



ASSOCIATION
OF COLLEGES

AoC Scholarship Project

Scholarly activity policies and practices
research project – Combined report

September 2016

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Introduction

This report is based on two phases of research. The first phase was based on an analysis of the documents submitted by the 12 first phase colleges (Appendix 1), supplemented by interviews (Appendix 2) with the college secondees and development managers. The second phase was based on a survey (Appendix 3) to the (then) 32 second phase colleges (Appendix 4) and supplemented by a reading of the colleges' policies where necessary. The second phase survey design took account of the results of the first phase research.

The aims of the first phase were to:

- Identify the key policies that 12 colleges are using to develop scholarship in their institution and amongst their staff.
- Identify the key tools, measures and activities, such as internal journals, staff conferences, master classes, industrial visits/shadowing that colleges have introduced or are planning to implement
- Summarise similar or parallel policy approaches

The aims of the second phase were to:

- extend the analysis and evaluation of the pilot colleges' policies and procedures related to scholarly activity via a short factual survey

Development Managers were asked to complete the survey for their own college and the others in their group. In order to keep workload as low as possible respondents were asked to answer the questions by copying and pasting from existing documents; they were not required to analyse or evaluate any of the data at this stage. The survey responses have been analysed and evaluated in this report and any comments which may appear critical are intended to help colleges further improve the documentation which supports and characterises scholarly activity and should not be taken as criticism of individual colleges.

It is worth noting that the colleges in both samples represent a continuum of practice and experience:

From a small college with

- A limited experience of delivering HE
- No specific policy
- A staff development policy, which is mainly FE focused,

- HE infrastructure & workshops, forums, committee
- Support for higher qualifications being intermittent

To a large college with

- Extensive experience of delivering HE
- A specific scholarship policy which is under review because it has reached the end of its life in this phase of development
- Specific staff roles to support HE in cognate disciplines
- Staff making grant proposals and bids
- Expectations of scholarly activity through staff reviews
- Sophisticated formal and multiple informal outlets for dissemination
- staff at different stages, for whom bespoke development activities are implemented
- a shift to discipline focused scholarly activity alongside generic HE staff development
- the largest amount of resource going on supporting staff qualifications

One implication of this continuum is that any guidance and advice should take account of this range of stages of development.

Scholarly Activity Policies

How many colleges had an explicit scholarship policy

In the first phase college group two colleges (Bradford and Hull) had explicit policies on scholarly activity while a third did not have a specific policy but embedded such support in its Teaching, Learning & Assessment policy. A fourth college had an explicit policy from their partner HEI which operated as a framework for their support for scholarly activity (Peterborough).

In the second phase group 8 had a scholarly activity policy (25%) and 28 (including the 8 with an explicit policy) (87%) had other policies which refer to scholarly activity.

Definitions of scholarly activity in the policies

This is a sophisticated policy which includes objectives, definition and priorities. UCP Strategic Plan mentions scholarship in relation to achieving Degree

Awarding Powers and has a specific objective to develop a scholarly and research community to support local stakeholders and partners.

Bradford's Scholarly Activity and Research Policy defines scholarly activity as

'The process of maintaining and developing the understanding and the application of academic and vocational subject knowledge and ensuring its contemporary academic and professional currency. Activities should be designed to have demonstrable impact on the student learning experience and the College academic and professional community, through research led and research informed learning, teaching and assessment. These activities should both engage with the knowledge creation process within subject disciplines and, through the application of research, contribute to the development of professional practice at local, national and international levels'

This definition is tightly formulated around combinations of attributes: academic and vocational knowledge; academic and professional currency; maintenance and development. The practical aspect is emphasised by the focus on 'demonstrable impact' and the centrality of the 'student experience'. Another part of the document states that the primary purpose of scholarly activity and research is to directly inform and enhance teaching. The definition implies a references to the work of Healey et al (2014) with the phrase 'research led and research informed' and to the work of Boyer (1990) through the phrase 'knowledge creation'. It demonstrates significant ambition with the intention that this should contribute at three levels.

At a practical level there is a sophisticated level of integration of the SAR policy with other activities and policies, including sabbaticals. The reference to organising symposia is further evidence of the permeation of a strong ethos of scholarly activity. However it would be worth enquiring about the evidence of their implementation and the level of attendance.

Hull also has an explicit Research and Scholarship Strategy. While this is a relatively sophisticated with definitions and aims, making use of Boyer's framework, it has no action plan, priorities or arrangements for monitoring (which may be in another document).

In the second phase group, many of the supplied definitions were not strictly speaking definitions. They were usually a list of activities which might be counted as scholarly activity (and nearly always ending with the proviso that "this is not an exhaustive list"). While this could be considered an 'extensive' definition it does not help discriminate between activities which can be considered as scholarly activity and those that cannot. In one case the proviso adds "and other activities that contribute to the development of an academic community may be included" (Northbrook) which is almost a definition and purpose rolled into one

but as an aside rather than as a central point. The same college identifies a further purpose in a statement in relation to resourcing: "staff to maintain and develop relevant pedagogic and subject expertise in their work. "

The amalgamated full list of activities is included as Appendix 5. It is worth making a few comments on some of the entries on these lists and on the definitions adopted.

It is not clear why all or any "activity which contributes to the enhancement of teaching and learning" (Northbrook) should be counted as scholarly activity since something like reorganising the timetable might enhance teaching and learning but could not be scholarly activity without more explicit reference to knowledge, discipline or pedagogy. It requires something in addition to undertaking an activity in order to make an activity scholarly. For example, if a timetable change was based on research then it is the research which is the scholarly activity not the change; making the change and then evaluating its impact could be a topic for scholarly activity but not the change itself. In one sense because the above phrase appears in a scholarly activity policy one can make a contextualised assumption about what is meant; but given that it does appear in a policy on scholarly activity, it ought to be more precise.

One college (Sparsholt) gives as the definition of scholarly activity a sentence from the Quality Assurance Agency's Code of Practice B3 and a statement of the key themes that define the college's commitment to quality assurance and improvement. It is not clear how this counts as a definition.

In a further example, one college's document (Peter Symonds) focuses on the purpose of scholarly activity as "associated with professional currency, the application of research and the creation and pursuit of new knowledge to enhance teaching & learning" which seems to offer a number of purposes and possible criteria by which to judge scholarly activity. The broad objectives of the protocol are identified as:

- "Ensuring an individual's currency of subject knowledge;
- Curriculum development through advancing knowledge in the subject area;
- Engaging in practice to advance knowledge;
- Relating to the changing requirements of professional practice.
- Demonstrating ability to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge in the teaching environment.
- Raising awareness amongst students of research, enabling them to challenge research and making them research active."

Identifying such purposes puts the list of possible activities into an appropriate context such that some of the items on this college's list raise questions about

their legitimacy to count as scholarly activity (e.g. Leading staff development events, Staff development events within college) but stated alongside these purposes their legitimacy as scholarly activity could be established.

Another college (South Devon) also identified the definition in terms of purpose ('Enable students and staff to professionally develop, aspire and Succeed ' (STET)) but this does not seem to be the kind of purpose which might distinguish scholarly activity from a range of other activities which are aimed at the same purpose such as Continuing Professional Development (see section c below).

Another college's (Petroc) scholarly activity policy defines scholarly activity "as intellectually updating, the application of research, the pursuit of new knowledge and informing teaching which will enrich the study of our students and morale of staff". It identifies six strategic objectives which cover further developing scholarly activity, further developing the expertise of staff, curriculum development, developing personal specialist knowledge, peer review and developing research links with employers. These are broken down into smaller objectives and set out in an action plan with milestones, dates and responsibilities. It is not clear how these smaller objectives and the action plan are used and from wider experience it would be better to have the objectives related to a time period and the action plan to be an appendix to the policy rather than embedded in it, but the manner in which the document is presented gives a strong impression of a managed direction.

One college (Sussex Downs) explicitly linked their scholarly activity policy to the college's strategic plan. Several other colleges made statements about scholarly activity in their strategic plans and these are analysed in section 3 below. This was mainly done through the expression of a purpose:

"Sussex Downs College aims to support scholarly activity that is congruent with the College's strategic objectives, enhances the quality and reputation of its educational programs, provides opportunities to partner with the communities served by the College and furthers the educational experiences of students."

In another college's (Yeovil) list a couple of examples stand out for examination as to why they should be considered as scholarly activity.

- Raising awareness of current HE policies, structures and issues: QAA, HEFCE
- Research to ascertain demand or employer needs to aid in the marketability of a Programme being considered for development as part of the college HE offer

It is not clear why they count as scholarly activity; they are clearly professional activities which are worth doing, things that CBHE staff should be supported to

do but the question is what makes them scholarly rather than professional activities. It is worth using the King & Widdowson (2010) definition used by another (West Nottinghamshire) college (below) as a touchstone to evaluate such examples.

This college's (West Nottinghamshire) scholarship policy made implicit use of Boyer's (1990) model with its definition of scholarship as possibly including "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". The college's 'Scholarship Crib Sheet' seemed a very interesting addendum to its policy. It explicitly quotes the King and Widdowson (2010, 3) definition which many other colleges could make more use of since it clarifies the purpose of such activities and includes dissemination which seems to be one clear differentiator of scholarly activity from Continuing Professional Development:

"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." (King and Widdowson, 2010, 3)

The crib sheet also includes a table of types of activity and examples which could be logged as scholarly activity (see extract in Appendix 6). While there are some concerns about some of the examples (e.g. those listed as action research or examples which ask the 'best' way to do something) it seems to be a useful way of expanding the discussion of scholarly activity into meaningful terms for staff.

Relationship of Scholarly Activity to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

In the first phase group, Bradford's policy aims to distinguish scholarly activity from CPD (which is what the King et al (2014) publication did) but it is not a very robust distinction: "Scholarly Activity can be distinguished from CPD when the activities undertaken have demonstrable impact on the student learning experience and/or the academic community of the College." It is not clear why CPD would or could not also have this type of impact.

In the second phase group, CPD was mentioned in six cases (Northbrook, Petroc, Sparsholt, Sussex Downs, South Devon, Yeovil). In the first case it is placed alongside scholarly activity as a source of maintaining "pedagogic and subject expertise in their work" and in the second case loose and implicit links are made to the need of staff to continually develop as part of their role. In the third case it

is seen as an additional avenue of development in relation to “relevant and industrially related CPD” and in the fourth case (Sussex Downs) it is mentioned in relation to resource allocation and entitlement. In the fifth case scholarly activity forms part of CPD with staff and has explicit links to development days. In the sixth case it was mentioned in the definition (Yeovil).

It is worth commenting that including CPD in a definition of scholarly activity raises the question as above in terms of the need to differentiate scholarly activity from CPD. In a scholarly activity policy it is considered important to clearly distinguish between scholarly activity and CPD so as to emphasise the scholarship that is the significant distinguishing characteristic

Underpinning philosophy

It is interesting to note that Bradford’s policy has an explicit underlying philosophy:

“The philosophy is that of 'accountable diversity'. The approach is based upon the dual concepts of trust and accountability. Trust means taking as a given that all staff are competent and professional; accountability means being transparently responsible for quality and standards (especially here in relation to SAR) and staff and systems being open to scrutiny. All staff, including teaching and management, then are charged with ensuring the continued organisational health of SAR.”

It operates as an underpinning touchstone and increases the sense that the college has a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between an ethos of enquiry and its more operational and functional purposes. Such relationships are alluded to in the following quote concerning tensions between corporate and individual purposes:

“Scholarly activity is directed to specific outcomes consistent with the College’s strategic objectives and priorities and, although self-managed in principle, is agreed on an annual basis as part of the developmental review and appraisal process”

The question of an underlying philosophy was raised in the second phase survey Bradford had an explicit philosophy and this seemed to provide a central strand from which the more administrative and procedural aspects of the policy were hung.

Examples of responses to this question in the second phase group included

- the idea of a growing HE culture and scholarly ethos of the college (Northbrook)

- a set of beliefs about the value of scholarly activity in terms of its contribution to staff confidence, competence and development, informing and guiding the development of curricula and taught programmes, and benefits to students and their ability to be scholarly (Peter Symonds)
- follows philosophy set out by 2009 HEFCE Publication 'Supporting Higher Education in Further Education' (Petroc)
- Links to validating institution policy which specifically mentions Boyer's work and development within the four scholarships (South Devon)
- staff demonstrating contemporary and current teaching, learning and assessment practices and a commitment to a learning environment in which scholarly activity and reflective practice are firmly embedded for students' benefit (Sparsholt)
- the value of research and scholarly activity in supporting academic excellence (Sussex Downs)
- QAA Quality Code: B3 Learning and Teaching (West Nottinghamshire)
- seen as "essential to the provision of high quality HE programmes which ensure the students experience current and relevant teaching and learning which is also valuable within the work environment" (Yeovil)

None of these responses seem appropriate as an answer to the question. While Chapter B3 may be appropriate as a guide to the purpose, scope and emphasis to place on scholarly activity, it seems inappropriate to classify it as a philosophy or underlying framework. It was not clear which aspects of the publication 'Supporting Higher Education in Further Education' provided a philosophy.

It would be valuable for colleges to consider whether introducing a philosophy would benefit the standing, status and operation of a scholarly activity and an extract from the report on the first phase colleges is included in Appendix 4 for such consideration.

Methods of dissemination

Colleges in the first phase adopted the following practices in disseminating the results of staff's scholarly activity:

- bulletin, college & Faculty
- Conferences
- Research hub
- Research lunches

- Student research ambassadors
- Symposia, staff and students

From the interviews it was made clear that although dissemination via the Bulletin is strong the reality is that the entries are sporadic and atomised across a few HE staff. The development of informal approaches to dissemination through symposia was a current priority in one college although they were not as well attended as possible. A further example of informal dissemination was via teaching & learning coaches and managers

Blackpool publishes a review of the results of scholarly activity (Scholarly Review). It is a relatively sophisticated document which acknowledges the debates about the meaning and scope of the term scholarly activity and adopts an hierarchical model of scholarship which is summarised in a brief definition of scholarly activity which focuses on its purpose:

“Scholarship is the driving force that influences and informs the development of curriculum which is not only about what we teach and who we teach, but also how we teach.”

The college has an intranet (Scholarnet) which is used to record and disseminate results. All the articles are structured and presented as they would be in an educational journal which demonstrates attention to academic conventions. The college also produces a thorough and sophisticated handbook on their Scholarship and Research Development Scheme which appears to apply to all levels of teaching not just HE levels.

Bradford also publishes a Research Bulletin. There is a clear aim to direct such activity through the articulation of four themes for research (Theme 1 – Pedagogy; Theme 2 – Corporate Social Responsibility; Theme 3 – Other, relating to teaching and learning; Theme 4 – Academic subject related, specific to your area of expertise/interest). However these themes are so broad that most proposals could fall under at least one theme. In September 2013 Bradford College launched B-Spark its online digital repository for research and scholarly activity. B-Spark (Bradford Scholarly Publications and Research Knowledge) is a repository for digital content including research reports and papers produced by members of Bradford College. It has also been the venue for an international conference (13th International Conference on Social Responsibility in 2014) which can be considered as evidence of success in relation to its overall policy. A further article on research ethics emphasises its strong corporate approach.

Hull also publishes a Research Bulletin which appears to come from the Faculty of Business and Science. It is not clear whether this publication covers only one Faculty or is published by that Faculty on behalf of the whole college. The

Introduction recognises current significance of scholarly activity and mentions the AoC project. The articles are relatively short and presented more informally than academic articles.

Dissemination played some part in all the policies of the second phase colleges. Some expressed this in quite open terms that “staff may be required to present outcomes” (Northbrook) or as an invitation “to present papers at half termly scholarly activity events at the annual scholarly activity conference and after events” (Petroc) or “encouraged to share professional practice with peers and students through groups such as the Research and Standards group, through conference days, publication etc. (South Devon) and professional development activities (Sparsholt). For others it was through course report procedures (Sussex Downs) and another via qualitative measures (unspecified) and “external examiner reports which comment on the relevance and currency of subject areas, annual surveys, focus groups with students” (Peter Symonds). Another college (West Nottinghamshire) identified a range of methods: 1. through course teams 2. through HE Annual Planning Day 3. through university partner Collaborative Conference 4. through other external conferences.

The most precise account (Yeovil) differentiated the requirement according to how much time had been allocated to scholarly activity:

- for 5 days the requirement is a 500 word statement which evaluates their activities
- for up to 10 days the requirement is to produce a research paper, conference paper or presentation which would be expected at the annual Convergence HE research conference

The college had also set up ‘Convergence, the Journal of Research in Higher and Further Education’ for which the Director of HE is editor in chief and in which staff can submit the results of their scholarly activity (http://www.ucy.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/6693_Yeovil_UCY_research_Journal_August_AW_Online.pdf). This appears to be a welcome initiative which other colleges could take advantage of.

Other details of the second phase colleges’ scholarly activity policies

The following sections apply only to the second phase colleges.

- i. Explicit support provided for scholarly activity (e.g. reduced teaching load, financial support)**

The amount and type of support varies across the eight institutions. It ranges across the following examples:

- i. allocating the four weeks of the college's academic year that is longer than the HE academic year to scholarly activity (Northbrook)
- ii. "financial contribution" from the staff development budget; staff timetables constructed to free up time and that staff have 17 days per year for self-directed study as well as staff development days (Petroc)
- iii. Financial Support, Timetabling, Hours, General Resources (South Devon)
- iv. "1. Time out of college during non-teaching weeks for academic or vocational developments; 2. conference attendance where papers are accepted ; 3. subscription to relevant academic/professional bodies or journals" (West Nottinghamshire)
- v. Allocation of a specific number of days for HE staff depending on the level of the programme; remission is given for the role of programme leader and possibly for curriculum/programme development (Yeovil)

Support was not mentioned in the documents submitted by two colleges (Peter Symonds, Sparsholt) and the other college (Sussex Downs) has no explicit support but allows time off teaching to be allocated and mentions that resources are discussed annually.

In (iv) it is not clear whether (1) refers to remission from teaching and we assume that (2) includes the costs of attendance. (3) can be considered as more forward thinking in that most college staff would gain access to academic journals through arrangements with their validating institution; however some validating institutions may not subscribe to the journals from professional bodies which may be more relevant to programmes run in CBHE.

In (v) while it is admirable that the college allocates resources to support the role of programme leader and possibly for curriculum/programme development, it is not clear, given the comments above why this counts as scholarly activity.

- ii. **How the focus for scholarly activity is determined (centrally, by individuals or teaching teams/departments)**

Appraisal was a significant method of determining the focus for scholarly activity in two (Northbrook, South Devon) colleges with an explicit scholarly activity policy; it was also significant in colleges without an explicit policy (see section 4. below).

In another college (Peter Symonds) the focus for scholarly activity was self-managed as part of departmental review and appraisal and aligned with college strategic objectives. Reference to the strategic plan that “outlines the strategic initiatives that support scholarly activity” was the main reference to this issue in another college (Sussex Downs) where applications are reviewed by the line manager and HE Manager; another college (Yeovil) had a similar application process. In another college (Sparsholt), it is unclear how the priorities are determined but “implementation and monitoring are seen as the responsibility of all staff and managers lead by the Higher Education Development and Quality Manager and supported by Learning Managers and Higher Education Senior Practitioners.”

At another college (West Nottinghamshire), the focus on scholarly activity is framed centrally, with individuals and teaching teams/departments determining the specific content. And the final college (Petroc) appeared to have the most open approach - self-directed study to pursue areas of academic interest.

iii. Whether the policy is directed solely towards HE or whether it includes FE

All the policies were directed solely towards HE.

iv. Specific resources allocated to supporting scholarly activity

a. how much resource is allocated and how that figure is determined

No specific resource was available for 2 colleges (Peter Symonds, Sussex Downs). In one case (Petroc) there was an annual scholarly activity prize awarded by the college and its validating institution (Plymouth University) alongside £500 per person per annum.

One college (Northbrook) currently allocates £10,000 per annum, but there was no information on how it is determined. Another college (Sparsholt) had a central ‘pot’ that is available to both HE and FE staff. While resource is limited at another college (West Nottinghamshire) conference attendance is funded through the college's People

Development budget; subscriptions are through the central HE budget and no applications which have met the criteria set out in the policy have been refused. Another college allocated a base of 5 days remission, increased to 10 for specific research activity (Yeovil).

b. how that resource distributed (e.g. through a bidding process, who is on the decision making panel)

Several colleges (Northbrook, Petroc, Yeovil) had panels with such roles as Research and Scholarly Activity Co-ordinator, Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Head/Director of HE, Head of Human Resources and Head of Department, on them. In one case (Northbrook) the panel determine what the College may be able to fund and decides whether the area of research or scholarly activity is appropriate.

In one case (Sparsholt) application were made via on-line system with approval by Head of HE Faculty and in another (Sussex Downs) resources are decided by the HE management group in line with the college Professional Development Policy for FE teaching staff

Which college body the policy gain its authority from

There was some confusion in answering this question. Several respondents identified the Principal or the Governing Body as the authority and another identified its validating institution and HEFCE. In strict legal terms these answers have some validity as that it where the internal authority to act in such corporations stems from. However the type of answer we were looking for related to the committee which had delegated authority for the policy and we should have been more explicit in the writing of this question. So the only answers we got which fitted our intentions were: HE Academic Standards Committee, Higher Education Management and Strategy Group (HEMSG); Senior Management Team (SMT); Learner Experience Group (LEG).

Any other significant features of the policy

Other features of the policy which respondents wanted to emphasise included:

- The review their scholarly activities with their line manager on a periodic basis and complete an annual review of their scholarly exercise/s as part of the appraisal system (Northbrook)
- Links to employers - Proactively develop research links with employers as part of a wider employer engagement agenda and as an

underpinning strategy to the development of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (Petroc)

- Higher Education teaching staff will be expected to have (or be working towards) appropriate teaching and learning qualifications in accordance with the UK Professional Standards Framework; normally this will be through the University of Portsmouth APEX programme, leading to the appropriate fellowship award (Sparsholt)
- Policy documents confirm that impact on teaching and learning is integral to scholarship as recognised by the college (West Nottinghamshire)
- Convergence, Journal of Research in Higher and Further Education (Yeovil)

Colleges without explicit policies on scholarship and/or scholarly activity – other policies used to support scholarly activity

Colleges which did not have a specific policy on scholarship used the following other policies to support scholarly activity:

- Teaching, Learning & Assessment
- Staff Development, CPD
- Staff Review
- Teaching Observation
- Research & Ethics Committee

Without a specific policy the support for scholarly activity was more vulnerable to intermittent support depending on college priorities. Nevertheless it was also the case that in one large and experienced northern college (Bradford) the resources for the support for scholarly were undermined by the current round of redundancies. A common view of the limitations of these other policies was that they tended to be focused on FE rather than HE, HE issues needed to be squeezed into such policies and any decision making about allocation of resources and the evaluation criteria for particular projects were based on an FE ethos of specific and measurable outcomes related to current FE priorities. Comments on particular colleges below illustrate how aspects of scholarly activity are mentioned explicitly in these other documents.

The existence of separate HE procedures for teaching observation alongside an HE infrastructure of committees and reporting lines was taken as a significant sign that an HE ethos either existed or was emerging.

An overview for the East Midlands (CDL) group summarises the context (Gail Hall). It references several documents which do not appear to have been included in the Dropbox (Central: How can scholarship inform curriculum design and development?; Student engagement in scholarship and enquiry. Leicester: How can scholarship inform new programme design?) and summarises some of the colleges' intentions as a result of the AoC project. However the conclusion of the overview is:

'There is currently no Scholarship Strategy at any of the PRRD colleges. Derby College HE strategy makes reference to 'developing an ethos of inquiry' and to students 'co-constructing' their learning. The HE strategies at Central and Leicester are currently being updated but will feature references to scholarship'

Central College has an Ethical Approval document which assumes scholarship in the application process and in an extremely thorough coverage of types of research and issues that may arise it includes a section on "Research activities can either be scholarly and/or commercial research" (9.4). In its HE Strategy it has one strategic objective which relates to scholarly activity:

"Continuing to support HE staff in their personal development, thus encouraging a culture of scholarly activity and research (both subject-specific and pedagogical) which is seen as essential for sustainable HE.

From 2011/12, all HE tutors have 1 hour abatement for every 10 taught to support scholarly activity".

Its Training and Development Policy supports scholarly activity which it defines and exemplifies as:

"engaging with and in those activities that enable reflective pedagogic evaluation and development and research, e.g.

- creative work that is peer reviewed and publicly disseminated e.g. art exhibitions, written articles for books/magazines/journals
- research related to subject area - to further knowledge and consequently learner experience"

However this does not specify whether these activities are solely related to HE or to both HE and FE which could be seen in both a positive and negative light. The college makes some funding available for these activities. Otherwise the other documents submitted do not refer explicitly to scholarly activity.

Derby's HE Strategy makes no explicit mention of scholarly activity but does have an operational objective to ensure staff and students are able to undertake and share research; several performance indicators cover research and scholarly activity (e.g. All staff involved in HE to have or be working towards HEA Fellowship; Run two annual research events for staff and students; Allow each FT course 100 hours per year to develop scholarly activity). There is also a slightly strange paragraph under the heading of "An ethos of enquiry" which is actually about "develop(ing) social prosperity, and economic growth". It is not clear how these two elements are intended to be related and it gives a strong instrumental feel to the statement. The CPD record mentions research but not scholarly activity and it covers some appropriate activities which could be seen as contributing to scholarly activity. The HE Teaching & Learning Strategy mentions scholarship in quoting QAA Indicators about teaching & learning and makes a couple of statements which lend support to scholarly activity but lack any sense of a coherent link with an overall approach (e.g. "The College works with other partner Colleges to develop scholarly activity and professional development"; "The Universities we work with offer CPD, peer observations and the chance for us to engage in the latest thinking about HE teaching.").

Leicester has an HE Research Handbook which specifies supported topics for research with some possibility of other areas being supported; it also outlines the application process but there is no sense of a link to an overall approach. Its Appraisal Policy makes no mention and its Observation Policy seems more related to OfSTED criteria although it does state that the criteria for grading have been derived in part from Institutional Review. However this is not evident from the Appendix listing the criteria.

There were no relevant documents from College of North West London and the only relevant policy (Staff Development) from North West Kent College makes no mention of scholarly activity. East Kent's HE Strategy has one relevant statement:

"Staff engagement in forms of scholarship as well as professional recognition by the Higher Education Academy directly enhances student achievement and onward progression to university and/or employment"

But it offers no evidence for such a statement which assumes a more instrumental approach to scholarly activity. There are two relevant objectives:

"SG3 S6 Obj2: To apply innovative approaches to learning and teaching informed by scholarship" and this continues the instrumental purpose as it is intended "To increase the number of students progressing to university or into full -time employment"

“SG4. S6. Obj2: “To create opportunities for active engagement in scholarly activity” with the intended outcome being “For each member of each programme team to be contributing individually or collectively to the production of sector/subject-specific ‘scholarly outputs’ that in some way inform learning, teaching and assessment” which seems a broader intention but the overall document lacks any underlying definition or philosophy.

Its ‘Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2015-2019’ includes the goal: “Innovative and practical approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, informed by scholarship and industry practice will be adopted by teachers” but contains no further supporting statements.

In their self-evaluation of their policies East Kent identify that

- scholarship is not directly mentioned but the supporting ideas of working with industry, developing curriculum, supporting staff development to improve the student experience, outcomes and therefore their aspirations are evident
- there is a framework that is already in place that will support staff to, for example, work in the field, present at conferences, which acknowledges that happy staff are good staff which will attract further good staff to the institution
- the Business Plan Centre for Higher Education contains several statements about developing scholarly activity:
 - To lead an ‘enhancement agenda’ as an integral and developmental part of Quality Assurance in curriculum design, management and delivery of Higher Education informed by student evaluation, the sharing of best practice, professional development of academic staff, and academic research/scholarly activity relating to higher vocational education
 - Engage programme teams in a range of scholarly activity to inform teaching and learning HE lecturers increasingly engages in a range of scholarly activity as part of their continuous professional development [which will then] inform teaching and learning

It is difficult to judge these statements as the first does not really address the nature of scholarly activity, the second gives no evidence for the existence of the framework and there are no supporting documents about the Centre for Higher Education.

Grantham submitted a Staff Development Policy which makes no mention of scholarly activity

South and City Birmingham makes no mention of scholarly activity in its Staff Development policy although it does have detailed objectives and action plan which mentions updating of qualifications for staff and promoting HEA Fellowship and the need for professional recognition for HE staff and development of a link with Birmingham City University for an MA.

For the second phase college there were 28 responses in relation to the question as to whether other college policies mentioned scholarly activity. The number of policies mentioning scholarly activity is as follows:

0 policy	1 policy	2 policies	3 policies	4 policies
4	28	18	12	5

28 colleges had at least one other policy in which mention was made of scholarly activity; 18 colleges had 2 policies mentioning scholarly activity; 12 colleges had three and 5 had 4 policies. 4 colleges had no policies which mentioned scholarly activity.

The generic names for these types of policies are:

- HE Academic Handbook for Staff
- HE Peer Review Guidelines
- Higher Education Development Plan or Strategy
- Observation of Teaching and Learning
- Policy on Lifelong Learning
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Reports on a programme area or to Board of Studies
- Research Internship Scheme
- Staff Development Policies
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Towards a strategy for scholarship

Analysis of statements supporting scholarly activity

In this section there is a selection of statements from the policies mentioning scholarly activity to give a flavour of the way it is integrated into other aspects of college activity.

- Underpinning HE learning environments

- Encouraging communities of practice, particularly including students
- Adopt a scholarly approach to learning
- Part of duties of lecturing staff supported by a paper on remission stating the number of hours staff are expected to be able to devote to scholarly activity
- Draft self-evaluation document “has a scholarship output table where scholarship is currently being captured by area heads via a scholarship template”

Several policies require staff to record what scholarly activity has been undertaken during the relevant reporting period. Several documents require staff to approach the development of their practice in that particular area (e.g. pedagogy, assessment, quality assurance) “drawing on scholarship, research and professional activity.”

A further item worthy of mention is a protocol from a college’s (Great Yarmouth) validating institution (University College Suffolk) which contains expectations concerning scholarly activity which illustrates a continuum of activities “ranging from research in its purest sense to activity that supports the pedagogic effectiveness of academic staff.” It also states that “It is distinct from routine CPD activity that is not directly related to teaching, for example covering health and safety or IT”. The continuum runs from Pedagogical effectiveness (non-discipline-specific) through Discipline-specific scholarly activity (professional updating) and Discipline Specific Scholarly Activity (academic) to Research. Minimum expectations for staff teaching at Foundation Degree, Honours Degree and Postgraduate programmes are set out against these four categories. Targets are set and monitored with an emphasis on raising aspirations through staff appraisal at departmental level. It would be interesting to know why the college does not use this document. While the college does not use this document it does demonstrate that some validating institutions have useful documentation which colleges could make more use of.

It is also interesting to note that one college (Macclesfield) which stated it did not have an explicit scholarly activity policy did have a specific item in its staff development protocol which not only mentioned scholarly activity (“To encourage all academic staff to undertake scholarly activity to support learning and teaching and enhancement of their subject.”), which was aimed at both HE and FE staff but also had a specific Appendix on scholarly activity which was aimed only at HE staff. Its stated purposes appear quite well directed:

1. "consolidate, sustain and further improve higher education provision
2. further develop the range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as appropriate offering maximum internal and external progression opportunities to locally and nationally identified priority groups
3. add value to local and regional provision by building on existing partnerships, validating higher education institutions and consortium partners, to ensure that existing and new provision is flexible, responsive, employer-focused and informed by the workplace, to best suit the needs of local and regional learners and employers
4. provide a high quality, differentiated higher education experience appropriate for the traditional and non-traditional learners
5. provide support for continuing professional development and the acquisition of subject-specific higher qualifications to inform pedagogical development."

These purposes are supported by a list of eligible activity and a short list of guidelines.

Other processes used to support scholarly activity

Other processes which interviewees cited as supporting scholarly activity included:

- Action research kit
- Doctoral workshops
- HE deliberative structures (building an HE community)
- HE induction & workshops
- HE Senior Tutors as a key fulcrum
- HEI tutor training
- Higher qualifications
- Industry Training days
- SEDA on line course
- Scholarship of Teaching & Learning:
<http://www.open.edu/openlearnworks/course/view.php?id=2027>
- Staff qualifications
- Training needs analysis

- Workload model

Some of these examples were used by colleges with a policy and others by those without a policy. For example, an experienced large college had set up doctoral workshops to support staff across the college who were undertaking doctoral study. Smaller less experienced colleges took advantage of tutor training by their validating HEI or invested in Industry Training days.

It is worth noting that the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) was supported explicitly at one large experienced college which used the Open University as one of its validating HEIs. This approach drew on the FE teachers' existing expertise in teaching and learning and drew it into a more theoretically informed paradigm which might be worth promoting across the project colleges. A smaller college had set up a teaching and learning scholarship group but it was not clear the extent to which this was supported by the rationale of SoTL.

One large experienced college used a specific role in the HE structure to support scholarly activity and this role was seen as a key fulcrum for developing such activities. A smaller college had begun to use a training needs analysis as one way of establishing the scope of needs for scholarly activity. The results will be drawn together to inform and action plan and this was seen as one way of providing a direction for scholarly activity alongside an institutional direction.

It was also clear from the interviews that there were substantial differences between subject areas in their relationship to scholarly activity. For example, art & design staff saw their production of artefacts and exhibitions as an automatic and integral part of their professional practice. This led to the idea that 'practice as research' which is a developing paradigm in art, design & media could be explored further as a basis for scholarly activity in other discipline areas.

In several colleges there was a reluctance to mention scholarly activity to staff as it was sometimes perceived as something distant from their own context. However when staff were asked about what they did to keep up-to-date in their practice for the HE work they produced a range of answers which have informed the above list. A recognised weakness of this approach is that it does not necessarily address the full range of activities which could be considered under Boyer's model (1990).

Similarities, differences, tensions

This section analyses a range of key difficulties which arose colleges from the interviews at all the first phase. They included:

- The difficulty of maintaining resources to support scholarly activity in times of resource constraint

- The logistical difficulties of getting together staff who taught HE from across the college either for specific HE events or within cross college staff development days
- These logistical difficulties were increased where a college used a significant number of part-time staff on their HE courses
- The extent to which the college provided support for higher qualifications which were often seen as a necessity for delivery HE courses

Overarching issues concerned:

- Whether to have an explicit scholarly activity policy or whether to embed it in other policies. It became apparent that it would, be preferable to do both: to have an explicit policy and to embed support for scholarly activity in as many other policies as it related to.
- The extent to which the focus for research & scholarly activity should be directed centrally or be determined by the motivations and interests of staff. The central determination of topics tended to come from colleges' strategic and HE development plans. The advantage of this approach was that it was focused on perceived institutional development needs and its weakness was that those needs might not chime with staff's perceived development needs. An alternative or additional source of priorities came from one college using a needs analysis audit with HE staff.
- A consistent theme was the contrast between an FE and an HE ethos; in one college HE provision had gained the trust of college SMT through successful external review and this added weight to their arguments to develop the HE ethos further
- A question which underpinned a number of issues was the perceived value of scholarly activity to higher vocational programmes. The assumption was whether employers would or did value the critical perspectives that might emerge from developing both staff's and students' scholarly approach. One answer to this question was based on the need to bring innovation and scholarly activity closer together.
- Several interviewees extolled the value of a consortium for a variety of reasons: it mitigated the isolation of small numbers of staff in individual colleges even though it was logistically difficult to arrange meetings, it

provided a broader approach to developing a community of practice, it enabled discussions which were not focused on one college but the practice of teaching HE in FE.

- In at least one consortium where there was no additional resource for attending meetings it was clear that staff motivation and interest drove their attendance and it is worth finding ways to acknowledge the value of this
- Several interviews alluded to tensions between academic and applied areas in considering what counted as scholarly activity; each area had slightly different reference points for their criteria between generic and discipline. There were similar tensions between those who wanted to focus on pedagogical scholarly activity and those who wanted to develop further discipline based scholarly activity
- Some of the more mature accounts of scholarly activity were underpinned by references to a particular philosophy(e.g. accountable diversity) or an attention to the kinds of attributes the policy was aiming to develop such as trust, inquisitiveness, risk, innovation

Conclusion and Recommendations

A key theme running through the analysis of responses by the first phase colleges has been the extent to which the overall approach towards CBHE is aspirational or instrumental, the extent to which it is expansive or restricted. This tension is the result of many different strands and permeates the ethos with which CBHE is approached.

Several of the first phase colleges made comparisons between HNDs and Foundation Degrees validated by an HEI. It seemed that greater emphasis was placed on the role of scholarly activity where qualifications were validated by an HEI. This either appeared as an explicit aspect where the HEI had its own scholarly activity policy or as a background expectation which was supported through some collaborative activity. This is an area which could be explored further in the second project.

It is clear from the first phase interviews that the project is already having an impact on colleges' approach to supporting scholarly activity. Its influence has been felt on the intellectual capacity to articulate a stronger rationale for scholarly activity as well as staff capacity in terms of considering the range of

activities that relate to this rationale based on sharing of practices across the project.

The recommendations which emerge from the first phase research include:

- Make better use of Boyer's model to articulate the scope and purposes of different kinds of scholarship
- Focus on the purposes of scholarly activity, particularly for vocational HE
- Explore 'Practice as research' as a model for dissemination of scholarly activity
- Aim to have an underlying philosophy to guide the more practical aspects of a scholarly activity policy

Recommendations which arise from the second phase survey include:

- colleges would benefit from adopting an explicit policy on scholarly activity alongside the references to such activity in other policies. One rationale for this is so as to maintain scholarly activity as a separate domain as well as a continuing dimension of a college's HE provision. We recognise that there may be particular circumstances in which college managers decide that such a policy does not aid the HE endeavour but in general we would encourage such a move not least because without a specific policy the support for scholarly activity could be more vulnerable to intermittent support depending on other college priorities.
- colleges improve the definition and purposes of scholarly activity in their policies so as to provide a set of criteria by which to judge whether an activity is considered scholarly activity or not. We recognise that there may be specific reasons why college HE managers may not want to adopt a more circumscribed definition and purpose because that would restrict their beneficial use of the ambiguity inherent in adopting an extensive definition. But in principle we would encourage college HE managers to adopt a more specific definition and purpose of scholarly activity.
- colleges distinguish scholarly activity from Continuing Professional Development in the ways mentioned in the body of the report. While some colleges might find benefit in maintaining ambiguities by not distinguishing these related activities it can be argued that this does not benefit the enhancement of a distinctive HE ethos.

- it would be valuable for colleges to consider whether introducing a philosophy would benefit the standing, status and operation of a scholarly activity.
- It would be valuable for colleges to consider developing further their means of disseminating scholarly activity. A welcome initiative which other colleges could take advantage of is Yeovil College's journal 'Convergence, the Journal of Research in Higher and Further Education' for which the Director of HE is editor in chief and in which staff can submit the results of their scholarly activity (http://www.ucy.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/6693_Yeovil_UCY_research_Journal_August_AW_Online.pdf). Other examples of means of dissemination can be found in the report on the first phase colleges.

Reflecting on the design of the survey now it is significant that we did not ask any questions about whether and how scholarly activity is monitored and evaluated. This would have helped flesh out the extent to which scholarly activity is subject to the full cycle of an initiative.

References

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- King M., Davis J., Flint C. and Widdowson J., (2014), *Exploring scholarship and scholarly activity in college-based Higher Education, A report by the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges*, London, Mixed Economy Group
- King M. & Widdowson J. (2010), *Scholarly Activity in Higher Education delivered in Further Education*, London: Mixed Economy Group

Appendix 1

List of first phase colleges in their clusters

East Kent College

- College of North West London
- North West Kent College

Leicester College

- Central College Nottingham
- Derby College

Hull College

- Blackpool and the Fylde College
- Bradford College

Peterborough College

- Grantham College
- South and City Birmingham College

Appendix 2

Interview schedule

- a. If you have got a policy,
 - i. What do you think are its strengths and weaknesses as a policy
 - ii. Who was involved in writing it, what factors influenced its construction, what debates were there about it, who supported it and who argued against it?
 - iii. how well does it operate, who is involved in making it work
 - iv. what are the issues with its operation, what support and barriers to its operation are there
 - v. what are your future plans for developing the policy and its implementation
- b. if you have a means of dissemination for scholarship
 - i. what are its strengths and weaknesses
 - ii. how were these means developed, who provided the resources,
 - iii. how well does it operate
 - iv. what sorts of gatekeeping methods are there, do/have you ever rejected or heavily edited a submission
 - v. what are your plans for developing dissemination of scholarly activity
- c. if you do not have a policy
 - i. why do you not have a policy
 - ii. are you planning to have a policy
 - iii. have you defined scholarly activity, are staff given any time given to undertake it
 - iv. in what ways do your other policies or practices support and disseminate scholarship in your institution

Appendix 3

Survey of Second Phase Colleges

Rationale

In the first phase of the project, we carried out an analysis and evaluation of the policies and procedures related to scholarly activity in the original pilot colleges. In preparation for extending that analysis and evaluation to the colleges in the second phase, we have designed a short factual survey about the policies for supporting scholarly activity.

Action

We want you to complete this survey in the first instance for your college and then repeat it at a later stage for your partner colleges. The date for the return of the survey on your college is below. We will set another date for the return of the data on your partner colleges in due course. We will follow up this factual survey with further qualitative methods in due course.

Responses

To be clear: we are not asking you to analyse or evaluate any of the data at this stage. Our intention is that you should be able to answer these questions by copying and pasting from existing documents. Please use the text boxes for your responses

Timescale

Please complete and return the survey on your college to Jonathan Simmons (jonathan.simmons@blueyonder.co.uk) by 15/04/16.

If anything in this survey is not clear then please contact me either by email as above or on 07580356243

Thanks, Jonathan Simmons
Consultant Researcher for the Project

The Survey

College name:

1. Does the college have an explicit policy on scholarly activity?

Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
No:	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, answer the following questions (2 – 11), if no proceed to question 12:

2. Provide the definition of scholarly activity used in the policy

3. What explicit support does the policy provide for scholarly activity (e.g. reduced teaching load, financial support)?

4. Is the focus for scholarly activity determined centrally or is it determined by individuals or teaching teams/departments?

5. Is the policy directed solely towards HE or does it include FE?

6. Are any specific resources allocated to supporting scholarly activity?

Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
No:	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please quote

- a. how much resource is allocated and how that figure is determined

- b. how is that resource distributed, e.g. through a bidding process, who is on the decision making panel?

7. Does the policy mention Continuing Professional Development?

Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
No:	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, in what way?

8. Does the policy have an underlying philosophy or framework underpinning it?

Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
No:	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please quote it

9. Is scholarly activity disseminated formally and/or informally within or outside the college in any way?

Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
No:	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, quote from the policy how this is done.

10. From which college body does the policy gain its authority?

11. Are there any other features of the policy which you want to draw attention to?

Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
No:	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so, please quote from the relevant section of the policy

12. List the **policies which explicitly mention scholarly activity** (e.g. Teaching, Learning & Assessment, Staff Development, CPD, Staff Review, Teaching Observation) and answer the questions in the table below

Policy Name	Please quote the context in which scholarly activity is mentioned	Is the policy directed solely towards HE or does it include FE?

Appendix 4 - List of second phase colleges in their clusters

Doncaster College

- North Nottingham College (joined after the survey)
- Rotherham College

East Surrey College

- Guildford College
- Peter Symonds College

Hereford College of Arts

- Gloucestershire College
- South Gloucestershire & Stroud College

Macclesfield College

- Mid Cheshire College
- South Cheshire College
- Warrington Collegiate

Myerscough College

- Bishop Burton College
- Sparsholt College

New College Durham

- Darlington College
- Hartlepool College of Further Education

New College Nottingham

- Highbury College
- The Sheffield College

North Lindsey College

- Great Yarmouth College
- Yeovil College

Northbrook College

- City College Brighton
- Sussex Downs College

Petroc

- City College Plymouth
- South Devon College

West Nottingham College

- Birmingham Metropolitan College
- Walsall College (joined after the survey)

Appendix 5

List of activities counting as scholarly activity included:

- Artistic creativity; exhibition and performance
- Consultancy to industry and other agencies
- Continuing employment within professional sector
- Curriculum development that involves research
- Curriculum development, particularly Foundation Degrees, with HEI's
- Enhancement of teaching and learning
- External conferences and workshops linked to other items on the list
- Field and library research
- Further study, either for higher level qualification or to extend the range of existing knowledge and skill in order to enhance teaching and learning
- Industrial Secondment/professional updating or work shadowing
- Involvement with SSCs or PSBs
- Keeping up-to-date with your subject at HE level
- Liaison with other HE staff from HEI's to develop knowledge
- Peer review
- Personal Development – action, research and reading
- Practitioner/applied/disciplinary/pedagogic research and publication
- Raising awareness of current HE policies, structures and issues: QAA, HEFCE
- Representing the College at academic or industrial conferences whilst presenting research findings
- Research to ascertain demand or employer needs to aid in the marketability of a Programme being considered for development as part of the college HE offer

- Research in university/college libraries for new courses/modules or to update existing module content as required
- Routine subject updating to ensure that knowledge is current
- Staff development events within college
- Testing out new ideas in the work place

Appendix 6

Extract from West Nottinghamshire Scholarship Crib Sheet

<i>Activity Type</i>	<i>Example of Activity</i>
Curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ designing/reviewing HE courses and/or modules
Conference/seminar attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ University of Derby TLA Conference ➤ HE in FE or pedagogic conference/seminar ➤ subject conference/seminar
Conference participation - delivering a presentation or workshop at a conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ University of Derby TLA Conference ➤ HE in FE or pedagogic conference/seminar ➤ Subject conference/seminar
Consultancy and professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ practising professional that relates to area of teaching (e.g. musician, artist, accountant, website designer) ➤ film or music production ➤ participation in professional body meeting (e.g. Institute of Civil Engineers, CIM, Tourism Society)
Exhibition of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ exhibit of art at gallery or show.
Subject updating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ reading academic journals, professional publications ➤ peer review of journal article ➤ University of Derby subject and/or research clusters
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ training provided by awarding body on curriculum developments or quality methods ➤ training by equipment/product supplier

	<p>on use of new/updated equipment/product</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ College-based training on pedagogic developments or sharing of good practice.
Research - investigation and reporting of specified question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ what is the best way to peer review HE lessons?
Action research - using work/practice to investigate and report a specified question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ can the provision of generic feedback improve students' future assignment work? ➤ is multiple choice questioning a valid HE assessment method?
Industry/Employer liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ gaining knowledge (and specific examples) of latest industry advances, techniques or methods through industry visits, etc. ➤ industry secondment ➤ recorded discussion with employer around specific topic
Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ publishing research findings in a peer-reviewed journal or appropriate internet site ➤ authoring a book, chapter or other publication
Personal and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ working towards teaching qualifications or higher level qualifications ➤ management training
External verification/examining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ being an external examiner for other HE provider