

**TITLE: STAFF RESEARCH POLICY**

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1. Purpose of Policy

The *Staff Research Policy* provides the quality assurance framework for research activities at Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College). Carlow College has a research active staff and a vibrant research culture, supported by the College [Research Hub](#). Carlow College recognises that staff research activities contributes to the College's institutional standing, strategy and mission, staff development, teaching and learning, inter-institutional collaboration and partnerships, and public outreach.

Staff at Carlow College are actively engaged in research that has regional, national, and global horizons. A number of Carlow College staff are recognised as experts in their disciplinary field. Carlow College staff have a track-record of producing high-quality research outputs in the form of books, peer-reviewed articles, and chapters in edited collections. They also regularly present their research at national and international conferences and symposia while promoting knowledge transfer through appearances as subject experts on TV, radio, print media, podcasts, and public events. Carlow College staff also actively engage with key

stakeholders in Carlow and the southeast region more broadly. The Research Hub holds an annual Research Week every February.

2. Definitions

2.1 Research

While definitions of research and research activity can vary across institutions, there is broad common agreement that research involves the generation of new forms of knowledge and understandings that result from sustained inquiry or investigation. These new forms of knowledge and understandings typically arise out of a research project or an area of focalised interest where an opportunity for new discovery has been identified or is being explored. For example, the University of Western Australia defines research as:

the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes.¹

The University of Auckland defines research as an ‘original independent investigation undertaken to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement’.² In this sense, although it typically involves learning, research is and must be qualitatively different from the mere acquisition of pre-existing knowledge. Carlow College defines research as the synthesis of existing knowledge and understandings to produce new outcomes and/or the original creation of or contribution to new knowledge and understandings.

2.2 Research Outputs

The Technological University of Dublin state that: ‘...research outputs make a significant contribution to new knowledge within and across disciplines including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application’.³ Research outputs are an important indicator of research activity that allow recognition of that research within the institution and across the wider sector, both nationally and internationally. Allowing that research is often a long-term project-based activity, it is important to acknowledge that outputs, particularly large ones such as books or edited collections/journals, can take a number of years to produce, while shorter/smaller outputs can be generated in months or even weeks. What qualifies as a research output can vary from institution to institution, but in general terms, outputs can be determined as a research output if the synthesis of existing knowledge and

¹https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/researchers/preparing_a_grant_application/dest_definition_of_research

² <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/research/output-system-and-reports/research-outputs--definition-and-categories.html>

³ <https://www.tudublin.ie/research/discover-our-research/our-impact/>

understandings to produce new outcomes and/or the original creation of or contribution to new knowledge and understandings is disseminated in a format recognized within the disciplinary sector, typically through publication, conferences, or various types of presentation or exhibition of research. Although research outputs can take many forms, what is defined as a research output should be consistent with standards across the disciplinary sector.

The list of defined research outputs and activities at Carlow College are contained in Appendix 1.2 of the *Academic Workload Allocation Policy*.

2.3 Research Activeness

Research activity always involves the dissemination of these new forms of knowledge / understandings through various types of research outputs. Research activity for academic staff at Carlow College is measured in the context of overall staff workloads.

Academic staff are the only category of staff who receive a research allocation under the *Academic Workload Allocation Policy* but where a member of non-academic staff is research active, their line-manager may decide to allocate some time at their discretion.

The form for capturing the projected research outputs / activities of academic staff is contained in the Appendix 1.2.1 of the *Academic Workload Allocation Policy*.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all Carlow College staff, inclusive of academic and professional services staff, who are engaged in research activities.

4. Policy Statement

Carlow College supports and encourages research in a variety of contexts, outlined below.

4.1 Strategic and Policy Contexts

Supporting College Mission: Carlow College [Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#) recognises research as important to its institutional mission and strategic positioning as a college of the arts, humanities and social sciences.⁴

⁴ *Carlow College Strategic Plan 2023-2028*, p. 5.

Research Hub: The Carlow College Research Hub was approved by Academic Council in November 2018 with the strategic aim of improving and fostering a culture of research at Carlow College. The contexts for and objectives of the Research Hub are set out in the [Research Hub Framework Document](#) (2018). These include:

- to identify existing areas of research within the College so as to develop a global picture of College research;
- to support and promote Staff research;
- to foster a research agenda that aligns with College Strategy, mission and ethos;
- to connect the College's research expertise with local and national organisations, communities and institutions; and
- to play a supporting role in College programme development by identifying, utilising and enhancing existing and potential areas of College research and expertise.

The Research Hub provides the following services:

- dissemination of staff research activities internal via regular staff newsletters and via their social media channels;
- organises the annual Research Week;
- publishes staff blogs about their research through the ['Spotlight on Research'](#) blog;
- provides logistical support for conferences and symposia where requested; and
- maintains a record of notified staff research outputs.

Supporting Teaching and Learning: Carlow College recognises that staff research supports teaching and learning in the following ways:

- (1) encourages student and staff engagement and achievement in research and teaching;⁵
- (2) promotes post-doctoral research, publication and advanced professional training by academic staff through clear support mechanisms;⁶

⁵ *Carlow College Strategic Plan, 2023-2028*, p. 6.

⁶ *Carlow College Strategic Plan, 2023-2028*, p. 6.

- (3) encourages research informed teaching⁷; and
- (4) encourages teaching staff to be active researchers and to keep up to date with current research and publications within their discipline and within the broader area of pedagogy.⁸

Academic Workload Allocation (Research): Carlow College is committed to increasing research capacity of staff. The College's *Academic Workload Allocation Policy* encourages academic staff to be actively engaged in creating new knowledge and disseminating this in peer-reviewed publications and at international conferences. It does so by providing for a proportion of time to be spent in these activities. In the case of significantly research-active staff, this can reach 40%. Staff are encouraged to make a research plan and request research allocation as part of their workload during annual evaluation.⁹

Programme Development: The *Programme Development Strategy 2023-2028* commits the College to ensure there are opportunities for research-led teaching on undergraduate programmes in alignment with college strategy, resourcing and programme requirements.¹⁰

Research Ethics: Carlow College has a Research Ethics Advisory Committee to ensure the ethical standards of research projects.

4.2 An Environment that Supports Research

To ensure the ongoing development of a research culture at Carlow College, the College is committed to:

- (1) Providing clarity on the scope of and the mechanisms for determining annual staff research allocation through the *Academic Workload Allocation Policy*.
- (2) Maintenance of the Research [webpages](#) and Research Hub as an important resource for research support.
- (3) Providing an annual Research Week to showcase the range of research activity at Carlow College.
- (4) Promoting post-doctoral research, publication and advanced professional training by academic staff through clear support mechanisms, including:

⁷ *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*, Objective 2.8, 'Promote excellence in learning and teaching practice', p. 10.

⁸ *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*, 2024-2029, p. 7.

⁹ *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*, Objective 5.4, 'Increase research capacity of staff', p. 14.

¹⁰ *Programme Development Strategy*, Objective 6: *Staff Research and Subject Expertise*, p. 3.

- Promoting and recognising staff research activities through the [Research Hub](#);
- A staff doctoral bursary;
- Academic Staff Post-Doctoral Research Leave;
- A Staff Book Publications Bursary;
- Providing for staff conference attendance;
- Providing clear procedures for applications for symposia and conferences held at Carlow College; and
- Providing clear guidelines for staff on how to organise and conduct symposia and conferences at Carlow College.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy.

The Research Hub is responsible for the dissemination and promotion of research activities at Carlow College.

The Research Ethics Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring the ethical standards of research projects.

The Strategic Development Committee is responsible for evaluating conference and symposia applications.

6. Associated Documentation

- Appendix 1: [Procedures for Organising Conferences and Symposia](#)
- Appendix 2: [Application for Conference and Symposia Funding Form](#)
- Appendix 3: [Academic Staff Post-Doctoral Research Leave Application Form](#)
- Appendix 4: [Application for Symposia and Conference Funding Form](#)
- Appendix 5: [Staff Book Publications Bursary Form](#)
- Appendix 6: [Staff Doctoral Bursary Form](#)
- Appendix 7: [Conference Attendance Application Form](#)
- Appendix 8: [Research Hub Framework Document](#)

7. Referenced Policies

- *Academic Workload Allocation Policy* (Available on the Staff Portal)
- [*Benefits Policy*](#)
- [*Data Protection Policy*](#)
- [*Learning and Teaching Policy*](#)
- [*Performance Management and Development Policy*](#)
- [*Quality Assurance Policy \(section 4.12\)*](#)
- [*Research Ethics Advisory Policy*](#)
- [*Social Networking and Social Media Policy*](#)
- *Staff Code of Conduct Policy* (Available on the Staff Portal)

8. Monitoring and Review

The Office of the Registrar will monitor the implementation of the policy. The Research Hub will annually review the Policy. As this is the first approval cycle, the policy will be approved in three years.