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Citation for published version

Beaton, Fran (2017) Just in time and future-proofing? Policy, challenges and opportunities in the professional development of part-time teachers. International Journal for Academic Development, 22 (1). pp. 19-30. ISSN 1360-144X.

DOI

Link to record in KAR

http://kar.kent.ac.uk/57991/

Document Version

Author's Accepted Manuscript

Just in time and future-proofing? Policy, challenges and opportunities in the professional development of part-time teachers.

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Part-time teachers form a growing proportion of the global HE workforce. Their backgrounds can vary from Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) teaching for the first time, to practitioners bringing workplace experience into HE and sessional teachers, all with differing professional development needs. This paper builds on previous research to consider structures and practices promoting sustainable, effective professional development for part-timers, to propose proactive holistic professional development, and raise institutional awareness of the challenges of reaching part-timers. A case study exploring the lived experiences of part-time staff illustrates key features of part-timers' preparation for their current work and future aspirations.

Keywords: part-time teachers; policy; professional development

Just in time and future-proofing? Policy, challenges and opportunities in the professional development of part-time teachers.

Part-time teachers form a growing proportion of the global HE workforce. Their backgrounds can vary from Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) teaching for the first time, to practitioners bringing workplace experience into HE and sessional teachers, all with differing professional development needs. This paper builds on previous research to consider structures and practices promoting sustainable, effective professional development for part-timers, to propose proactive holistic professional development, and raise institutional awareness of the challenges of reaching part-timers. A case study exploring the lived experiences of part-time staff illustrates key features of part-timers' preparation for their current work and future aspirations.

Introduction

Part-time teachers form a growing proportion of the global HE workforce. Worldwide data (eg Beaton & Gilbert, 2013, p. 9; Bryson, 2013, p. 3) show a steady increase in the proportion of part-time staff in the first decade of this century. There are various reasons for this, such as economic considerations; changing university curricula; students' employment expectations; increased student numbers; changing perspectives of the nature of graduate education; practitioners' perceptions of routes into/through academic work. However, it remains difficult to arrive at precise numbers of part-time staff. Their recruitment

" ... is frequently "casualised" and informal too ...until fairly recently [UK] universities were not required to return [nationally collected statistics about] staff who worked for less than 25% full-time equivalent in a year..." (Bryson, 2013, p. 2)

".... a massive effort is needed to identify such staff at even faculty or departmental level." (Bryson, 2013, p. 3)

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However, part-timers are a diverse group, representing a spectrum of experiences and backgrounds. The term can include postgraduate students/Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) teaching for the first time, professional practitioners bringing workplace experience to the HE classroom (including the workplace itself functioning as a site of HE practice), experienced sessional teachers, people employed in multiple institutions on various kinds of fractional contracts, para-academics (McFarlane, 2011), experienced academics teaching part-time en route to retirement. The literature uses these, and many other terms, including "non-standard academics" (Beaton & Sims, in Baume & Popovic, 2016, p. 104) to describe the role. Whatever term is used, these roles consist of different responsibilities and are undertaken for a variety of motivations. It is thus problematic to regard part-timers as an homogenous group, and their diversity poses institutional challenges in planning appropriate and accessible professional development, supporting an individual in their immediate role and preparing them for possible future careers.

While part-timers' core responsibility is normally to teach students (a role which they take as seriously as their full-time colleagues), what they are additionally asked to do can vary considerably: holding office hours for pastoral and academic support; giving students formative feedback; undertaking summative assessment. In some disciplines part-timers may team-teach, give demonstrations or be one of several people in a class, led by a fulltime member of staff, responding to ad hoc questions from students. The pressure group, Fighting Against Casualisation in Employment (FACE) asserts that:

"Hourly paid staff at many universities already have the worst of both worlds, lacking the security of full positions while still being expected to carry out administrative and

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pastoral duties for effectively zero pay." (Times Higher Education, 27/08/15)

The variety of expectations, combined with "... the invisibility of casual academic work" (Ryan et al., 2013, p.169) makes it more likely that unless institutions take deliberate steps to reach them, part-timers will lack consistent access to professional development opportunities to support them in their work and to help them develop the skills which will help them in future, within or outside academia. This paper considers practices from a range of universities and disciplines identified in previous research, a case study from a UK university and, based on these, proposes strategies towards a more consistent quality experience for part-time staff.

Unpicking the context

Many part-timers operate in a context over which they have relatively little control but which shapes their experiences. The examples which follow are drawn chiefly from the UK, North America and Australasia but have resonances which apply more widely.

The economic case for employing part-timers is far from new, although this becomes more visible as the numbers of part-time/ sessional, casual, "atypical" staff (Gilbert, 2013, p. 10) increase. Part-timers are typically cheaper to hire (and easier to fire) than their permanent counterparts and, as universities are expected to become more responsive to fluctuating student numbers, having ready access to a pool of part-timers can appear an attractive institutional option (e.g. Gilbert, 2013). However this raises the prospect of a part-timer, who has not been involved in curriculum development, preparing to teach new content at short notice. The support novice part-time teachers get in this undertaking can range from extensive guidance on exactly what and how to teach (which does not necessarily help them become resourceful independent practitioners) to no guidance at all e.g. Klapper, cited in Tomkinson, 2013. Ad hoc or

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inconsistent approaches can strain their morale, sense of agency and relationship to the institution or institutions which employ them (e.g. Anderson, 2007; Ryan, Burgess, Connell, & Groen, 2013). Harvey (2013, p. 25) summarizes sessional staff motivation:

"..... being boiled down to

- it suits me

- it was all that was on offer

- I do not wish to work fulltime."

Furthermore, Brown and Gold conclude that

".... the overall most pressing reason for (women) taking a non-standard contract was the lack of any other sort." (2013, p. 26).

Armstrong, 2011; Gilbert, 2013; Higher Education Statistics Agency, https://www.hesa.ac.uk/, 2012; and Starr, 2015 all identify the significantly higher proportion of women in part-time or unstable employment, particularly in junior level posts with a predominantly teaching focus, compared to their fulltime peers.

The Open University in the UK (OUUK) notably makes a deliberate distinction between the fulltime staff engaged in curriculum design and development and part-timers who undertake the teaching and tutoring. OUUK initial and continuing professional development for tutors is systematically and specifically tailored to address the challenges of this distinction, as explained in, for example, Baume and Popovic, 2016; Gaskell, 2013. The link between HE study and student employment may boost the involvement of those part-timers who bring or combine HE teaching and workplace

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experience in industry and in vocational subjects. In disciplines such as Accountancy, Business, Engineering and Performing Arts, students appreciate and can greatly benefit from practitioners' contacts and expertise, particularly in fast-moving fields. Universities, too, benefit from being able to link these experiences to, for example, graduates' employment destinations. However the literature e.g. Santoro and Snead (2012); Shreeve, (2011) indicates that while the experience of the practitioner teacher in these dual roles can be rich and complementary, it can also be conflicting and troublesome. This can work both ways. Santoro and Snead (2012, p. 391) note:

"…. literature that suggests that professionals in the field can often be suspicious or dismissive of their academic counterparts whose work they regard as lofty in theory but useless in practice."

Nevertheless, the changing nature of academic work and the academic world - why, on what, with whom, where and how we work, for instance - means that these practitioners need to be aware of the implications of the changing context for their approach to their HE work, but the dissonance of their two worlds may contribute to a sense of feeling on the margins.

Changes in graduate education have also contributed to an increase in the numbers of part-time teachers. In the US, for example, Park (2011, p. 350) notes that:

"..... North American GTA models serve a number of needs, including reducing teaching loads and thus increasing research time for academics, providing financial support for graduate students and offering an apprenticeship model for future professors."

While UK GTAs have tended to build a less extensive teaching portfolio compared to their US counterparts, the last decade has seen an increasing expectation

that GTAs gain some experience of undergraduate teaching as a possible route into academic work. For example, the UK 2009 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, completed annually by all registered UK postgraduates, reveals:

> *"......* that 44.2% of 17,813 postgraduates visualise themselves as career academics and therefore become interested in the skills-set that enables them to function in this role." (Chadha, 2013, p. 206)

> "… [a qualification) is a good CV thing.*"* (Muzaka, in Chadha, 2013, p. 211)

The expectation of support and professional development is allied, as previously discussed, to a general drive to ensure a quality experience for part-timers and the students they teach. However, professional development can also provide a means of building teaching communities: 'It is such a relief to discover we're all in the same boat!'' (personal communication to author, 2014), helping staff develop skills, self-confidence and self-efficacy and enabling access to informal and formal discipline-specific networks and discussions. There are strategic benefits in assisting universities to demonstrate a commitment to teaching quality. This central aim, important in itself, has been sharpened by the requirement for UK universities to provide data to HESA on how many academic and teaching staff have relevant teaching qualifications. This information may also be one metric in the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (see, for example, Times Higher Education, November 2015) which is intended to enable government to monitor the quality of university teaching.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore what proportion of GTAs or other would-be academics actually achieve their aim of gaining an academic post; indeed, Hall and Sutherland note (2013, p. 85) that the aim of tutor training and development is:

> "... not merely to turn out understudies for professors...... apprentice-type approaches to tutor training and development, which aim to induct and/or socialise

tutors into the academic community by exposing them to scholarly standards such as reflective critique, clear goals and appropriate methods can have influence well beyond an academic career.*"*

What, then, are the implications for practice in the professional development of part-time staff? Previous research (e.g. Beaton, 2014; Durur & Gilmore, 2013; Partridge, Hunt and Goody, 2013; Wareing, 2013) strongly advocates a proactive, coherent and holistic approach to the professional development of all staff, while being aware of the specific challenges of identifying and reaching part-timers. To sum up, the main challenges when considering the professional development of part-time staff are:

- identifying who they are

- their institutional visibility

- undertaking a needs analysis which takes account of their roles

- planning appropriate interventions which balance the discipline-specific and the generic

In Australia, the Benchmarking Leadership and Standards for Sessional Teaching (BLASST) project responds to recommendations in the RED Report (Percy et al., 2008), based on five domains and with clear examples of practical actions for institutions to implement:

- Systemic and Sustainable Policy and Practice;

- Employment and Administrative Support;

- Induction and Academic Management;

- Professional and Career Development;

- Reward and Recognition.

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Although BLASST "... had its genesis at one large metropolitan university..." (Harvey, 2013, p. 4), its flexibility enables it to be used more widely. It is supported by an interactive online tool enabling institutions to self-assess what they offer part-time staff, identify areas for development and engage with iteratively to evaluate the effect of their interventions on the quality and experiences of this group of staff. Elsewhere, Gaskell, (2013); Lee, (2013); McCormack and Kelly, (2013); and Wilson (2013) have explored effective initiatives to support part-timers in different contexts. Partridge, Hunt and Goody (2013, p.114) evaluate an embedded and successful postgraduate teaching internship scheme which illustrates how an institution-wide approach can work. They summarise three intertwined ways of conceptualising types of strategies to bring about changes in teaching:

> "Top-down ...... the development of policies and infrastructure to support teaching
> Middle-out .... through learning and teaching centres (which ... normally facilitate
> both top-down and bottom-up initiatives), professional development and ....
> resources and incentives
> Bottom-up...... initiatives by individual [or groups of] academics in departments
> and schools."

A common theme to emerge from these initiatives is the importance of 'buy-in' in the form of active senior support (which Partridge, Hunt and Goody note frequently means assigning budget or other resources), and strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives on individual and disciplinary practice.

Institutional case study

This case study gives examples generated in each of the Partridge, Hunt and Goody's three categories. It supplements the examples already cited and case studies developed through the 26 UK Subject Centres. (These discipline-specific resources, once

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maintained by the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA), have now been re-collated by Professor Mick Healey and are available from www.mickhealey.co.uk.) The case study draws on data and experiences in a UK multi-faculty, multi-campus teaching and research university in Southern England and two specialist Arts Higher Education Institutions, one English and one Scottish.

In all three institutions the rationale for supporting part-timers is a top-down initiative, actively promoted by key senior staff. In the university, GTA teaching responsibilities are linked to the award of university scholarships, partly based on the apprenticeship model and partly to address practical challenges due to a rapid increase in undergraduate student numbers. This increase had created demand for additional seminar groups, problems classes, workshops etc. which GTAs could help meet. As GTAS are completely new to teaching, the middle-out preparatory support consists of a combination of one-day 'Preparing to Teach' workshops, run centrally by a team of Education academics and elements (50%) of a centrally run PGCert in Higher Education, developed and run by the same team. (Fulltime probationary staff take the whole PGCert). The PGCert places considerable emphasis on developing a critical, reflective, scholarly approach to practice and includes module content in four spheres: the development of practical teaching skills, different perspectives on academic practice, development as a researcher and skills development e.g. in using technology, undertaking action research. Part-timers with teaching experience receive 1-1 advice on which modules to select to support them in both their current and possible future roles. The PGCert is taught in interdisciplinary groups, with further discipline-specific input provided by a School mentor and complemented by other forms of bottom-up School provision. This at minimum means a named member of fulltime staff with responsibility for co-ordinating part-time teachers. Further provision frequently

includes School workshops, reading and discussion groups on learning, teaching and assessment. These workshops are often taught jointly by disciplinary specialists and a member of the Education team.   This combination, intended to balance the contextual, discipline-transcendent and discipline-specific, can present challenges. Many GTAs' primary purpose at the University is to work towards their PhD. Other part-timers are on campus only when they teach and may be juggling several jobs or other commitments. Many report a struggle to carve out the additional time needed to engage in developmental work and prepare their teaching. While there is scope for these spheres of activity to be complementary, part-timers may simply feel that there are too many demands on their time for them to do anything full justice.   Part-timers in specialist institutions frequently combine their HE work with other part-time, or in some cases nearly fulltime, practice as creators or performers. The legitimacy which being in professional practice bestows on their HE work is balanced by the pressures of trying to do their best in both spheres. The support, both informal and formal, may take the form of context - specific peer learning with limited scope for interdisciplinary work.

Methodology

This project was funded through a small grant from an Education research centre in the author's institution, which included scrutiny for ethical clearance based on BERA guidelines. The study aimed to draw out data from part-time practitioners engaged in HE teaching, from a variety of disciplines and with differing amounts of experience. Given the difficulties previously discussed of identifying part-time staff through central records, the decision was made to contact potential participants through two routes: firstly, through academic Schools known to employ large numbers of part-time teachers (GTAs and professional practitioners) and secondly, through Heads of HE in specialist

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institutions with a record of employing professional practitioners to teach on HE programmes.

The data was gathered in two ways. First, a link to an online questionnaire was sent electronically to the Head of School/Head of HE, to be returned directly to the author. The questionnaire was accompanied by an explanation of the purpose of the project for participants and details of what the ethical clearance covered, including the process for participating, right to withdraw at any time, right to confidentiality, anonymity and secure data storage. This arrangement assumed that Heads were best placed to alert relevant staff, but should not be involved in subsequent data traffic, given the considerable sensitivities for participants in discussing their workplaces. The aim was to ensure that a spread of participants had the opportunity to respond if they wished and were assured of confidentiality, as all returned questionnaires would be coded numerically. This questionnaire was launched in early Spring with a four-week deadline for return and covering five broad areas:

- Relevant personal details: age range, gender, professional/academic qualifications, years in post
- HE experience, including current roles
- Qualitative comments on combining part-time HE work with other work
- The extent to which an individual experiences these as complementary or conflicting
- Examples of helpful formal or non-formal strategies for professional development

The end of the questionnaire invited participants to include contact details if they were willing to participate in a subsequent semi-structured interview. The aim, again, was to gather rich data in a confidential setting.

The second phase of the project took place over the subsequent two months, a timescale largely dictated by the multiple calls on participants' time. This took the form of semi – structured interviews, typically lasting 60 minutes. Interview questions followed up initially on the qualitative responses to questions (iii) – (v) of the questionnaire, while encouraging interviewees to elaborate on the effect of their experiences on their sense of identity and belonging. This combination of methods was chosen as being the most effective way of gathering quantitative and qualitative data which could be coded for analysis, provide a stimulus for subsequent interviews and ensure that individual voices and experiences could be heard. Interview recordings and transcripts were kept securely during the time period of the study; each participant's interview transcript was returned to them for factual checking; individuals' permission was sought to use anonymised quotations from either questionnaire or transcript to be used in published work.

40 people (28 female, 12 male) responded to the questionnaire. 10 (six female, four male) volunteered for follow-up interviews. As respondents were geographically scattered, five interviews were conducted face to face, four by phone, with one respondent withdrawing due to pressure of time. Respondents and interviewees will henceforth be identified by number e.g. Resp. 3, Int. 7 and role: Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), part-time teacher (PTT), professional practitioner (PP).

The data identified three broad themes which part-time staff highlighted as inhibiting their professional identity and development, and three critical aspects which made a positive contribution.

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Inhibiting factors

Conflicting responsibilities

Nearly 90% of GTA respondents expressed similar sentiments to Resp. 5:

> "Teaching takes time, preparation and commitment, and these resources are
> limited, making the time devoted unwieldy......my supervisor says I should
> concentrate more on my research."

For professional practitioners, there is the challenge of juggling their HE commitment
with another fulltime job. Resp. 3 observes:

> "My clients and fellow professionals expect my 9 – 5 availability, 6 days a week,
> regardless of HE commitments."

Int. 1 comments:

> "Belonging to two communities is the most relevant factor in my professional
development, although time/ financial/ personal resource constraints affect my performance and
participation in both."

Tangential status in the institution

Institutional practices vary widely, for example the extent to which part-timers are
expected or enabled (paid!) to attend meetings or engage in other forms of School
collective activity such as teaching forums. Wareing (2013) also notes that in contexts
where a substantial proportion of staff are part-timers working on different days and at
different times, part-timers need to have both consistent access to formal professional
development and be involved in key events which help build team spirit, such as
awaydays, welcoming or bidding farewell to staff:

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"When new people start in a team with part-timers, it can take longer to assimilate them, because some people... may never meet if their times in the office do not overlap...... [if] everyone's talking about someone you've never met, it can make you feel peripheral from the rest of the team." (2013, p. 191)

The sense of being outside the loop can be exacerbated by the lack of a physical base...

"I thought I was getting somewhere when my department let me leave my cardboard box [of resources] under someone else's desk.... but I'm not." (Resp.14, GTA);

by institutional systems…

'"It took me two months to get an email account and a parking permit. I was invited to a new staff induction after I had been here for a year! Does the university know I exist?" (Resp. 8, PTT)

and by a feeling of being outside the conversation…

"Informal groupings are a lot more frequent and carry more weight… but they are estranged from institutions in the general sense." (Resp.15, PP)

Colleagues' actual or perceived perceptions led to part-timers feeling on the margins:

"Teaching the sort of subjects that I do has led to an attitude of dismissiveness from some of my academic colleagues who do not consider professional practice to be a subject of work." (Resp. 9, PP)

"I have ended up feeling like neither fish nor fowl…someone who doesn't fit in either category…. but I don't see how it can be otherwise." (Resp. 2, PP)

Limited agency and voice

"I really wish I could be allowed to know why things happen." (Int. 4, GTA)

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"It is hard, extremely hard, because finding yourself as one of the youngest faculty members it is very hard to articulate a voice." (Int. 2, PP)

Three respondents who had combined working in HE and professional practice for more than 10 years felt the conflict between the two had intensified rather than diminished over time e.g.

".. [working with students] enables me to continue work which I have enjoyed for over thirty years, but which detracts from my research time and is not deemed to have impact." (Resp.12, PP)

Positive contributions

There is hope! There are many heartening examples of Schools providing initial and ongoing support for GTAs and other part-time teachers which go beyond the administrative basics. Examples include a named GTA co-ordinator, regular and systematic mentoring, fora to pool ideas and challenges, involvement in School and Faculty teaching-related events and help in accessing useful networks.

Overwhelmingly, part-timers identified their academic tutors on Education programmes and their disciplinary mentors as crucial figures in promoting and enabling their development as teachers. The majority of mentors were PGCert graduates, willing enthusiasts who considered the role to be an opportunity to undertake something from which they had themselves benefited.   As one mentor put it:

"I see it as doing my bit and helping them avoid some of the rubbish you went through yourself. It's one of my responsibilities as a female professor (there aren't many of us here) to promote and support young staff, including women. Male profs see it differently!"

"My mentor has spent time explaining to me what the expectations of students here are and how I should prepare." (Int.7, GTA)

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"… a senior colleague who is a buddy at your side." (Int.1, PTT)

"Being mentored has created the potential for reflection and development.... there is nothing like this anywhere else in my department." (Resp.17, GTA)

"My tutor has been brilliant….. thinking about my teaching in the context of performance and understanding the uncertain environment in which we find ourselves has made me much more confident about how I can handle all this." (Resp. 20, GTA)

60% of professional practitioners specifically identified their colleagues, their teaching and their students as enabling professional learning:

"Teaching allows me to keep my thinking current in the context of performance." (Resp.10, PP)

"My students on placement are at the threshold of practice in the profession they are hoping to join, and bring this back to my classroom." (Resp. 4, PP)

"There is real enjoyment in watching students learn and produce new ideas and ways of thinking you hadn't thought of before." (Int. 5, PP)

"Very little can prepare you for the job… fascinating, challenging and brings me into the academic community." (Resp. 8, PP)

Co-ordination

The central Education team co-ordinates and contributes to activity to support individuals in their role. These combine middle-out (e.g. a centrally co-ordinated Mentors' Network and work with the Graduate School) and bottom-up initiatives. Each member of the team has built working relationships with Faculties, Schools and programme teams, as well as having acted as tutor to previous PGCert participants.

This enables discussion and collaborative work in School-based activity, including initial induction and ongoing development for part-time teachers. Examples of joint provision include assessment and feedback in Maths; managing a Fine Art crit; developing teaching in Modern Foreign Languages. Where these relationships are less well developed (due, for example, to staff changes, time or resource pressures) there is a risk that content delivered in Schools either duplicates what is done centrally or, if each assumes the other is doing the work, it is not done at all. In their central role the team has worked with Human Resources, Staff Development and other central services to create coherent and consistent policies and practices to identify and support all staff, including part-timers. The team has supported a number of part-time and fulltime staff in preparing successful internal and external teaching prize applications, drawing on evidence from the range of academic practice, and promoted the award of Faculty prizes for seminar leaders to raise the profile of part-timers within the institution.

Up to the end of the 2014/15 academic year, the principal means for part-time staff to formalise their professional development was through completion of aspects of the PGCert and submitting coursework to gain academic credit. This provision is also accredited by the UK Higher Education Academy, which through the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) recognises individuals at different levels of Fellowship. For part-time staff, this is normally Associate Fellowship, which is developed through writing an individual claim against various criteria. Since September 2015, our part-time staff can draw on a combination of central and local provision to build their claim for Associate Fellowship. As this combination of provision and the development of a claim is an extremely recent development at this university, awareness of this change is still permeating the university. Although the central team is briefing all key people, it

will necessarily take time to embed; again, ongoing active promotion by senior leaders and reinforcement/ implementation by the central Education team is likely to be needed.

Implications and future developments

These experiences, allied with findings from the literature, suggest the following implications for practice.

First and foremost, there needs to be a clear institutional commitment to quality teaching and a strategy to support the professional development of all staff to that end. This could manifest in, for example, consistency in recruitment practices, job descriptions, terms and conditions (including what exactly part-timers are paid to do), criteria for internal teaching related-awards and advancement. In universities whose permanent or fulltime staff are expected to be teaching - and research - active in order to progress, the part-time teacher is in a weaker position. However, if institutional professional development enables them to work towards a recognised qualification, and a clear sense that universities/HEIs value staff who are qualified, this may help mitigate the sense of having conflicted responsibilities. The development of awards and recognition which are equally open to part- and full-time staff open the doors for their contribution as teachers, whose practice is grounded in scholarship, to be more visible.

Institutional provision needs to be clearly communicated. Consistency in how staff are recruited and effective institutional record-keeping makes it less likely that individuals or groups of individuals will slip through the cracks. However this means clear communication between central bodies such as HR and educational development units and elsewhere in the university eg Schools and departments. While many (all?)

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of us have experiences of troubleshooting, this could on occasion have been averted through better anticipatory planning. Good communication channels are key.

Institutional provision needs to be thorough and appropriate for the different contexts in which people are working, but not be confined to 'how we do things around here.' For part-time staff, this means offering (and publicising) what is on offer centrally, such as a PGCert and identifying what is being run locally within Schools. A central team can build on working relationships to minimise duplication and to ensure that part-timers (particularly GTAs) do not over-reach themselves and put their doctoral work at risk. Mentors, programme leaders and supervisors are key here and their contributions needs to be made more visible and recognised. There is further work to be done in this area.

Formal and informal curricula both need to balance immediate and future work, combining the practicalities of part-timers' immediate work with developing an understanding of the current and possible future contexts. The involvement of discipline-based staff is central to part-timers' sense of belonging, while participation in interdisciplinary centrally run sessions enables them to gain a different perspective. We need to be mindful of the specifics of disciplinary work: extolling the virtues of interactive small-group teaching will not speak to a part-timer helping in terminal sessions or teaching large lab groups. Educational /academic developers have a pivotal role to play in promoting and persuading institutions of the value of all staff, be they full-time or part-time, accessing professional development which empowers them, benefits their current and future students and prepares all staff to deal resourcefully with possible uncertain futures.

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Fran has extensive experience as a teacher educator in Adult, Further and Higher Education, with longstanding research interests in academic identity and the nature and impact of professional development for part-time and fulltime academics. She is currently researching into the experiences of staff who work both in practice (e.g. Law, Creative and Performing Arts) and as university teachers.

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