



CBHE Scholarly Activity & Research Toolkit

Devised through collaboration among the Advance HE
College-based HE Network

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This guide has been written to provide a supporting document for staff within UK College-based Higher Education Institutions who wish to participate in scholarly activity and research at a greater depth, or for anyone wanting to understand more about the key elements of entering scholarly activity and research within the higher education sector from a college-based perspective.

It is divided into key sections referencing useful resources throughout, as well as several case studies, external documents and websites. It can be printed off and utilised or shared as a PDF as required.

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1. Introduction

This toolkit has been devised through collaboration among the Advance HE College-based HE (CBHE) Network Group. It is a positioning resource to help providers and practitioners understand what they already have in place regarding their research culture, with advice and guidance to take the next steps. The toolkit provides guidance and links to helpful resources to support CBHE providers in developing scholarly activity and research within their institutions and as part of an HE culture. Practitioners will be able to dip in and out of the toolkit as they need without a need to start at the beginning of the toolkit.

The toolkit is focussed on supporting CBHE practitioners in advancing relevant forms of scholarship within technical and professional CBHE curricula and aim to enhance the learning experience for students.

1.1 What do we mean by research and scholarly activity?

There are limited pre-conceived notions of what scholarship is, but the work of Ernest Boyer on the four scholarships (Boyer 1990) can provide a good starting point. Boyer devised an academic model of scholarship, that has been widely utilised across the academic sector, and builds on the traditional definitions of scholarship and research to create four types of scholarship – these being:

- + of discovery
- + of application
- + of integration
- + of teaching.

The intention of Boyer's model was to explore how each form of scholarship might be developed, monitored and evaluated within a college higher education context (see 'Where to start'). Boyers' text can be downloaded from [here](#).

Scholarly activity and research are central to HE ethos and are activities that increase and improve subject knowledge or pedagogy. They are activities which contribute to enhancing the student experience and promote engagement with research and support research led/informed learning, teaching and assessment (Turner, 2009).

"If one asks educational practitioners in the UK post-compulsory education sector to define the word 'research,' then you might expect to receive different responses depending on whether professional practice is based within higher or further education." (Child, 2009).

This indicates potentially contrasting measures of professionalism between FE and HE. The Mixed Economy Group of Colleges (MEG, 2014) recommends that colleges need a locally-published, supported and monitored definition of scholarly activity appropriate to the

professional development of staff teaching HE, and suggest scholarly activity be considered 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.

To be accepted as Research and Scholarly Activity, this activity must be shared with peers, disseminated across the institution and possibly beyond and archived in ways which are easily accessible to all staff.”

The key aspects of scholarly activity and research can be seen as:

- + It makes you think...reflect
 - What is it you want to know...?
 - Why do you want to know it...?
 - How will you use what you have found out?
 - What do you want to know now...?
 - Reflection before, in and on action.

There is also an opportunity to consider inclusivity and research and scholarship including, for example, intercultural awareness and scholarship/research. Developing inclusive research including de-colonising academic research. There is growing interest in the whole notion of de-colonising the curriculum and academic study in the UK and overseas. There are now many articles that explore decolonising research and many universities in the UK have guidance on their websites.

Useful sources can be found at:

<https://guides.lib.sussex.ac.uk/c.php?g=692062&p=4959234>

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ces/research/current/socialtheory/maps/decolonising/>

1.2 Why should you do it?

Scholarly activity and research can:

- + contribute to a lecturer's identity
- + contribute to a students' development
- + contribute to an institutional ethos.

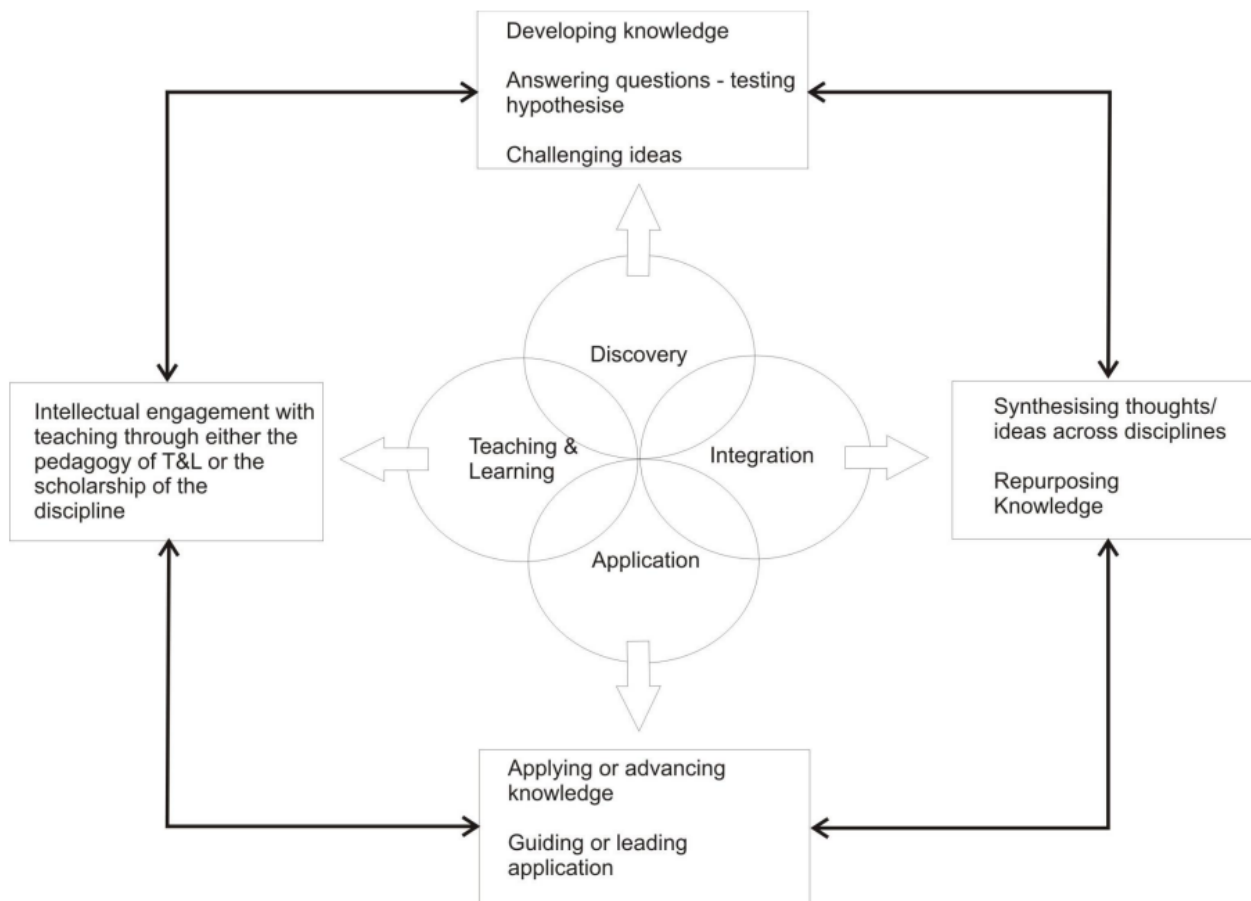
It can provide:

- + continued currency of subject and teaching knowledge to maintain academic standards.
- + advancement and development of curricula and learning materials
- + support academic and pedagogical research and activities
- + dissemination opportunities of insights and research findings within a College and across the sector, including conferences and through publication
- + celebration of CBHE scholarship and research through discipline and subject-specific activity; for example, land-based research or social/community work-based inquiry
- + collaboration opportunities with other CBHE providers, university partners, public and voluntary sectors, and industry.

And it can:

- + enhance the learning of CBHE students
- + encourage students to be scholarly and co-creators of knowledge
- + improve employment opportunities for students
- + enhance student outcomes and graduate destinations
- + formalise action research (the work practitioners do to continuously improve their teaching, learning, assessment and support practices and the activities or intervention they may implement)
- + grow the reputation of the College in the HE sector
- + fulfil compliance with regulatory expectations.

Figure 1: What is scholarly activity? (Turner, 2009).



1.2.1 Regulatory body expectations, Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), Foundation Degree/Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP/DAPs), and similar

Engaging colleagues in scholarly activity and research can help providers meet the expectations of regulatory and validating bodies, and improve a college/university centre's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) commentary, provider submission in the Quality Review Visit (QRV) process and preparation for achieving degree awarding powers (DAP).

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) publishes sectorial expectations for engagement with scholarly activity and research both in its criteria for Foundation Degree (or Taught Degree) Awarding Powers and in Section 3 Learning and Teaching of The UK Quality Code for Higher Education ("the Quality Code"). The Quality Code avoids the use of the terms 'research' and 'scholarly activity' in its preamble, suggesting:

“Effective learning and teaching activities and practices are enabled through, and depend on, staff who are appropriately qualified for their role and who engage throughout their career in continuing professional development, in the evaluation of their practice, and in developing their understanding of their subject and the learning process as it relates to their subject.” [p5] However, the ‘Indicators of Sound Practice’ within this section are more specific. Indicator 3 states, “Learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.”

The explanatory text expands on this expectation:

“Scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education, but their nature will depend on the academic level of the programme, the subject area and the provider or providers of the programme. Scholarship may include conventional research (discovery of new knowledge), innovative application or integration of existing knowledge, for example in professional practice, or the study of learning and teaching processes and practices ... In subject areas such as clinical medicine, music or performing arts among others, or where learning is taking place in the workplace, evaluation of professional practice directly informs student learning. The requirements of professional, regulatory or statutory bodies are also taken into account where applicable.” (p13).

In contrast, Indicator 4 publicises the expectation of appropriate levels of qualification and continued professional development:

“staff are expected to have the necessary skills and experience to facilitate learning in the students they are interacting with, and to use approaches grounded in sound learning and teaching scholarship and practice.” (p14).

The Code touches on the impact of subject, level and provider contexts on scholarly activity: The guidance provided for colleges seeking FDAP or TDAP makes explicit reference to ‘scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff’ (2013, p5).

The advice notes that:

“For example, scholarship in support of the Foundation Degree is likely to involve an employer-driven focus and a tightly structured approach to learning, reflecting the vocational orientation of the qualification. Bachelor’s and taught master’s degrees may also have a vocational orientation, as in the case of business, law and nursing for example, but they are also likely to have a greater subject focus and academic orientation, reflected in more open-ended enquiry and the development of students as independent learners.”

1.2.2 Curriculum development and course validation

Research refers to the systematic collection and analysis of data to provide a greater understanding of subject matter and to inform the design of products. Programme development research is undertaken in either primary (e.g. directly from respondents) or secondary form (by analysis of published information) so as to inform the development of educational programmes (MEG, 2014).

Continually engaging in scholarly activity and research ensures that curriculum development, teaching, learning, and assessment are evidence and research informed. This provides confidence in robust approaches to curriculum development that supports positive outcomes for students.

Scholarly activity and research inform curriculum development, content and teaching on proposed programmes/awards and those being revalidated/reviewed. This should encompass both discipline-specific and pedagogic research and scholarship.

Evidencing scholarly activity and research as part of programme development should demonstrate how:

- + staff effectively draw upon their research, scholarship and/or professional developments to inform their teaching
- + staff engage in regular and sustained scholarly activity and research
- + students are exposed to a research dimension and encouraged to develop the required skills
- + research and evaluation of teaching practice has been used to enhance the curriculum/student experience
- + reference is made to the institution's strategy/policy on supporting teaching informed by research or scholarly activity.

1.2.3 Aspiring to teach HE (supporting new to HE staff and those aspiring to teach HE)

New to HE staff should complete some form of New to HE training, in addition to the usual institution induction. It is beneficial if this is aligned to the PSF (Descriptor 1). Throughout this training, new staff should be introduced to the HE Regulatory Landscape and key documents (such as the QAA Benchmark Statements, Quality Code, etc), Teaching, Learning and Assessment regulations, strategy and methods, and other content in relation to curriculum design and student support. Embedded throughout should be an ethos of

scholarship and action research for curriculum development, professional development, quality enhancement, and student engagement.

Importantly, following the Covid 19 pandemic when universities and colleges moved to digital, online teaching and learning some commentators are suggesting that there has been a rapid development of the 'digital scholar'. This entails the use of digital technologies in everything a college or university does, including research. The OU has developed a free training program introducing digital scholarship. This program can be found [here](#). The program uses one of the first texts about digital scholarship by Martin Weller which can be downloaded from [here](#).

1.3 Benefits to CBHE providers

Beyond those outlined above, engagement in scholarly activity and research provides several benefits to CBHE, including enhancing institutional reputation.

Effective learning and teaching:

"Effective learning and teaching occurs when staff display a sound understanding and up-to-date knowledge of their subject, pedagogies and/or professional practice and bring this to a variety of appropriately-designed learning and teaching activities. Recruitment and appointment procedures ensure that new staff have an appropriate level of competence for teaching and supporting learning" (QAA, The Quality Code, 2018, p.7).

Pursuit of degree-awarding powers:

In the QAA Cymru (2022) Degree Awarding Powers in Wales: Handbook for Applicants, it is stated that the criteria for FDAP and taught degree awarding powers (TDAP) includes focus on scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff (p. 2).

Similarly, the Designated Quality Body in England (2022) states, in the Degree Awarding Powers in Wales: Handbook for Applicants, that institutions should ensure that everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning:

- + **maintain a professional understanding of current developments in research and scholarship in their subject** and, where applicable, keep in touch with practice in their professions and for ensuring that structured opportunities for them to do so are both readily available and widely taken up.

Institutions will be required to provide evidence that all staff involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, have:

- + relevant learning, teaching and assessment practices that are **informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship**
 - + academic and (where applicable) professional expertise
-

- + active engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline knowledge
- + **understanding of current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline and that such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching. Also, active engagement with research and/or advanced scholarship to a level commensurate with the level and subject of the qualifications being offered**
- + opportunities to engage in reflection and evaluation of their learning, teaching and assessment practice
- + **development opportunities aimed at enabling them to enhance their practice and scholarship.**

Further reading that may be useful:

[Exploring Scholarship and Scholarly Activity in College-based Higher Education](#)

[Defining and supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(SoTL\): A sector-wide study](#)

[What is scholarly activity?](#)

[Scholarly activity in higher education delivered in further education](#)

[Research and Scholarly activity resource – guidance for staff delivering HE in FE](#)

2. Barriers, enablers and potential solutions

CBHE providers often face several challenges not commonly associated with ‘traditional’ HE (Lea, 2014) and staff are often bound by practices more commonly associated with further education (FE) (Dutton and Rapley, 2014).

Research by Advance HE with CBHE providers also indicates that the key challenge of being able to support staff development, scholarly activity and research in the context of intensive teaching requirements persists. The challenge is often explained to Advance HE CBHE members as one of creating a culture of developing scholarship and research across learning and teaching, leadership and governance, grounded in inclusivity.

Details of how to implement a research framework in a CBHE setting remain largely unknown. This may be attributable to the fact that CBHE does not fall into a particularly well-defined category; in fact, its history is characterised by hybridity (Simmons and Lea, 2013). This hybrid quality has specific implications for research since CBHE does not have a research tradition of its own and CBHE professionals are generally not perceived as having the research credentials to design and conduct research. Feather (2011), for example, categorises the main role of the CBHE educator as “reading to teach” (p.248).

2.1 Time

One of the biggest and most common barriers to scholarly activity and research for CBHE practitioners is time. The majority of CBHE Network Members report that FE-based contracts and a lack of remission places significant restraints on the time resource available for CBHE staff to engage in scholarly activity and research.

Suggestions of enablers and support to provide CBHE practitioners the time include:

- + increased recognition of ‘what counts’ - for example, action research, every day practitioner interventions, peer observation actions, annual review actions, etc.
- + creation of opportunities for staff/ student collaboration based on Dissertations or similar modules/projects
- + designated scheduled scholarly activity and research time for teams – such as Staff Development Days, Team Meeting time, Scholarly Activity Month and/or Research Week
- + bidding rounds, for remission and remuneration of hours
- + HE specific teaching/support contracts including expectations and time allocation for scholarly activity and research
- + inclusion of remission/remuneration and expectations with scholarly activity strategy and policies

- + increased opportunities afforded by emerging digital scholarship for example crowd-sourcing and collaborative research.

2.2 Funding

CBHE providers often experience greater challenges in accessing funding to support scholarly activity and research, often due to a lack of resource in sourcing opportunities followed by developing the submissions.

Potential solutions could be provided both internally and externally to institutions, and considering collaborative opportunities with other teams and/or external partners can support the sharing of resource needed.

Within institutions, providers could consider:

- + bidding rounds, for remission and remuneration of hours
- + funding pots for capital/resources (such as ELT Innovation Fund, sustainability project funding, Corporate Social Responsibility project funding, or similar)
- + Innovation/Project Champions
- + Collaborative Enhancement Projects
- + designated bid writing/project co-ordinators
- + bid writing training
- + centralised funding/bid opportunity communications.

Beyond the institution, providers might consider external funding opportunities such as:

- + Localised partnerships such as with validating partners, UniConnect, LEPs
- + [Mixed Economy Group of Colleges](#)
- + [Association of Colleges \(AoC\) Research Further](#) - scholarships for Masters or doctorate study
- + [Skills and Education Group](#)
- + [Advance HE Collaborative Development Fund](#)
- + [QAA Collaborative Enhancement Projects](#)
- + OfS Funding Competitions
- + Department for Education (eg. Higher Technical Education funds and ITE grants)
- + [TASO \(Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in HE\)](#)
- + [UK Research and Innovation funding for research and knowledge exchange](#)
- + [European Research Council](#)

- + [ESRC \(Economic and Social Research Council\)](#)
- + [MRC \(Medical Research Council\)](#)
- + [AHRC \(Arts and Humanities Research Council\)](#)
- + [BBSRC \(Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council\)](#)
- + [EPSRC \(Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council\)](#)
- + [NERC \(Natural Environment Research Council\)](#)
- + [STFC \(Science and Technology Facilities Council\)](#)
- + [Royal Society of Chemistry](#)
- + [Institution of Engineering and Technology](#)
- + [Royal Academy of Engineering](#)
- + [abrdn Financial Fairness Trust](#)
- + [British and Foreign School Society: Educational Opportunity for All](#)
- + [Garfield Weston Foundation](#)
- + [National Lottery Community Fund](#)
- + [The Ironmongers Foundation](#)
- + [Get Grants](#)

2.3 Colleague readiness – self-doubt, isolation and imposter syndrome

“Fear of the unknown? Fear of criticism? Of not being taken seriously or just looking stupid.”
(Turner et al., 2014)

“I was not confident to write about the things I knew about, there was no environment that suggested or stimulated me that I might have anything to contribute by writing” (Turner et al., 2014).

Colleague readiness to engage in scholarly activity and research, and disseminate it, can vary massively among team members and institutions. Many teaching staff arrive in these roles through non-traditional routes, such as sector/industrial employment routes, and many (regardless of entry route) can associate ‘writing’ with ‘fear’ and ‘exposure’.

Skill development in all aspects of scholarly activity and research, and specifically dissemination and publication, is required but all colleagues are different and there is no ‘one size fits all’ quick fix approach.

Establishing a means to understanding individual practitioners’ interests can be helpful to increasing engagement. Undertaking this activity will provide an opportunity to match

colleagues to potential scholarly activity, research and dissemination opportunities, and encourage collaborative working with colleagues with similar interests.

Internal opportunities to increase confidence might include:

- + Celebration of everything 'that counts'
 - experiential learning vs other learning/research (eg academic vs other)
 - Action/practitioner research
 - 'what works'.
- + newsletters
- + blogs
- + research journals
- + conference style events (also exploring the possibility of publishing a book of abstracts for such events)
- + reading and writing groups, retreats or workshops
 - Consider limited numbers to enhance cohesiveness and intensive support
 - Co-writing
 - ['Shut up and write'](#)
 - Facilitate peer review, discussion and collaboration
 - Development of resilience and robustness through 'safe exposure'
- + research cafes to discuss and explore research ideas
- + buddying and collaboration opportunities – those with similar interests and/or more experienced with less experienced
- + Teaching and Learning Committees
- + digital spaces for dissemination
- + research databases/archives.

External opportunities to increase confidence could include:

- + membership of subject specific associations
 - Networking opportunities
 - Opportunities to write for blogs/publications
 - CPD in turn boosting confidence
- + opportunities for book of abstracts with Research Journals – starting with those from internal conferences
- + localised partnerships and collaborative opportunities (eg. validation partners, UniConnect, LEPs)
- + Advance HE CBHE Network.

2.4 Where can it lead?

“It gave me knowledge which had not previously had, as it was an unknown club that I wasn’t part of. Although I taught in HE I was never privy to meetings or any of that stuff, the paper work etc. was kept secret. Knowledge is power as they say, I was allowed to go and ask as I was doing research.”

“Personally, oh gosh, it makes me smile so it must be good, being involved in research has allowed me to meet some very exciting, likeminded people in the HE environment. I have made some not (just) friends but good contacts with other lecturers”

“I always thought that (research) was a bit above me but actually I've seen a lot of presentations and read papers and thought "I can do that". I won't claim I'm the best of presenters or the best of writers, but I don't think I'm out of my league either.”

“As a part-time lecturer in HE within a predominately FE college there can be a sense of being slightly detached from the larger community. HELP CETL provided an opportunity of participating in a number of different communities including approaching my own college from a different perspective. Joining a group of researching practitioners gave me a sense of identity that enabled me to approach research and my practice in a new way.”

“Just simply the opportunity to move out of your institution and collaborate with others who have similar issues, you feel so isolated sometimes especially in certain subject areas, as a HE in FE lecturer.”

(Turner, 2009)

3. Embedding Scholarly Activity & Research in CBHE

3.1 Where to start

The best place to start is to consider scholarly activity at institutional level and to consider and implement college wide scholarship policies. From there, consideration of individual practitioners and the resources they need can be developed, aimed at developing a wider community of CBHE practice.

Figure 2: Embedding scholarly activity into institutions (Education and Training Foundation, 2023).



Considerations for institutional level development might include, although not limited to, the following themes, and the Education and Training Foundation have pulled together [resources linked to each as part of the Framework](#) (individual, institution, or community of practice):

- + curriculum development
- + professional development
- + quality enhancement
- + student engagement.

3.1.1 Types

Scholarly activities should be purposeful and have a demonstrable impact on the HE community within institutions and across the HE sector. These activities go beyond Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or training and promote a deeper understanding of the subject matter or the knowledge creation process, either to the individual and/or to a wider audience.

The work of Ernest Boyer on the four scholarships (Boyer 1990) - of discovery, of application, of integration, and of teaching - can help understand types of scholarly activity and underpin a scholarly activity and research framework, with the intention of exploring how each form of scholarship might be developed, monitored and evaluated within a college higher education context.

Understanding scholarship in these forms helps to explore ways in which curricula and pedagogies have encouraged forms of interplay between knowledge contexts – interdisciplinary and work/academic knowledge (the scholarship of integration); encouraged staff, students and local employers to develop productive knowledge exchange networks (the scholarship of application); and sought ways to enhance peer support and evaluation of teaching (the scholarship of teaching).

Boyer's four scholarships can be related to student learning activities:

Types of scholarship	Illustrative example of ways of engaging learners
Scholarship of discovery	Engage in inquiry-based learning; undergraduate research and consultancy projects; co-research projects with staff.
Scholarship of integration	Engage in integrating material from different sources, including across disciplines; integrate life and work experience with academic studies; reflect on implications of studies for personal development.
Scholarship of application/engagement	Engage with local, national, and international community service projects; volunteering; knowledge exchange projects; apply knowledge and skills in work-based placements.
Scholarship of teaching and learning	Engage in mentoring; peer support and assessment; collaborative group work; learners as explicit partners in educational development and inquiry.

Table 1: Boyer's four scholarships

Scholarly activities vary with context and discipline but can include, for example:

- + action research
- + applied/practitioner research
- + auto/biographical research
- + case study research
- + conference/event attendance
- + conference presentations/workshops
- + consultancy to industry
- + curriculum development that involves literature searching/work with industry/validation partners

- + External Examining, External Verifying, External Academic validation panel member, QAA review, TEF reviewer etc.
- + Fellowship activity
- + HE specific CPD modules
- + Higher qualifications
- + industrial secondments
- + networking, forums and working groups
- + opportunities to develop research methodology expertise (eg Research Committee, Research Ethics, external Independent Research Organisations such as UK Research Integrity Office, TASO)
- + professional memberships and associations
- + research projects
- + research using secondary sources
- + stakeholder engagement activities
- + subject updating
- + training programmes
- + writing for publications

Further reading:

[The Challenge to Scholarship](#)

3.1.2 Developing policy, strategy and ethics

Institutions should seek to develop an underpinning strategy and policy in relation to scholarly activity and research; expectations, processes, and procedures.

Policies should seek to recognise the categories of scholarships, such as those defined by Boyer above.

MEG (2014) concluded from their research that:

- + colleges delivering HE must have a clear strategy and rationale, which takes into account both the changing external environment and the College's own capacity and aspirations
- + HE in FE is an emerging recognised brand
- + colleges must ensure that the uniqueness of that brand is developed and sustained
- + colleges must allocate sufficient human and other resources to deliver HE to the highest levels of quality
- + college staff should be encouraged to undertake appropriate professional updating and participation in related national networks.

The range and nature of institutional expectations of scholarly activity should be clear and should reference both individual professional development and that appropriate to the enhancement and assurance of the community as a whole.

3.1.3 Ethical Considerations

Providers starting out on their scholarly activity and research journey have experienced challenges relating to establishing a Research Ethics panel, including issues surrounding:

- + tensions and complexities between institutions/funding bodies
- + defining what is evaluation and what is research
- + clarifying what requires ethics what does not
- + establishing clear guidelines relating to gate keepers and consent
- + access to Ethics Panels relating to practitioner action research.

Providers may consider working with validating partners or collaborative networks to explore ways to overcome these challenges.

Please see some example Ethics Policies from other CBHE providers below:

University Centre South Devon –

[HE Scholarly Activity and Research Policy](#)

[HE Research Ethics Policy.](#)

South Thames College Group –

[Scholarship and Research Strategy](#)

University Centre Leeds –

[Research Ethics Policy](#)

3.1.4 Recognising action research

One of the biggest and most common barriers to scholarly activity and research for CBHE practitioners is time but many practitioners will be engaging in some sort of intervention or quality enhancement activity that could be defined as practitioner or action research.

Increased recognition of 'what counts' is fundamental to increasing engagement and recognition of scholarly activity and research - for example, action research, everyday practitioner interventions, peer observation actions, annual review actions, etc.

This can be enhanced through supporting informal and formal action research, potentially with remuneration of teaching time or dissemination opportunities that encourage sharing of findings and outcomes. We recommend that, to maintain motivation and engagement, institutions should celebrate this research, highlighting experiential learning vs other learning/research (eg. academic vs other), action/practitioner research and 'what works'.

3.1.4 Creating HE Research Culture and Ethos

There are several recommendations made by HE providers that can help in creating a culture of scholarship within institutions and among HE colleagues. Many of these are applicable to CBHE providers and will be discussed in more detail within this toolkit. Some examples include:

- + establishing strategy, policy, and procedures
- + developing an institutional framework
- + encouraging and promoting continuous improvement
- + supporting informal and formal action research, and sharing of findings and outcomes
- + celebrating and recognising success (eg. gallery of academic posters, recognition awards, celebratory bulletins / communications)
- + mobilising opportunities for collaboration.

Factors key to success include:

- + effective leadership and clear goals - let it be seen as a priority/valued from highest levels
- + frequent and impactful communication - keep on the agenda
- + staff training and mentoring
- + training for leaders/curriculum leaders – especially those who have responsibility for onboarding/appraisals as they will need to understand the importance of research and how to support the staff with it
- + staff support to further own education
- + encouragement of collaboration.

[Hanover Research \(2014\)](#) examined successful practices for developing a culture of research in higher education and considered the essential characteristics of institutions with high levels of research productivity and plans for developing and maintaining cultures of research.

Other useful resources may include:

[Guiding Principles for Effectively Embedding Scholarship within College Higher Education](#)

3.1.5 Recognition and remission

Suggestions of enablers and support to provide CBHE practitioners the time include:

- + increased recognition of 'what counts' - for example, action research, every day practitioner interventions, peer observation actions, annual review actions, etc.
- + creation of opportunities for staff/ student collaboration based on Dissertations or similar modules/projects
- + designated scheduled scholarly activity and research time for teams – such as Staff Development Days, Team Meeting time, Scholarly Activity Month and/or Research Week

- + bidding rounds, for remission and remuneration of hours
- + HE specific teaching/support contracts including expectations and time allocation for scholarly activity and research
- + inclusion of remission/remuneration and expectations with scholarly activity strategy and policies.

3.1.6 Examples of Good Practice and Useful Links

- + [Case Studies The Scholarship Project | Association of Colleges \(aoc.co.uk\)](#)
- + [Together or Apart: Developing an HE culture in an FE college - Andy McGill](#)
- + [Research and Scholarship in College Higher Education: Reaping what you sow, or turning a blind eye?](#)
- + [Scholarship Project | External Links | Association of Colleges \(aoc.co.uk\)](#)
- + [Practitioner-led development and research - The Education and Training Foundation \(et-foundation.co.uk\)](#)

3.2 What next?

3.2.1 Recognise and celebrate development, learning, success and achievement

Internal opportunities should consider informal and formal recognition and celebration activities that mobilise outputs and appreciate all forms of scholarly activity and research, and might include:

- + newsletters
- + blogs
- + research journals
- + conference style events (also exploring the possibility of publishing a book of abstracts for such events)
- + research cafes
- + teaching and Learning Committees
- + digital spaces for dissemination
- + research database / archive
- + gallery of academic posters
- + recognition awards.

External opportunities may include:

- + blogs with local or sector-wide partnerships
- + sector/subject-specific conferences, symposiums, and blogs
- + sector awards eg. Times Higher Education Awards, NEON Awards, Educate North Awards
- + Advance HE CBHE Network sharing practice agenda items.

3.2.2 Active engagement

Scholarly activity and research should be embedded within the strategy and policy and to underpin the expectations of teams and departments to take responsibility for ensuring staff are engaged in training activities and scholarship that commensurate with their role.

All staff in HE should be engaging in some form(s) of scholarship, with some expectation that outputs from scholarship be shared.

The collation and review of individual CPD logs and regular CV updates help to demonstrate scholarship, research and CPD - both in relation to teaching/professional practice and subject specialism. This should be on a standard template.

Recognising what activities 'count' is important in supporting active engagement eg, network/forum representation, conference attendance, formal qualification, paper presentations and publication.

Developing a central record of scholarship is recommended. This should capture the activity being undertaken by each staff member, their highest qualification, PGCE status, professional body memberships, completion of HE-specific CPD schemes, Fellowship status, publications, conference lists, professional and subject area engagement, and so on.

Further steps could consider the development and implementation of Scholarly Activity and Research Plans per department/team and per individual.

3.2.3 HE specific CPD schemes

Several institutions have developed CPD schemes and expectations in addition to those of their FEC. These schemes are usually ongoing, mandatory, and designed for professional development to help continually develop staff.

As part of a HE-specific CPD scheme, institutions may consider the development of Communities of Practice - sharing of practice sessions and more formalised dissemination activities within the institution. See [Community of Practice Design Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide for Designing & Cultivating Communities of Practice in Higher Education | EDUCAUSE Library](#) for more guidance.

HE-specific CPD schemes are encouraged to be aligned to PSF.

Case study:

University Centre Leeds - <https://ucleeds.ac.uk/university-centre-leeds-awarded-accreditation-by-advancehe/>

Modules included in this scheme are:

- + Wider Professional Practice in Higher Education
- + Higher Education Practitioners as Researchers
- + Improving Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- + Emerging Technologies in Higher Education
- + Assessment and Feedback Practices in Higher Education
- + Evaluation in Higher Education
- + Partnership Learning Communities in Higher Education.

3.2.4 Measuring Impact

“evaluation is about attributing value and worth to our activities, to indicate what differences we have made” (Bamber, 2013, p.12).

There has been a notable increase in regulatory pressure across the HE sector to know and understand what is working/not working to support equitable student outcomes. This has been welcomed and is also somewhat overwhelming. We know how vital evaluation is, but that there is a lack of confidence and resources for CBHE colleagues to respond effectively.

“Monitoring and evaluation of higher education is an essential process within providers, forming a fundamental part of the academic cycle. It can, and should, look at all aspects of the higher education experience.” (QAA, 2018, p.2).

This area of work is particularly important, and useful, in creating a research culture within CBHE institutions, whilst also responding to regulatory expectations. By considering our approaches to monitoring and evaluation across all institutional activities, recognition of action and practitioner research becomes more formalised as scholarly activity and research in a natural and habitual way. The development of training packages and staff development in relation to defining monitoring and evaluation, tools for evaluation, data collection, and ways to evidence impact may be necessary.

Useful resources:

[TASO \(Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in HE\)](#) have devised a [series of resources designed to help measure impact and support effective evaluation](#).

Types of evaluation:

Process Evaluation	Impact evaluation	Outcome evaluation	Summative evaluation	Formative evaluation
Measures activities and quality of program, and who it is reaching	Measures the immediate effect of the program and how well objectives are met	Measures the long term effects of the program and how well goal is achieved	Considers the entire program cycle and if and how it is continued	Evaluations which occur during the process and if any immediate changes are needed

Table 2: Types of evaluation.

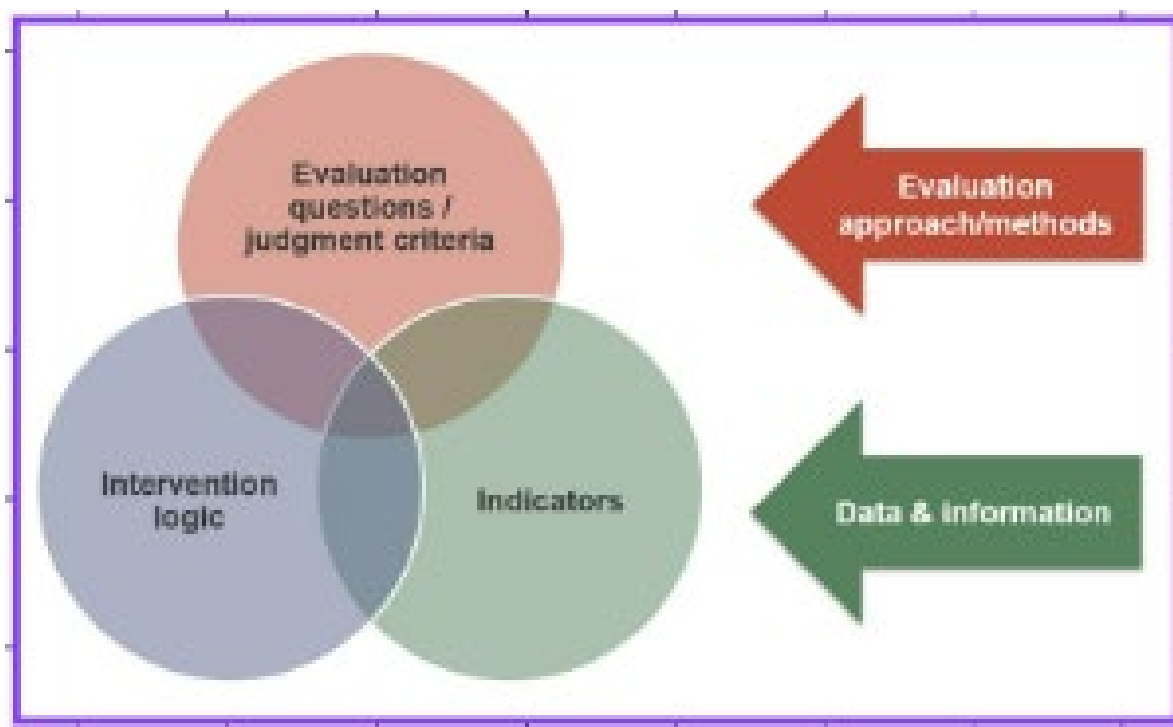
Key components of evaluation:

- + Validity - the extent to which scores form a measure represent the variable they are intended to.
- + Reliability - accuracy and consistency of a measure over time and context.
- + Fairness - the extent to which the evaluation process is impartial and free of bias.

Developing a monitoring and evaluation system:

Any monitoring and/or evaluation system needs a process of regular data collection. The process of evaluation is greatly enhanced by the availability of robust and comprehensive information and data relating to the project processes and results.

Figure 3: Monitoring and evaluation system.



Step 1 - Thoroughly understand the program; Why was it created? What are the goals? How will the goals be achieved? What are the activities, outputs and outcomes?

Step 2 - What indicators will you use to measure the success of your program? There can be more than one, though try to keep the number of indicators manageable

Step 3 - Define exactly how the indicators are managed for consistency and reliability

Step 4 - Identify which tools will be used to collect data for each indicator. Where possible use existing tools that are known to work.

Things to consider here may include:

- + monitoring and evaluation of module and programme surveys and/or NSS
- + theories of change (logic models to high-level theories of change)
- + what is good evaluation and measuring of impact (case study vs cohort wide data)
- + dissemination of impact evidence
- + income generation research targets
- + monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- + Institutional Evaluation Strategy
 - Why, how, where, minimum expectations, training and support requirements
 - aligned to the strategy, Annual Review processes, APP, B3 conditions, and all aspects of the student lifecycle.
- + Evaluation Repository
 - to store all evaluation and evidence impact from across the institution to help with APP monitoring, TEF, audits, collation of outputs from action research, etc.
- + Collaborative Enhancement Projects
 - coming together to look at evaluation, from the offset, of similar interventions as well as a collective group of advocates/champions to help the wider teams with how to evaluate and what methodologies might work best for the intervention being planned.

Useful resources linking to this area of work include:

[TASO](#) - An independent hub for higher education professionals to access research, toolkits and evaluation guidance to help improve equality.

[Evaluation Collective](#) - A cross-sector group of like-minded evaluation advocates working to enhance higher education student outcomes and who aim to:

- + create opportunities to debate and develop knowledge about inclusive and effective evaluation practices
- + challenge dominant narratives about evaluation practice through the creation of our Evaluation Manifesto
- + improve higher education experiences and outcomes for students from groups traditionally under-represented in higher education.

Other useful resources include:

Grimsby Institute - <https://grimsby.ac.uk/documents/highereducation/quality/HE04/HE04-Scholarship-and-Research-Framework.pdf>

British Educational Research Association (BERA) - <https://www.epigeum.com/>

3.2.4 Theories of Change

The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) was set up in 2019 and is funded by the Office for Students on an initial grant until 2023. Their Vision and Mission is to eliminate equality gaps in higher education and to improve lives through evidence-informed practice in higher education.

TASO is an affiliate What Works Centre, and part of the UK Government's What Works Movement. This means that TASO is committed to the generation, synthesis and dissemination of high-quality evidence about effective practice in widening participation and student outcomes.

The information that follows is from the [TASO website](#), that provides higher education professionals access to research, toolkits and evaluation guidance to help improve equality.

TASO define a Theory of Change as:

“a visual representation of a programme’s inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and underlying causal mechanisms.”

A Theory of Change describes the underlying assumptions about how planned activities will lead to intended outcomes. By developing a model setting out your Theory of Change, you can understand how different aspects of your programme fit together to achieve your final goal.

In the event of a null or negative result, a well-designed Theory of Change will help the evaluator distinguish between:

- + theory fallacy – the underlying assumptions are not leading to the intended outcomes;
- + implementation fallacy – the intervention was not implemented as intended; or
- + methodology fallacy – unsuitable evaluation methods were used or suitable methods were used insufficiently.

A Theory of Change model allows you to:

- + describe the need you are trying to address
- + the changes you want to make (your outcomes); and
- + how you plan to achieve these changes (your activities).

This is best done collectively, drawing on the experience of those who will work on the service or scheme’s implementation.

Why do I need a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change helps you answer the following questions:

1. Is this the right intervention?

A Theory of Change requires you to model your desired outcomes, before deciding on the intervention. This allows you to design interventions which can achieve the desired outcomes. It also allows you to critically assess the intervention you have designed and be transparent about how it will lead to the long-term goal.

2. Is your intervention achievable?

A Theory of Change sets out how the intervention is intended to work and the resources necessary to deliver the intervention. This allows you to identify whether you need to review your outcomes and adapt the activities to achieve them, given the resources available.

3. Is your intervention testable?

A Theory of Change model will help identify questions for the evaluation and sources of evidence. Once you have identified sources of evidence, you will be able to assess if things are progressing (or not) and if you are on course to meet your short and medium-term outcomes.

How do I develop a Theory of Change?

Developing an impact-focused Theory of Change is straightforward when you approach it using the following steps in sequence, rather than mapping from activity to impact.

Doing so will structure your thinking, starting broadly with the current state of play (steps 1&2) and identifying the outcomes (step 3) which will enable you to get where you want to be (step 4), followed by the specific things that need to happen to get you there (steps 5-7). Then you can consider the assumptions (step 8) underpinning your Theory of Change – this will help you to understand whether you can achieve your intended impact within the context you are operating.

Theories of Change are best developed as part of a group discussion, preferably with an external facilitator. Your team should go through the following sections.

1. Situation: What is the context in which you are working? What problem is your intervention trying to address or resolve?
2. Aims: What goal or objective is the intervention aiming to achieve? What is your proposed solution to the problem? Your aim should be linked to your overarching strategy.
3. Outcomes: Which short and intermediate-term outcomes need to be in place for the long-term goals of your intervention (or impacts) to be achieved?

4. Impact: What is the long-term goal which relates to your situation and aims? What will result from the removal of the problem?
5. Activities: Outline the interventions you believe (supported by your rationale and assumptions) will bring about your desired change. Activities mobilise your inputs to produce outputs.
6. Outputs: What are the direct results or deliverables of your intervention which enable you to achieve your outcomes?
7. Inputs: What are the human, financial and organisational resources required to deliver your activities and, in turn, achieve your desired outcomes?
8. Rationale & assumptions: What are your assumptions? Your assumptions are the conditions which underpin, and are necessary for, the success of the intervention. What is your rationale? Your rationale explains why one outcome is needed to achieve another. Including your assumptions and rationale (which are often supported by research) strengthens the plausibility of your theory and the likelihood that its stated goals can be achieved.

Once you have developed the Theory of Change, it's important to write it up in a formal document and save it where everyone can see it and refer back to it. It may also be helpful to share with key stakeholders.

Developing a Theory of Change (ToC) is the first step in [TASO's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework](#) and the foundation of all evaluations.

TASO has a two-strand approach to Theory of Change development:

- + Strand one – Core Theory of Change – is used for simplicity and to assist HE providers with planning interventions and evaluation activities. The Core ToC guidance follows a simple model of mapping inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. It provides a high-level snapshot of how we expect an activity to lead to impact.
- + Strand two – Enhanced Theory of Change – is used for evaluability and to assist HE providers with robustly evaluating interventions and activities. The Enhanced ToC guidance provides a format for capturing much more information about activities and mechanisms by which we expect change to happen. It includes: context; mapping of links between activities and outcomes; and assumptions and change mechanisms.

You can access the Core and Enhanced ToC resources to plan your interventions and evaluation activities [here](#).

Figure 4: TASO core theory of change template

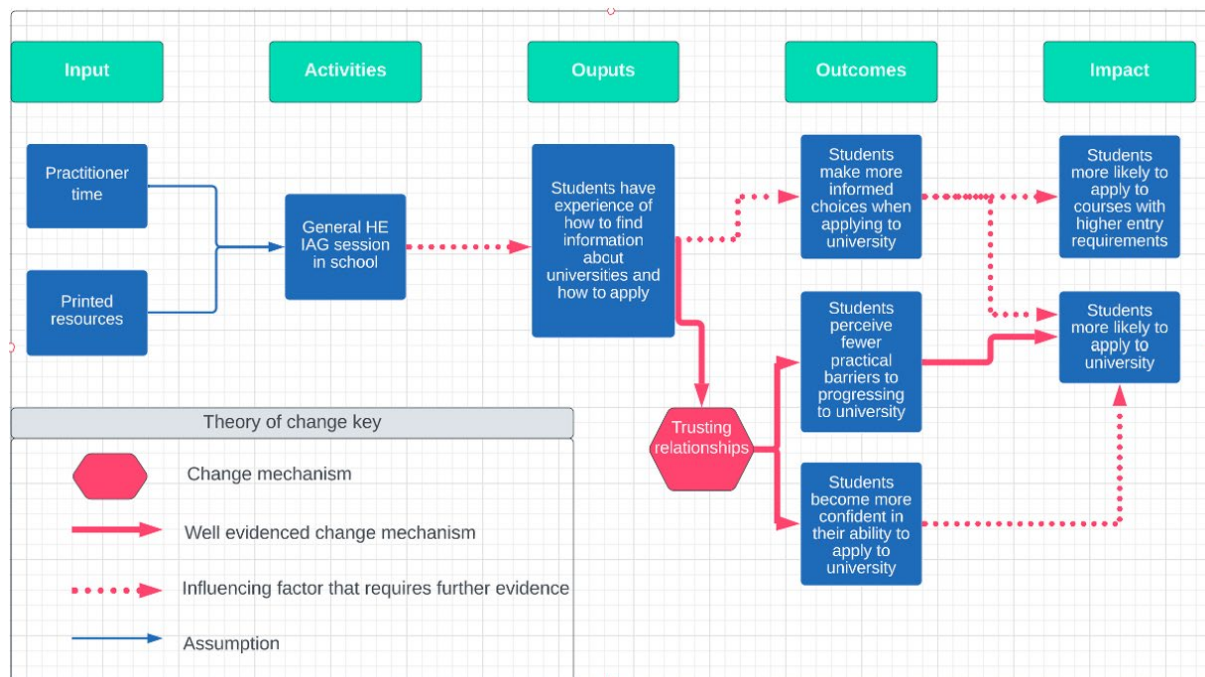
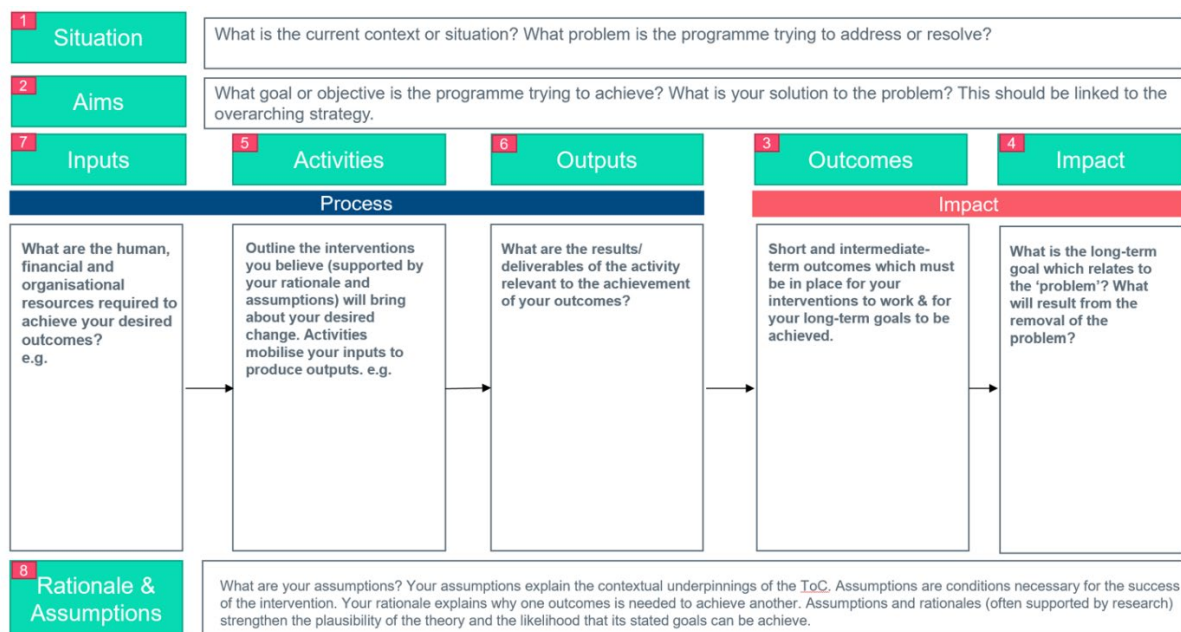


Figure 5: TASO enhanced theory of change template



Other useful resources:

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/publications-and-resources>

3.2.5 Developing an institutional framework and establishing principles

All the resources in a framework should be centred on advancing relevant forms of scholarship within technical and professional CBHE curricula and aim to enhance the learning experience for students.

A framework should consider several external reference points, including mapping to the descriptors within the Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education (PSF) descriptors and the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018).

3.3 Advanced/Further Development

Theoretical underpinning to a Scholarly Activity and Research Framework may include the ‘integrated academic’, a typology of professional expertise formulated by Evans et.al. (2021). The model identifies seven “key dimensions of practice” that characterise the work of the HE professional (p.540) irrespective of the context in which they work. These are as follows:

- + Disciplinary Knowledge
- + Pedagogical Expertise
- + Academic Practice (QA)
- + Contextual Awareness
- + Data Analytic Competence
- + Research Methodology Expertise
- + Critical Pedagogy

The concept of the integrated academic is particularly interesting because it privileges a particular kind of (traditionally undervalued) research practice, one that is grounded in the working practices of the HE professional. Its distinction is that it is easily interpretable into a CBHE context.

In all, this integrative model provides a useful foundation for examining the work of the CBHE professional and the variability of research activities within the college-based environment.

Wider dissemination activities may include:

- + blogs with local or sector-wide partnerships
- + sector/subject-specific conferences, symposiums, and blogs
- + sector awards e.g. Times Higher Education Awards, NEON Awards, Educate North Awards
- + Advance HE CBHE Network sharing practice agenda items

- + Membership of subject specific associations
 - Networking opportunities
 - Opportunities to write for blogs/publications
 - CPD in turn boosting confidence.
- + opportunities for book of abstracts with Research Journals – starting with those from internal conferences
- + localised partnerships and collaborative opportunities (eg validation partners, UniConnect, LEPs)
- + Advance HE
- + TASO.

Useful resources:

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/journals>

<https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>

<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/how-to-get-published>

<https://blog.royalhistsoc.org/2021/08/17/ten-practical-tips-for-getting-published-in-academic-journals/>

https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/learning-objects/mre/getting-published/story_html5.html

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/03/how-to-get-published-in-an-academic-journal-top-tips-from-editors>

3.4 Academic Writing and Publication

There are many useful resources in relation to getting published as well as the key guidelines provided by academic publishers and academic journals. (These guidelines must be followed to the letter).

Useful resources:

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/journals>

<https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>

<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/how-to-get-published>

<https://blog.royalhistsoc.org/2021/08/17/ten-practical-tips-for-getting-published-in-academic-journals/>

https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/learning-objects/mre/getting-published/story_html5.html

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/03/how-to-get-published-in-an-academic-journal-top-tips-from-editors>

Also, there is a number of helpful publications in relation to academic writing. A good one to get started is *The Clockwork Muse*; a practical guide to writing theses, dissertations, and books, Zerubavel, Eviatar.(1999) Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1999 which can be downloaded from [here](#).

4. Fellowship

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship>

Fellowship demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. Across four categories, from Associate to Principal, Fellowship provides individuals with recognition of their practice, impact and leadership of teaching and learning.

Fellowship is embedded in the UK and brings you a range of benefits:

- + Consolidates personal development and evidence of professional practice in your higher education career.
- + Provides a valuable measure of success and is increasingly recognised by international institutions.
- + Demonstrates commitment to teaching, learning and the student experience, through engagement in a practical process that encourages research, reflection and development.
- + Fellowship is increasingly sought by employers across the education sector as a condition of appointment and promotion.
- + Provides assurance that your institution is fully aligned with PSF practice and a badge of assured quality.

Advance HE award four different categories of Fellowship, [Associate Fellowship](#), [Fellowship](#), [Senior Fellowship](#) and [Principal Fellowship](#).

These four categories reflect the wide range of professional practice carried out by individuals who teach and/or support learning in higher education; from those who have a partial role in teaching/supporting learning through to senior professionals with strategic impact on teaching and learning in an organisational, national and/or international setting.

4.1 Professional Standards Framework (PSF)

The four categories of Fellowship are awarded on the basis of evidence of personal professional practice which meets the requirements of one of the four Descriptors of the [Professional Standards Framework \(PSF\)](#). The PSF has been developed as a standards framework for the higher education sector that sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours demonstrated by those teaching and/or supporting higher education learning.

Fellowships are awarded on the basis of a successful and effective demonstration of one of the four PSF Descriptors. In deciding which category of Fellowship to apply for at this stage

in your career, you will need to determine which of the four Descriptors of the PSF is most appropriate to your practice and professional experience:

Advance HE's [Fellowship Category Tool](#) has been designed to help you understand which category of Fellowship most closely reflects your current practice and to reflect on your ongoing professional development and career aspirations.

After you have answered a series of choice questions, which will take around 10-20 minutes, you will be shown your results and a PDF report summarising your responses will be sent to you.

[Associate Fellow](#)

If you are able to provide evidence of effectiveness in relation to your professional role which will typically include at least some teaching and/or learning support responsibilities, by applying for [Associate Fellowship](#) you will present an understanding of specific aspects of effective teaching, learning support methods and student learning.

[Fellow](#)

If you are able to provide evidence of broadly based effectiveness in more substantive teaching and supporting learning roles and can demonstrate a broad understanding of effective approaches to learning and teaching support as a key contribution to high quality student learning.

[Senior Fellow](#)

If you can demonstrate a thorough understanding of effective approaches to teaching and learning support as a key contribution to high quality student learning. You may be an experienced member of staff able to demonstrate impact and influence on other colleagues through, for example, responsibility for leading, managing or organising programmes, subjects and/or disciplinary areas.

[Principal Fellow](#)

If you can demonstrate a sustained record of effective strategic leadership in academic practice and development and you are highly experienced with wide-ranging strategic leadership responsibilities in connection with key aspects of teaching and supporting learning.

4.2 The process

Fellowships are awarded on the basis of a successful and effective demonstration of one of the four PSF Descriptors. There are [two different routes](#) to becoming a Fellow:

- [Individual direct application to Advance HE](#) - for those wishing to apply through submission of an evidence-based account of practice supported by referees or advocates and which is peer reviewed.
- [Completion of accredited programmes](#) - Advance HE accredits institutional programmes (programmes and continuing professional development schemes/frameworks) against each of the 4 Descriptors.

There are [a number of services available to support you](#) if you are thinking of applying for one of the categories of Fellowship, from our Fellowship Application Builder online course (designed for Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF) to Senior and Principal Fellow Writing Retreats designed to help you create an application that fully reflects your practice.

Advance HE offers Fellowship support to institutions through a structured process:

- + Fellowship workshops - sessions helping your staff understand Fellowship and the application process
- + Fellowship Writing Retreats - expert support providing a structured and guided environment in which to construct an application for Fellowship
- + draft Fellowship applications reviews - a consultant will review applications and provide annotated feedback, including points for further development.

All of these services can be delivered online.

Providers can also seek [Advance HE accreditation of their in-house professional development programme](#), aligned to the PSF, allowing the automatic award of Fellowship to successful applicants.

[Accreditation](#) is the means through which institutions can have their commitment to teaching and learning recognised by aligning the development they provide for their staff against the Professional Standard for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE (PSF). Once accredited, institutions can award Fellowships to their staff who meet the requirements of the PSF demonstrating to all stakeholders that the institutional and individual are committed to educational excellence.

To make it easier for you to find out everything you need to know about Fellowship, Advance HE have created a downloadable [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) document.

5. Involving and collaborating with students

Many aspects of the toolkit may be implemented to also include students and encourage staff-student collaboration. Whilst many institutions will be clear about how they develop research skills on programmes of studies, the toolkit can support advanced thinking in relation to student research as part of the HE research culture of an institution. Things to consider:

- + Ensure understanding of the research culture includes students, with institutional strategy and priority relating to this,
- + Create Student Research Groups and Networks.
- + Invite students to present at internal, and external, research dissemination events such as Research Conferences.
- + Invite students to attend conferences with staff.
- + Support students in a range of research dissemination activities.
- + Support students to understand research publication and the opportunities available to them.
- + Consider including students in Research and Ethics Committees, including approval of projects.
- + Recognise workplace experience.
- + Celebrate student voice, co-creation and co-production relating to teaching, learning and assessment practice (Student fellowship).
- + Promote understanding of [Academic Integrity](#), including use of approaches and resources from Advance HE.

Useful links:

[Students as researchers: Supporting undergraduate research in the disciplines in higher education](#)

[Pedagogic approaches to developing students as researchers, within the curriculum and beyond](#)

[Implementing student journal clubs](#)

[Supporting academic integrity: approaches and resources for higher education](#)

[Case Studies of Research Based Curricula in College Based Higher Education \(CBHE\)](#)

6. Useful resources

Advance HE research and scholarly activity resources have been collated and can be found [here](#).

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Our strategic goals to enhance confidence and trust in HE, address inequalities, promote inclusion and advance education to meet the evolving needs of students and society, support the work of our members and the HE sector.

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