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Part-time teachers in the 21st century workforce

Identifying, supporting and sustaining professional
development

The broader context

- National policy drivers eg Australasia RED report (2008)
UK Govt White Paper 'Students at the heart of the system' (2011)
- Market forces eg KIS, NSS, league tables
- Professional recognition
- Quality indicators of teaching
- Undergraduate expectations
- Nature of graduate education

Opening questions

- Who are the part-time teachers?
- What do they do?
- Why do they do it?
- How are expectations established and communicated?

Scoping the task

Difficulty of identifying estimated numbers

- OECD statistics suggest a slow but steady increase up to ~ 40- 50% in many developed countries
- HESA 35% + 'atypical' contract staff eg demonstrators, online tutors, occasional contributors

So who are they?

Phil – retired professor of Botany



Alessandro – PhD student



Wilma – part-time lecturer and full time health professional



Sarah – undergraduate student and tutor



Daniel – Master's student and tutor

Motivation

- Pragmatism
- Enthusiasm
- Contributing to academic community
- Transition into new role or between other roles in other professional sphere
- Potential route into fulltime post
- Congruence with other responsibilities

but... insecurity is more troublesome than part-time work in itself

Institutional motivation?

- Economic pragmatism
- Forging /strengthening links with industry and professional bodies
- Enhancing students' HE experience and employment prospects
- Building next generation of academics

Setting expectations

At individual, team and programme level

- involving part-timers without imposing
- academic and other expectations

Institutional expectations

Nature and accessibility of support on offer

Developing appropriate interventions

- Purpose, content, timing
- Accessibility
- Pedagogic <->practical
- Modelling and interrogating behaviours
- Building communities

Broader structures and practices

- Discrete provision: isolation or integration?
- Support and guidance eg mentoring, coaching, involvement in departmental life
- Institutional recognition of individuals who undertake any of the above roles

Sustainable frameworks

- Holistic
- Pervasive/ embedded
- Transparent
- Responsive



Challenges and issues

Building academic careers

- Part-time teaching much less likely to be perceived as leading to a 'real' career (Coates et al 2009:53)
- Reported high levels of dissatisfaction with academia as a career among imminent retirees
- Changes in contract types and duration
- Different kinds of institutional missions

Key implications

- Timely interventions
- Flexible, accessible provision
- Sense of voice and agency
- Future- proofing