



The Continuum Model of Scholarship

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Foreword by the HEA

Through our work in the area of professional recognition and the award of Fellowships, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) has worked for over a decade to encourage those who teach and support learning to be engaged with continuing professional development not only in their subjects but also in their pedagogy. This is further underpinned by the requirement for all Fellows of the HEA to demonstrate that they use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research and scholarship. While across the globe over 76,000 people have demonstrated this approach and achieved Fellowship, encouraging scholarship - particularly the scholarship of learning and teaching- can be a challenge for a variety of reasons.

The aim of this paper is not to critique the key issues that may contribute to this challenge, but rather to introduce a possible new way of reflecting upon scholarship as a concept that may provide the foundation for practical tools to support both self-reflection and analysis. It would hope to facilitate discussions between individuals and their mentors or supervisors regarding engagement in scholarship and its impact upon teaching and learning.

The model that is outlined here emerged from the college-based higher education (CBHE) sector in which the particular issues in relation to the scholarship of teaching are well documented but would be of interest to those with responsibility for the enhancement of teaching and learning and associated scholarship across a wide variety of institutional settings.

1. Introduction

This paper offers an account of the development of a conceptual model of scholarship¹ and its potential as a developmental tool for the integration of scholarship with learning and teaching in higher education. It is intended that the model would be used as a self-assessment tool for HE practitioners in order to support their professional development and recognition by the Higher Education Academy, as well as a tool for line managers to identify, map and support the development of expertise at School/Faculty level or institutional level.

The Continuum Model of Scholarship (hereafter the CMS) has been developed in alignment with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for Teaching and Supporting Learning, but it also integrates aspects of the UK Quality Code with some of the current aspirations of the 2016 UK White Paper. The CMS has a fundamentally developmental or enabling stance; it does not attempt to explore the considerable amount of literature pertaining to definitions of scholarship or the teaching-research nexus. As will be seen later, this has been and continues to be, covered in very extensive detail and depth by the academic community. The CMS assumes an intrinsic interrelationship between scholarship and learning and teaching and is responsive not only to the 'complexity of professional roles in higher education, be it teaching, student support or the supervision of research students' (HEA Dimensions of the Framework 2016, p.1), but also to the considerable diversity of HE provision both in the UK and abroad; in this respect the CMS is pertinent to a wide variety of HE providers.

2. Background and setting

The impetus for the development of the Continuum Model of Scholarship initially arose in the context of college-based higher education (CBHE)². The status of

¹ The term 'scholarship' in this paper is interchangeable with the other common usage: 'scholarly activity'.

² CBHE accounts for 8.4% of all UK higher education with approximately 244 colleges delivering undergraduate and postgraduate courses to 159,000 students in the UK (HESA & HEIFES data 2015)

research and scholarship in CBHE has been an area with its particular challenges for some time (see for example, Lea and Simmons, 2012) and which has been more recently focused by the opportunity for colleges of further education to apply for either Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP) or Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP); an associated agenda for scholarship/scholarly activity has been outlined in corresponding documentation and guidance for applicant organisations by the Quality Assurance Agency (e.g. QAA August 2004; January 2013).

While HEIs have been moderately comfortable with assumed understandings of what is denoted as 'research' – as defined by the conventions of the Frascati Manual³ (2002) – further education colleges delivering higher education have for some time wrangled with notions and definitions of 'scholarship', which is not only embedded within the UK Quality Code and other recent QAA documentation (together with the term 'advanced scholarship'), but which is more implicitly aligned to the emphasis by colleges upon prioritising high level teaching and learning over and above 'research'. Thus, in the narrative relating to, and deriving from, colleges of further education delivering HE, the paramount driver for scholarship and advanced scholarship (and to a lesser extent, 'research') has been the direct improvement of learning and teaching. The report by King et al (2014) reviewed FE colleges' understandings and practice of scholarship drawing upon information from among others, the Quality Assurance Agency, the Institute for Learning (IfL), the Learning and Skills Research Network, private providers, good practice guides from HEFCE, and research projects (e.g. Parry et al 2012), and triangulated this against interviews from around 60 college representatives. Notably, within the report the authors stated that 'of the many [definitions of scholarship] in circulation, most are predicated on a traditional university-based setting and thus do not transfer easily to HE delivered in FE' (p.2) a sentiment echoed by Healey et al., (2014)⁴ and that it therefore 'raises the prospect of an extended definition of scholarship', one which

³ The Frascati Manual defines research as follows '.. creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.'

⁴ The scholarship agenda in CBHE has been problematised by what Healey, Jenkins and Lea refer to as 'the predominance of the yardstick which measures the quality of scholarship by how close it approximates the kinds of original research which typify academic departments in the most research-intensive universities'(p.10)

has been most clearly articulated with the inception of the AoC Scholarship Project⁵ where understandings of scholarship and scholarly activity are informed by the work of the American academic and scholar Ernest Boyer (1928-1995).

3. Towards a developmental model of scholarship

What is now widely known as the Boyer Model of Scholarship has been identified as being particularly resonant with possibilities across the HE sector. With its beginnings in the 1990s in American higher education (and more recently in the UK), the Boyer Model has given rise to concepts such as 'research-led teaching', 'research-informed teaching', the 'scholarship of teaching and learning' and so on. As a former president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Boyer had been struggling with the sense of academic elitism which seemed to him to permeate the American University system. Boyer challenged the 'dominant view, [is that] to be a scholar is to be a researcher – and publication is the primary yardstick by which scholarly productivity is measured ... the reward system has been limited to honour only those engaged in research and publication' (Boyer, 2016 p.56). Boyer argued that there was a need to 'confront the old teaching versus research debate, and to try to give scholarship a broader, more capacious meaning' (p.68); as a result he proposed four elements or 'functions' of scholarship:

- > The scholarship of discovery – original research; generation of new knowledge; peer-reviewed publishing; original empirical study
- > The scholarship of integration- seeing connections across disciplines; integrating new discoveries into a broader body of knowledge
- > The scholarship of application – the solution of problems both within the academic community and the wider social context
- > The scholarship of teaching – keeping abreast with developments in the field, engagement in pedagogic research, disseminating good practice in one's specialist field, ongoing reflective evaluation of own practice

⁵ The national AoC scholarship project 2015-18 'aims to support the development and embedding of a distinct college higher education scholarly ethos across the sector'

Boyer's hope was that in the practice of an academic, these four elements or functions would be 'separate, yet overlapping' (p. 68). Despite Lapworth's commentary that this reformulation of scholarship into a four-way typology would 'provide a way of thinking of research and teaching as part of the same synergistic continuum rather than as separate, discrete entities' (Lapworth, 2004 p.105), this hoped-for 'overlapping' is less than evident in institutional practice.

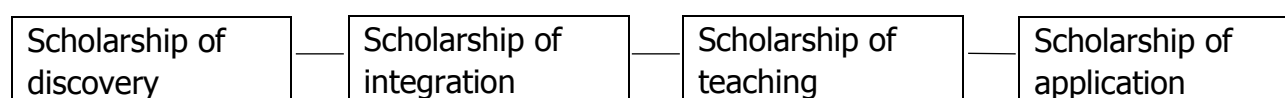


Fig 1: Boyer's four functions of scholarship

4. Challenges

This author had introduced the Boyer Model to academic staff in 2009, embedding it into ongoing staff development, annual appraisals and scholarship audits. However, over time the 'compartmentalised' nature of the Boyer model with its four discrete functions did not appear to be satisfying particular questions which were arising: What model of scholarship or scholarly activity would be needed that was clearly developmental and could be embedded into both individual and institutional continuous professional development? What model of scholarship might be appropriate to the sector and to a diversity of subject disciplines? How might this look in terms of staff being enabled to self-reflectively evaluate and plan their own scholarship aligned to teaching and learning, and how might it inform strategic planning for the ongoing professional development of staff? How would scholarship and learning and teaching interrelate outwith the Boyer model, as an 'interdependent whole, rather than as a hierarchy of functions' (Karlsson 2007, p.281)? Further external drivers became increasingly important in this re-evaluation, particularly, the Dimensions of the Framework (UKPSF 2011) and the requirements for Professional Recognition across the categories of HEA Fellowship; the requirements of the UK Quality Code (QAA, 2013), and more latterly, the 2015 White Paper with its specific focus upon the delivery of high quality learning and teaching in Higher Education (BIS, 2016).

Thus, over time, the Boyer model was seen to be becoming increasingly unfeasible in terms of enabling and developing staff, since academic practitioners unwittingly and unconsciously located their practice into (mainly) one of Boyer's four categories

of scholarship, sidestepping Boyer's hope for 'separate, yet overlapping' scholarship functions. Indeed, the very recent study by Fanghanel et al. does identify that, 'the 'overlapping' of Boyer's categories is not fully recognised by the academic community; the scholarship of discovery clearly overpowering all others in the academic 'psyche,' and in academic structures.' (Fanghanel et al, 2015 p.15). As a foil, therefore, the concept of a non-'compartmentalised', developmental model of scholarship was explored by this author, a model of scholarship which might fully acknowledge the professional diversity of staff in terms of both experience and maturity in scholarship and teaching, and one which would recognise the dynamic of a *continuum* of developing expertise in scholarship rather than static categorisation.

5. Scholarship as a continuum

The UK Quality Code's broad definition of scholarship - which 'may include conventional research, the 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' (UK QC B3 p.13) – does itself reflect Boyer's scholarship of discovery, integration, application and teaching but the Code is also careful to indicate varied understandings and practice across higher education provision, and adds that while 'scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education, their nature will depend on...the provider or providers of the programme' (chapter B3 p.14).

In this sense, rather than scholarship being defined by a particular Boyerian category, the CMS suggests that staff scholarship within (and without) any particular institution exists on a continuum which traverses four different levels of reach and influence: at programme level, departmental (or faculty level), institutional level, and extra-institutional level. This mirrors the study by Fanghanel et al which postulates a theoretical framework for examining SoTL, namely, the micro level – the individual academic engaged with students, and engagement with the disciplinary community of the department; the meso level – the institution's associated strategic direction; and the macro level of national and international frameworks and communities (op cit p.4). It also mirrors the four levels described in Jenkins's work on teaching-research relations: the individual level; programme level; departmental level ; institutional/national level (Jenkins 2004, p. 30–31), and the four levels of student partnership settings suggested by Healey et al (2014 p. 53-4): module; programme; department-faculty; institution; national-international. However, in the CMS it should be noted that any continuum of academic scholarship, in terms of reach and

influence, should be seen to run through these levels rather than be constrained within and by them. The following schematic illustrates this continuum of scholarship with its overlapping of reach and influence:

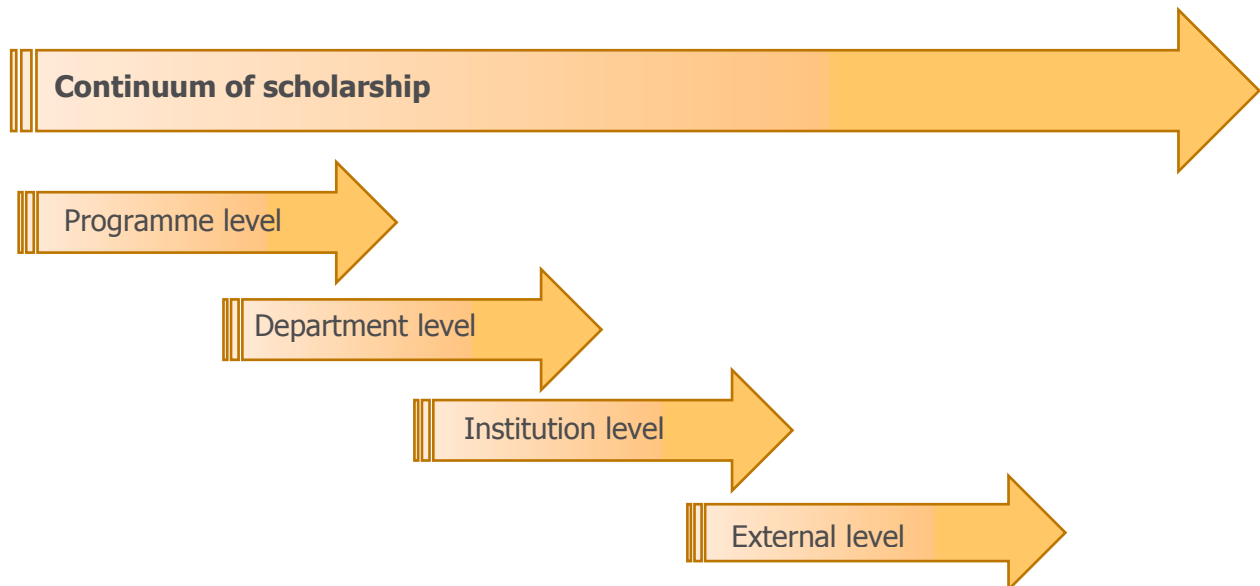


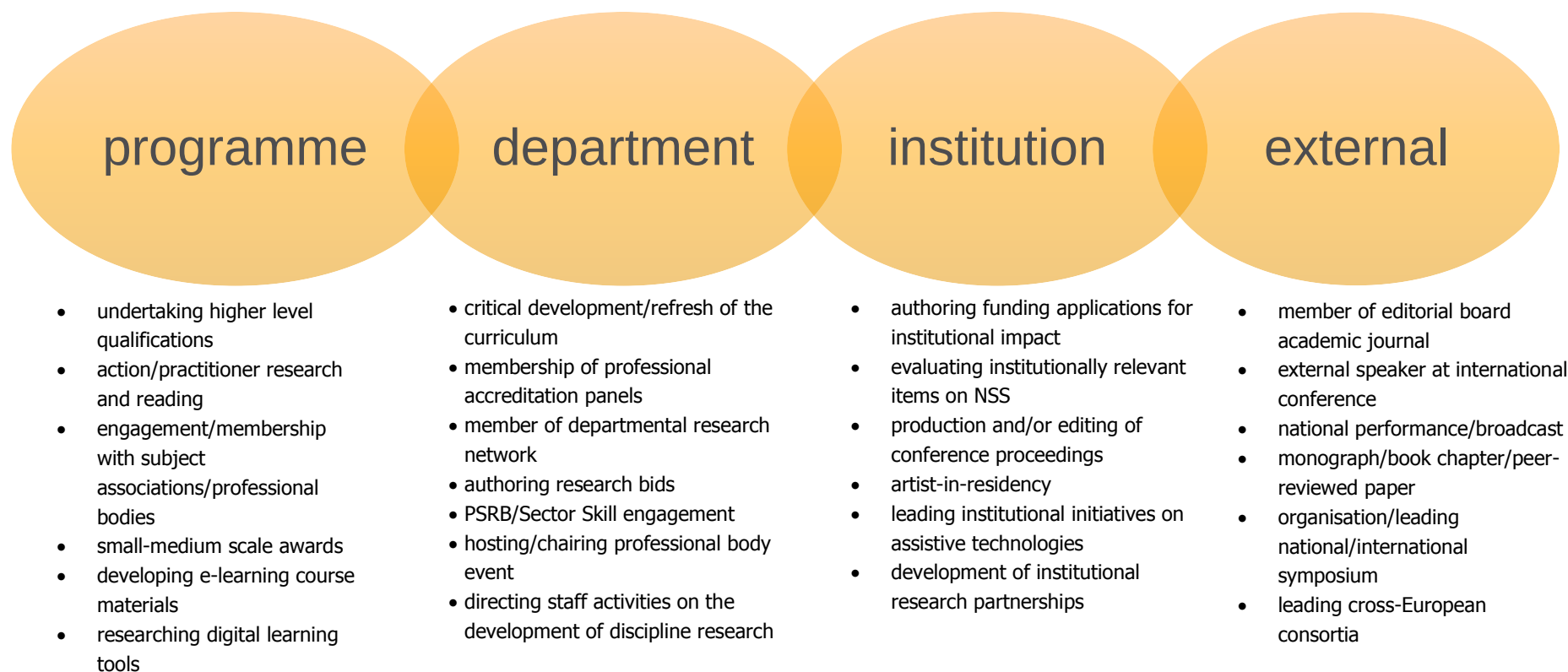
Fig 2: The continuum of scholarship: reach and influence

In order to illustrate this, the following schematic outlines a suggested list of exemplars to demonstrating such a continuum of staff expertise in scholarship, fully bearing in mind that different institutions have differing research and scholarship policies and strategies, with linked workload models. The Continuum Model enables each institution to align these whilst maintaining the criteria of reach and influence at individual, departmental, institutional and extra-institutional levels. The list is indicative and by no means exhaustive:

Fig 3: Exemplars of scholarship as a continuum

[Note: Different institutions may have differing research and scholarship policies, strategies, together with linked workload models. The CMS allows each institution to align these with the criteria of reach and influence (programme/departmental/institutional/external) and subsequent correspondence with the UKPSF]

Axis 1 The continuum of scholarship: reach and influence



6. The continuum of scholarship: intersections with the locus of learning and teaching

As stated in the introduction, this paper does not attempt to explore the very extensive literature pertaining to what is sometimes referred to as the teaching-research nexus (see for example, Hattie & Marsh (1996); Elton (2005); Trowler & Wareham (2007); Healey et al (2010)). Historically, early UK governmental reviews assumed a self-evident interaction between clearly defined understandings of what constituted 'research' and its connection to teaching and learning; the Robbins Committee of 1963 spoke optimistically of a 'reciprocal benefit' between research activity and teaching and learning in an environment where 'publication is a form of teaching' (p.182). The Dearing Report (1997) then appeared to open up the terminology of 'scholarship' and emphasised, 'the important role of research and scholarship in informing and enhancing teaching' (p.115). Shortly after, the HEFCE review of research (2000) began to incorporate more overtly the notion of scholarship as separate from research activity: 'teaching needs scholarship, and scholarship depends on, and is distinct from research. What is required is for all teaching to be animated by scholarship and for scholarship in turn to be informed by research' (para. 23). But as Lapworth points out, it was only until the White Paper of 2003 that 'research and teaching were finally broken apart' with an admission of 'ample evidence of the highest quality teaching being achieved in circumstances which are not research intensive' (p.28) with a subsequent recommendation to create 'teaching only universities' (p.103). A decade later, much of this has now come full circle.

Within this flux of understandings, the Boyer model of scholarship provided a springboard for a range of approaches on the back of UK government recommendations. One writer has stated that, 'bearing in mind the impact that Scholarship Reconsidered has had on academe is all the more impressive when one considers how brief the section of that report is which lays out his vision of teaching as a scholarly pursuit' (Beach, 2016 p.13). As stated earlier in this paper, the 'research-teaching nexus' has, according to Haslett, 'spawned a range of terminologies and methodologies, for example, research-led teaching; research-oriented teaching; research-based teaching; research-informed teaching' etc. (Haslett, 2009 p. 1). The extensive HEA report by Alan Jenkins on teaching-research relations, together with Healey's ever-burgeoning bibliographies on teaching-research links and the scholarship of teaching and learning – both of which currently stand at around 800 articles each – illustrate the immense diversity of understandings and applications with respect to learning and teaching. In this context therefore, the Continuum Model of Scholarship does not attempt to impose a single one-size-fits-all approach. Indeed, the recommendation by Lucas et al in 2008

was that the '(HEA) Academy should support institutional and department level leaders in developing a conception of teaching-research relations that is appropriate to their institutional contexts' (p. 57). The UK Quality Code echoes this sentiment: '[O]ne strength of UK higher education is the diversity of its providers in terms of mission and range of provision. Each higher education provider sets out, in a form it deems appropriate, and implements its strategic approach to learning and teaching, indicating how it promotes student learning across all of its provision...' (UKQC B3 p.9). Thus, using again the four-level structure outlined earlier to delineate the continuum of scholarship, the following schematic illustrates the range of learning and teaching loci of activity which may be evident in the practice of individual academics, or, for example, within cross-section of departmental and/or institutional practice:

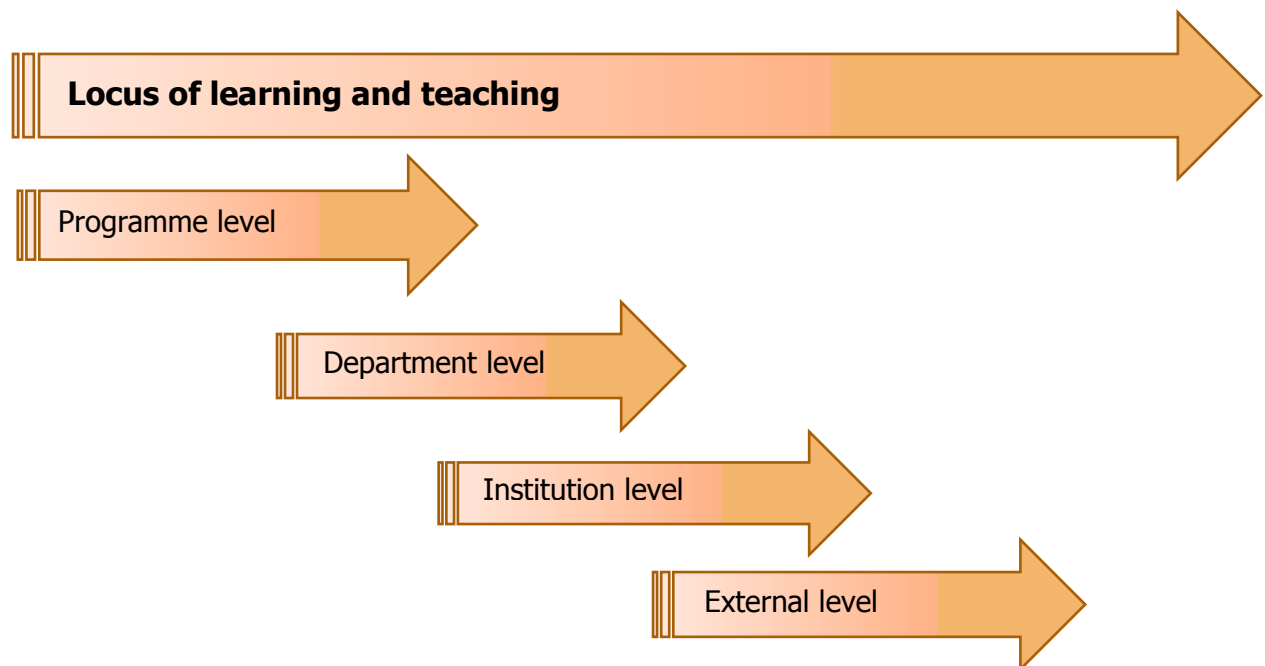
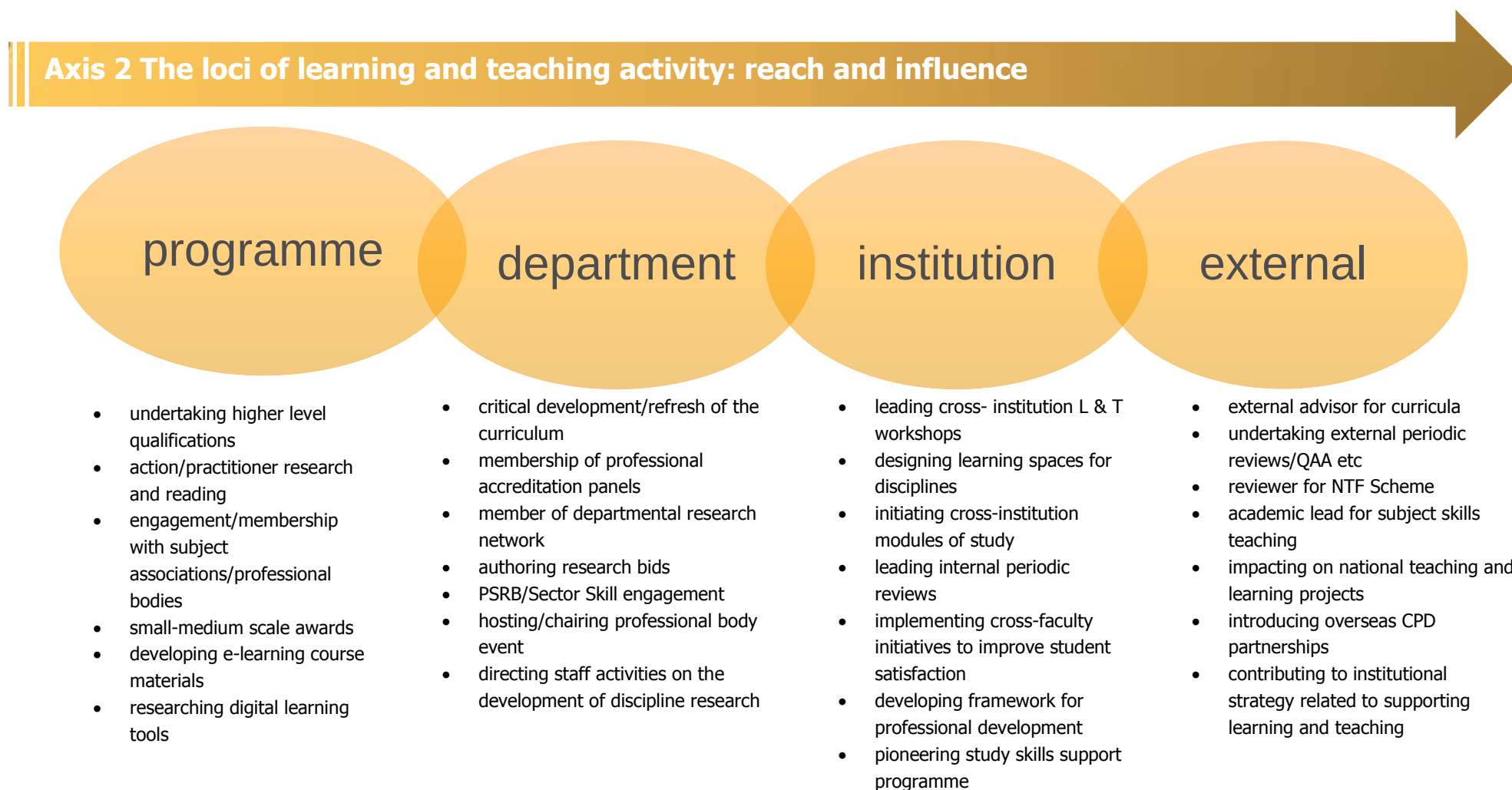


Fig 4: The loci of learning and teaching practice

A suggested range of learning and teaching activities drawn from corresponding to this continuum of reach and influence in learning and teaching is outlined here:

Fig. 5 Exemplars of learning and teaching as a continuum

[Institutions have differing learning and teaching strategies. The CMS allows each to align practice and own exemplars with the structure outlined and subsequent correspondence with the UKPSF]



The above can be represented schematically as forming two axes:

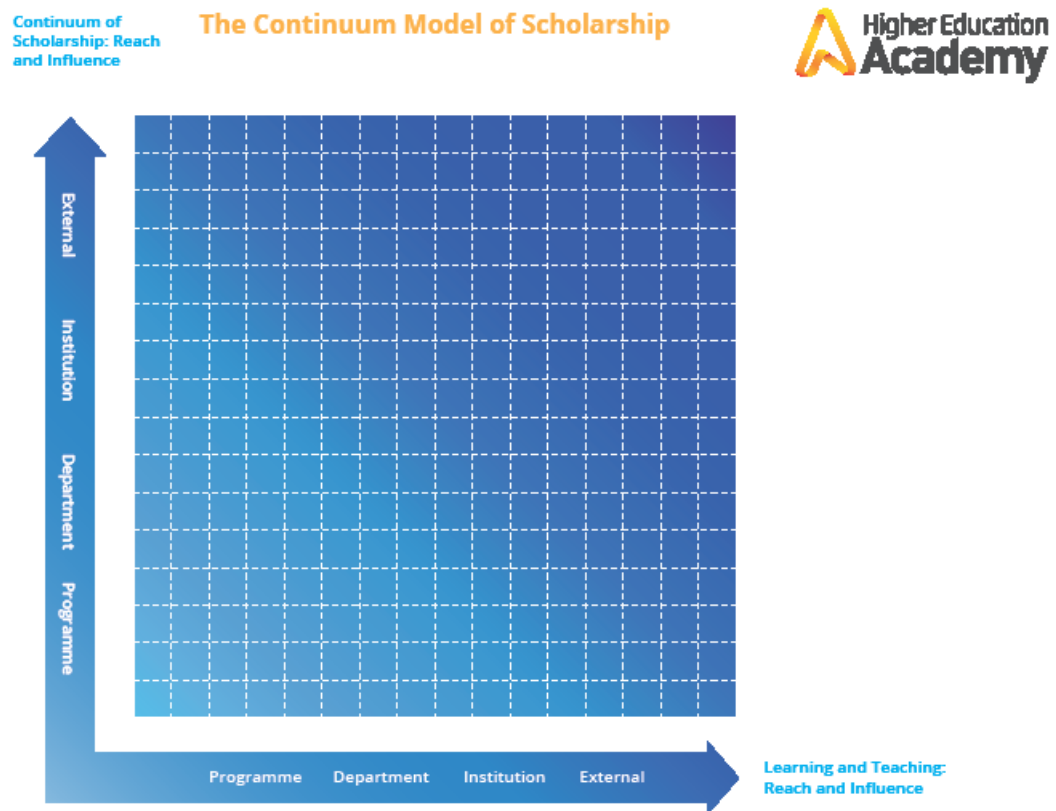


Fig 6: The two axes of the Continuum Model of Scholarship

7. Summary

The Continuum Model of Scholarship outlined above is designed to be flexible and responsive to the complex and nuanced nature of Higher Education settings and the practitioners who work within them. In summary, the CMS – as with the UK Professional Standards Framework – emphasises the developmental aspect of practitioner scholarship. It is not framed by typologies or discrete categories of scholarship and assumes that scholarship exists in a two-way iterative interaction with the practice of learning and teaching. Furthermore, the CMS accepts that the impact and influence of scholarship on learning and teaching should be appropriate to the individual institutional context

In conclusion, the Continuum Model of Scholarship can help answer the question: 'where are we now – in terms of scholarship and learning and teaching – and where do we want to be?' by enabling the developmental engagement of individual academic practitioners in higher education. It enables those teaching and supporting learning to 're-imagine' with their integration of scholarship with learning and teaching; it enables these practitioners to self-reflectively locate their own practice on a continuum rather than situated in discrete categories. Additionally, it can provide academic managers with 'snapshots' of staff expertise and skills located in departments/faculties to enable the local planning of CPD and related scholarship activities, as well as provide an institutional audit tool to enhance the relational landscape of scholarship with learning and teaching.

8. The UK Professional Standards Framework

Finally, the schematic below illustrates both 'axes' of the CMS and how they align to the categories of Fellowship conferred by the HEA (here denoted as zones of integrated scholarly practice: D1= Associate Fellow; D2= Fellow; D3= Senior Fellow; D4= Principal Fellow):

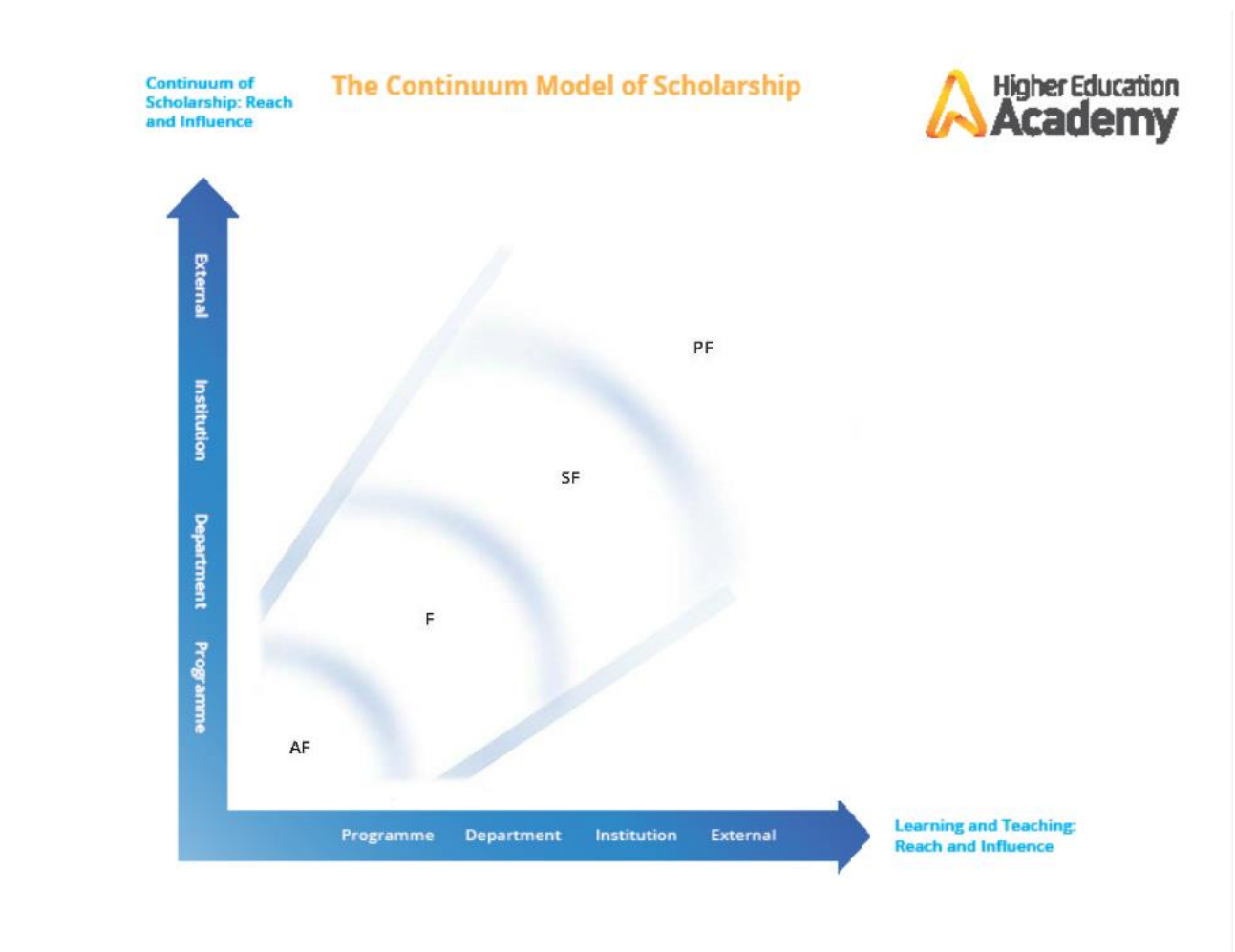


Fig 7: Axes on the Continuum Model of Scholarship and zones of integrated scholarly practice within the UKPSF

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