

# Information for those managing sessional staff



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This document is designed to support those at UNSW who are responsible for managing sessional staff. This will include Heads of School and Course Coordinators, as well as designated School contacts for sessional teaching staff and School Administrators.

The number of sessional teaching staff employed at universities across Australia, and internationally, is growing. UNSW is no exception. The increased casualisation of teaching staff has presented universities with the challenge of avoiding *'the emergence of a two-tiered academic workforce - the tenured core with security and good conditions and the tenuous periphery with insecurity and poor conditions'* (Kimber, 2003). Countering this dichotomy of core versus periphery has been identified as a priority at UNSW.

*'Casual and limited-term staff will continue to play an important role in higher education. This role... cannot be overlooked or isolated if universities are to make the best use of the skills of the people who collectively are working to advance the institution.'* (Coaldrake, 1999)

Sessional teaching staff play a crucial role in developing and sustaining quality learning and teaching environments. Sessional teachers might be tutors, casual lecturers, demonstrators, clinical tutors, or people external to the university from the professions or industry. However, despite the diversity of their roles, sessional teachers all share a position 'at the coalface' of teaching at UNSW. This is particularly the case for sessional tutors and lab demonstrators, who are often given *'the task of mediating the complexity and diversity of the first year experience'* (Kift, 2003).

*'An ethos of inclusivity is one that comes from management down and, for casuals, will echo in measurable indicators such as commitment to resource provision, facilitation of networking and staff development opportunities, the naming of these teachers and their inclusion in strategic school/faculty/university developments... The goal here is to develop a tangible sense of community.'* (Kift, 2003)

Supporting our sessional teaching staff has never been more important, and the following section is designed to help you to do this by providing a **guide to your responsibilities**, as well as providing **useful strategies, resources and links**. Using the *UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)* as a base, the following key components of the sessional teaching staff experience will be examined:

- Recruitment and employment
- Integration and communication
- Learning and teaching development
- Evaluation and recognition
- Support for you.

In each section you will find a brief discussion of key issues, and UNSW policy designed to address these issues. If you have suggestions for other information you would like to see on this website, or for other resources and programs that would help you in managing your sessional teaching staff, please contact the Learning and Teaching Unit by phone (x55989) or email (lt@unsw.edu.au). The LTU is consulting with staff across the university to ensure that we develop the best possible resources and programs for sessional teachers at UNSW, and you are encouraged to contact us with your thoughts and suggestions.

## References

- Coaldrake, P., 1999, 'Rethinking university work', paper delivered at the HERDSA Annual International Conference, Melbourne, 12-15 July.  
<http://www.herdsa.org.au/branches/vic/Cornerstones/pdf/Coaldrak.PDF>
- Kift, S., 2003, 'Assuring Quality in the Casualisation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Towards Best Practice for the First Year Experience', *March UltiBASE ISSN 1443-7023*.  
<http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/march03/kift1.htm>
- Kimber, M., 2003, 'The Tenured "Core" and the Tenuous "Periphery": the casualisation of academic work in Australian universities', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol 25, pp. 41-50.  
<http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/media/ba7gwwuxwj0m0y1xjar6/contributions/c/3/2/1/c321axmp8k8lg6rg.pdf>
- *UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*.  
[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)

# Recruitment and employment

*'Studies have shown that the majority of postgraduates obtain casual teaching via informal mechanisms; either by word of mouth or through personal recommendations. In many cases, it's being in the right spot at the right time; there are few formal processes for the advertising of positions. Linked to this is a perception of favouritism or nepotism within departments - several postgraduates surveyed stated there was a perception of not "what you know but who you know" in their areas.'*  
(MacDonald, 2004)

The process by which sessional teaching staff are recruited, and the employment practices that follow, can play a significant role in making sessional teachers feel valued by their School, Faculty, and by extension, the University.

Most importantly, recruitment and employment processes within your School and Faculty should be open and transparent. Schools and Faculties might consider recruiting sessional teachers by advertising in advance and/or preparing an eligibility list to draw on as needed. Once sessional teaching staff are appointed, they must be provided with a contract that details the terms of their appointment, working conditions, duties, and rate of pay. Sessional staff should be informed of any relevant School and Faculty administrative or organisational procedures, and they must also be given access to any necessary resources. On an administrative level, this includes access to office space, library, computer, phone and fax facilities, and on an academic level, this includes all of the materials needed for teaching (including course outlines and assessment materials). Recruitment and employment practices must align with the *UNSW (Academic Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2006*.

The policy and checklists below, taken from the *UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*, are designed to guide you in formulating recruitment and employment processes for sessional teaching staff within your School and Faculty, while the resources and links will take you to a range of case studies detailing these processes at other tertiary institutions.

## Sessional staff views

*'As a first time tutor, it would have been really useful to have been given more information about administrative procedures in my School and Faculty.'*

*'I think that in general administrative procedures for sessional teachers need to be streamlined.'*

## Policy

### 1. Recruitment practices

- 1.1 When deciding upon staff appointments, Schools and Faculties are to consider whether it is in the best interests of staff and students for the appointment to be on a continuing, fixed-term or casual basis.
- 1.2 Within the constraints of the short term needs of Schools, sessional teachers are to be appointed on the basis of merit.
- 1.3 Advertisement and recruitment should as far as practicable reflect the procedures for fractional and full-time employees and may include advertisement in advance and preparation of an eligibility list to draw on as required. Such a list would be advertised with a specific lifetime. Even genuine 'emergency' situations should comply where possible.
- 1.4 The University will inform applicants for a casual position that if they do not hear from the University within a specified time, they should conclude that they have not been successful in gaining a position.
- 1.5 The recruitment of sessional teachers is to align with the *UNSW (Academic Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2006* (the Enterprise Agreement). Remuneration is to be in accordance with the Casual Academic Salary Rates prescribed in Schedule 2 of the Enterprise Agreement.

### 2. Employment practices

- 2.1 On appointment, all sessional teachers who are to work for a continuous period of more than 4 weeks should receive a contract that specifies the terms of their appointment, their working conditions, the duties they are expected to perform, and their rate of pay.
- 2.2 The principles of UNSW's *Equity and Diversity Policy Statement* will apply to sessional teachers as they do to full-time staff members.
- 2.3 The roles and responsibilities of sessional teachers are to align with their level of appointment.

2.4 Sessional teachers should be provided with the resources necessary to fulfill their employment role, such as access to office, desk, computer, phone, fax and library facilities.

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## Checklists

### Recruitment practices

#### *School level*

- Is there a school-based policy that ensures transparent and equitable processes for the recruitment of sessional teachers?
- Has consideration been given to whether alternative forms of employment (fixed term, fractional, continuing) would be more appropriate than a sessional teaching appointment?

#### *Course level*

- If responsible for recruiting sessional teachers, have you read the relevant institutional or School policies?
- Do you consistently follow existing policies concerning equitable and fair recruitment practices in terms of gender, race, etc?

### Employment practices

#### *School level*

- Do sessional teachers receive payment according to their responsibilities and in accordance with the rates prescribed in Schedule 2 of the 2006 Enterprise Agreement?
- Do sessional teachers employed for a continuous period of more than 4 weeks receive a written contract of employment, and have the terms of the contract been explained by someone responsible for this task within the school?
- Is there an induction session and/or manual for sessional teachers that inform them of policies and processes that affect them?
- Are sessional teachers informed about workplace health and safety responsibilities and procedures?
- Do sessional teachers receive access to office space, necessary supplies, phone, fax and computer facilities, email, library rights and support services?

#### *Course level*

- If responsible for monitoring payment of sessional teachers, have you ensured that they all receive payment according to their level of responsibility and in line with the 2006 Enterprise Agreement?
- Do your sessional teachers have a document of agreement or statement of duties that outline the tasks, roles and responsibilities expected of them?
- Do you ensure that the workload and responsibilities of your sessional staff align with their level of appointment?
- Do your sessional teachers have access to office space, necessary supplies, phone, fax and computer facilities, email, library rights and support services?
- Are sessional teachers provided with all necessary materials, including accurate and detailed course outlines and assessment materials such as marking guidelines and answer sheets, which they need to fulfil their teaching responsibilities? For information about and assistance with using the UNSW Course Outline template, please visit the Learning and Teaching Unit website - [http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/content/course\\_prog\\_support/course\\_outline\\_template.cfm?ss=0](http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/content/course_prog_support/course_outline_template.cfm?ss=0)

Policy and checklists taken from the  
*UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*

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## Ideas and strategies

- Complete the School Orientation Sheet provided via the sessional teaching staff website at [http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/content/sessional\\_staff/Recruitmentideasandstrategies.cfm?ss=0](http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/content/sessional_staff/Recruitmentideasandstrategies.cfm?ss=0)

- and include it with contracts issued to new sessional teaching staff.
- Produce a handbook or online resource for your sessional teachers that details School policies and procedures. Once you have the document written and formatted, it is very easily adjusted year by year.

## Resources and links

- **University of Queensland**

The Teaching and Educational Development Institute (TEDI) at the University of Queensland has a comprehensive web site on tutor training. Go to the subsection 'Guidelines' for very detailed checklists on recruitment and employment practices at University, School and course levels.

<http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/sessionalteaching>

- **Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Faculty of Law**

The article and policy document below outline the recruitment process followed in the QUT Law Faculty:

- Kift, S., 2003, 'Assuring Quality in the Casualisation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment', *March UltiBASE ISSN 1443-7023*,

<http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/march03/kift1.htm>

- QUT Faculty of Law, 2003, *Policy on casual academic staff*, (go to the section entitled 'The Issue of Quality')

[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case\\_studies\\_frameset.html](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case_studies_frameset.html)

- **2003, QUT, Brisbane Graduate School of Business,**

*Recruiting, Inducting and Supporting Sessional Staff in Business*

[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case\\_studies/Gradschool\\_of\\_Business.pdf](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case_studies/Gradschool_of_Business.pdf)

- **2004, *Smart Casuals: NTEU handbook for casual university staff*,**

This handbook outlines employment rights for academic and general casual staff employed by universities

<http://www.nteu.org.au/publications/other/smartcasuals>

- **Further case studies**

The TEDI website contains a page of links to further case studies

[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case\\_studies\\_frameset.html](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case_studies_frameset.html)

- **UNSW Compendium of Good Practice Issue 4 February 2007** Special Issue focusing on Sessional teachers at UNSW showcasing current good practice in support and development programs for sessional teachers in different schools and faculties. [http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/content/compendium\\_prac/compendium.cfm?ss=0](http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/content/compendium_prac/compendium.cfm?ss=0)

## References

- ***UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*,**

[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)

- MacDonal T., 2004, 'The Impact of Casualisation in Universities: The Costs of and for Education', Paper presented to the Inaugural Asia Pacific Postgraduate Forum, Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, October 18th-20th.

[http://www.capa.edu.au/conferenceevents/AsiaPacForum/APF\\_casualisation.pdf](http://www.capa.edu.au/conferenceevents/AsiaPacForum/APF_casualisation.pdf)

# Integration and communication

*'Intangible aspects of the institutional culture include the more subtle inclusive practices of a School or Department, which add to an employee's identification with the School or Department, as well as their own perceived status within the School or Department'. (AUTC Project, University of Queensland, 2003)*

Successful integration of sessional teaching staff begins with an effective induction process, and given that many sessional teachers are only on campus for a few hours a week, providing access to course information and key administrative resources is essential. Schools and Faculties must ensure that all of their sessional teachers are provided with the opportunity to participate in systematic induction and orientation processes. Following on from this is the need to develop systematic and effective channels of communication.

Establishing positive integration and communication practices assists in generating within sessional teaching staff a sense of belonging to their School and Faculty.

Following are the relevant policy and checklists sections from the ***UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)***, designed to guide you in further developing integration and communication practices within your School and Faculty, as well as useful strategies, resources and links.

## Sessional staff views

*'It would be great to be part of a peer support network in the School or Faculty - to meet and share ideas with other tutors with similar levels of experience.'*

*'I've found that being a sessional teacher can be a great way to develop industry contacts and knowledge, provided you get the chance to meet regularly with permanent staff.'*

*'My biggest problem was getting in touch with my course coordinator, which made aspects of my teaching experience really difficult.'*

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## Policy

### 4. Integration and communication practices

4.1 All new sessional teachers are to be provided with the opportunity to participate in recognised and systematic induction and orientation processes, which will include being informed of relevant School/Faculty administrative and organisational procedures.

4.2 Sessional teachers are to be made aware of and given access to policies and processes that affect them, including Occupational Health and Safety, equity policies, appeals processes, assessment and plagiarism policies, grievance handling, and support services.

4.3 Systematic processes of communication should be established which keep sessional teachers fully informed of relevant Course/School/University activities and matters.

4.4 There is a need for systematic and supportive channels of communication between sessional teaching staff and their course coordinators.

4.5 Faculties and Schools need to provide opportunities for collegial interaction between sessional teachers and full-time teaching staff.

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## Checklists

### *School level*

- Is there an administrative system which allows staff and supervisors to contact sessional teachers (eg via email lists, etc)?
- Is there a staff member assigned to act as a contact person for sessional teachers with regards to professional development, employment and pay issues?
- Do coordinators have regular team meetings with sessional staff to discuss, review, outline and/or implement course requirements?
- Do opportunities or forums exist for collegial interaction between sessional teachers and full-time academics?
- Are sessional teachers able, or encouraged, to make contributions to the development of learning and teaching practices and curricula?

### *Course level*

- Is there an administrative system which allows staff and supervisors to contact sessional teachers (eg via email lists, etc)?
- Are sessional teachers informed of procedures to follow if students have concerns or needs external to their course or program of study?
- Is there a staff member assigned to act as a contact person for sessional teachers with regards to training, employment and pay issues?
- Do you have regular team meetings with sessional staff to discuss, review and/or implement course requirements?
- Do you instigate or encourage opportunities for collegial interaction between sessional teachers and full-time academics?
- Are sessional teachers able, or encouraged, to make contributions to the development of learning and teaching practices and curricula?

Policy and checklists taken from the  
*UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*

[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)

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## Ideas and strategies

- Appoint a sessional staff coordinator within your School/Faculty.
- Establish an email list of sessional teaching staff within your School/Faculty.
- Provide clerical support for sessional teaching staff - eg to order books, arrange for special equipment or collect essays (Jacobs, 1998).
- Host informal get-togethers for sessional teaching staff and permanent staff once or twice a session.
- Display photos or brief biogs of your sessional teaching staff - either online or on a board within the School.
- Send a thankyou letter to sessional teachers from the Head of School or Dean.
- Organise an end of year function to acknowledge the efforts of your sessional teachers.
- Set up a 'catch people doing something right' system where students, peers or academic staff point out effective ideas or actions they have noticed from sessional staff members. These are then collected in a common place, such as a website or ideas log.
- Organise an 'International Week of the Tutor' during which course coordinators and students do something nice for their tutor/s.

(adapted from the AUTC Project, University of Queensland, 2003)

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## Resources and links

- Queensland University of Technology, Faculty of Law

Kift, S., 2003, 'Assuring Quality in the Casualisation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Towards Best Practice for the First Year Experience', *March UltiBASE ISSN 1443-7023*,

<http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/march03/kift1.htm>

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## References

- 2003, 'Training, Support and Management of Sessional Teaching Staff: A Review of the Literature', *Sessional Teaching: AUTC Project*, University of Queensland.  
[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/pdfs/Lit\\_review/Lit\\_review2.pdf](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/pdfs/Lit_review/Lit_review2.pdf)
- Jacobs, F., 'Using Part-Time Faculty More Effectively', *New Directions For Higher Education*, No. 104, Winter 1998, 917.  
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-in/fulltext/101523487/PDFSTART?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>
- *UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*  
[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)
- *UNSW Learning and Teaching Plan 2005-2007*  
[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/LandTPlan\\_05.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/LandTPlan_05.pdf)

# Learning and teaching development

*'For many first year students, their earliest human interaction at university will be with their tutor. It is more likely than not that this first point of personal contact will be a casual academic. That we should be able to assure the quality of this experience for both parties - teacher and student alike - has become a prominent management issue for the sector in recent times.'*

(Kift, 2003)

UNSW is committed to offering support for all staff in their learning and teaching practice, recognising that effective learning and teaching depends on all staff with responsibilities for teaching. In most Faculties and Schools, sessional teaching staff play a key role in building a quality learning and teaching environment. Whether they are postgraduate students employed in their Faculty as tutors and lab demonstrators or outside professionals employed to design and deliver courses, sessional teachers are entitled to have access to learning and teaching development. The *UNSW Learning and Teaching Plan 2005-2007* commits to *'support[ing], valu[ing], acknowledge[ing] and reward[ing] the work of sessional teachers by providing opportunities for their professional development'* [8.4, p19].

*'In absolute terms, the most pressing issue for quality assurance of the casual teaching and learning environment is the training and staff development made available to casual staff, both at the induction stage and on an ongoing basis.'* (Kift, 2003)

The policy and checklists below are designed to guide you in establishing or expanding learning and teaching development for sessional staff within your School and Faculty, while the resources and links take you to a range of case studies outlining learning and teaching development programs for sessional teachers at other tertiary institutions.

## Sessional staff views

*'Dealing with difficult students is a real challenge - I'd like to be given help with that.'*

*'In my first semester as a tutor, I was thrown in to the deep end with assessment and marking. I felt like I didn't really know what I was doing.'*

*'It would be great if more experienced sessional teachers could play more of a role in developing courses.'*

*'How are we supposed to find a permanent position when we don't get any support for career development?'*

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## Policy

### 3. Opportunities for development in learning and teaching

- 3.1 All sessional teachers should have initial and ongoing opportunities to develop their learning and teaching knowledge and practices.
- 3.2 Sessional teachers are to be provided with training to use University, Faculty or School systems that are necessary to their effective functioning as teachers, such as training in online teaching.
- 3.3 Faculties are responsible for ensuring that there is an annual budget allocation to ensure all orientation, teaching, and professional development activities are appropriately and adequately funded.

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## Checklists

### *School level*

- Is the Career Development Scheme utilised to provide professional development opportunities for sessional teachers whenever possible?
- Do appointees participate in a formal induction process (including teaching and learning issues, completing administrative tasks, location of facilities, etc)?

- Does your School have a resource such as a manual or web site that informs sessional teachers of relevant policies and procedures such as assessment policies, plagiarism policies, equity policies, teaching philosophy etc?
- Do sessional teachers receive guidance in marking students' work and other matters of assessment?
- Are sessional staff informed about staff development opportunities available to all staff? For online information on this, please visit the professional development schedule on the UNSW corporate site - <http://www.unsw.edu.au/learning/pve/developmentschedule.html>
- Are learning and teaching development opportunities provided for sessional teachers?

#### *Course level*

- Do you provide sessional teachers with written guidelines which will assist them in their teaching role?
- Do you ensure that sessional teachers receive guidance in marking students' work to ensure consistency in assessment procedures?
- Do you keep your sessional teachers informed about formal professional development courses, including those that lead to certification? (eg FULT, the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education, or other sessional staff training)
- Do you make opportunities for sessional teachers to meet and liaise with one another?
- Do you use the Career Development Scheme as a source of professional development for yourself in managing sessional staff?

Policy and checklists taken from the  
*UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*

[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)

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#### Ideas and strategies

- Encourage sessional teaching staff to present papers at conferences by providing research and writing assistance or incentives through funding.
  - Invite sessional teaching staff to participate in School or Faculty planning and course development.
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#### Resources and links

- **University of Melbourne**  
An interactive online tutor development program.  
<http://tlu.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/tutortraining/tutortraining.htm>
- **University of Queensland**  
Barbara Masser, Peter Gauci and Debra Herbert, *A Comprehensive Tutor Training Program*.  
[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case\\_studies/Tutor\\_Training.pdf](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case_studies/Tutor_Training.pdf)
- **Griffith University**  
Margaret Buckridge, 'Conducting an Assessment Marking Meeting with Sessional Teachers.'  
[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case\\_studies/Marking\\_meeting.pdf](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case_studies/Marking_meeting.pdf)
- **Charles Sturt University**  
*Improving assessment practices: working with sessional markers*  
This site has four downloadable booklets focusing on university assessment practices involving sessional or casual markers: Designing Assessment Tasks, Supporting Sessional Markers, Working Effectively as a Sessional Marker and University Policy Issues.

<http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/edu/cutsd>

- **Oxford Brookes University**

*First Words*

A site designed for new teachers with information on a range of topics such as planning classes, questioning techniques, giving feedback to students and course design.

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/firstwords/fwconts.html>

- **Further case studies**

The TEDI website contains a page of links to further case studies.

[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case\\_studies\\_frameset.html](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case_studies_frameset.html)

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## References

- Kift, S., 2003, 'Assuring Quality in the Casualisation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Towards Best Practice for the First Year Experience', *March UltiBASE ISSN 1443-7023*,

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- *UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*

[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)

- *UNSW Learning and Teaching Plan 2008-2010*

[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/LandTPlan\\_05.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/LandTPlan_05.pdf)

## Evaluation and recognition

As key facilitators of the learning and teaching experience of students, sessional teachers should be provided with the opportunity to critically reflect upon their teaching, be this through standard University evaluation processes, or through more informal reflective practice. Encourage your sessional staff to participate in formal and informal processes of evaluation, both as a means to develop and enhance quality teaching, but also as a way of building *'an ethos of inclusivity'* (Kift, 2003) within your School and Faculty community. This culture of inclusiveness can be further developed by establishing systematic processes for acknowledging and rewarding the work of sessional teaching staff in your School and Faculty.

The policy and checklist below are designed to guide you in further developing processes for evaluation and recognition of sessional teaching staff in your School and Faculty. You will also find useful strategies, resources and links.

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### Policy

#### 5. Evaluation and recognition

5.1 Sessional teachers are to participate in standard University evaluation processes (Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement - CATEI).

5.2 Sessional teachers should be encouraged and supported in reflecting upon their teaching performance.

5.3 There are to be systematic processes for recognising and rewarding the work of sessional teachers as there are for permanent academic staff, such as awards for teaching excellence.

#### Sessional staff views

*'I found the lack of general encouragement and recognition of what I was contributing really disheartening.'*

*'One of the most important experiences in my development as a teacher was when I got specific feedback on my teaching evaluations from my course coordinator.'*

*'I think that there should be clearer and more systematic institutional acknowledgement of the importance of our roles.'*

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### Checklists

#### *School level*

- Are inexperienced/newly appointed sessional teachers provided with mentoring or coaching?
- Are sessional teachers utilising CATEI evaluation procedures?
- Are sessional teachers encouraged to reflect on their own performance and to develop their teaching skills?
- Are the supervision practices of sessional teachers regularly evaluated?

#### *Course level*

- Are inexperienced/newly appointed sessional teachers provided with mentoring or coaching?
- Are sessional teachers utilising CATEI evaluation procedures?
- Are sessional teachers encouraged to reflect on their own performance and to develop their teaching skills?
- Are sessional staff subject to performance review? Does training or other support follow if performance problems are identified?
- Are the supervision practices of sessional teachers regularly evaluated?
- Do you reflect upon your own supervision practices by way of feedback, discussion forums, etc, with sessional staff?

Policy and checklists taken from the  
*UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*

[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)

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## Ideas and strategies

- At a School level, provide sessional teaching staff with feedback on their teaching, based on student evaluations and observations of their teaching by permanent teaching staff. (Jacobs, 1998)
- Acknowledge positive student feedback about sessional teachers at a School or Faculty meeting.
- Establish nominations-based Faculty or School Teaching Awards for sessional teachers. See below for examples of these at UNSW and other universities.

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## Resources and links

For examples of University and Faculty Awards schemes for sessional teaching staff, visit the links below.

### UNSW

- Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence.  
<http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/employee/acad/vcate.html>
- UNSW@ADFA Teaching Award.  
<http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/governance/tlc/guidelines.html>
- Faculty of the Built Environment, Staff Teaching Awards.  
<http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/futurestudents/teachingawards.asp>
- Faculty of Engineering, Staff Excellence Awards.  
<http://www.eng.unsw.edu.au/staff/awards/2005/Protocol.pdf>
- Australian School of Business, Teaching and Learning Awards.  
[http://www2.fce.unsw.edu.au/nps/servlet/portalservice?GI\\_ID=System.LoggedOutInheritableArea&%20maxWnd=\\_LT\\_FacultyAwards](http://www2.fce.unsw.edu.au/nps/servlet/portalservice?GI_ID=System.LoggedOutInheritableArea&%20maxWnd=_LT_FacultyAwards)
- COFA Dean's Award for teaching <http://www.cofa.unsw.edu.au/staff/awardsrecognition/cofateachingawards.html>

### Other Universities

- University of Melbourne,  
Overview of University and Faculty teaching awards.  
<http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/UniMelbTeachAwards06.html>
- Australian National University, Faculty of Economics and Commerce  
Faculty Teaching Awards.  
<http://ecocomm.anu.edu.au/staff/teachaward.asp>
- Queensland University of Technology, Faculty of Law,  
Faculty Teaching and Learning Awards.  
<http://www.law.qut.edu.au/academic/tl/tlwards.jsp>

- **University of Western Australia, Faculty of Law,**  
Excellence in Teaching Award.  
[http://www.law.uwa.edu.au/current/excellence\\_in\\_teaching](http://www.law.uwa.edu.au/current/excellence_in_teaching)
- **University of Adelaide, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,**  
Teaching Awards.  
<http://www.arts.adelaide.edu.au/faculty/teachingawards/>
- **Flinders University,**  
Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Teaching.  
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/teach/awards/vc/index.htm>
- **University of Queensland,**  
Teaching and Learning Excellence Awards.  
<http://www.uq.edu.au/teaching-learning/index.html?page=7417>
- **Edith Cowan University,**  
Vice Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Teaching.  
[http://www.ecu.edu.au/LDS/pd/teaching\\_awards/t\\_awards.htm#VCAET](http://www.ecu.edu.au/LDS/pd/teaching_awards/t_awards.htm#VCAET)
- **University of South Australia,**  
University Teaching Awards.  
<http://www.unisa.edu.au/staff/teachawards.asp>
- **University of Tasmania,**  
Teaching Excellence Awards.  
[http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/recognising/awards/excellence\\_awards.html](http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/recognising/awards/excellence_awards.html)
- **University of Reading,**  
Awards for Outstanding Contributions to Teaching and Learning Support.  
<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/cdotl/teaching/excellence/index.htm>

#### References

- *UNSW Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan (2005)*  
[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/UNSW\\_Sessional\\_Staff\\_Strategic\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/UNSW_Sessional_Staff_Strategic_Action_Plan_2005.pdf)
- *UNSW Learning and Teaching Plan 2005-2007*  
[http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/2005/LandTPlan\\_05.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/2005/LandTPlan_05.pdf)
- Jacobs, F., 1998, 'Using Part-Time Faculty More Effectively', *New Directions For Higher Education*, No. 104, Winter, 917.  
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/101523487/PDFSTART?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>
- Kift, S., 2003, 'Assuring Quality in the Casualisation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Towards Best Practice for the First Year Experience', *March UltiBASE ISSN 1443-7023*.  
<http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/march03/kift1.htm>

## Support for you

This section contains a variety of resources and links designed to support you in managing sessional teaching staff within your School and Faculty.

These are organised into 3 sub-sections:

- **research** into issues specific to sessional teaching staff,
- **case studies** of programs established to support sessional teaching staff, and
- links to a range of **resources** for sessional teaching staff developed by other universities.

### Research

- Jacobs, F., 1998, 'Using Part-Time Faculty More Effectively', *New Directions For Higher Education*, No. 104, Winter, 917.  
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/101523487/PDFSTART>
- Kimber, M., 2003, 'The Tenured "Core" and the Tenuous "Periphery": the Casualisation of Academic Work in Australian Universities', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol. 25, No. 1, May, 4150.  
<http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/media/ba7gwwuxwj0m0ylxjar6/contributions/c/3/2/1/c321axmp8k8lg6rg.pdf>
- Sutherland, K., 2002, *Maintaining quality in a diversifying environment: The challenges of support and training for part-time/sessional teaching staff*, Victoria University of Wellington.  
<http://www.ecu.edu.au/conferences/herdsa/main/papers/nonref/pdf/KathrynSutherland.pdf>
- Townsend, R.B., 2000, 'Part-Time Teachers: The AHA Survey', *Perspectives Online*, April 2000. <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2000/0004/0004new1.cfm>
- 2003, 'Training, support and management of sessional teaching staff: A review of the literature', *Sessional Teaching: AUTC Project*, University of Queensland.  
[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/pdfs/Lit\\_review/Lit\\_review2.pdf](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/pdfs/Lit_review/Lit_review2.pdf)

### Case studies

- **University of Queensland**  
'Managing, training and supporting sessional teachers at the University of Queensland'  
Details the support offered to STS as a result of participation in AUTC Project. Outlines strategies for implementation of policy in 2005.  
[http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case\\_studies/Managing\\_training.pdf](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/SessionalTeaching/case_studies/Managing_training.pdf)
- **Queensland University of Technology**  
Whelan, K., Smeal, G. and Grealy, J., 2002, 'Teaching and Learning Development of Casual Academic Staff: an Institutional Approach', Paper presented at the AARE International Conference, The University of Queensland, December 2002.  
Details QUT's Casual Academic Staff Teaching and Learning Development Program  
<http://www.aare.edu.au/02pap/whe02569.htm>
- **La Trobe University**  
McCormack, S., 2003, 'Casual Academic Staff at La Trobe University, Report on a survey and support program'.  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/adu/pdf/casaca.pdf>
- **University of Sydney**  
George, A., Stewart, C., Placing, K. and Peat, M., 2003, Faculty of Science and Institute for Teaching and Learning, 'Tutor and Demonstrator Training: The Management of Small Group Teaching and Learning'.  
Provides an overview of Faculty of Science Tutor and Demonstrator Training Program.  
<http://science.uniserve.edu.au/usydcst/tutortraining.pdf>

- Hall, S. and Parker, L., 1996, 'A strategic approach to providing support for sessional academic staff, Different Approaches: Theory and Practice in Higher Education', proceedings of the HERDSA Conference held in Perth, Western Australia from 8-12 July. <http://www.herdsa.org.au/confs/1996/halls3.html>

## Resources

- The Teaching and Educational Development (TEDI) at the **University of Queensland** has a comprehensive web site on tutor training. Go to the subsection 'Teaching Ideas' for a range of useful learning and teaching resources.  
<http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/sessionalteaching/>
- *Teaching Matters: A Handbook for UTS Academic Staff*, **University of Technology, Sydney**. An online handbook for new teachers, including chapters on preparing to teach, student learning, classroom management and evaluating teaching.  
<http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learn/teach/resources/tm/index.htm>
- **University of New England**, *Online handbook for Casual and Sessional Teaching Staff (CASTS)*.  
<http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/casts/>
- Pearson, C., 1999, 'Guide to Support for Part-Time Teachers of Sociology', **The Open University**.  
<http://www4.open.ac.uk/sociology/others.html>