



How can we cope? Enhancing education practice in disrupted higher education

Liz Johnson, Deakin University

...with search help from my research assistant, Google AI

Images

- *James Smith on Unsplash*
- *Pixabay creators: Pexels , Peggy_Marco, Whitney Hoffman, geralt*
- *Wikicommons*



How can we *thrive*? **Enhancing education practice in disrupted higher education**

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Universities: an ideas ecosystem

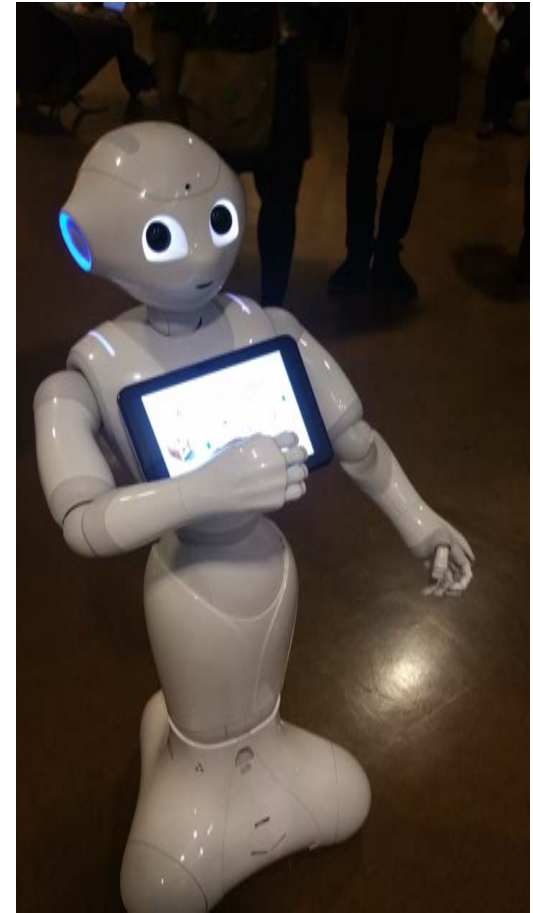
Teaching and learning:
Knowledge, skills & application
Review and reflection
Fresh perspectives



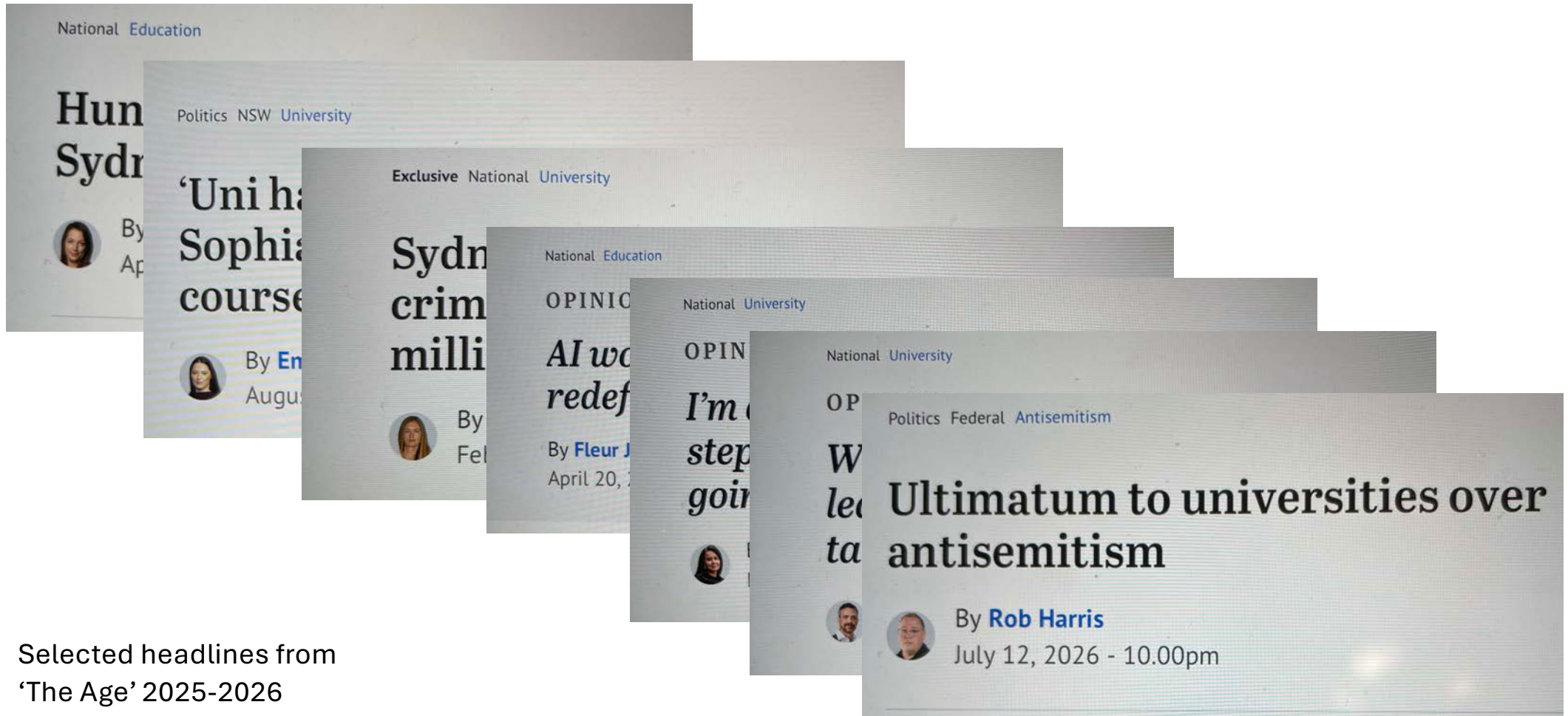
Research and innovation:
Discovery, analysis, synthesis
Innovation and application
Ways of thinking



Global disruption

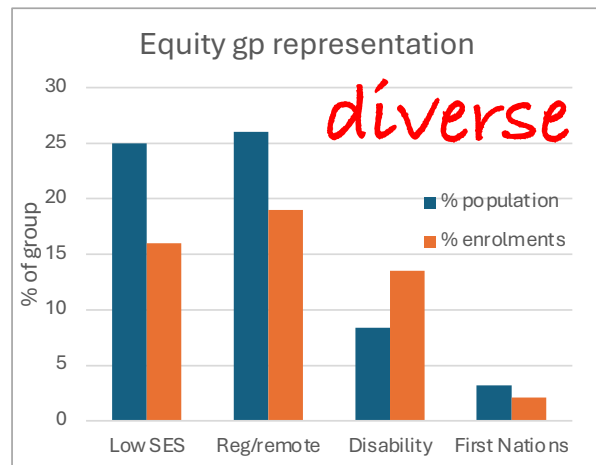
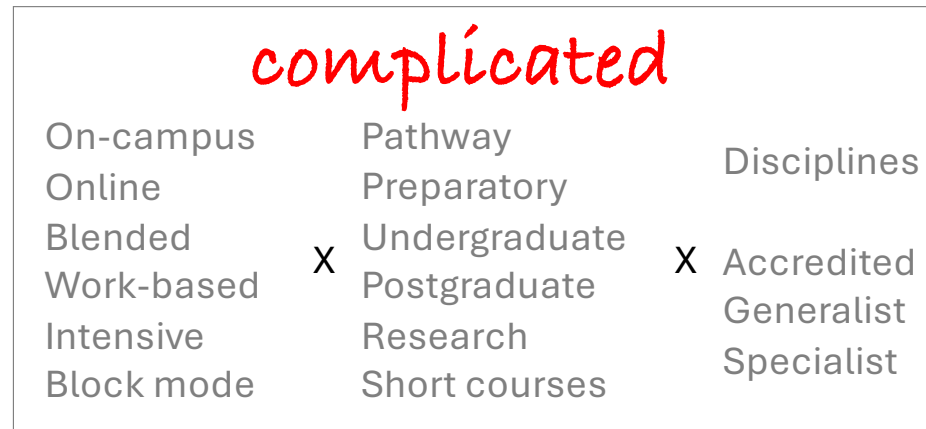
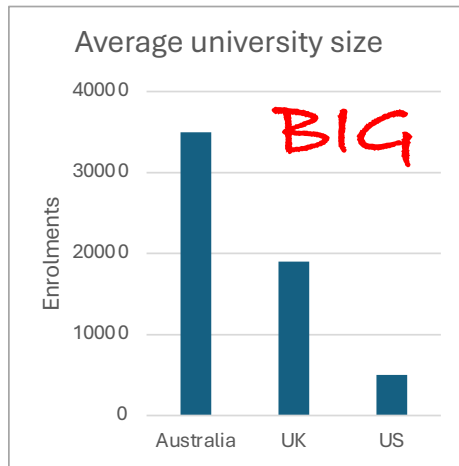


Universities under pressure



Selected headlines from
'The Age' 2025-2026

University education is complex



...and pressured

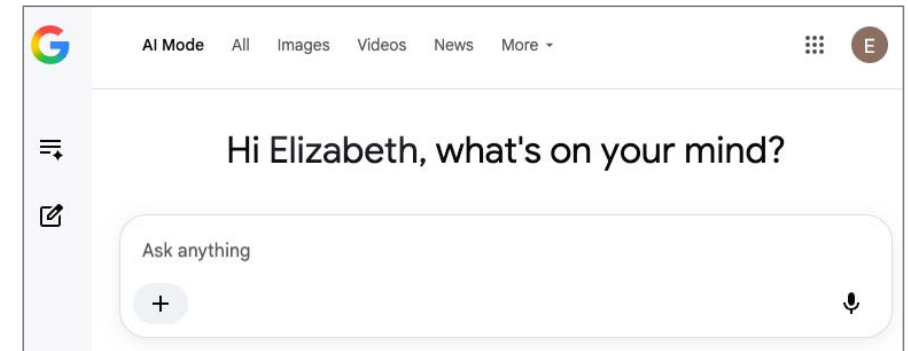
FUTURE CAMPUS

News ▾ Watch Events ▾ Advertise

Workload Drives Mental Health Issues in Australian HE: Study

By Tim Winkler || June 9, 2026

Knowledge and learning are changing



Finding sources
Reading
Interpreting
Extracting information
Constructing a view
Analysis
Critical thinking
Evaluation
Judgement

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Courses and assessment is being redesigned

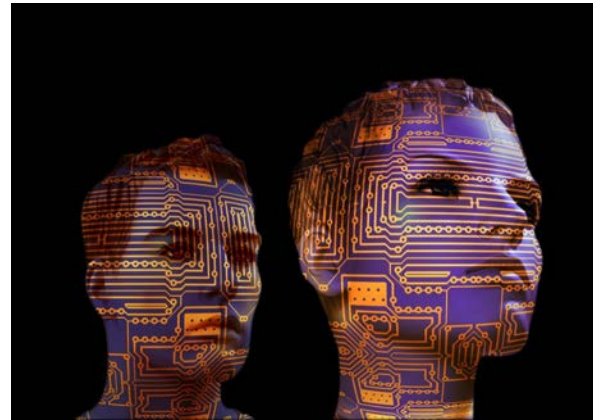
Assessment reform

Performance not just product
Program-level design

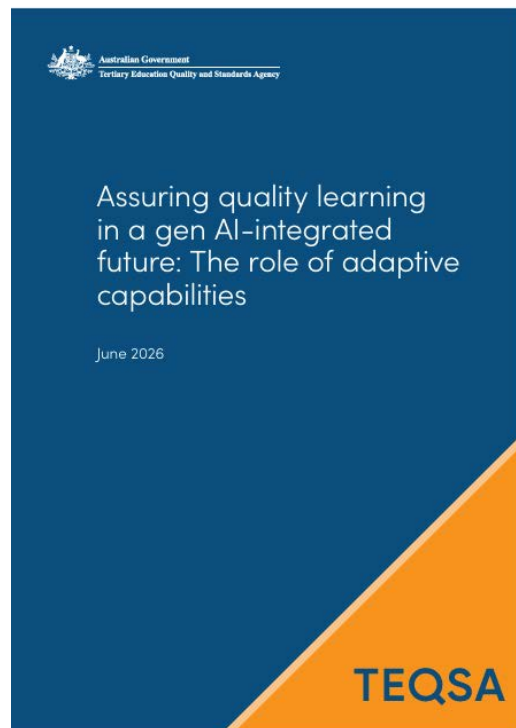


Learning objectives

Thinking skills - evaluative judgement
Human capabilities
GenAI and digital literacies
Resilience and adaptability
Application and employability

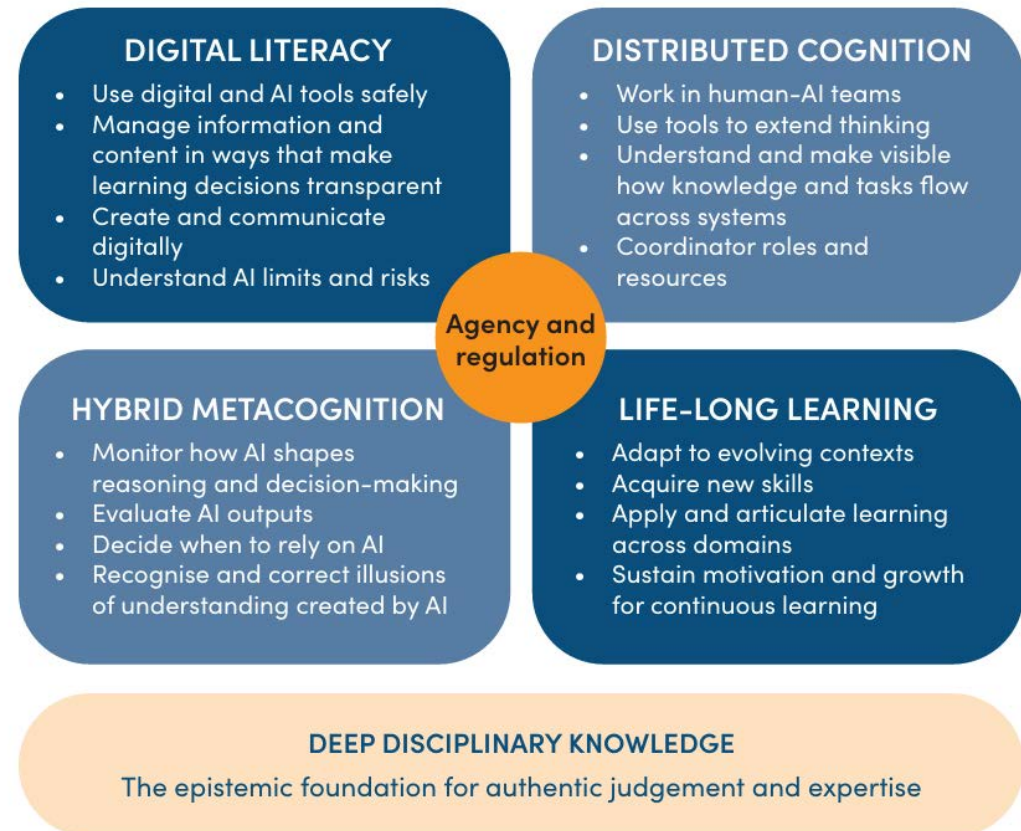


TEQSA: GenAI knowledge Hub



Adaptive capabilities

For assuring quality learning in an AI-integrated higher education system





Teams...



...and
capability

Academic roles are changing

Croucher et al (2023): Australian universities

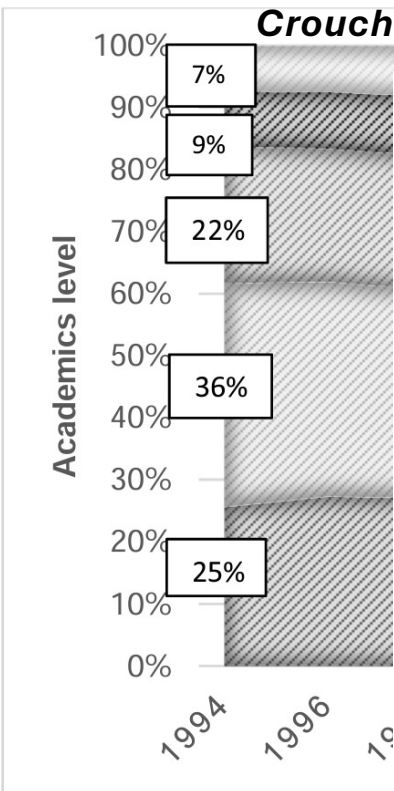
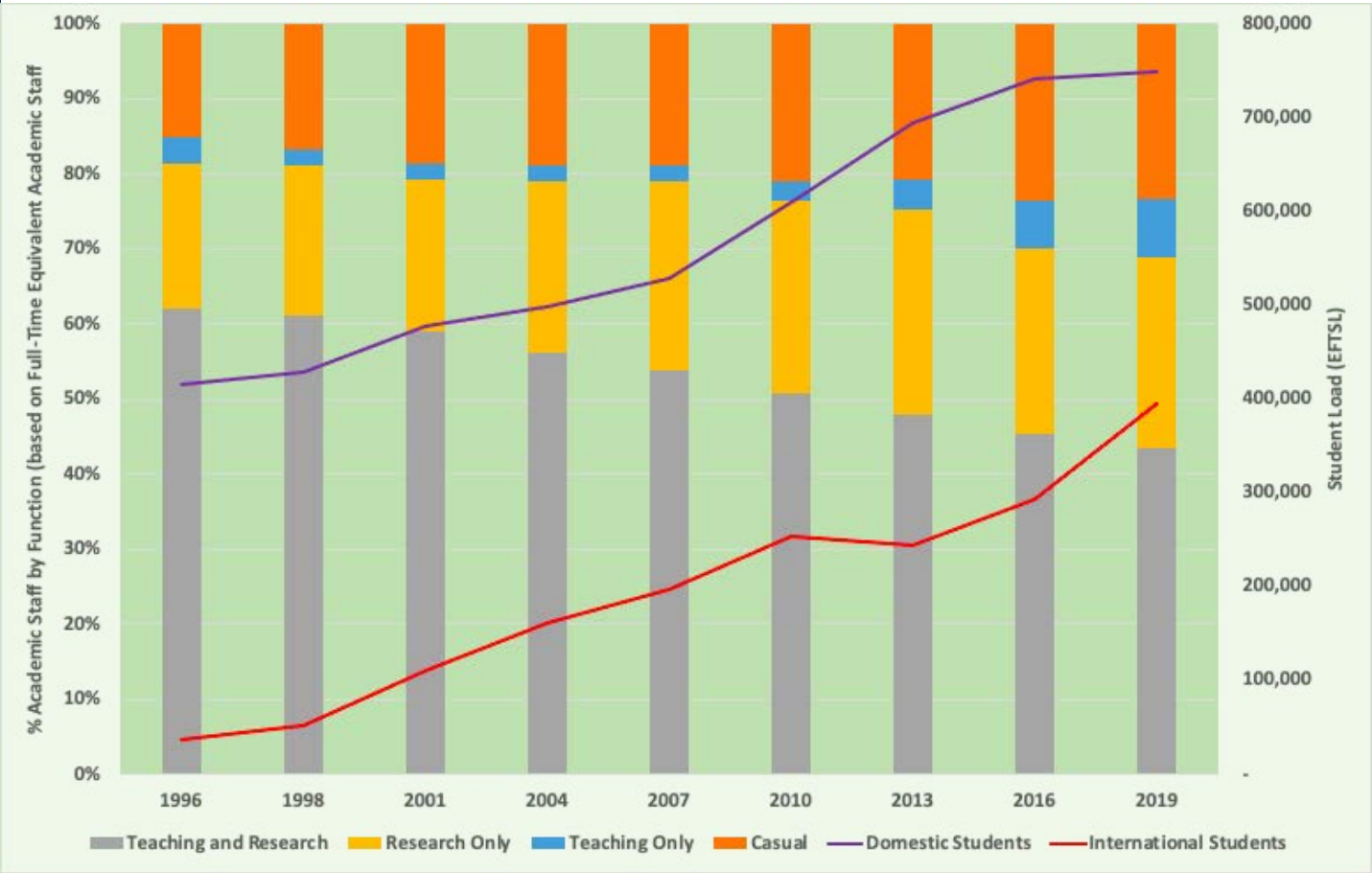


FIGURE 5: All Teaching-only staff as percentage of all academic staff.*
Total sample is 1

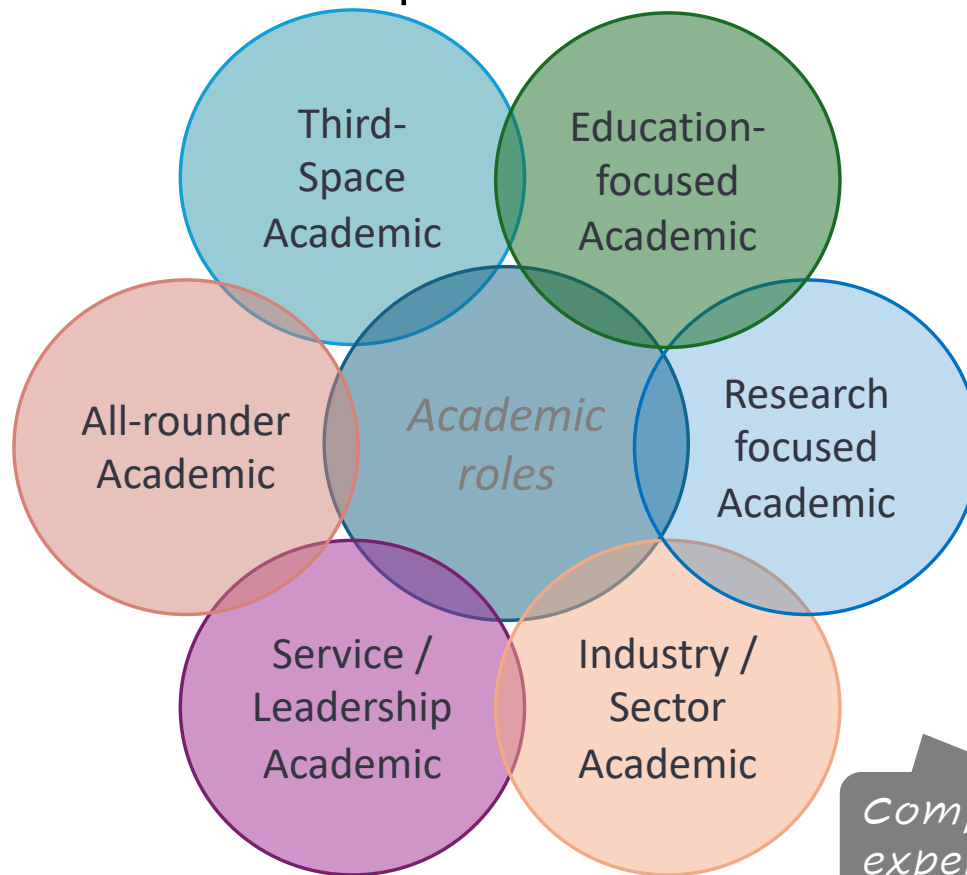


Bare et al (2023): Australian universities

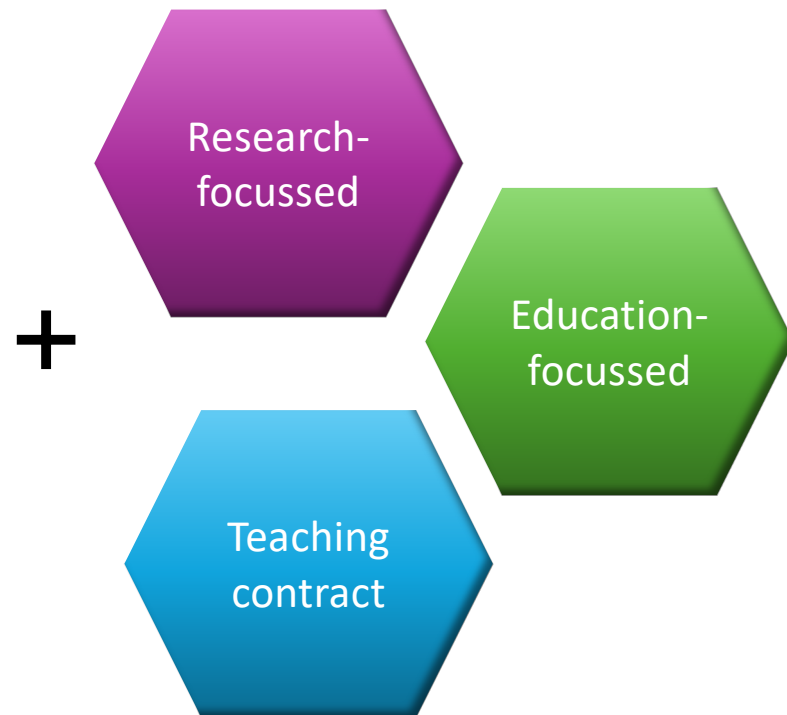
Individuals have varying focus

*Parity of esteem?
Promotion?
Workload allocation?*

TRS roles: persona model



Named specialist roles

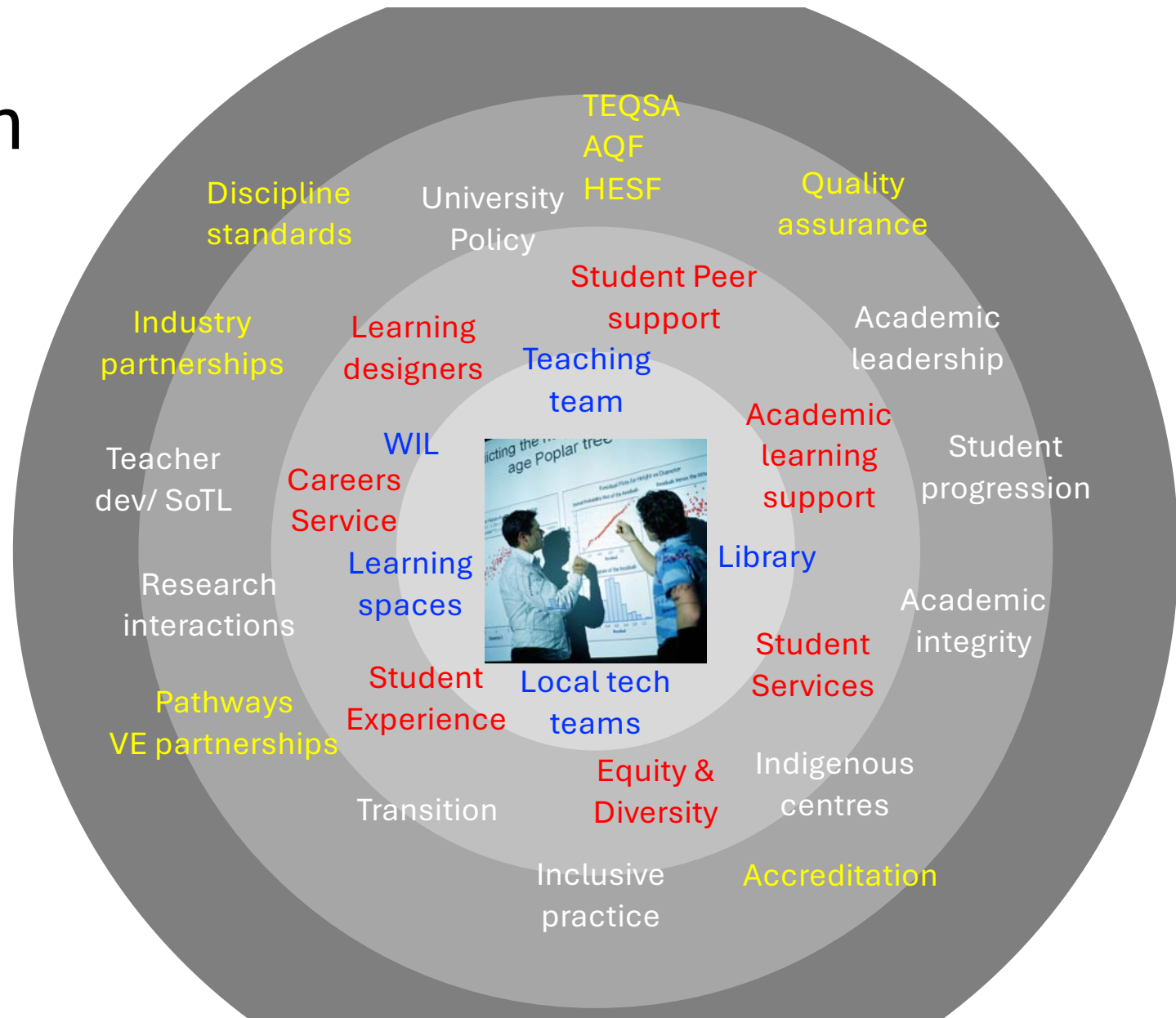


Complementary expertise

Educators work in teams

Relies on

- **local core support**
- **specialist support**
- governance & management
- **external groups**



Distributed leadership empowers

Distributed leadership, by contrast, conceptualises leadership as a [collective and relational](#) process that mobilises expertise dispersed throughout institutions. By aligning with the adaptive logic of complex systems, it allows leadership influence to emerge through [collaboration, co-design and shared responsibility](#) rather than command and control. (Tubino et al, 2026)

a practical and everyday process of supporting, managing, developing and inspiring academic colleagues ... [leadership in universities should be by everyone from the Vice Chancellor to the casual car parking attendant, leadership is to do with how people relate to each other.](#) (Ramsden, 1998, p.4)

Research Articles

Enacting distributed leadership for educational transformation: a seven-year study of academic development in higher education

Laura Tubino , Iain Doherty  & Andrew Cain 

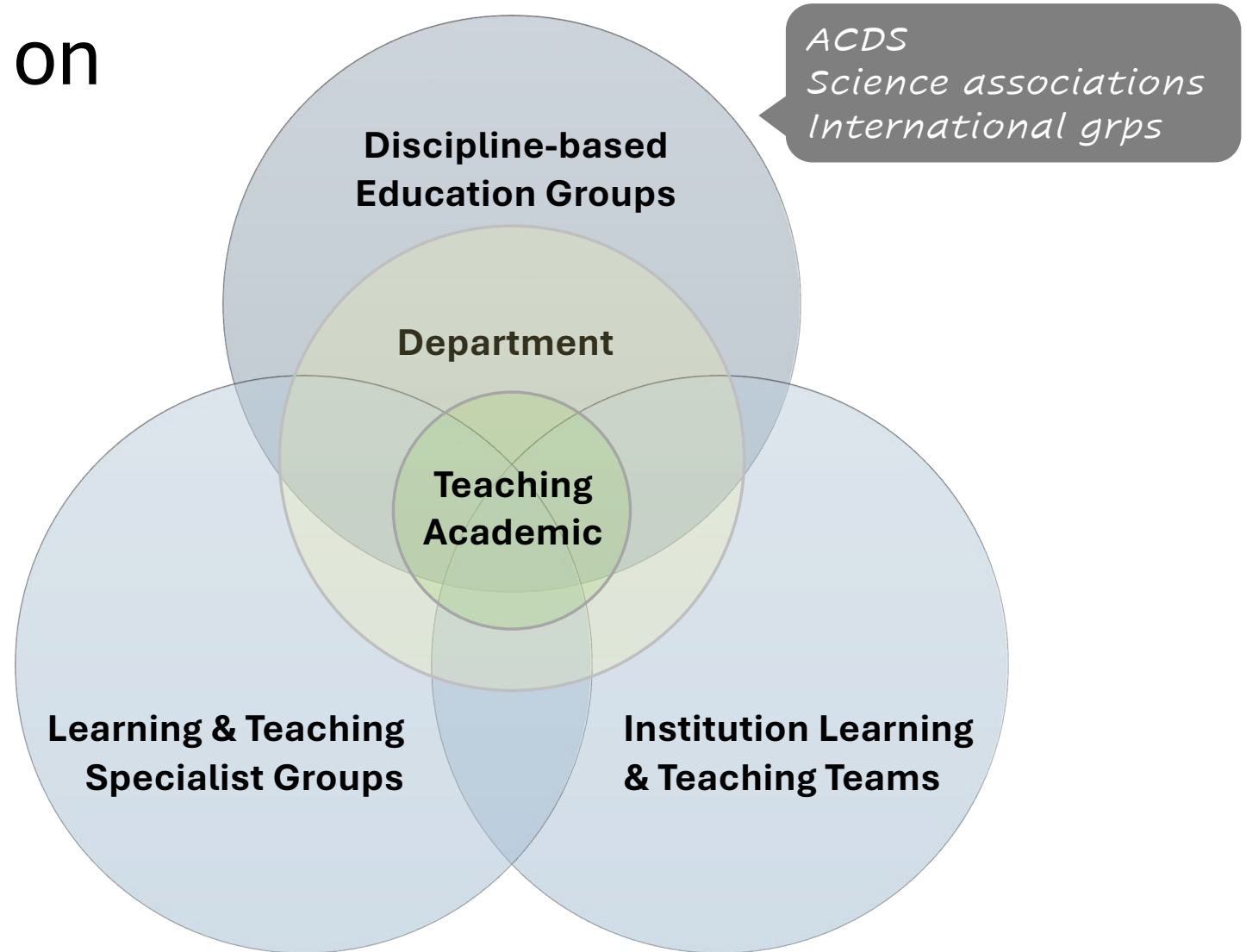
Pages 238-254 | Received 29 Nov 2024, Accepted 17 Feb 2026, Published online: 20 Apr 2026

[International Journal for Academic Development](#) >

Volume 31, 2026 - [Issue 2: Educational leadership of, for, with, and through academic development](#) Edited by Klara Bolander Laksov, Cormac McGrath and Anna Serbati

More agile, responsive, aware...

Educators draw on networks



Education is our expertise

National University

OPINION

We keep talking down our world-leading universities. Now we can talk them up



Attila Brungs
UNSW vice chancellor

June 18, 2026 – 11:30am

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24

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What if
teaching was
as celebrated
as research?



JUTLP

Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice

Australian higher education researcher between 2020-2024: Open-access fees, authorship, editorships, and institutional analysis

Dr Joseph Crawford
University of Tasmania, Australia

17 February 2025

Ranked 3rd globally
on higher education
research? (?)

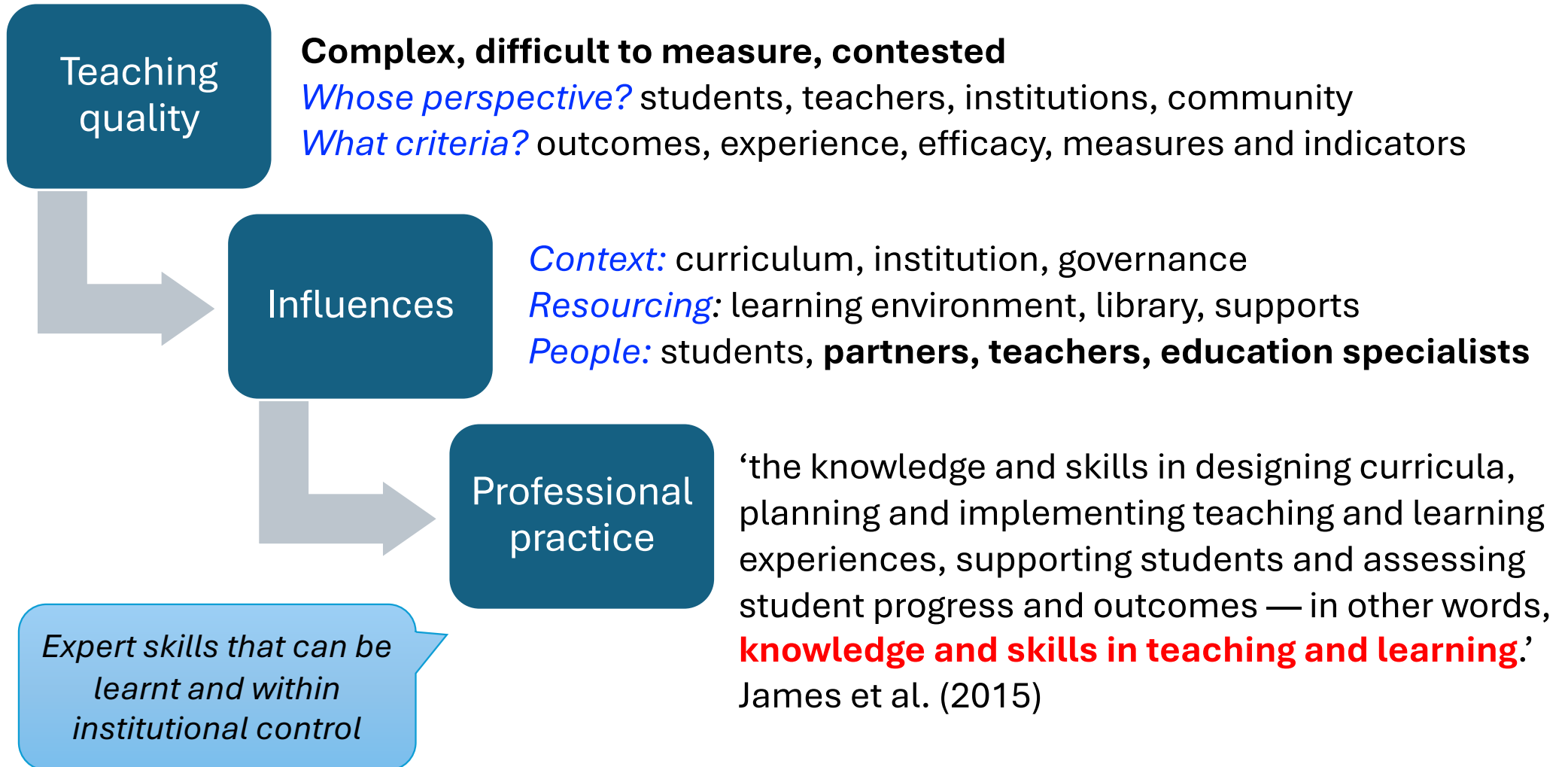


Teams...



...and
capability

Teaching quality... and professional practice

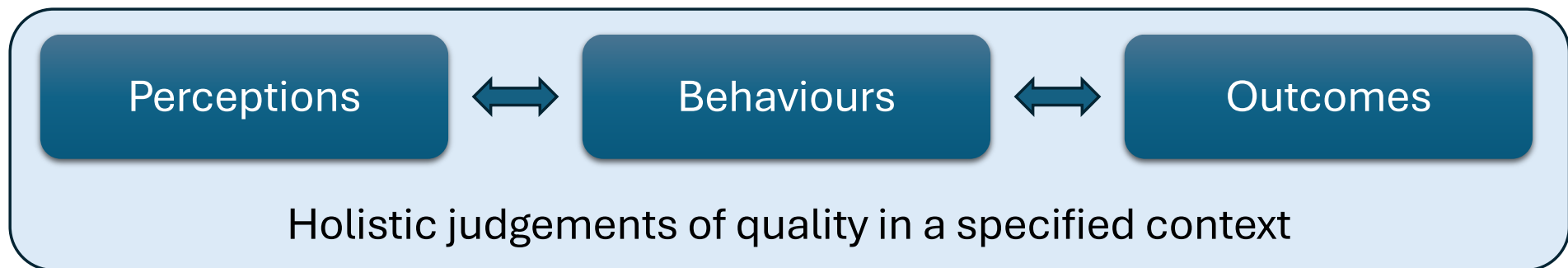


Codifying 'good' quality in teaching

Teaching quality frameworks

- consensus views based on evidence of what promotes learning
- criteria for making judgements on teaching practice
- peer esteem measures – *we know it when we see it?*
- responsive/ relevant in different teaching situations

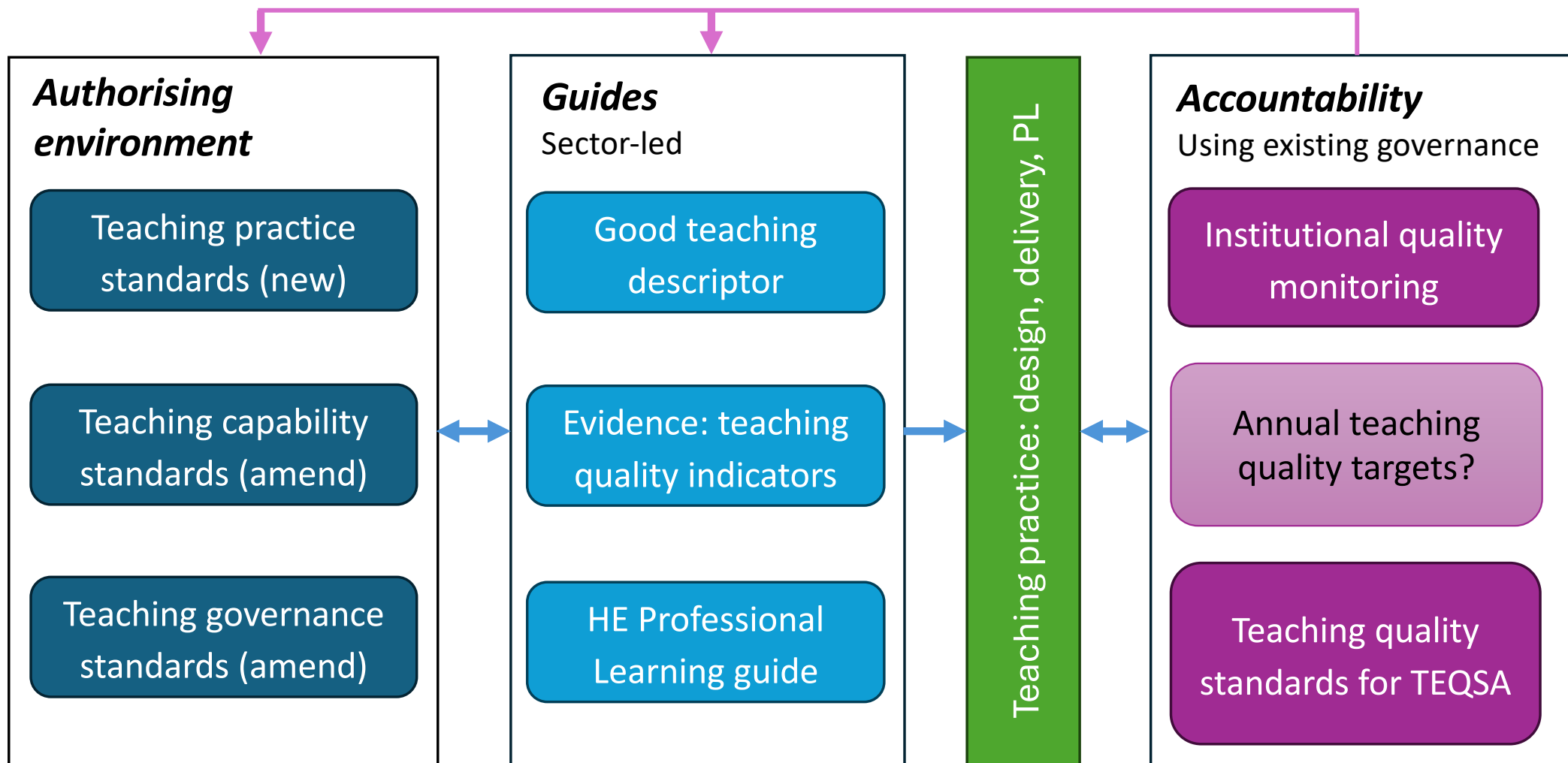
Evidence: multi-dimensional measures and indicators of quality



Promoting good professional practice



ATEC project: possible national approach...



HESF Standards

Minimal change with added requirements

- teaching practice to be evidence-based
- teaching capability uplift
- governance oversight for teaching practice

National Descriptor for Good Teaching

Acknowledge existing and describe:

- Shared language
- Shared hallmarks for institutional frameworks
- Diversity in learning and teaching

Guide: Measures and Indicators

- Multi-dimensional
- Quantitative and qualitative
- Expert development based on research and effective practice
- Improvement and accountability

Guide: Professional Learning

- Ensure **foundational learning** for all responsible teachers (Intro to L&T, GCHE)
- Ensure **continuing professional learning** for all active teachers
- Align PL requirement to teaching responsibility
- Record participation
 - PL Quals alongside discipline quals
 - Continuing PL via career management
- Recognition of PL needs expert review

Determine scope (who needs PL?): Subject directors, Course directors, TL named roles and leaders, anyone responsible for assessment??

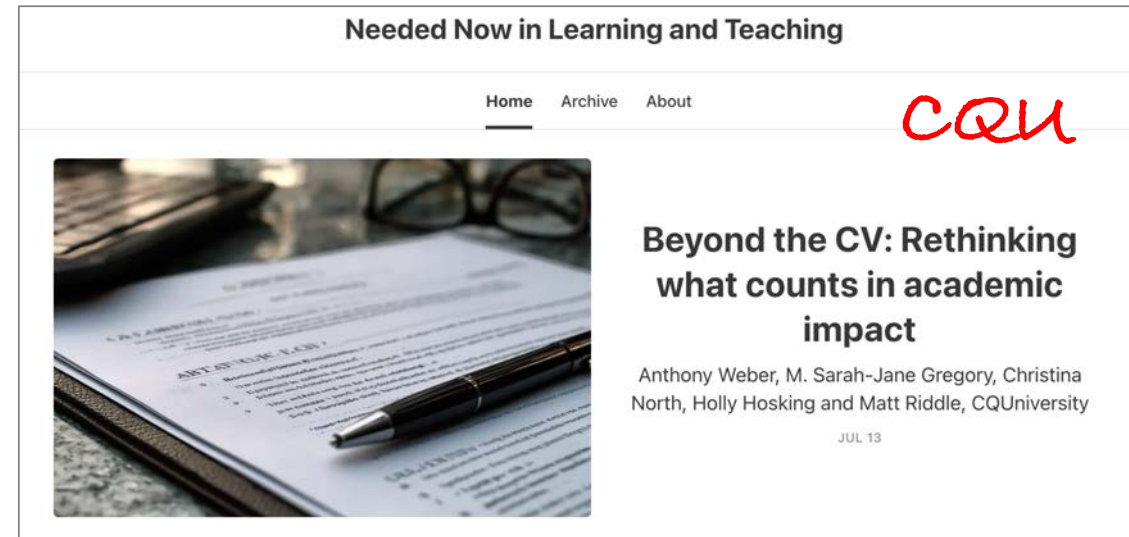
Determine range (what is recognized?):

- *Formal qualifications*
- *PD modules*
- *Action learning: curriculum & student experience projects*
- *Peer review*
- *SoLT, ed research*
- *More?*

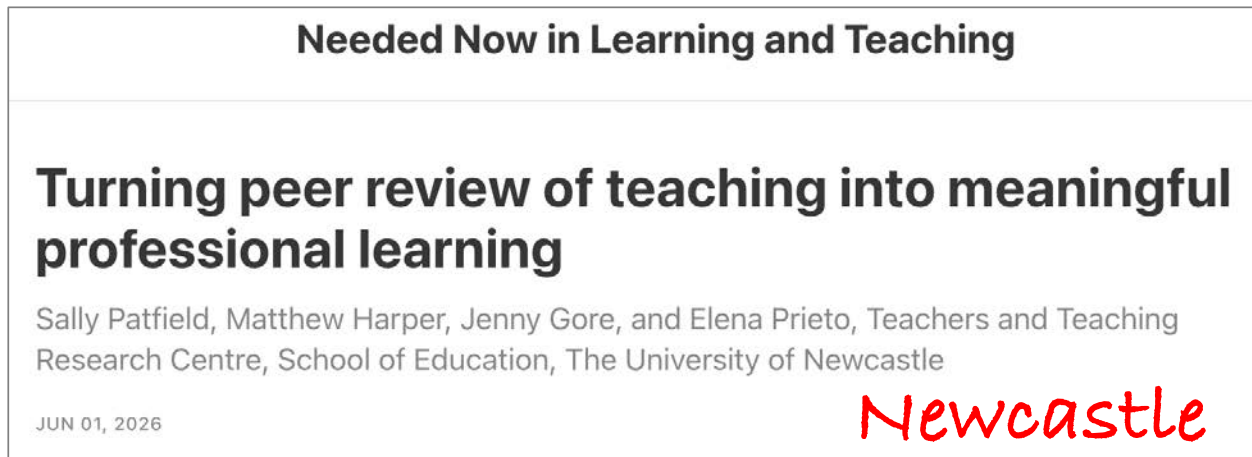
Action is already happening...



<https://www.monash.edu/pharm/research/education-research>



<https://needednowlt.substack.com/>



<https://needednowlt.substack.com/p/turning-peer-review-of-teaching-into>

*Local action
Adapt current processes
Influence your institution
Build networks and share
solutions*

So, facing disruption...

Support educators locally

- Work in teams
- Value expertise
- Invest in distributed leadership
- Build networks

Make professional practice an expectation

- Invest in quality
- Invest in continual professional learning

Influence whole-of-sector initiatives via
ACDS, ATEC, TEQSA



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