Sessional staff have a significant impact on the learning experiences of students, yet often encounter difficulties in accessing professional development and support, due to factors such as the part-time nature of their roles. The SEG Education committee endorsed the following Principles related to the Professional Development of Sessional Teaching Staff at its October 2014 meeting. The principles promote high quality teaching by sessional staff, and high quality support for sessional staff development.

**PRINCIPLE 1:** The University should offer professional development programs to ensure that sessional teachers are prepared for and can continue to build their skills for high quality sessional teaching.

These programs should be offered where possible in a flexible online format, accessible at any time, and be supported by occasional workshops designed to ensure maximum impact.

*Implementation:* The ITL will offer appropriate professional learning programs for sessional staff.

**PRINCIPLE 2:** Through selection and appointment processes, Faculties should ensure that all sessional staff are appointed on the basis of demonstrated preparation for and, where applicable, evidence of high quality sessional teaching.

Evidence provided on appointment or re-appointment might include:

- Completion of a recognised university teaching training program, at least equivalent to the University of Sydney 3 hour online Sessional staff Development program.
- Recent student feedback or peer review.
- Other equivalent experience or skills.

*Implementation:* Include as a selection criteria in appointment documentation (HR & Faculty Managers).

**PRINCIPLE 3:** Faculties should be clear about mutual responsibilities and expectations for sessional teaching staff and provide a local induction for new sessional staff.

This could be done either in unit of study teams or at the departmental, School or Faculty level, and should:

- Familiarise staff with their responsibilities, available resources and relevant policies.
- Provide a clear explanation of staff responsibilities.
- Discuss how the quality of teaching and assessment is assured and supported.
- Include a commitment to feedback and evaluation for all sessional staff.

*Implementation:* Include 'Induction of Sessional staff' in UoS coordinator roles and responsibilities statements in revised Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching policy (Academic Board). Develop an online university / faculty induction resource (Faculty sessional staff development leaders, ITL) Develop a template contract for sessional staff setting out the expectations and responsibilities of the University and the sessional staff member, and include use of this contract in the Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching policy (Faculty sessional staff development leaders, ITL).
PRINCIPLE 4: The University should implement a whole-of-University approach to gathering student feedback on the perceived quality of sessional teaching.

This could be achieved by modifying the Unit of Study Survey to include a question on sessional teaching for those units of study in which sessional teachers contribute to teaching.

**Implementation:** Develop an approach for ensuring that feedback is systematically obtained on sessional teaching in units of study.

PRINCIPLE 5: Faculties should implement, through Unit of Study Coordinators, strategies to assure the quality of sessional staff contributions to teaching and assessment.

In addition to gathering data on sessional teaching through the Unit of Study Survey, this should include:

- Encouraging sessional teaching staff utilize mechanisms for detailed feedback on individual teaching (e.g. student feedback via the FFT, or peer observation). (see Principle 2)
- Including sessional staff in UoS teams’ consideration of (USS) student feedback on overall unit of study.
- Developing improved means of rewarding and recognising the contribution of sessional teachers as individuals and as members of teaching teams.

**Implementation:** Ensure all sessional staff are aware of Feedback for Teachers surveys and other mechanisms for more detailed feedback on (ITL and UoS Coordinators). Include assurance of the quality of sessional staff contributions to teaching in UoS coordinator roles and responsibilities statements in revised Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching policy (Academic Board).

PRINCIPLE 6: Faculties should facilitate access to professional development to support career development for sessional staff

This might include:

- Supporting sessional staff participation in professional development activities (this could range from informing staff of available resources to funding staff participation in recognised PD activities).
- Providing access to peer observation and mentoring from experienced colleagues (Unit coordinators or senior tutors).
- Identifying career development pathways and provide career opportunities for sessional staff that draw on the University’s professional development offerings and career development pathways and support.

**Implementation:** University endorsed Principles and Faculty guidelines which are monitored through SEG Education, for supporting professional development of sessional teaching staff. (SEG Ed, Associate Deans & Faculty Managers, ITL).