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# Contexts for the Professional Development of Part-timers

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This paper seeks to explore the contexts in which part-time academics pursue their professional development practices at one Lebanese higher education institution. It is part of a larger research concerned with the study of part-timers and their professional presence. For the purpose of the research, a case study was carried out at the American Oriental University (AOU) (a pseudonym) where 23 part-timers and three full-timers (ex-part-timers) were interviewed. To triangulate the data, four of the participants were asked to participate in diary writing. In addition, document checking was carried out. The part-timers were chosen to represent the wider population of part-timers at the University. Thus, they were chosen to illustrate particular factors characterizing part-timers, such as gender, seniority, educational standing, number of work sites, and type of part-time choice. Thematic and discourse analysis were used to analyze the data and investigate the contexts and their impacts on the professional development practices carried out by the participants under study. Analysis revealed that professional development efforts are greatly curtailed by the unfortunate circumstances of part-time work in general coupled with the more specific country situation and particular university practices. Professional development practices which are essential for securing 'lifetime employability' of the participants seem, as a result, to be seriously abridged making them insecure both in the short and long run.*

**Keywords:** Professional development, Part-timers, Contexts.