



## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

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Approved by	ACADEMIC BOARD
Responsible Body	ACADEMIC BOARD
Approval date	10 MARCH 2023
Effective date	10 MARCH 2023
Review date	10 MARCH 2025
Superseded documents	<i>ACT Research and Scholarship Strategy</i>
Related documents	<i>Supervisors and Supervision Policy Research Active Policy Supervisor Register ACT Ranking Lists Research and Scholarship Networks ACT Grant Policy Research &amp; Scholarship Publications form Scholarly Activities form Integrating Scholarship with Teaching and Learning form</i>

### 1. PURPOSE

To ensure that academic and teaching staff are active in scholarship that informs their teaching, academic staff involved in research supervision are active in research, and that an agreed level of refereed publication output and scholarly activity is maintained across the affiliated colleges of the ACT.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**ACT** is the Australian College of Theology Limited.

**Academic Board** is the Academic Board of the **ACT**.

**ACT Ranking Lists** provide indicative rankings of Journals and Publishers and are maintained by **Research Committee**.

**Affiliated College** is an institution approved to offer an accredited higher education award of the **ACT**.

**Confessional scholarship** refers to academic publications (books, book chapters and journal articles subject to typical refereeing processes), that are about how the Christian faith is understood and applied to the churches, Christian organisations and other ACT stakeholders. It is faith-based “integration” and “application,” adapting the second and third Boyer (1990) categories to the ACT’s context, and is a subset of **Scholarship**. It does not include popular writing, blogs, etc.

**Course of study** is a course of **units** that lead to an **award** given by the **ACT**.

**FTE** stands for Full-Time Equivalent.



**Graduate School of Research (GSR)** is the division of **ACT** which oversees research and research training.

**HDR candidate** see **Higher Degree by Research candidate**.

**HESF (2021)** is the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

**Higher Degree by Research candidate** is a candidate enrolled in the MTh, DMin, PhD or ThD degrees. Also known as an **HDR candidate**.

**Research** is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way by a higher education provider so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings.

**Research Committee (RC)** is the committee which oversees research and research training within the **ACT** through the **Graduate School of Research**.

**Scholarship** refers to those activities concerned with gaining new or improved understanding, or appreciation and insights into a field of knowledge, or engaging with and keeping up to date with advances in the field.

**Supervisor** is a person who supervises an **HDR candidate** enrolled in a research course of the **ACT**.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all ACT academic staff.

### 4. BACKGROUND

HESF (2021) B1.1.2 requires that “academic and teaching staff are active in scholarship that informs their teaching, and active in research when engaged in research student supervision, supported by the provider.”

### 5. POLICY STATEMENT

The ACT is committed to biblically focused teaching and learning informed by rigorous research and scholarship.

### 6. PRINCIPLES

#### General

- 6.1 All academic and teaching staff must be active in scholarship that informs their teaching and academic staff involved in research supervision must be active in research.
- 6.2 Scholarship activities include, but are not limited to, the following: publications such as journal articles, book chapters, books, translations, edited books, and book reviews; conference and seminar attendance, organisation, and presentations; participation in panels or acting as a respondent at conferences and seminars; editing a book series or academic journal; membership of journal or other editorial boards; membership and leadership of scholarly societies; membership of accreditation panels for



academic institutions; peer review of journal articles, book chapters and books; reports for denominational or government bodies; participation in ACT Research & Scholarship Networks, ACT PD and HDR conferences, ACT consortium academic committees, and/or affiliated college research seminars; HDR candidature; study leave; secondment; and scholarly reading.

- 6.3 The requirements for **supervisors** of **HDR candidates** are outlined in the *Supervisors and Supervision Policy* in conjunction with the *Research Active Policy*. The *Research Active Policy* also describes the process for classifying publications as **Research** or **Confessional scholarship**, informed by **ACT Ranking Lists**. Qualified **supervisors** are listed in the *Supervisor Register* and supervisory teams approved for HDR candidates by **Research Committee**.
- 6.4 **Affiliated colleges** must provide support for their academic staff to undertake the necessary scholarship and research relevant to their role, including time and funding for study leave, resources, and seminar and conference participation.
- 6.5 The **ACT** provides support for research and scholarship through the programs and resources of the **Graduate School of Research**, Annual PD and HDR conferences, Research & Scholarship Networks, and the ACT scholarship and grants programs.

#### Reporting and Benchmarking

- 6.6 Academic staff must report on their publications and scholarly activities at least annually using the relevant forms: *Research & Scholarship Publications* and *Scholarly Activities*.
- 6.7 The ACT Research Department will use this data to produce annual reports at both **ACT** and **affiliated college** levels for submission by the Dean to Academic Board.
- 6.8 While individual academic staff may vary in where they focus their time and energy and have differing levels of opportunity and ability, the ACT has set the following minimum benchmarks:
  - Benchmark 1: An average of five points over five years for refereed research and confessional scholarship publications per teaching FTE at both **ACT** and **affiliated college** levels.
  - Benchmark 2: An average of five scholarship activities per teaching FTE per year at both **ACT** and **affiliated college** levels.
  - Benchmark 3: A minimum of fifty research publications over a six-year period in FoRs 5004 (Religious Studies) and 5005 (Theology) across the **ACT** consortium as a whole only.
- 6.9 Affiliated colleges which do not meet a minimum benchmark will be noted in yearly reports. If a college does not meet a benchmark in a single year by a significant amount (greater than 20%), or for more than one consecutive



year, the affiliated college Principal will be required to provide the Dean with a plan for reaching the benchmark by the next year, and this plan will be monitored until the benchmark is achieved. Sustained failure to meet the minimum benchmark will be referred to the Board of Directors for further action in accordance with the Affiliation Agreement.

### Calculating Teaching FTE, Refereed Publications and Scholarly Activities

- 6.10 **Academic Load (i.e. teaching FTE)** is the overall load of a typical academic/lecturer that contains teaching, administration and research. A full-time academic has a load of 1.0.
- Teaching includes all teaching-related tasks and, where relevant, HDR supervision.
  - Administration involves all administrative activities expected of a typical academic but excludes the following: non-academic administration such as a separate role as Registrar or Chaplain; management responsibilities of affiliated college Principals and the ACT Dean and Deputy Dean.
  - Research involves all research-related tasks except for HDR supervision.
- 6.11 “Teaching only” academics (and casual teaching staff) do not have a research load and are not required to conduct research. They are included in the “teaching FTE” calculation, but not in calculations of research load, even if they have a modest allocation of research time to complete HDR awards. Any relevant publications are still collected for **affiliated college** and **ACT** statistics.
- 6.12 Academic staff who have no publications are still included in the teaching FTE calculation.
- 6.13 Current load will be used for calculations.
- 6.14 Where load figures are not available for an academic, estimates based on similar ACT academics will be used.
- 6.15 For refereed research and confessional scholarship publications, books count as five points; book chapters and journal articles count as one point each. Edited books, book reviews and (unpublished) conference presentations are not counted.
- 6.16 For scholarship activities, books count as five points; all other publications and activities count as one point each.
- 6.17 Shared authorship is weighted to avoid double counting within the ACT, but such weighting is not applied to external authorship.

### Scholarship Informing Teaching and Learning

- 6.18 Academic staff will report on how their teaching and learning has been informed by their scholarship and scholarly activities on an annual basis using the relevant form: *Integrating Scholarship with Teaching and Learning*.



- 6.19 Examples of the impact of scholarship on teaching and learning include, but are not limited to, the following: providing additional resources; modifying assessments; updating bibliographies, textbook, course notes, and/or the LMS (e.g., Moodle); introducing new learning activities and/or teaching methods; modifying the unit outline and/or syllabus (unit review); and creating new units. It can also involve contributing to course reviews and other wider teaching and learning review activities.
- 6.20 The *Integrating Scholarship with Teaching and Learning* form will facilitate a cross-check on the reporting of scholarly publications and scholarly activities. Academic staff who have not completed it will be followed up by the ACT Research Department.
- 6.21 At times, academic staff may not have undertaken recent activities integrating scholarship with teaching and learning due to leave or other circumstances, in which case they will report the reason(s) they were unable to meet this requirement and supply their plan for achieving it in the coming year.
- 6.22 The ACT Research Department will use this data to produce annual reports at both **ACT** and **affiliated college** levels for submission by the Dean to Academic Board.

## 7. RELATED LEGISLATION

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(HESF 2021\)](#)

[Higher Education Support Act \(HESA\) 2003](#)

## 8. REFERENCES

[TEQSA Guidance Note on Scholarship](#)

[TEQSA Guidance Note on Research and Research Training](#)

## 9. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	Academic Board	10 March 2023	10 March 2023	New policy approved
1	Board of Directors	27 March 2023	27 March 2023	Endorsed and approved new policy

*Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the ACT regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at*

<https://www.actheology.edu.au/documents>.