

Scholarship Policy

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Introduction

'Scholarship' is a term used to describe engagement in academic study and the knowledge that is obtained from it. The knowledge pursued through scholarship has the potential to 'open up' new ways of thinking, critically and analytically. As a consequence, scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education.

The Greater Brighton Metropolitan College has inherited a strong culture of research and scholarly activity, this policy recognises the importance of scholarly activity to enable teaching staff to maintain and develop relevant pedagogic and subject expertise in their work. This is matched by an on-going commitment to planned and meaningful scholarly activity that will contribute towards the maintenance of the college's excellent learning and teaching and the scholarly ethos of students and staff.

Mission and Vision

The Greater Brighton Metropolitan College's vision is to be recognised by students, staff, employers and all of our communities as an exceptional provider of technical, vocational and professional education. Our mission is to prepare our students for life and for work by equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need. By encouraging, supporting and inspiring students, the college aims to build the self-belief, confidence and resilience they need to meet their goals and aspirations.

We pride ourselves on our heritage of learning and teaching which combines industry specialism with high levels of academic pedagogy. This enables our graduates to be highly successful in their chosen professions, to build portfolio careers, and to progress to higher degrees.

Students at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College are part of a vibrant and diverse academic community. Effective academic and pastoral support structures allow students and staff to work closely together to ensure learning and teaching are responsive to individual needs and interests, creating a bespoke and flexible student experience in a nurturing environment.

Our greatest resource is our staff who are already well qualified with exceptional industry links and experience. Supported to engage in research and scholarly activity, our staff are well placed to lead on fostering an ethos and culture for our students which is informed by scholarship and professional practice and inspires and challenges students and fellow staff to aspire to excellence.

A community is created when staff who are themselves researchers and practitioners work with students to facilitate them in their enquiry led learning, because enquiry is a fundamental characteristic of study. This community is enhanced when students are encouraged to innovate, experiment and undertake original work and collaborate across disciplines.'

Developing Scholarship in the college requires continued support for research and advanced practice across the provision which directly enhances the student learning experience through:

- The promotion and enhancement of a culture of scholarship based on collaboration and dissemination
- The integration of scholarship with learning and teaching
- The improvement of student academic and employment outcomes, and raised aspirations for further study
- The recognition of the value of scholarship for quality enhancement

Defining Scholarship

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. This aligns with Boyer's (1990) four functions of scholarship, which have been identified as being of particular relevance to college higher education (Lea 2016).

Boyer challenged the dominance of the scholarship of discovery, or traditional research, and argued that there are a range of scholarly activities that are of equal value, namely:

This policy also enshrines King and Widdowson's definition of scholarship as 'an activity or activities with the potential to:

Function	Purpose	Examples
Discovery	When producing new knowledge or original research for publication or review	<p>Publishing in peer-reviewed forums</p> <p>Producing and/or performing creative work</p> <p>Creating infrastructure for future studies</p>
Integration	When making connections across organisations, disciplines or subjects through knowledge sharing	<p>Preparing literature review</p> <p>Writing a textbook for use in multiple disciplines</p> <p>Collaborating with colleagues to design and deliver a core course</p>
Application	When using knowledge to solve problems in the real world such as in industry or vocational areas	<p>Consultancy to industry and other agencies</p> <p>Assuming leadership roles in professional organisations</p> <p>Advising student leaders</p>
Teaching & Learning	When the enhancement and improvement of pedagogy including learning and assessment is central	<p>Advancing learning theory through classroom research</p> <p>Developing and testing teaching materials</p> <p>Mentoring students in research</p> <p>Designing and implementing programme-level assessment systems</p>

- 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.' (2010, p. 10). The quality of scholarship may be evaluated by Shulman's criteria for evaluating scholarly activity, namely:

- it becomes public
- it can be critically reviewed and evaluated for the academic according to accepted standards
- it can be used, built on and developed by other scholars (1999 p.11)

In addition to these is the overarching criterion that it leads to a recognisable enhancement of learning and teaching. However, 'scholarly activity' does not include such professional development activities

such as mandatory training and updating of IT skills. The notion of scholarship does, however, encapsulate the expectation that staff will keep abreast of developments in their sector by, for example, attending conferences and workshops, reading journals and other peer reviewed academic literature.

At the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College, scholarship is professionally orientated, with teaching staff understood to be relatively autonomous, committed and responsible professionals acting as drivers for planned activities in the context of the college's aims and mission statement.

Embedding Scholarship

Scholarship is embedded in the culture of the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College through the following policies and procedures:

1) Appraisal/Teaching and learning professional practice development

For staff involved in teaching the appraisal process will be triangulated with their teaching and learning professional practice development to determine the form of planned Scholarly activity/CPD. For staff who teach HE, they will be expected to review their scholarly activities with their line manager on periodic basis and to complete an annual review of their scholarly exercise/s as part of the appraisal system. The scholarly activity must reflect the remitted hours allocated to staff who teach on HE programmes

2) Annual and Programme Review Committees

Scholarly Activity is reported at HE course board level and as well as forming part of each course's annual health report.

A quarterly report on college-wide research and scholarly activity will be made to the quarterly Higher Education Board. The compilation of this report will be led by the Quality Improvement Manager.

3) Publication and dissemination:

All staff engaged in research and scholarly activity are encouraged to discuss their ideas and share their projects-in-progress with colleagues at sharing of good practice events such as CPD days and the Research Cafés.

Once projects have been completed, support is offered for the drafting of abstracts and preparation of presentations at local and national conferences. Some staff will go on to publish their outcomes in peer-assessed journals.

4) Resources

a) Remission

In most instances, where HE staff teach a regular pattern of HE hours across the 30 week year, they will simply extend those hours into a 34 week year, with the additional 4 weeks of time-tabled hours being given to Scholarly Activity/CPD. In circumstances where staff are not teaching a regular pattern of HE in the 30 weeks of the HE calendar, a commensurate individual arrangement will be entered into to ensure they are able to undertake scholarly activity.

Staff involved in teaching HE are encouraged to allocate this designated time for Scholarly Activity/CPD in ways that best enable the productive use of that time. Thus accumulated Scholarly Activity/CPD time may be taken as whole days or as hours per week in agreed weeks or at times deemed most productive by the member of staff, subject to agreement by line management through the appraisal process or by other means.

b) Financial support

A Research and Scholarly Activity fund is made available on an annual basis to support staff wishing to undertake scholarly projects. The award process is competitive. A call for projects goes out in October each academic year, and a panel meets to evaluate proposals in November. If funds remain, a second call may be put out in February. Staff are assisted in the writing of bids, the undertaking of their research project and the dissemination of their outcomes.

5) Ethical policy and procedure:

Staff are expected to adhere to the principles laid out in the college's Procedure for the Ethical Review of Research Proposals, in particular:

- Minimising the risk of harm to all participants
- Obtaining informed consent of all participants
- Protecting anonymity and confidentiality
- Avoiding deceptive practices
- Providing the right to withdraw without prejudice

Related Policy/Guideline documents:

- Greater Brighton Metropolitan College Curriculum Strategy
- Learning and Development Policy
- Development and Assessment of Teaching and Learning Policy
- Appraisal Process Guidelines and FAQs

Research and Scholarly Activity Fund guidance and application documents:

1. Procedure for the Ethical Review of Research Proposals
2. Guidelines on submitting a Research and Scholarly Activity Fund proposal
 - Ethical Protocol Guidance Form and Checklist (appendix 1)
 - Ethical Protocol Form - to be completed (appendix 2)
3. Application for HE Research and Scholarly Activity Fund (to be completed)

References:

Boyer, E (1990/2016) *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

King M. & Widdowson J. (2010), *Scholarly Activity in Higher Education delivered in Further Education*, London: Mixed Economy Group

Shulman, L. (1999) *The Scholarship of Teaching*, Change, 31(5)