NONPF White Paper
Nurse Practitioner Faculty Workload
2015

Introduction and Background

Making faculty assignments and accounting for faculty workload are complicated processes for all faculty and administrators. Currently the dramatic increase in need for advanced practice nurses and the increased enrollments in nurse practitioner programs, support the critical need for transparent, equitable, and consistent workload formulas. Special issues exist when determining workload for nurse practitioner faculty. Each program/institution must create policies and procedures that account for situations specific to their setting. General guidelines can be useful for developing or refining workload specific to the institutions. During the course of reviewing the literature on workload, the task force identified some controversy about use of workload formulas for faculty since the role is a professional and not an hourly worker mode. Workload formulas can short-change knowledge workers and be artificially too precise. In the midst of this controversy, it is important to note that workload is a part of academia with most academic institutions having workload policies. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2000) does have a statement on workload. However, university policies typically focus on classroom teaching loads, and may not adequately address the work involved in clinical education programs or online education. This document supports previous NONPF statements on faculty practice (Blair, Dennehy, & White, 2005; Pohl, et.al. 2000).

Guidelines for Determining Nurse Practitioner Faculty Workload

NONPF supports the primary assumption that nurse practitioner faculty teaching clinically-related courses must be involved in clinical practice and maintain national certification to insure faculty competency, program accreditation, and quality. Maintaining clinical practice for certification and clinical competency should be included in workload calculations. The evaluation criteria for NP programs put forward by the National Task Force on Quality of Nurse Practitioner Education (2012) state:

**Criterion I.C:** Institutional support ensures that NP faculty teaching in clinical courses maintain currency in clinical practice. . . It is intended that institutions provide administrative support for faculty to practice the required clinical hours to obtain and maintain national certification (p. 4).

Faculty and administrators are encouraged to review the detailed criterion description and required evidence of meeting criterion in the NTF document.
NONPF also supports common assumptions related to faculty workload, such as those made by Bakewell-Sachs (2014):

1. Programs are of high quality with high faculty engagement.
2. Faculty time is precious.
3. Faculty engage across missions.
4. Faculty and staff work is honored.
5. We are responsible stewards of finite resources.
6. Quality, efficiency, and effort are valued.
7. Curricula must meet academic quality and financial responsibility.
8. Meet specific institution APT guidelines.

**Additional Assumptions:**

1. Transparency is important.
2. Workload varies across divisions and across a person’s career.
3. Expectations should be clear.
5. Professional responsibility is expected, including institutional commitments/committees.
6. Private schools may have different expectations than public schools.
7. Faculty practice may be a separate workload area, or may be part of the service expectations.
8. Requirements for licensure, certification, and credentialing should be accounted for in workload.
9. These are guidelines for the faculty role, and the program coordinator role may be different than the faculty role.
10. Clinical courses require an unique set of expectations that are different from classroom teaching.
11. Online teaching requires additional consideration for faculty workload.
12. The best guidelines must be flexible and adaptable to special or changing circumstances. Some of these circumstances include the following:

- New faculty
- New course
- Travel
- Distance between sites
- Experience level of student
- Degree level (e.g. MSN, DNP) of student
- Experience level of preceptor
- Student problems
- Characteristics of clinical site
- Faculty role in pre-clinical requirements (e.g. CPR, immunizations, drug screen, background checks, blood borne pathogens; EHR training)
- Faculty role in clinical site development and student placement
- Variations in length of academic terms (quarters, semesters, intensives)

Roles and Responsibilities

Nursing faculty share common roles and responsibilities. Each program’s or college’s workload criteria will include roles and responsibilities related to teaching, scholarship and service. All faculty members are expected to participate in accreditation, mentoring of new faculty, curriculum development and revision, student recruitment, admissions, advisement, and retention. Often, NP faculty members have greater volume of responsibilities in these areas than do faculty not involved in NP education. This document is designed to provide guidance on faculty responsibilities specific to the advance practice nursing role.

Because of the intense clinical nature of APRN education, special attention should be paid to

- faculty clinical expertise and certification matched to program concentration/specialization.

- faculty APRN licensure, certification and credentialing.

- clinical site procurement and assessment.

- student assessment and preparation for clinical site (use of EHRs, meets all requirements for clinical placement, clinical evaluation of site, and clinical evaluation of students).

- preparation of clinical site (orientation of preceptors, contractual arrangements between site and university).

- career advice to students seeking first APRN position.
Because of the dramatic increase in demand for nurse practitioners, many programs are experiencing unprecedented growth. During periods of expansion, attention needs to be paid to orienting and mentoring new faculty, rapid expansion of need for assessing and developing new clinical preceptors and clinical sites, and matching students with appropriate clinical experiences. Additional workload credit should be considered in these circumstances.

**Emerging Issues Related to DNP**

The development and implementation of DNP programs has resulted in dramatic growth in programs and graduates. The expectation of the final DNP project has created the opportunity to study new workload issues related to the DNP. The expectations of faculty related to the final DNP project and practicum result in increased faculty work and should be part of workload assignment considerations.

**References**


Bakewell-Sachs, S/. (July, 2014). Workload assumptions and guiding principles. Presentation at the Oregon Health & Science School of Nursing Leadership Council Retreat, Portland, OR.


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