



NCG HE Research and Scholarly Activity (RSA) Framework

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework which outlines NCG's expectations in relation to research and scholarly activity (RSA). The Framework ensures NCG HE meets the requirements of our awarding powers whilst also providing assurance of the scholarship and pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff across the institution. The Framework is underpinned by the OfS Regulatory Framework for Higher Education (2018), The Scholarship Framework (2018), and the work of Boyer (1990, 1996).

OfS Regulatory Framework for Higher Education

- The OfS 2018 publication 'Securing Student Success: Regulatory Framework for higher education in England' outlines the following expectation in regard to the scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff at degree awarding institutions:

*Organisations awarding their own qualifications have a crucial responsibility to ensure that every student has the chance to develop as an independent learner, and the opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought. Chances are maximised by effective teaching and the facilitation of learning undertaken by staff with academic, professional and vocational expertise in line with the organisation's curriculum offer. This includes a responsibility for ensuring that staff 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. It also means that teaching for degree-level qualifications should reflect, in a careful, conscious and intellectually demanding manner, the latest developments in the subject of study. Organisations also have a responsibility for making certain that the assessment of their students is carried out in a professional, rigorous and consistent way.*

(Source OfS 2018)

Our Approach

Our approach to RSA is inextricably linked to the nature of our HE curriculum offer. For this reason, our shared understanding of the meaning of research and scholarship is most clearly illustrated through Boyer's model. In a report published in 1990 entitled 'Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate', and later in 1996 ('The scholarship of engagement') Boyer articulated his vision of four distinct categories of scholarship:

1. The scholarship of discovery: this can be defined as the acquisition of new knowledge through critical enquiry. This aligns most closely with the concept of pure research.

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2. The scholarship of integration: this can be defined as the application of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. This usually takes the form of interdisciplinary studies.
3. The scholarship of engagement: this can be defined as the application of knowledge to remedy problems outside of academia. This might involve collaboration with employers, industry, professional bodies or community organisations.
4. The scholarship of learning and teaching: this can be defined as the acquisition of knowledge concerning teaching and learning. This might take the form of innovative evidence-based curriculum developments or action research within the learning environment.

NCG HE is committed to implementing Boyer's model placing value on the four distinct categories of scholarship, an approach supported by The Scholarship Framework (2018). The core principles within the NCG RSA Framework are:

1. Enhancing Teaching and Learning
2. Supporting Staff
3. Supporting Students as Researchers
4. Engaging with External Bodies
5. Externalising Research Outputs

NCG RSA Framework Core Principles

1. Enhancing Teaching, Learning, and Assessment:

We believe that research and scholarship should inform and enrich teaching, learning and assessment. It ensures that our HE courses are current, academically rigorous and valued by employers and industry. Research-informed teaching is embedded across our HE provision. Curriculum design encourages and promotes research-engaged teaching, in which learning opportunities allow students to explore the limits of disciplinary knowledge through replicating contemporary research practice within their field.

2. Supporting Staff:

We are committed to supporting and developing staff members in utilising RSA to deliver exceptional learning opportunities for our students. Teaching staff are viewed as members of a wider subject community, who have a responsibility to contribute positively to the currency and future academic direction of their discipline. Staff are encouraged to ensure their practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship. We recognise and value research and scholarship undertaken by staff members, commensurate with the level and subject of the qualifications they teach.



3. Supporting Students as Researchers:

We view students as peers and partners in the research process. Our students are valued as producers, not merely as consumers, of knowledge, whose research outputs are worthy of promotion and dissemination. Students are encouraged to participate as active members of an inclusive research community. We seek to empower students as agents of change, whose research projects inform the development of our HE provision, including assessment practices, module design, teaching and learning. In this capacity, it is anticipated that students will initiate and drive evidence-based change processes to deliver an outstanding learner experience.

4. Engaging with External Bodies:

We are committed to encouraging staff to engage with other HE providers in order to develop their subject knowledge but also to gain experience in curriculum development and assessment design. Furthermore, we are committed to strengthening existing relationships with employers, industry, professional bodies and the wider community by engaging them in RSA conducted across the institution. These bodies will be encouraged to view us as the solution to regional business and skills needs through our strength in applied research.

5. Externalising Research Outputs:

We are committed to validating our research outputs by exposing them to the scrutiny of the wider academic community. Externalising RSA through peer-reviewed publications and conference papers affirms that our research is recognised and valued beyond the institution, ensuring research impact at a regional, national and international level.

Process

To provide 'assurance of the scholarship and pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff' each College will submit an annual plan (**Appendix 2**) which outlines the focus and RSA activities for the academic year. The plan will be submitted for approval at the HE Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee (November) with regular updates provided by each College to the committee throughout the academic year in the form of written progress against the plan. In addition, all colleges will regularly meet via the RSA Committee to discuss best practice, share resources, and support one another with their RSA Implementation Plans.

In addition to the plan NCG expects staff to evidence, or be actively working towards if they are involved in teaching, learning and supporting higher education: The table in **Appendix 1** outlines the criteria and expectation for staff linked to the level of teaching.



Appendix 1

SCHOLARSHIP & PEDAGOGICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF STAFF TEACHING HE

The following table outlines the criteria which the NCG expects staff to evidence, or be actively working towards if they are involved in teaching, learning and supporting higher education:

All HE teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An academic qualification awarded at one level above the highest level taught or a significant level of relevant industrial experience.• An appropriate teaching qualification.• Awareness of the Advance HE Fellowship scheme.• Knowledge and understanding of the QAA subject benchmarks and frameworks for Higher Education.• Knowledge and understanding of the resources and services provided by the Library.
Teaching staff at levels 4 & 5 (in addition to the above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of current scholarly developments, professional practice, and legislation.• Application of knowledge from industry on teaching and learning.• Ability to maintain a suitable balance between theory and practice as part of the learning experience.• Attendance at HE conferences, research seminars, and relevant external events.• Understanding of academic literacy and integrity, relevant to the academic level and subject taught.• Awareness of benchmarks, standards, and quality assurance processes.• Enrolment on staff development sessions, appropriate to prior experience, qualifications and academic level taught.
Teaching staff at level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of research and advanced scholarship in the relevant discipline.• Engagement with RSA through developing or leading staff, student or collaborative research projects leading to some form of scholarly output.• Ability to deliver research informed teaching.• Support for students in planning, executing and disseminating their research.

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(in addition to the above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of RSA outputs for example through the Staff Research Conference, Research Seminars and E-Journal. • Participation in Research Forums • Membership of appropriate professional bodies or learned societies as appropriate.
Teaching staff at level 7 (in addition to the above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active personal engagement with RSA, with a focus on external dissemination. • Mentoring of colleagues with regard to research, assessment, teaching and learning. • Active membership in appropriate professional bodies or learned societies. • Experience as external examiner, moderator or QAA reviewer. • Personal engagement with HEIs, industry, employers and/or community organisations.
PT/fractional teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currency with professional practice and relevant legislation. • Awareness of current teaching practice, benchmarks, and standards. • Application of knowledge from industry on teaching and learning, appropriate to the academic level taught. • Engagement with the ethos, culture and strategic vision of the curriculum area community of research.
Guest speakers Associate or visiting lecturers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced understanding of cutting-edge scholarship or professional practice. • Engagement with students through adding value to the learner experience. • Appropriate academic qualifications or extensive vocational experience, appropriate to the level taught. • Engagement with the institution's community of research.



Appendix 2

RSA Implementation Plan

College:	
Academic year:	

RSA Framework	College response to meeting the framework	
1. Enhancing Teaching and Learning		
<p>We believe that research and scholarship should inform and enrich teaching, learning and assessment. This will continue to ensure that our HE courses are current, academically rigorous and valued by employers and industry. Research-informed teaching is embedded across our HE provision. Curriculum design will encourage and promote research-engaged teaching, in which learning opportunities allow students to explore the limits of disciplinary knowledge through replicating contemporary research practice within their field.</p>		
This will be developed and demonstrated by:	Proposed Action	Activities Undertaken
a. Designing research-engaged learning opportunities which encourage students to develop as researchers through inquiry-based and problem-solving activities, within a stimulating and supportive academic environment.		
b. Addressing the teaching-research nexus within a model of Action Research, Communities of Practice and staff-student collaborative working		

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c. Providing appropriate and current library and electronic resources to support the student experience and prompt pedagogic innovation.		
d. Actively promoting Student as Producer to continue to align RSA and LTA.		
e. Embedding mechanisms for student-led research and student voice to inform pedagogical practice at a course, curriculum, or institutional level.		
f. Providing staff development to enhance, support, and highlight the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching.		
g. Ensuring a direct correlation between the NCL TLA Strategy and the direction of RSA at NCL, to include research-informed and research-engaged teaching, collaborative output from the Student as Producer initiative, and staff development training and support.		
2. Supporting Staff		
<p>We are committed to supporting and developing staff members in utilising RSA to deliver exceptional learning opportunities for our students. Teaching staff are viewed as members of a wider subject community, who have a responsibility to contribute positively to the currency and future academic direction of their discipline. Staff are encouraged to ensure their practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship. We recognise and value research and scholarship undertaken by staff members, commensurate with the level and subject of the qualifications they teach.</p>		
This will be developed and demonstrated by:	Proposed Action	Activities Undertaken
a. Continuing to offer a structured HE Staff Development programme, containing a strand of RSA related sessions, to provide robust support and training for new, intermediate and advanced research practitioners.		



b. Supporting and encouraging new staff and those studying for higher degrees through the provision of effective resources, mentoring and peer support opportunities.		
c. Promoting the development of Communities of Practice to bring staff with similar research interests together from across the institution and beyond, to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to RSA.		
d. Holding events in the form of conferences, seminars and workshops which will provide an opportunity for staff to share their RSA and gain constructive feedback and support from peers.		
e. Providing recognition for RSA conducted by staff members, which contribute to outstanding teaching and learning, through the appraisal process.		
f. Encouraging staff to keep up-to-date with industry trends to inform scholarly activity and curriculum development e.g. industry placements, secondments, networking, professional body membership, industry board membership, external examiner role.		

3. Supporting Students as Researchers

We view students as peers and partners in the research process. Our students are valued as producers, not merely as consumers, of knowledge, whose research outputs are worthy of promotion and dissemination. Students will be encouraged to participate as active members of an inclusive research community. We seek to empower students as agents of change, whose research projects inform the development of our HE provision, including assessment practices, module design, teaching and learning. In this capacity, it is anticipated that students will initiate and drive evidence-based change processes to deliver an outstanding learner experience

This will be developed and demonstrated by:	Proposed Action	Activities Undertaken
a. Guidance and resources to support students in their research activities and to promote their personal development as research practitioners, appropriate to their level of study.		
b. Supporting student-led research projects which have an impact on aspects of our HE curriculum design and delivery, with appropriate mechanisms to ensure their findings inform future developments at course, curriculum or institutional levels.		
c. Providing opportunities for students to contribute to the future direction of RSA internally through participation in focus groups and relevant committees.		
d. Holding events which will allow students to disseminate their research findings to their peers in the form of conferences and seminars. Opportunities will also be provided, where appropriate, for students to publish their work as peer-reviewed articles in, for example, Seven Bridges journal.		

e. Embedding enterprise and entrepreneurship across the HE curriculum to support students in viewing their research skills as an asset within industry and employment after graduation.		
f. Addressing student need in terms of research development practices via Communities of Practice, shared resources and extra-curricular programmes		
4. Engaging with External Bodies		
<p>We are committed to encouraging staff to engage with other HE providers in order to develop their subject knowledge but also to gain experience in curriculum development and assessment design. Furthermore, we are committed to strengthening existing relationships with employers, industry, professional bodies and the wider community by engaging them in RSA conducted across the institution. These bodies will be encouraged to view us as the solution to regional business and skills needs through our strength in applied research.</p>		
This will be developed and demonstrated by:	Proposed Action	Activities Undertaken
a. Communicating our RSA capabilities effectively to external bodies through dissemination activities, networking events, and engagement activities.		
b. Supporting staff members to engage with relevant professional bodies or organisations		
c. Encouraging appropriate staff members to serve as external examiners, moderators or QAA Reviewers.		
d. Initiating collaborative research opportunities with, for example, other HE providers and/or relevant external		



bodies, to further raise the profile of our RSA across the commercial sector.

5. Externalising Research Outputs

We are committed to validating our research outputs by exposing them to the scrutiny of the wider academic community. Externalising RSA through peer-reviewed publications and conference papers affirms that our research is recognised and valued beyond the institution, ensuring research impact at a regional, national and international level.

This will be developed and demonstrated by:	Proposed Action	Activities Undertaken
a. Providing effective support for staff to engage in their own research activity and disseminate that research.		
b. Providing effective support for students in developing research findings, gained through the curriculum or via student enrichment activity, for dissemination		
c. Encouraging staff engagement with, and awareness of, relevant wider scholarly communities as an important component of a thriving research culture and for staff CPD.		
d. Strengthening current relationships with regional, national and international HE-relevant bodies to increase the opportunities for staff to present their work at external events and to experience wider research cultures.		

