Policy on casual academic staff

QUT Faculty of Law

1. Introduction

The Faculty of Law recognises that casual staff play an important role in the delivery of its undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The purpose of this policy is to state the Faculty’s position in relation to the recruitment, support and development of its casual academic staff. In so doing, this policy recognises that different issues arise in respect of casual staff employed in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

A copy of this policy should be distributed to all full time and casual academic staff.

2. Undergraduate Programs
   (Law School and Justice Studies)

2.1 Recruitment

The recruitment process is an important means of ensuring that the Faculty employs quality casual academic staff.

The relevant School will establish a pool of approved candidates from which casual academic staff will be drawn. A person may be added to the pool in one of three ways:

(1) By nomination by a unit coordinator

When the pool is first established, all unit coordinators will be invited by their relevant Heads of School to nominate for inclusion in the pool any existing casual academic staff who have the ability to provide quality teaching and/or discharge marking duties. An existing casual academic staff member who is nominated by a unit coordinator is not required to undergo an interview in order to become part of the pool.

(2) By selection by an interview panel

The Faculty will advertise for applications in August where necessary to maintain a sufficient number of approved candidates in the pool. The relevant Head of School will constitute an appropriate selection panel to conduct interviews.

(3) By nomination by a Head of School

In an exceptional case a Head of School, either by his/her own volition or on application by a full time academic staff member, may nominate a person to be added to the pool. In such a case the person must provide a curriculum vitae and such other evidence as necessary to satisfy the Head of School that the person has the ability to provide quality teaching and/or discharge marking duties, for example by virtue of teaching and/or marking experience. A Head of School may at his/her discretion decline to nominate the person but instead refer the person’s case to the interview panel for determination as in (2) above.

Successful candidates will be advised that they have only been selected as part of the pool and are not guaranteed casual academic employment.
Approved candidates remain in the pool and are not required to undergo an interview each year.

Irrespective of the means of nomination or selection, all persons wishing to become part of the pool must complete a standard form application prior to appointment (or, in the case of (2) above prior to interview) which will require details including:

- Name and contact details;
- Qualifications and/or any teaching courses (including TAFE courses) undertaken;
- Teaching experience (if any), including relevant level;
- Assessment experience (if any);
- Preferred units and any supporting reasons;
- Whether any higher degree study is being undertaken;
- Times available, including time preferences (ie day/night);
- Number of hours prepared to teach;
- Whether available to undertake assessment;
- How long the person wishes to be involved with the Faculty;
- Demonstrated ability to work in a team;
- Demonstrated understanding of equity issues;
- Staff development requirements prior to commencement; and
- Any computing skills relevant to teaching (skills may be rated using a self-audit form).

The relevant School will create and maintain a database of all approved candidates. The database will record the details of approved candidates including any relevant comments made by the selection panel, including whether the approved candidate would be suitable for lectures or only tutorials.

Normally a unit coordinator should select staff from the pool of approved candidates, including a reserve list to accommodate last minute vacancies in the preferred teaching line-up.

Guest lecturers (ie casual academic staff who teach for four or less hours per semester) may be appointed on recommendation of a unit coordinator but only with the prior permission of the relevant Head of School.

2.2 Training and Staff Development

The Faculty will normally conduct at least one workshop each year for new academic staff, including casual academic staff. This workshop will focus on Faculty-specific issues including the Faculty’s teaching and learning philosophy and include practical sessions on interactions with students and assessment. All newly appoint casual academic staff are required to attend the next available workshop.

In addition, casual staff will be encouraged to attend the staff development program for casual academic staff conducted by TALSS and the Professional Association for Part-time Academic Staff (PAPTA).

Where skills have been integrated into a unit and casual academic staff will be required to teach or assess skills, it will be the responsibility of the unit coordinator to arrange for the casual academic staff in the unit to receive appropriate training.

2.3 Communication and Mentoring

Wherever possible, casual academic staff should be encouraged to subscribe to the student e-mail list for their unit in order for them to keep up to date with notices being sent to students. If possible casual academic staff should provide their e-mail addresses to their unit.
coordinators so that they may be included on e-mails forwarded to members of the teaching team.

Wherever possible and appropriate, casual academic staff should attend team meetings. In any event the unit coordinator should meet at least once with all casual academic staff at the start of the teaching period to discuss expectations (e.g., that any assessment should be marked and returned on time with appropriate written feedback, that the tutors guide must not be read out and referred to as the required answer in class, skills training, staff development etc).

Each teaching team must designate a first line contact and mentor for its casual academic staff. Teaching teams, particularly in large units, should consider delegating the task of being the first line contact and mentor for casual academic staff to a particular member of the teaching team other than the unit coordinator.

2.4 Extent of Duties and Remuneration

Duties

Marking of examinations and major assignments is the primary responsibility of full time academic staff. Casual academic staff should only be used as a secondary resource. Casual academic staff must not be allocated marking duties by unit coordinators without the prior permission of the Head of School.

Where casual academic staff may be required to undertake marking they should be advised to this effect at the beginning of the teaching period, if possible. When choosing casual academic staff from the pool of approved candidates, unit coordinators may request casual academic staff to indicate whether they will be available for marking.

Casual academic staff will normally not be considered to coordinate units unless they have, in the opinion of the relevant Head of School, an appropriate amount of experience in teaching and assessment. Further, no casual academic staff should be invited to teach in more than two units at any one time without the permission of the relevant Head of School.

Remuneration

Casual academic staff will be paid for attendance at the Faculty-focused Orientation Workshop. The University may pay for attendance at the TALSS-run staff development program sessions.

Further, casual academic staff will be paid for additional staff development activities, such as skills training.

Casual academic staff will be expected to undertake marking associated with their classes during the semester, including assessment of seminar performance and skills training, as an element of their regular remuneration. Casual academic staff may be paid in addition to their regular remuneration where the Head of School has granted approval for them to undertake the marking of examinations or major assignments. Different arrangements may be implemented by negotiation in respect of casual academic staff who co-ordinate units during the Summer Program.

2.4 Quality Assurance

The Head of School, in conjunction with unit coordinators, will review the pool of approved candidates each year.

Casual academic staff will be appointed for six months at a time and advised that one of the factors that may be taken into consideration in the reappointment process is evidence of their
level of performance, for example as evidenced by student feedback (including SET) or peer
review. If no evidence is provided, a casual academic staff member may be encouraged by
the relevant Head of School to undertake an SET or to participate in some form of peer
review in future, to assist him or her in evaluating his or her own performance as part of their
his or her staff development.

2.5 Support
Casual academic staff will be provided with the following infrastructure support:
- Pigeon holes;
- E-mail accounts;
- Access to staff photocopiers;
- Access to staff common rooms; and
- Access to any staff libraries.

3. Postgraduate program
   (Law School, Justice Studies and Legal Practice)
In the following sections, the term “Course Coordinator” will refer to the following persons:
- In the case of the postgraduate courses in the Law School, the Assistant Dean,
  Postgraduate Studies;
- In the case of the postgraduate courses in Justice Studies, the Justice Studies Head
  of School; and
- In the case of Diploma of Legal Practice, the Director of Legal Practice.

3.1 Recruitment (Law School and Justice Studies)
Casual academic staff in the postgraduate programs are normally employed for their
expertise, seniority and/or to maintain involvement from the profession. Accordingly, casual
academic staff may be personally approached and appointed by the Course Coordinator
provided the following criteria are established:
- The applicant possesses relevant postgraduate qualifications;
- The applicant's curriculum vitae together with the relevant proposed Unit Outline
  have first been approved by Law Faculty Teaching, Learning and Curriculum
  Committee and Law Academic Board.

Where a casual academic staff member is required to take over a unit which is already
offered in the Postgraduate Program, the Course Coordinator must first submit the curriculum
vitae of the proposed candidate to, and obtain the approval of, Law Faculty Teaching,
Learning and Curriculum Committee and Law Academic Board.

An existing casual academic staff member may be re-appointed for duties by the Course
Coordinator without being required to submit his or her curriculum vitae and without the need
to obtain the approval of Law Faculty Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Committee and Law
Academic Board.

Guest lecturers (i.e. casual academic staff who teach for four or less hours per semester) may
be appointed on recommendation of a unit coordinator but only with the prior permission of
the Course Coordinator.
3.2 Recruitment (Legal Practice)

Casual academic staff in the Legal Practice Course are normally employed for their standing in the legal profession, expertise as legal practitioners and teaching ability. The course employs three types of casual staff:

- “Visiting lecturers” who provide briefing sessions or workshops in their area of practical expertise (usually for no more than four hours per course and usually unpaid);
- “Practice Court presidents” who reside over student practice courts (usually no more than 3 hours per week); and
- “Clinical instructors” who may coordinate units, support students in their day to day work, give briefing sessions on problems that students have to perform, and assess student work (may be up to 36 hours per week).

Casual academic staff may be personally approached and appointed by the Course Coordinator provided the following criteria are established:

**Visiting lecturers**

Visiting lecturers are appointed by the Course Coordinator usually on the advice of the relevant unit coordinator. The unit coordinator will normally consult with one or more practitioners in the relevant field to identify suitable candidates.

**Practice Court presidents**

Practice Court presidents are appointed by the Course Coordinator usually on the advice of the relevant unit coordinator or Bar Practice Course Warden. Appointments may also be from a panel of suitable practitioners that unit coordinator maintains, and who have been previously approved by the Course Coordinator.

**Clinical supervisors**

Clinical supervisors appointed for short periods of time (4 weeks in succession or less) are appointed by the Course Coordinator. Short term clinical supervisors appointed this way may be persons who have been appointed to similar positions in the past, persons who are in the Law School pool, or persons who have submitted a curriculum vitae to the Course Coordinator.

Clinical supervisors appointed for long periods of time are appointed by the Course Coordinator with the approval of the Dean and, if the person has not been previously appointed as a clinical supervisor, on the recommendation of a selection panel. Long term clinical supervisors appointed this way may be persons who have been appointed to similar positions in the past, persons who are in the Law School pool, or persons who have submitted a curriculum vitae to the course coordinator. The Course Coordinator may advertise for applicants for these positions. The Course Coordinator will normally ask candidates who have not been previously appointed as clinical supervisors, to participate in an interview with a selection panel consisting of the Course Coordinator and two full-time members of the Legal Practice Unit academic staff, one of whom is elected by the Unit's academic staff.

3.3 Training and Staff Development

The Course Coordinator has the responsibility of providing information and instruction concerning Faculty-specific issues such as the Faculty’s teaching and learning philosophy, and expectations concerning the provision of feedback on assessment.
Where appropriate, the Course Coordinator may recommend that a casual academic staff member engaged in the postgraduate program attend the TALSS-run program.

3.4 Communication
Wherever possible any casual academic staff should provide an e-mail address to the Course Coordinator.

3.5 Extent of Duties and Remuneration

Duties
A casual academic staff member appointed to teach in the postgraduate program will be expected to discharge any assessment requirements associated with the unit. Such a staff member will also be expected to update any on-line teaching site associated with the unit as an element of his or her normal duties.

Remuneration
Where a postgraduate unit has 20 or less students, the casual academic staff member will be expected to discharge the assessment duties in the unit as an element of their regular remuneration for the unit. However, where the unit has in excess of 20 students, appropriate arrangements for remuneration may be negotiated with the Course Coordinator.

3.6 Quality Assurance
Casual academic staff will be appointed for six months at a time and advised that one of the factors that may be taken into consideration in the reappointment process is evidence of their level of performance, for example as evidenced by student feedback (including SET) or peer review. If no evidence is provided, a casual academic staff member may be encouraged by the Course Coordinator to undertake an SET or to participate in some form of peer review in future, to assist him or her in evaluating his or her own performance as part of their his or her staff development.