

## REGULATION 31

### DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

#### 1. Education

The education definitions derive from the QAA perspective.

- Academic quality  
How well the learning opportunities provided support students to achieve their academic award and prepare for their future.
- Enhancement  
Taking deliberate action to ensure continual improvement of the student learning experience.
- Academic standards  
The threshold level of achievement required for a student to successfully achieve their academic award.
- Quality assurance  
A range of policies and procedures designed to safeguard academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

#### 2. Research

The corpus of knowledge defining research is broad and deep. When reporting to HESA or undertaking Research Assessment Exercises for HEFCE, universities in the UK agree to use the definition of research adopted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in their publication entitled the 'Frascati Manual' (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264199040-en> section 2.1 # 63). The summary statement of the fuller definitions contained therein (para 63) is:

***'Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man/woman<sup>1</sup>, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.'***

- Academic quality  
How well researchers, post-graduate research students and academic staff are able to produce research that may be recognised as successful by their peers and users in terms of the quality of its outputs and impact.
- Enhancement  
Taking deliberate action to ensure continual improvement of and support for the research
- Academic standards  
The level of achievement in research judged in terms of its originality, significance and rigour.
- Quality assurance  
A range of policies and procedures designed to safeguard academic standards and quality for research.

### **3. The Concept of Scholarship**

The concept of “scholarship” is important across the higher education sector. Scholarship underpins the delivery of education across all disciplines, and may have particular significance for areas such as practice-focussed education, and supporting quality in student learning. In the context of the remit of Senate (ensuring academic quality and standards and ensuring enhancement in practice-focussed education), the criteria for research excellence can be seen in the Research Excellence Framework guidelines, and the criteria for learning and teaching excellence in the Higher Education Academy Fellowship guidelines. Clearer guidelines would assist in identifying and underpinning excellence in relation to “scholarship”.

Defining and developing high quality in scholarship are important in delivering several core concepts in the City’s Education and Student Strategy. Institutional values of creativity, innovation, rigour, and the fostering of a professional and ethical attitude can all be demonstrated and supported through scholarship. Good quality scholarship is vital for student employability and career development agendas, and is relevant to staff development.

#### **Definition**

Scholarship may of course be based on research, including pedagogical research. The purpose here is to identify indicators of quality in scholarship in wider areas important to City’s work.

All forms of scholarship are likely to include academic study and achievement at a high level by someone who is a specialist in a particular area and is using systematic method and discipline, with a reflective approach to practice.

#### **Professional and business focussed scholarship**

Scholarship may relate to knowledge and experience of a specific area of business or professional practice, creating outputs of recognised value to a business or professional practice community. (Professional practice could include any area where specialist knowledge and skill is used in a work environment, including areas such as nursing, law or computing).

It is proposed that, in relation to specific areas of business or professional practice, “scholarship” should be seen as scholarly activity which leads to outputs which are valuable to a business or professional practice community, and/or in educating individuals entering or developing careers in such communities.

#### **Indicators of quality**

To be seen as scholarship of high quality in this area, the scholarship should produce an identifiable output that can be demonstrated to have impact or influence, with reach and significance being relevant to overall quality.

Relevant outputs would include: the authorship or editorship of recognised practitioner texts; the publication of scholarly work (in the form of books or journal articles) with significant relevance to practitioners; editorship of professional journals; presentations at practitioner-focussed conferences. These activities should meet at least some of the following criteria:

- The work is based on scholarly activity, producing an outcome that has been disseminated within a professional community and recognised as valuable by that community;
- There is evidence that the work supports the training or continual professional development for those working in a particular area;
- There is evidence that the work has helped significantly to ensure that curriculum content, design and delivery remains current and forward looking as regards professional and/or business-focussed knowledge and practice;
- The work produces a demonstrable expansion and/or enhancement of professional knowledge and practice;
- There is evidence that the work has been recognised by practitioners in the relevant discipline and/or has had a positive influence on professional knowledge and/or practice;
- There is evidence that the work has led to positive change in business or professional policy or practice;
- There is evidence that the work has involved valuable evaluation and development of business or professional practice;
- There is evidence that the work has informed the understanding of practice of members of a professional community;
- The work involves collaboration with those working in a business or professional environment;
- The work involves engagement with professional practice or business networks.

### **Academic scholarship**

Scholarship may relate to an area of academic knowledge and study. It is proposed that, in relation to a specific academic area, “scholarship” should be seen as scholarly activity which leads to outputs which are valuable in ensuring that the knowledge and teaching of the individual remain current, and/or that the activity helps to ensure that the individual makes and retains links within the relevant academic community.

### **Indicators of quality**

To be seen as scholarship of high quality in this area, the scholarship should produce an identifiable outcome or output that can be demonstrated to have impact or influence on the development of the individual and/or their teaching.

Relevant outputs would include: the publication of scholarly work (in the form of books or journal articles); making conference presentations; active membership of relevant peer groups; writing review articles; editing research volumes; writing textbooks; writing for dictionaries. These activities should meet at least some of the following criteria:

- The work is based on scholarly activity, producing an outcome that has been disseminated within an academic community and recognised as valuable by that community;
- The work produces a demonstrable expansion and/or enhancement of academic knowledge and/or practice;
- There is evidence that engagement in the activity has directly helped to ensure that the knowledge skills and experience of the individual remain fully up to date and directly inform their teaching and/or research;

- There is evidence that the work has been recognised by academics in the relevant discipline and/or has had a positive influence;
- There is evidence that the work has helped significantly to ensure that curriculum content, design and delivery remain fully current and forward looking;
- There is evidence that the work has led to positive evaluation of or change in academic practice;
- There is evidence that the work supports the continual professional development of the individual and/or colleagues;
- The work may involve collaboration with other academics;
- The work may involve engagement with an academic network.

Approved by Senate 04.03.15, revised 08.07.15  
Approved by Chair's Action (Senate) 24.08.16

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<sup>1</sup> The Frascati definition has been updated to include both genders.