

# Employment on the Periphery of Japanese Higher Education: A Study of Foreign Adjunct Faculty

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This report discusses preliminary survey research that investigated the personal, educational and professional identities of foreign adjunct faculty at Japanese universities. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2017), adjunct faculty make up roughly half of the teaching labor force in Japanese higher education. In foreign language instruction, reliance on part-time instructors can be considerably higher, often constituting the majority of the academic labor force in many programs. This majority position has not translated into superior workplace benefits, however, and the differentials in terms of pay, workload, and benefits are substantial. Moreover, adjunct faculty frequently have little or no voice in curricular, pedagogical or administrative matters that impact their classrooms, and more generally lack access to the status, stability, office space, and research opportunities accorded their full-time counterparts.

A large-scale survey instrument was developed to investigate the choices and challenges associated with contingent employment of foreign instructors at Japanese universities. Data was collected through an online survey platform about the personal attributes, motivations, and career patterns of foreign adjunct faculty along with their conceptualization of their role as adjunct faculty including decision-making processes in work selection, daily time and work-life management, attitudes toward research and publishing, and financial and retirement planning. Subsequently, five main areas were identified for analysis in the research: participant demographics, employment situation and goals, work-life balance, benefits, and challenges of part-time employment.

Data analysis is currently ongoing, but a significant finding revealed in the data is the major impact that the lack of job security has on teachers' personal and professional lives. Participants cited this particular challenge as the root cause for marriage trouble, inability to make future plans, stress and financial anguish. In addition, there was a growing sense among respondents that universities "want more for less," with additional requirements and restrictions over the years such as longer semesters, 100-minute classes, no salary increases, limited contracts, and greater requirements asked for in job advertisements. A more comprehensive report of all of the research findings will be forthcoming upon completion of data analysis addressing the choices and challenges associated with contingent employment of foreign adjunct faculty at Japanese universities.