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Buying-out teaching for research : the views of academics and their managers / Erica Smith ; Andrew Smith

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Abstract

This paper reports on the practice of buying-out teaching to create time for research. A study was carried out, at a regional university in Australia, with academics in receipt of research grant funds (and therefore with the means to buy out teaching), Heads of School, and the Deputy Vice Chancellors responsible respectively for research and for academic matters. We found that while eligible academics did buy out teaching by employing casual staff, most of them worried about the potential effects on teaching quality and students' learning. Heads of School were more sanguine about possible effects on teaching. Decision making by academics about whether to buy out teaching, and by Heads of School about whether to allow it in particular cases, took account of a number of factors. Some teaching activities were seen as higher-risk than others for buying-out. It was uniformly recognised by all parties that buying-out did not result in complete relief from the teaching activity that was bought out; a great deal of time and energy needed to be invested by the academic in making appropriate arrangements and monitoring the quality of work undertaken by the casual staff. The

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paper suggests that clearer policies need to be instituted in this area; academics were unsure what buying-out was allowed or acceptable, and would benefit from more discussion of the practice. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Smith, Erica, E-Mail: e.smith@ballarat.edu.au