

## EFL University Teachers' Professional Development in the Thai Context

**Sureepong Phothongsunan**

School of Arts, Assumption University, Thailand

### Abstract

This study aims to explore the perceptions of 30 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers serving in public universities in Thailand regarding needs, challenges and quality of teacher career development in their universities. A questionnaire and an interview are employed to gather data. According to the teacher development programs offered, all universities served by the participants provide prospects for teachers to have further in-service education. In relation to professional development, nearly all participants point out a strong need for obtaining a higher degree as career advancement in their field and interestingly as a tool for salary increment. Teacher collaboration and student learning also emerge as possible factors motivating teachers to strive for self-improvement. Although undertaking research is referred to as an important and for some a required element for English teaching jobs, time-consuming nature and a sophisticated process discourage its instigation. Regarding views about quality of university teacher development, most report being satisfied with the overall universities' emphasis on improving English teaching and learning by accentuating teachers as a key. However, teachers' lacking motivation to progress professionally due to excessive teaching workload and internal politics embedded in some universities can be reasons preventing teachers from securing educational growth. Implications from the study shed light on the significance to support the quality of university teachers through furnishing sufficient opportunities of professional development and what Thai EFL university teachers aspire to accomplish most to develop themselves efficiently.

**Key words:** challenges, EFL teachers, needs, perceptions, professional development

**Cite as:** Phothongsunan, S. (2018). EFL University Teachers' Professional Development in the Thai Context. *Arab World English Journal*, 9 (2).

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no2.19>