

Embracing the mantle of casualisation: the provision of professional development for a contingent workforce

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In 2000 the Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment (PETE) in Victoria commissioned four research projects to broaden discussion and to investigate new directions for human resource development (HRD) in VET. It was envisaged that the findings from these research projects would promote best practice in staff development and prepare teachers and trainers for new forms of employment within the VET system.

This paper reports on the final stages of one of the projects – ‘Training the TAFE sessional workforce’. The project is set amidst a culture of workplace change and also a shared responsibility between employer and employee for updating knowledge and skills. It is, however, unclear at this stage of where these boundaries of professional development begin, overlap or indeed terminate. The paper discusses the current characteristics of sessional teaching staff, their work patterns and training. It also identifies their desired training needs and raises some pertinent questions on how the research findings can be turned into viable outcomes for this contingent workforce.