

What is scholarship time?

For those of us on education-focused, or ‘Teaching and Scholarship’ academic pathways, scholarship time may too often be treated as a buffer: it is the slack that absorbs marking peaks, module admin and an ever-present email backlog. That misreads its purpose and risks limiting one’s ability to develop practice and progress one’s career. Scholarship is what keeps teaching intellectually alive, and it is a significant part of the role that makes T&S colleagues academics rather than teaching-delivery staff.

IN PRACTICE

Three overlapping areas of work

- 01 Staying current in the discipline**
Reading, thinking, and writing so that what we teach reflects where the field actually is.
- 02 Keeping our pedagogy under review**
Engaging with the literature on how students learn, trying new approaches, and evaluating those approaches’ effectiveness.
- 03 Making that work public**
Scholarship becomes the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) where it is systematic, evidenced and shared (e.g. through articles, conference papers, blog posts, etc.) so that others can test and build on it.

None of this needs to look like conventional research to count. A well-evaluated redesign of an assessment, written up for colleagues, is scholarship. A synthesis of existing evidence for a departmental discussion could also be classed as scholarship.

IN YOUR WORKLOAD

Protecting scholarship time

For T&S colleagues, protecting scholarship time, not letting it be sacrificed to temporarily placate the ever-present email backlog, is an important thing to do. There are ways to make the most of your scholarship time, including:

- Reviewing what time you are given for scholarship in your workload.
- Having a conversation with your line manager when that time is being sidelined.
- Setting aside dedicated scholarship time.

These are all useful ways to make sure you are identifying what you have available.

THE NEXT QUESTION *How do you want to make your scholarship time work for you?*