

## Pedagogic research case study

Title	<b>The role of an academic development centre in Scholarship of teaching and Learning based institutional decision making.</b>
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Institution	University of Hull
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Case study summary	
<p>We reflected upon the role of our academic development centre, The Teaching Excellence Academy, in scholarship of teaching and learning /pedagogic research informed decision making at the University level. This reflection facilitated the articulation of a framework supporting a culture of scholarship-based practice at the university. We identify six key domains within the framework that we consider essential to the development of a culture of scholarship of teaching and learning /pedagogic research informed decision making: <i>drivers</i> of a scholarship-based approach; activities to <i>develop</i> scholarship capacity; <i>enacted</i> scholarship-based activities and decision making; <i>evaluation</i> of impact; <i>dissemination</i> of success; and <i>celebration</i> of our scholars.</p>	
Key outcomes	
<p>With senior leadership support, and working in partnership with the wider university community our academic development centre plays a crucial role in the development and maintenance of a culture of scholarship of teaching and learning/pedagogic research informed decision making. We have developed a framework identifying the key domains underpinning this success.</p>	
Case study	

The QAA funded Collaborative Enhancement Project *Creating an environment to foster pedagogic research informed decision making on quality matters* provided a valuable opportunity for discussions and reflections focusing on the development of a framework or model to enable institutional decisions on teaching quality to be underpinned by pedagogic research and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

Participation in the Collaborative Enhancement Project encouraged us to reflect on our own practice at the University of Hull through the lens of the emerging project framework. Specifically, we, the Teaching Excellence Academy, explored our role as a scholarship and evidence-based learning development centre in support of SoTL based decision making at the university level in relation to teaching excellence.

Our initial output is the articulation of an institutional framework of activity supporting a culture of scholarship-based practice at the university, a simplified version of which is presented as figure 1.

### ***Driving a culture of scholarship-based practice***

The University Education Strategy 2020-2025 is grounded in scholarship. It establishes a clear ambition that excellent teaching at the university will be informed by research and scholarship in both the disciplinary and pedagogical sense. The Teaching Excellence Academy is identified as a main agent for both the operationalisation of the strategy, and (by inference) for the development of a culture of the scholarship of teaching and learning. In establishing the Academy the Vice Chancellor and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) envisaged it as being *academic led and evidence based*. The Academy has a clearly defined mission to *Celebrate, Develop and Promote excellent teaching* which it understands to be grounded in scholarship.

### ***Developing a culture of scholarship-based practice***

To develop a culture of reflective teaching enhancement the Academy delivers a university wide Academic Development Portfolio, a suite of in-person and online professional development resources that are scholarship based and promote a scholarly approach. We emphasise the value of evidence-based practice and provide opportunities for both academic and professional service staff to be part of an active community of scholarship by involving them as partners in university wide projects, by supporting formal and informal networks and communities of practice, and by seconding staff (for 50% of their time and for up to 2 years) to undertake significant SoTL projects. All new to teaching academic colleagues are given the opportunity to engage in discipline based educational enquiry as part of their *Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice*. The University also supports an active *Student Staff Partnership* programme that is scholarship led.



**Figure 1. Institutional framework of activity supporting a culture of scholarship-based practice.**

### ***Enacting a culture of scholarship-based practice***

All members of the Academy model a scholarly approach through their interactions with the wider university community. They share the scholarship that underpins their work with the community that they serve, and they undertake their own research and scholarship activities. Through the CPD that they deliver and through membership of key

university committees and leadership of university working groups they have an opportunity to use scholarship (their own and that of others) to influence the development of strategy and policy, decision making and university wide practice. Through their disseminated work they have impacts beyond the institution.

#### ***Evaluating a culture of scholarship-based practice***

The Academy comes together to discuss scholarship as practice regularly and a focus of these discussions is often the appropriate collection and use of evidence and data to inform practice and to evaluate success. Members of the Academy work in partnership with colleagues across the university to evaluate practice and the impact of policy decisions. Working with the Director of Student Success a seconded Senior Fellow of the Academy is currently undertaking a project to develop a framework for the evaluation of initiatives to enhance teaching and the wider student experience.

#### ***Disseminating a culture of scholarship-based practice***

The scholarship of the Academy is disseminated through peer reviewed publication, national and international conference presentations and the publication of web-based toolkits and resource banks. We support our colleagues across the university to disseminate their pedagogic practice externally, but also internally through an annual Learning and Teaching Conference that is open to the wider sector, through symposia, seminars and workshops, and through blogposts and podcasts. We also encourage both academic and professional services colleagues to work with us to co-author resources that are used as part of our Academic Development Portfolio.

#### ***Celebrating a culture of scholarship-based practice***

Through membership of the working groups that develop institutional reward and recognition processes the leadership of the Academy have an opportunity to influence the reward and recognition of scholarly activity within institutional promotion criteria. By providing colleagues with opportunities to be members of working groups and committees, and to undertake university wide projects that have impact demonstrable impact we are also able to support individuals in their career development and progression.

Having responsibility for the university programme that confers all levels of fellowship of AdvanceHE and that supports nominations for National Teaching Fellowships and Collaborative Awards for Teaching Excellence (CATE) the academy can provide mentorship and support to a significant proportion of the university community and to celebrate their eventual success.

## Acknowledgements

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