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Quality and qualms in the marking of university assignments by sessional staff : an exploratory study

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**Abstract**

The higher education sector is increasingly reliant upon casual (?sessional?) staff for teaching and marking purposes. While this practice has been little examined in the past, over the last few years increasing attention has been paid to the quality of marking, mainly because students and academic staff alike are becoming increasingly likely to question examples of poor practice. Hence, many universities in Australia are now attempting to introduce stricter procedures relating to marking. Despite current concerns, there is little published research on marking practices in Australian universities. This paper adds to the body of knowledge by reporting on two pieces of empirical research into the use of casual markers. A project at Charles Sturt University comprised focus groups of, respectively, students, lecturers and markers, and a survey of distance education students. Research at the University of South Australia focused on pedagogical issues relating to marking, comparing the approaches of permanent lecturing staff with those of sessional markers. The results of

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these projects provide a useful insight into areas of current concern to university staff and management. (HRK / Abstract übernommen),Smith, Erica, E-Mail: [esmith@csu.edu.au](mailto:esmith@csu.edu.au)