Half of all teaching in Australian higher education is provided by sessional staff, rendering the quality of their teaching critical to student learning, retention and progress. However, national research suggests support and training for sessional teachers remains inadequate. The ‘Smart Casual’ project received funding from the Office of Learning and Teaching to addresses this national need.

THE PROJECT

During 2013/2014 Smart Casual project team is working to address this national need by:

- Conducting research to identify the professional development requirements of sessional staff in law;
- Determining what development opportunities are already available to sessional teachers in law schools and faculties around Australia;
- Creating three self-directed and just-in-time professional development modules specifically designed for use by sessional staff; and
- Trialling and evaluating the effectiveness of those development tools at three institutions with very different student cohorts, teaching methodologies, and sessional teachers.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Based on the trial and evaluation, and with guidance from an Expert Review Group consisting of national and international leaders in legal education, the Project Team will refine the three modules for distribution and implementation nationally across the diversity of Australian law schools.