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Part-time teachers in the 21st century workforce

Identifying, supporting and sustaining professional development
The broader context

  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

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