

ENhance Quick Guides

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

Department of
Learning & Teaching
Enhancement

Theme: Research & Practice Integration

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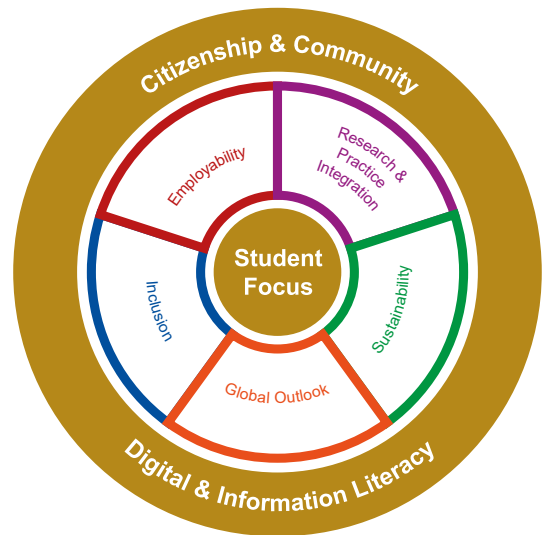
What is Research & Practice Integration?

This ENhance theme focuses on the ways in which the curriculum is embedded with current, subject-specific thinking, research, and practices. This theme also seeks to identify how students can engage with innovative research and professional practice related to their subject, programme of study (and their possible related future vocation) and how it impacts on their knowledge and understanding of the discipline.

Why is Research & Practice Integration important in Learning & Teaching?

Ensuring curricula are reflective of current research, thinking, and practice in subject disciplines is crucial for providing students with an education that is up-to-date, rigorous, and relevant. In our rapidly changing society and employment landscape, graduates need to have developed skills that mirror the state of knowledge and work in their chosen fields as closely as possible. Embedding innovative developments prepares them to apply their learning in real-world contexts and hit the ground running in their careers and outside of university. It also helps students engage meaningfully with their subjects by providing tangible examples of theory in practice.

On an institutional level, integrating contemporary subject developments demonstrates a commitment to dynamic, evidence-based programmes that evolve over time. This supports student recruitment and satisfaction, as well as reputation and competitiveness. It also enables meaningful links between teaching and academic research activities allowing colleagues to inform learning, teaching and assessment with findings from their research and/or developments in professional practice. From



a pedagogical perspective, exposure to latest disciplinary advances can stimulate critical thinking, dialogue, and curiosity in learners. It encourages students to view knowledge as living and unfolding, not static, aiding authentic learning and assessment while enabling links between theory and its application in practice to be realised.

More broadly, ensuring students engage with current practice helps fulfil the purpose of higher education in society. Universities have a social responsibility to produce graduates who are aware of the latest theories, discoveries, technologies, ideas, and challenges shaping their disciplines. This advances public knowledge, productivity, and innovation. It also equips students to respond to rapidly changing societal needs and labour market demands.

Examples of Research & Practice Integration in curricula:

Dr Rosalind Haddrill, Research skills for professional midwifery practice (SHSC)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards require midwives to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of local, national, and international research and scholarship in midwifery, and to use this in their practice. However, student midwives frequently describe research content at university as uninteresting and lacking relevance, and it is often left until the final year of studies. This new module adopts a different pedagogical approach, teaching research through its application to core aspects of midwifery practice. Students learn about methodologies and methods, whilst being challenged to reflect on what they see clinically when on practice placements, why improvement is needed and how this might be achieved through research.

George Shepherd, MSc Creative Advertising Programme (SACI)

Every week students have a guest lecture from a senior industry professional, many of whom are also graduates of Edinburgh Napier University. As well as ensuring that the curriculum is kept up to date with current practice, this also presents the students with fantastic networking opportunities. As a result, this programme has one of the highest employment records in the University, with many graduates going on to successful careers in the Advertising industry.

Prompt statements/questions

The following prompt questions – along with the further resources listed below – may help you begin to outline how you can embed this theme in your programme(s):

- Where and when in the curriculum (i.e., through modules and levels of study, if applicable) are students introduced to innovative theories, technologies, methods, or ideas?
- Do students know what the research or practice focus is of the module team? Can examples of experiences of the module/teaching team be integrated into modules to involve learners in discussions and/or examples from practice and research?
- How is the curriculum currently kept up to date with developments in the field?
- How can assessments be shaped to require application of latest knowledge, developments, innovations, approaches, or processes as indicated by current research or professional practice?
- What partnerships could enable engagement with current research or practice for both the students and the module team, i.e., case-based topics, guest speakers, projects which can involve students as contributors?