix 2 – Nottingham College HE Ethics Policy (for Research)

Nottingham College HE Ethics Policy (for Research)

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Policy and procedure is to promote the highest possible standards of ethical practice in the conduct of academic research involving HE students and staff at Nottingham College.

1.2 The College is committed to protecting the rights, dignity, safety and privacy of research subjects, the wellbeing of animals and ensuring the protection of the environment. We also (as above) maintain the academic freedom to conduct research and minimise risks to the health and safety of researchers.

1.3 Specifically, the Policy aims to ensure that the overarching principles of research, stated in the Scholarship Policy, promote a high-quality research culture, where excellence is achieved through effective leadership, and openness, and honesty in processes.

1.4 This Policy applies to all those conducting research within, or on behalf of the awarding body and/or partner University, including staff and students of all HE levels; it may also include visiting researchers or scholars who may be involved in research from external appointments or outside organisations, to always ensure accordance with agreed diligence.

2. General Principles

2.1 The College requires ethical review of all research enquiries involving primary research with human beings (or their data), irrespective of funding source. It also requires service evaluation and audit to be subjected to ethical review. This review will be undertaken by the College's Ethics Committee which sits as part of the HE Academic Governance Framework.

2.2 The College abides by its own additional measures to review research focusing on subjects where there is the potential to attract the attention of third-party investigations into the conduct of the researcher, such as research on terrorism or extremism. This forms part of the approach to supporting the College's Prevent duty under Section 26(1) of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015.

2.3 For certain types of research (e.g. certain types of research involving the NHS) external ethics committees already exist to consider research proposals. Their use for such research is compulsory. In such cases, the Ethics Committee is empowered to give the research proposal ethical approval.

2.4 All projects involving living persons, human tissues, or data or tissues relating to recently deceased persons, or animals (including animals living in their natural habitat) should have a serious research, educational or training purpose.

2.5 All research involving human participants, human material or human data requires ethical review and confirmation of agreement. The requirement for ethical review does not include research where information about human participants is publicly and lawfully available (for example census data, population statistics published by government departments, court reports and personal letters/diaries in public libraries, ordinarily categorised as 'secondary [source] research').

2.6 As well as the College's own policies, the Ethics Committee must consider relevant professional ethical codes and the policies of research where applicable. In cases where it can be demonstrated that there exists a difference in ethical standards between the College's Policy and those of the relevant professional body or organisation, the Ethics Committee shall apply whichever is considered the highest standard of ethical practice.

3. Role of The Ethics Committee

3.1 This Committee of Ethics is established as part of the Academic Governance structure for HE; Terms of reference can be found in that document. This is determined in conjunction with the HE Scholarship Policy to promote the research ethics and ensure research adheres to main principles.

4. Operating Procedures

4.1 Applications for ethical approval. This Ethics Committee will operate under a set of standard operating procedures that includes:

- Principles of research ethics as stated in the College's Scholarship Policy.
- Offer of guidance on which type of research requires an ethics opinion and details of the review process operated by the ethics committees including an appeals process.
- A set of specific criteria used to assess applications submitted as proposed research.
- Advice to the College's HE Academic Board, or further scrutiny for review and appeal at that Board where necessary and appropriate.

4.2 Links to wider approaches: For guidance on wider forms of research and enquiry see HE Scholarship Policy.