



The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers
in higher education

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Examples from Australian universities

The Implications of Scholarly Research in Urban Planning Courses

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Broad discipline area:

Architecture and Building

- Urban Planning

Year level:

- Fifth year undergraduate

TRN strategy:

- Teach research methods, skills and techniques explicitly within subjects

Teaching and learning context:

- Final year thesis preparation subject

Brief description of the initiative:

The *Research Design* course is a fifth year core subject in the Bachelor of Planning Program, with typical enrolment numbers of 35-40 students. The subject canvasses conceptual and methodological issues of research design in urban planning studies as a foundation for major research investigations. The primary focus is on the substantive c15,000 word research project in the final year of the planning degree. The course considers fundamental questions about research paradigms, explores the realities of the scholarly research process, and covers practical topics such as writing and presentation. Students gain an understanding of the theoretical, analytical, and technical bases for the construction and delivery of research projects. Students have had exposure to an array of research tasks earlier in the degree. This subject revisits and integrates this orientation into a more holistic framework emphasising the use, relevance and standards of the scholarly research literature.

The subject is a mix of presentations by the course lecturer, guest presentations on best practice by experienced researchers and former students recounting their experiences. Formal tutorial and informal workshop sessions break the class into smaller groups. Another key element is one-on-one consultations with the course lecturer tailored to individual interests and needs.

The core assessment outcomes are written documents of various kinds required continuously through session prepared to specific criteria and standards. Lectures, tutorials and assessments are intended to guide students toward a developed thesis proposal and plan of study addressing critical heads of consideration (problem context, objectives, theoretical context, methodology, data sources, and structure). A critical review of the relevant scholarly literature - domestic and international – specifically targeted at either debates in the field, potential theoretical models or methodological approaches is required. This is prepared to the format and submission standards of a refereed journal article. The suite of smaller complementary tasks varies from year to year but is targeted at information retrieval, bibliographical and/or précis-writing skills.

For further details:

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