



The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers
in higher education

www.trnexus.edu.au

Self-Review Framework for Academic Staff Members

This self-review framework is for academic staff members. Academics with teaching roles are the target group for this set of questions, which include (a) what academics do at an individual level to link teaching and research and (b) how individual academics contribute to their Department's ethos and culture regarding the teaching-research nexus.

The purpose of the instrument is to raise awareness of the various dimensions of the teaching-research nexus (TRN) and to encourage academic staff to consider ways in which they might make effective links between discipline-based research, learning and teaching across year levels and disciplines.

You do not need to answer all questions. We suggest that you:

- a) start by skimming through the six dimensions below so that you are aware of the range of ways in which the TRN might have a role to play in learning and teaching;
- b) then focus on an area of particular interest and relevance to you, your teaching and your career.

1. Your University and the TRN

- Does your university have a stated view on how it conceives the teaching-research nexus?
- If no, would it be helpful to do so? What would be useful to include?
- If yes, could it be improved to be more comprehensive/ useful?

2. The TRN in Your Department/School/Faculty

- Thinking about your Department/School/Faculty/Group and your University, in what ways do you make connections between research and teaching in your day-to-day teaching activities?
- In what specific ways is the TRN useful for inducting students into your disciplines' values, practices and ethics?
- What does your Department/School/Faculty do to encourage you to link teaching with research? (e.g. senior staff acting as mentors/role models for linking these activities, peer-review of TRN linkages, professional development seminars)
- In what ways are academic staff supported to develop the TRN for a specific program of study? (e.g. resources to develop new teaching modes and materials, staff development, trialling periods, appropriate workload allowances)
- Is there a 'community of practice' around the TRN in your Department/School/Faculty?

3. The TRN and Student Learning

- In what specific ways do you think your students benefit from the connections you make between research and teaching?
- How are students made aware of the research activity in their departments? (e.g. through guest lectures, site visits)
- What opportunities do undergraduates have to participate in departmental research projects (e.g. as research assistants) and to disseminate their research findings and activities?
- What opportunities are there for students to become involved in the TRN outside formal courses? (e.g. through research seminars, 'observer' roles in research teams, student journals)
- What strategies are used to make students made aware of postgraduate research opportunities?
- What deliberate efforts are made to help students feel part of the research community of the university?
- What strategies are used to encourage students to document and reflect on how research training/knowledge contributes to their employability?

4. The TRN in the Curriculum

- Can you clearly identify where research-based learning is integrated into your teaching program?
- In what specific ways is the TRN manifested in units and courses that you teach? (e.g. through outcomes, processes, assessment items, use of specific learning methods like enquiry-based learning)
- What efforts are made to ensure there is a developmental sequence of the TRN, from first year to final year and into postgraduate courses?
- At what point in the program do undergraduate students learn about research methods, skills and ethics?
- In what specific ways are research skills and the links between teaching and research embedded in systems for approval and review of courses/subjects?
- At what point(s) in the program do undergraduate students have opportunities to apply research methods, skills and ethics?

5. Rewarding and Recognising the TRN

- In what ways do you document the TRN in your own practice so as to enhance chances of reward and recognition?

6. Evaluating the Impact of the TRN

- In what ways are students' views on their perception of and engagement with the TRN collected?
- How is such evidence used to inform future developments of the TRN?
- How do you monitor and evaluate the TRN in our courses/units/programs?
- What strategies do you use to assure the quality of teaching-research linkages in your local context? (e.g., do you benchmark your practices with colleagues in other parts of the university or with equivalent courses/programs in other universities?)