

Supporting Excellence in Teaching and Learning: A Framework for Academic Career Development in Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive framework designed to support academics to evidence excellence in scholarly approaches to teaching and learning in higher education. Despite growing emphasis on teaching quality and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), institutions and faculty members face significant challenges in effectively documenting their scholarly teaching practices. Through analysis of 19 publicly available resources from Australia, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia, we developed a consolidated framework that transcends institutional barriers while aligning with traditional academic pillars of teaching, research, and service. The framework comprises four interconnected matrices addressing user engagement, learning and teaching, research and scholarship, and collegiality. Available in both PDF and digital formats, it provides calibrated guidance based on academic level and teaching profile proportion. Pilot implementation with teaching-focused academics across levels A-D demonstrated the framework's effectiveness in supporting annual performance reviews, career planning, and promotion applications. This work contributes to the field by offering a structured approach to recognizing and leveraging SoTL practices while providing institutions with a robust mechanism for demonstrating compliance with scholarly activity standards.

Introduction

The landscape of higher education has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, with increasing emphasis on the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning practices. Within this context, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) has emerged as a crucial framework for advancing pedagogical excellence and educational innovation, which is central to the academic role (Kern, Mettetal, Dixson & Morgan, 2015; Lindstrøm, Spagnoli, Pye, Beckman, & Kepert, 2022; Plews & Amos, 2020; Waller & Prosser, 2023). In conjunction, the emergence and expansion of teaching/education-focused roles has been seen in higher education institutions over the past decade (Fleischner, 2025; Goodman, Parfitt, & Yasukawa, 2023). Further, the introduction of teaching-focused roles has led to an increase in discipline-based educational researchers (El-Adway, Alexis & Sayre, 2023; Probert, 2013), the need to support educational research capabilities (Quinnell, 2019; Whitton, Parr & Choate, 2021), and for alternate mechanisms to recognise practice (Crossley, 2021; Probert, 2013; Vardi & Quin, 2011). These changes create a dichotomy in (i) the recognition of education as a legitimate career path in academia (Rowland, 2024; Ross & Scanes, 2024) and (ii) the persistence of issues (and creation of new issues) raised around promotion (Bull, Cooper, Laidlaw, Milne & Parr, 2024; Graham, 2019; Godbold, Matthews, & Gannaway, 2023; Smith & Walker, 2022; Smith & Walker, 2021). Thus, despite its growing importance, institutions and faculty members continue to face substantial challenges in effectively evidencing and documenting their scholarly approaches to teaching and learning (James et al, 2015; Fukuzawa, Ashbourne, & Rawle, 2020; Yusoff, 2013) and the demonstrated value of the teaching component of academic

profiles (Bennett, Roberts, Ananthram & Broughton, 2018; Kern, Mettetal, Dixson, & Morgna, 2015).

While there has been progress toward more effective guidance and recognition mechanisms for SoTL in Australia, there remains a critical need for clearer frameworks (Gurung, 2023; James et al, 2015) and structured approaches (Bishop-Clark & Dietz-Uhler, 2012) to support engagement in scholarly teaching and learning practices holistically (Dean & Geertsema, 2023). Also, an emphasis on clear methodologies in SoTL which describe what constitutes valid scholarship (Fanghanel, 2016; Rowland, 2024; Tierney, Park & Clark, 2021) are needed. This need is particularly evident in the distinction between scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning (Felten & Chick, 2018; Potter & Kustra, 2011), where faculty often struggle to leverage the former to support the latter.

The challenges associated with evidencing SoTL are multifaceted and complex. Bloom (2020) argues that "scholarship doesn't have to be hard," yet Janke and co-authors (2021) provide insight into why it can be challenging in reality. Many institutions struggle to establish supportive environments that adequately value teaching scholarship, leading to reduced faculty engagement in SoTL activities (Fukuzawa et al., 2020; Locke, 2014). Additionally, it has been recognised that SoTL is not delivering in terms of promotion for teaching staff across universities (Brooke, Lee, So-Sum Wai-Cook, Segarra Navera, Tang Kum, 2020; Chalmers et al., 2015; Graham, 2019). These challenges are compounded by limited access to funding opportunities and resources, which can impede educators' ability to pursue meaningful teaching inquiries.

Currently, while there exists a wide variety of documents to support education-focused career progression, there is no single, consolidated framework and resource to support planning and evidence curation demonstrating excellent scholarly career progression. This gap is particularly evident in the practical application of recommended processes, where faculty members need clear guidance on recognising and leveraging SoTL practices (Cashmore, Cane & Cane, 2013; Smith & Schwartz, 2015).

This paper presents a comprehensive framework for evidencing and documenting excellence in scholarly approaches to teaching and learning that could be utilised by both academic and professional education-focused staff. The framework aims to provide a consolidated, single point of reference that transcends institutional barriers and aligns with common categories of academic work: teaching, research, and service. It is designed to be accessible to anyone with teaching-associated activities in their work allocation, offering examples of holistic evidence types and explicit methods for beneficial data gathering. Through a digital resource version, the framework enables users to collate their data in a single space, facilitating the rapid identification of potential gaps and supporting narrative curation for annual reflection, peer mentoring, and career progression.

Furthermore, this work addresses the recent emphasis from the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA, 2022) on evaluating provider engagement with staff scholarly activities (TEQSA, 2022 section B1.1.2) and support. By providing guidance calibrated not only to academic level but also to the proportion of profile allocated to teaching and scholarship, the framework offers a practical solution to the ongoing challenges of evidencing SoTL excellence in higher education.

Methodology

The development of this framework followed a systematic approach to ensure comprehensive coverage and practical utility. The project commenced in 2021 with a review of publicly available examples for evaluation of teaching and scholarship at higher education institutions.

Keywords utilised in the search for literature included: academic promotion, promotion criteria, university promotion, award, educational-focussed, teaching-focussed, teaching associate descriptor, teaching fellow, SoLT, SoTL, teaching and scholarship, teaching and research, scholarship evidence, T&L, and T&L award.

Of the frameworks identified there were several excluded from further use. Exclusion occurred where the documents were not open access, from higher education providers, written in English, contained definitions of levels and profile breakdown or were unavailable within the research timeframe.

Of the framework resources initially reviewed, 19 were selected for inclusion (Table 1), representing institutions from Australia, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia. In the creation of this framework, we referred to several additional frameworks from Australia and the UK, that were publicly available at the time but are currently no longer so.

The selected resources included:

1. Peak bodies (3)
2. Group of Eight universities (4)
3. New Generation universities (3)
4. Regional/dual sector institutions (2)
5. Russell Group universities (5)
6. Other international institutions (2)

Table 1: Resource sources used to develop the Academic Evaluation Framework

Organisation	Country	Institution Type
Office for Learning and Teaching (Chalmers, et al, 2015)	Australia	Peak Body
University of Queensland (2024a)		Group of Eight
University of New South Wales (2017)		Group of Eight
Victoria University (2016)		Dual Sector New Generation
University of Western Australia (n.d.)*		Group of Eight
University of Western Sydney (n.d.)*		New Generation
Charles Sturt University (2024)		Regional University Network
Monash University (2019)		Group of Eight
Australian Catholic University (2020)		New Generation
University of Warwick (n.d.)	United Kingdom	Russell Group/Plate Glass
Royal Academic of Engineers (2017)		Peak Body
University of Bristol (2023)		Russel Group/Red brick
University of Nottingham (2021)		Russel Group
University College London (2018)		Russell Group
Sheffield University (2021)*		Russel Group/Red brick
Advance HE (2023)		Peak Body

Royal Holloway University of London (n.d.)*		Public Research University
London South Bank University (2015)		New Universities/ Polytechnic
Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2017)	Malaysia	Peak Body

* No longer publicly available

Inclusion Criteria and Analysis Process

The development process followed these key steps:

1. Review of information sources to determine common themes associated with developing and evidencing both scholarly and scholarship expectations
2. Synthesis of materials to address key gaps in content application and usability
 - a. Individual inductive coding and collaborative evaluation using a shared codebook
 - b. Determination of key performance themes with associated activities and evidence types
 - c. Consolidation of information into structured matrices

This process then created consolidated broad areas of activity that are trans-institutional and adaptable to specific use cases as desired. It addresses the issue of nuanced institutional criteria and allows for portability across institutions and simplicity to meet different requirements. It also allows for a single curation document for an individual that provides continuity regardless of their employer, which is particularly important for casual employees.

Once the core framework was developed, it was further reviewed for relevancy and transferability by senior leaders in Law, Business, and Health at the institution of initiation.

The framework has been continuously updated to incorporate new resources as they became available, such as the Career Framework for University Teaching (Royal Academy of Engineering, 2017), ensuring its ongoing relevance and comprehensiveness.

A small pilot of the framework and accompanying guidebook was conducted by six teaching-focused academics, including the two authors, who volunteered to trial the material as part of their annual review process documentation. Three academics also utilised it to help frame narrative and evidence curation towards promotion applications.

Results

Resource Review

Each of the resources reviewed had areas of consistency and variation. Documents reviewed consistently stressed the importance of identifying and curating appropriate evidence as being crucial to demonstrating competence, impact, and leadership, and thus to successful academic progression. Guidance aligned to academic levels (as per one of the selection criteria) with increasing expectations for leadership, impact and scope. Examples include

"Level C (Senior Lecturer): "Evidence of leadership in teaching and education development" and "Demonstrated competence in academic management and/or service activities." (University of Technology Sydney, n.d., p14)

Or

"Level E(Professor) Teaching Domain "Teaching profile: demonstrates a sustained, skilled, and collegial contribution to teaching and the student experience." (University of Queensland, 2024b, p1).

Evidence guidance varied from basic illustrative examples (University of London, 2018; Australian Catholic University, 2020) through to detailed matrices (e.g. Chalmers et al, 2015; Monash University, 2019; UNSW, 2025; Victoria University, 2019) with the most commonly highlighted evidence types associated with peer review, student feedback, leadership roles, and external recognition. Examples include Charles Sturt University (2024, p4-11): *“brief references from peers,” “awards and citations,”* and *“data showing student engagement”* and the Monash University (2019, p4-10): *“SETU data,” “peer review of teaching,”* and *“demonstrated leadership.”*

Some provided emphasis of narrative construction beyond listing achievements such as the University of Bristol (2023, p6) *“When building your case, you should make clear the impact you have made, focusing on quality of contribution over quantity.”* Others set expectations as to how materials should be utilised, for example, University of Warwick (n.d., p1) *“There is no expectation that all forms of evidence need to be demonstrated at each band, nor are these the only types of evidence.”*

The focus for each document was on categories requiring demonstrated capabilities and general evidence sources were provided. No document provided reflective prompts or resources designed to support unpacking what type of data could be curated and impact articulated to evidence capabilities. No single document provided a complete information set for levels, evidence, curation and narrative development.

The Academic Evaluation Framework and Guidebook

There are two elements to the developed resources: the framework itself and the accompanying guidebook that supports usability and contextualisation of the framework with exemplars drawn.

Framework Structure

The Academic Evaluation Framework integrates four interconnected matrices, creating a comprehensive system for assessing academic performance across multiple dimensions.

The User Engagement Matrix establishes foundational expectations in teaching design, teaching delivery, professional development, and recognition. This matrix employs carefully chosen descriptive verbs that align with different academic levels, progressing from developing and preparing at Levels A and B, through to preparing to lead at Level C, leading at Level D, and sustained leadership at Level E. These verbs were chosen to represent the most frequently used terms in the resources examined; however, these may not align completely with an individual institution’s descriptions. This matrix’s evidence requirements are thoughtfully calibrated to account for both academic level and teaching proportion, ensuring appropriate expectations for academics at different career stages.

The Learning and Teaching (L&T) Matrix expands the evaluation scope through five detailed sub-criteria: teaching design, professional development, course-level delivery, program-level delivery, and recognition.

The Research and Scholarship (R&S) Matrix focuses on three key areas: engagement, outputs, and recognition, providing a structured approach to documenting scholarly activities and their impact on teaching and learning practices.

The Collegiality, Leadership and Management (C, L&M) Matrix examines contributions across three levels of engagement: school level, group level, and university, profession and community level. This matrix helps academics document their service contributions and track their leadership development, specifically within teaching and learning contexts.

Guidebook Overview

This comprehensive guidebook has been designed to support academic career development through a series of four functional matrices. Available in both PDF and Excel formats (refer to supplementary materials), the resource allows for versatile application across different contexts, with the digital version enabling active data management. To ensure broad accessibility, Australian Enterprise Bargain Agreement (EBA) profile terminology has been used throughout the documentation. For example, the category ‘Learning & Teaching’ in the framework is represented by ‘Education Practice’ in the Bristol Academic Promotions Framework and ‘Collegiality, Leadership & Management’ in the framework, which correlates with service in the EBA, is represented by ‘Academic service and good citizenship’ in Nottingham’s Academic Career Framework. Additionally, there is practical guidance on how to utilise these matrices for different objectives, complete with worked examples to illustrate their use.

Implementation

Each matrix provides detailed criteria for practice aspects, along with recommended teaching proportions by academic level. The framework includes suggestions for evidence collection opportunities and guidance on evidence types. While comprehensive in scope, academics are not expected to provide evidence for every identified opportunity. Instead, the resource serves as a support mechanism for narrative development and in assisting communication of highly valued impact during career progression. Criteria and evidence are built through the academic levels according to the Table 2. The descriptive verbs used to describe progression of demonstrated capabilities were established based on the synthesis of descriptions used by institutional documents reviewed.

Table 2: Expectations of academic level demonstrated engagement in scholarly teaching and learning and SoLT.

Level	Descriptive Verbs
A & B	Developing, preparing
C	Preparing to Lead/Supporting Leadership
D	Leading
E	Sustained Leadership

The scale and duration of activities should be evidenced relative to appointment level, fraction and opportunity.

User Engagement Matrix

This matrix should be used initially and provides a summary of the level of learning and teaching engagement a user should aspire to, commensurate with their academic level relative to the Australian context. Guidance falls into the categories of: (i) teaching design, (ii) teaching delivery, (iii) professional development and (iv) recognition. In combination with the action verbs (Table 2) it sets the context to applying information in the additional three matrices.

User Engagement Matrix (Levels A to E)				
<i>This engagement matrix provides examples of the level of engagement for the L&T criteria and the differing levels of demonstrated capabilities in alignment with academic level. The amount of evidence provided will depend on the proportion of profile allocated to teaching. Scholarship is addressed separately as part of the Research & Scholarship matrix.</i>				
	A & B	C	D	E
Teaching Design	Evidence based/innovative teaching approaches	Evidence based/innovative teaching approaches	Leading the implementation of evidence based/ innovative teaching approaches at course/program level	Leading the implementation of evidence based/innovative teaching approaches at program level
	Participation in course improvement - reflective approach	Participation in course improvement - reflective approach	Participation in program improvement - reflective approach	Participation in program improvement - reflective approach
	Course convening and awareness of program alignment	Course convening and knowledge of program alignment	Adopting/assisting leading a program level approach to curriculum development	Leading a program level approach to curriculum development
Teaching Delivery	Construction and/or implementation, evaluation & effective response to both positive & poor student experience feedback at course level	Construction, evaluation & effective response to both positive and poor student experience feedback at course level	Construction, evaluation & effective response to both positive and poor student experience feedback at course/program level	Construction, evaluation & effective response to both positive and poor student experience feedback at course/program level
	Engagement in co-curricular experience Careers nights, Society events, Student outreach etc	Developing co-curricular experience Careers nights, Society events, Student outreach etc	Developing/leading co-curricular experience Careers nights, Society events, Student outreach etc	Leading co-curricular experience Careers nights, Society events, Student outreach etc
	Developing effective strategies to monitor and change student practices to improve student learning outcomes at a course level	Monitors and changes student practices to improve student learning outcomes at course level	Monitors and changes student practices to improve student learning outcomes at course/program level	Monitors and changes student practices to improve student learning outcomes at course/program level
	Completed annual review of course learning outcomes	Completed annual review of course learning outcomes within program	Completed annual review of learning outcomes across program	Completed annual review of learning outcomes across program
Professional Development	AFHEA or FHEA	FHEA/SFHEA	FHEA/SFHEA	SFHEA/PFHEA
	Graduate Certificate of University Learning and Teaching Courses (or equivalent): Curriculum design for learning, Teaching for learning, SoTL and ethics, scholarly research project	Mentor colleagues towards AFHEA Undertake an FHEA/SFHEA submission Review of applications at relevant level	Mentor colleagues towards AFHEA/FHEA/SFHEA Undertake an FHEA/SFHEA submission Review of applications at relevant level	Mentor colleagues towards AFHEA/FHEA/SFHEA Undertake an SHEA/PFHEA submission Review of applications at relevant level
	Demonstrate understanding and implementation of inclusive practices for diverse learners	Demonstrate understanding and implementation of inclusive practices for diverse learners	Demonstrate understanding and implementation of inclusive practices for diverse learners	Demonstrate understanding and implementation of inclusive practices for diverse learners
	Alignment with institutional vision for L&T - Academic strategy; Principles of excellence in L&T; Design principles etc.	Alignment with institutional vision for L&T - Academic strategy; Principles of excellence in L&T; Design principles etc.	Alignment with institutional vision for L&T - Academic strategy; Principles of excellence in L&T; Design principles etc.	Alignment with institutional vision for L&T - Academic strategy; Principles of excellence in L&T; Design principles etc.
	Participating in PD opportunities; engagement with Structured Peer Review Process	Participating in PD opportunities; Mentorship of colleagues in a Structured Peer Review Process	Participating in PD opportunities; Mentorship of colleagues in a Structured Peer Review Process	Participating in PD opportunities; Mentorship of colleagues in a Structured Peer Review Process
	Curating evidence of practice for use in applications for awards, citations and grants	Application for awards, citations and grants	Application/mentoring awards, citations and grants	Mentoring awards, citations and grants
Recognition	Collaborating with colleagues within university and/or collaborative team-teaching approach	Collaborating with colleagues within university/nationally	Collaborating with colleagues nationally/internationally	Collaborating with colleagues nationally/internationally
	Developing a teaching philosophy and establishing a SoTL reputation at School or Group level by practice and scholarship	Refining a teaching philosophy and establishing a SoTL reputation at university or national level by practice and scholarship	Refining a teaching philosophy and establishing a SoTL reputation at national or international level by practice and scholarship	Refining a teaching philosophy and establishing a SoTL reputation at national or international level by practice and scholarship
	Demonstrating collaboration to improve scholarly practice	Collaborating to improve scholarly practice	Mentoring/collaborating to improve scholarly practice	Leadership in mentoring scholarly practice
	Awards and prizes for L&T excellence at School level	Awards and prizes for L&T excellence at School / Group level	Awards and prizes for L&T excellence at Group / University / National level	Awards and prizes for L&T excellence at University / National / International level

Figure 1: User Engagement Matrix

The User Engagement matrix should be utilised in combination with the three subsequent criteria matrices (i) Learning & Teaching (L&T) Matrix, (ii) Research & Scholarship (R&S) Matrix, and (iii) Collegiality, Leadership & Management (C, L&M) Matrix. These align with the common EBA academic profile components (for example, Fair Work Commission, 2023) of teaching, research/scholarship and service respectively. The development of these profile components was grounded on empirical workload studies (Kenny & Fluck, 2019), conceptual scholarship models (Watson, King, Dekeyser, Baré, & Baldock, 2015), institutional performance pressures (Haddow, 2021) and collective bargaining and advocacy between the academic unions and universities in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cwlth) s 70.

Using the Matrices

The three additional matrices each contain two components. Component 1 is the matrix (L&T, R&S or C, L&M) with aligned sub-criteria (Figure 2). Component 2 is the Table of Evidence that aligns with the matrix. Horizontal information includes the areas for evidence that could align with the overarching criteria and sub-criteria.

The L&T matrix supports the user to align expectations of engagement and identify capabilities aligned with the five sub-criteria of teaching design, professional development, course-level delivery, program-level delivery and recognition

The R&S Matrix looks to support curation of evidence associated with research and scholarship under the three sub-criteria of engagement, outputs and recognition.

The C, L&M Matrix supports curation of evidence aligned with service activities associated with learning and teaching that occur at various sectors of the community namely school level, group level and the university, profession and community.

When reviewing each of these matrices, the right-hand side of the matrix supports setting expectations associated with each criterion and area for evidence. These expectations are identified using ticks and shading to align with an academic's specific fraction of their work profile allocated to teaching, in conjunction with their level of academic appointment.

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Expectation of engagement relative to fraction/level										
		Fraction of Profile allocated to Teaching:	Up to 40%					>40%				
		Level of Appointment:	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
		Areas for Evidence										
Learning & Teaching	Teaching Design	Demonstrated evidence of collaborative review of teaching practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Evaluation of the impact of changes made to teaching practices to benefit learning.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Enhancement of teaching or the engagement of students, the development of educational practice of other academics				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
	Professional Development	Positive student feedback regarding modules, review by peers for instance on teaching materials, departmental leadership testimonials		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Demonstrated participation in and impact of professional T&L development opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Alignment with Institutional vision for learning and teaching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work Activities												

Figure 2: Extract of Component 1 of the Learning and Teaching Matrix

The matrices' additional three-column structure outlines areas for evidence for each of the three categories; L&T, R&S and C, L&M). Each column serves a distinct purpose: the first column identifies specific areas requiring evidence, the second column presents practical opportunities where educators can meaningfully gather such evidence (such as through teaching activities, research projects, or leadership roles), and the third column details the types of information that would effectively demonstrate impactful practice beyond mere task completion.

Criteria		Sub-criteria		
Learning & Teaching	Delivery - Course Level	Areas for Evidence	Examples of opportunities	Examples of evidence of impact
		Positive student feedback, sound peer review/ evaluation of teaching and assessment outcomes, peer observation outcomes	Positive student feedback on course evaluations - associated with course delivery and/or design for impact	Consider the number of students, the number of open responses, look for trends over time for specific courses and across the board
			Peer review/evaluation of teaching and/or assessment outcomes	Who reviewed your work & what is their experience, what did they highlight, was this a formal process? Was there triangulated data from students?
			Peer observation outcomes	What did you evaluate? Consider undertaking a specific evaluation relative to a narrative you want to develop about your work.
		Examples of good practice which enhance the student learning experience.	Student feedback on experience (SEC/SET qualitative statements, unsolicited emails)	Consider educating students around what is helpful, actionable feedback. For eg your X (teaching strategy/activity) made me feel Y and benefited me (how specifically)
			Student attendance	Where not compulsory, student attendance numbers potentially indicate good teaching practice if sustained over time in a term or over multiple years/courses.
			Student engagement with activities	For eg in an online class of X students, how many regularly participated, what did participation look like, what was the impact on student academic work?
			Improvement in student academic outcomes (with context as this may vary purely on cohort composition)	Ensure you are comparing apples with apples. For eg Did grades improve on a specific task because - you introduced a new scaffolding mechanism or you made the task easier or the student cohort was much more able, or the timetable was better so they attended more often?
	Delivery - Program level	Evidence of effective use of different methods of delivery and support to benefit learning, inclusivity and/or widening participation.	Improvement in student academic outcomes (with context as this may vary purely on cohort composition)	Links to literature, pre-post assessment scores, analyse assessment to identify trends and improvements
		Evidence of successful: (i) Programme leadership	Feedback on program	Pay attention to discussions and capture comments students make in class, student reflective tasks in eg portfolios
		(ii) Project leadership	Feedback on project	(i) Survey results, admission trends, graduate employment outcomes, colleague implementation of program strategies
		(iii) Peer learning effort	Feedback from peers	(ii) Evaluation reports, funding achievements, output and outcome indicators (iii) Evidence of positive changes to peer academic practices, peer performance improvement

Alignment from first component of matrix

Examples of where to collect evidence from

Suggestions/prompt questions towards data collection

Figure 3: Extract of Component 2 of the Learning and Teaching Matrix

For each criterion and category, educators would not necessarily be expected to provide evidence from every listed opportunity to meet probation, annual review, or promotion criteria, but rather this is a tool to support narrative development and to provide meaningful curation of evidence.

In higher education there are several common terms, such as course, program, with different meanings for different institutions. Institutional abbreviations are also utilised. The resource uses these terms in the context of the institute it was originally developed with definitions provided to allow the user to apply their own appropriate linguistics for interpretation purposes. This information is provided in the definitions and glossary section on page 4 of the guidebook.

Digital Integration

The framework's implementation leverages digital integration through both PDF of the guidebook and Excel spreadsheet of the matrices. The editable spreadsheet document offers enhanced functionality including interactive checkboxes for evidence evaluation, dedicated space for documentation updates, progress tracking capabilities, and impact documentation fields. Both are available in the supplementary materials section of this paper.

The digital documents support systematic curation of information across evidence types, impact measures, gap analysis, and narrative development (Figure 4). These sections support a quick overview of where evidence may exist through a check box. The intention is not that a user would tick every box to meet a level or effectively demonstrate capabilities but provides visual oversight of scope and breadth of activities and address to higher criteria areas. Together

these promote meaningful reflection on impact. The framework incorporates specific prompting questions that encourage academics to consider who has been affected by their work, what evidence demonstrates these changes, how stakeholders have been impacted, when these changes occurred, and why these changes matter. This reflective opportunity ensures that evaluation goes beyond mere documentation, to understand the genuine impact of academic contributions.

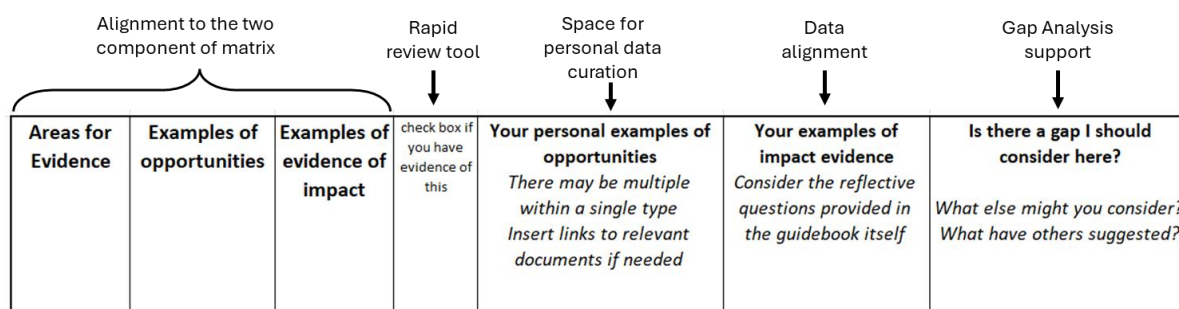


Figure 4: Excerpt from digital platform

Utilisation of the matrices, particularly the personalised evidence section, enables effective conversations regarding scholarly and scholarship approaches an individual may be taking with mentors and/or supervisors. To support the user in considering their impact evidence, a series of reflective questions are also included in the matrix. Questions prompt the user to consider who has been affected by their work, how this has affected them, when changes occurred, evidence to demonstrate these changes and present an argument as to why these changes matter.

Pilot Evaluation

The pilot evaluation was conducted within the School of Environment and Science, with a subset of six teaching-focused staff, including the two authors. The guidebook has proven effective across multiple academic levels, from A through D, helping teaching-focused faculty develop their annual performance reviews, career plans, and promotion applications. Feedback from participants has been positive. Self-reflections from the authors note the usefulness of the tool to set professional goals:

"this resource brings together all the different parts of scholarly work in a really practical manner that saved me time and clearly set expectations I can work towards."

And the impact on their annual evaluation process

"As soon as I finished my previous annual review, I started using this framework to record activities as I did them, during the year. The next annual review was much simpler as I didn't need to spend hours searching back through notes and calendars to evidence my activities as they were already recorded and ready to use!"

Early results speak for themselves: three members of the pilot group tested the framework when applying for successful promotions of Levels B to C, C to D and D to E between 2021-2024. While all have successfully navigated their annual performance reviews and career progression goals at Levels A to D.

Discussion

The development of this comprehensive framework addresses several critical gaps in higher education's approach to evidencing scholarly teaching and learning practices. By aligning with the traditional academic pillars of teaching, research, and service, while incorporating specific elements of scholarly approach and scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), the framework provides a structured yet flexible approach to academic development.

The resource's primary strengths lie in its comprehensive coverage and practical utility. It offers detailed matrices for different academic levels (A-E), encompasses multiple aspects of academic work, and provides concrete examples of evidence and impact measures. This aligns with recent literature emphasising the need for clear methodologies in SoTL (Fanghanel, 2016; Rowland, 2024; Tierney, Park & Clark, 2021) and responds to Gurung's (2023) call for clearer frameworks in the field. The framework's practical approach to evidence curation provides concrete pathways for academics to demonstrate their engagement with scholarly practices, addressing Bloom's (2020) assertion that "scholarship doesn't have to be hard."

A key innovation of this framework is its adaptability to different academic levels and teaching proportions. This flexibility addresses a significant challenge identified in the literature, where faculty members often struggle to effectively evidence and document their scholarly approaches (Fukuzawa et al., 2020). The framework supports both scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning, helping bridge the gap between these two areas that Felten and Chick (2018) identified as problematic. Furthermore, the resource's alignment with regulatory requirements (TEQSA, 2022; Webb 2020) provides institutions with a robust mechanism for demonstrating compliance with scholarly activity standards whilst maintaining practical utility.

Usability was a key focus for this project. Whilst there are many excellence resources and guidance documents already available (Table 1), none of them appear to readily consolidate information in a user friendly, systematic and progressively developmental manner. Areas for evidence is perhaps the most frequent provision in these types of resources. Unfortunately, they provide little guidance beyond generalised demonstration of activities, for example, stating "include SET/SEC scores" with no further explanation of how to utilise this material or how it adds value to the discussion. Furthermore, whilst most resources provided clear guidance as to alignment of the level of appointment and requirements for areas of evidence, there are no current publicly available resources that address expectations associated with the fraction of an academic profile attributed to teaching. Yet this can be a highly impactful aspect of how an academic can appropriately and effectively demonstrate capabilities. This resource supports the commencement of more widespread discussions associated with expectations relative to profile fraction and opportunity.

The ability to articulate an impact-focused progression narrative for academic progression is considered crucial (Harzing, 2023, Sutherland, 2015). An articulated requirement in most institutional promotion materials, for example, James Cook University (Academic promotion procedure, n.d.) is the ability to provide persuasive, engaging arguments around scholarship and scholarly practice. Yet the ability to recognise, curate and consolidate evidence of impact is core to supporting this narration. The framework serves as a valuable tool for academic career progression in teaching. Its dual functionality as both a reflective tool and an evidence curation system enables academics to engage in meaningful reflection on their scholarly work and scholarship activities. The detailed examples of evidence types and impact measures, coupled

with useful reflective questions for self-assessment, provide practical support for academics at all career stages.

The resources provide a backbone for both universities or individuals that can be modified and adapted to their specific requirements. For universities this may include quantification of requirements relative to profiles and for all end users it allows for incorporation of additional criteria and sub-criteria as necessary. This is particularly important with emergent teaching modalities such as the use of generative artificial intelligence.

Conclusion

This synthesised framework represents a significant advancement in supporting teaching excellence in higher education. It addresses the critical need for structured approaches to evidencing scholarly teaching and learning practices, while providing practical solutions for academic career development as advocated in the literature (Dean & Geertsema, 2023; Plews & Amos, 2020). The framework's strength lies in its comprehensive nature, combining theoretical understanding with practical application, and its flexibility in accommodating different academic levels and teaching proportions. Its success in pilot implementations suggests significant potential for broader application across the sector.

The resource successfully bridges the gap between scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning, providing academics with clear pathways for evidencing their work and developing their careers. Its digital format ensures accessibility and ease of use, while its comprehensive approach supports both individual reflection and institutional requirements for demonstrating teaching excellence.

As the higher education landscape continues to evolve, this framework provides a sustainable and adaptable approach to documenting and developing scholarly teaching practice. Its success in pilot implementations suggests significant potential for broader application across the sector, supporting individual career development, curation of career narrative, professional development mechanisms to support effective teaching practices and enhance institutional quality assurance fostering a culture of continuous improvement for academic excellence.

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