












POLICY ARTICLE

Advocating for a designated portion of time in educator's job descriptions for scholarship

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Abstract

Background: Scholarship is a fundamental expectation for academic faculty members. Many institutions do not allocate dedicated time for scholarship. Providing dedicated time for scholarship is crucial for the success and advancement of both academic faculty members and institutions. This white paper identifies methods and recommendations to incorporate dedicated time for scholarship within workload expectations. **Methods:** Educator Development Workgroup members within the FIP Academic Pharmacy Section collaborated to explore strategies for promoting faculty scholarship. The workgroup defined scholarship to encompass the broad range of research pursuits, reviewed literature, and identified institutional practices supporting scholarly productivity. **Results:** Academic faculty members engaging in scholarship advance the profession, bring recognition to their institutions, and experience professional fulfilment. Strategies to incorporate dedicated time for scholarship include: establishing reasonable working hours per week, setting clear scholarship time minimums, and collaborating with faculty to balance teaching, service, clinical responsibilities, and/or research obligations. **Conclusion:** Implementing strategies to provide dedicated time for scholarship can empower pharmacy educators to make meaningful contributions to research, teaching, and practice innovations. These efforts not only advance the profession but also enhance faculty satisfaction, improve overall workplace satisfaction, inspire other faculty, and improve institutional reputation.

Introduction

Scholarship, including writing grant applications, performing research, and authoring peer-reviewed publications, is a fundamental expectation for academic pharmacy faculty alongside instruction and service. Furthermore, scholarship is emphasised in

recent American accreditation standards and the Nanjing Statement 6.7, which says, “*academic staff should demonstrate active participation in sharing their knowledge and promoting collaboration with colleagues in their field (and other fields) at a national and international level*”. (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, 2015; Bosso *et al.*, 2015;

International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2017). Providing dedicated time for scholarship is essential for the success and advancement of both faculty and institutions. However, many institutions fail to allocate such time within the regular job expectation and often do not recognise the full spectrum of scholarship (Arif *et al.*, 2014; Van Schyndel *et al.*, 2019; Payakachat *et al.*, 2021; Farias-Ruiz *et al.*, 2023).

A recent analysis of a survey of US pharmacy educators conducted by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy revealed significant disparities in the perceived appropriateness of time allocated for research. Specifically, there was a large difference in the perceived appropriate percentage of time spent on research, with 70% of academic faculty members at public institutions feeling their time spent on research was appropriate, compared to only 56% of faculty those at private institutions feeling the amount of time spent on research was appropriate (Park, 2023).

Many universities continue to adhere to a traditional and narrow perspective on scholarship, equating it primarily with laboratory or original research (Arif *et al.*, 2014; Franks & Payakachat, 2020; Payakachat *et al.*, 2021). This limited and narrow perspective can hinder faculty from engaging in other forms of scholarship that contribute significantly to higher education, such as integration, application, teaching, and extension and engagement (Boyer, 1990; North Carolina State University, n.d.).

This white paper describes the challenges stemming from the lack of dedicated time for scholarship within academic faculty workloads and provides strategies and recommendations for incorporating dedicated time for scholarship within academic faculty member responsibilities. It is written to encourage a larger conversation among both pharmacy school administrators and faculty regarding one facet of academia that could be adjusted and result in increased scholarly productivity, which is helpful for faculty advancement and university rankings.

Academic overload: The toll on scholarly productivity

Lack of scholarly productivity has many causes, including institutions not having adequate human, financial, or facility resources and academic faculty members not having sufficient research training (Smesny *et al.*, 2007; Robles *et al.*, 2009; Farias-Ruiz *et al.*, 2023). Clinical pharmacy faculty with Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degrees often have less research training than pharmaceutical science faculty who tend to have Doctor

of Philosophy (PhD) degrees. A 2014 study at a pharmacy school in Texas found only 40% of newly hired first-time clinical faculty had published a peer-reviewed paper prior to hire as compared to 93% of pharmaceutical science/research faculty (Wanat *et al.*, 2014). Commonly, academic faculty members state there is not enough time to conduct research with their other academic responsibilities (Hagen *et al.*, 2019).

Across the world, the scholarly expectations of academic faculty members can vary. For example, in the United States, most schools, colleges, and programmes of pharmacy outline the expected effort of academic faculty members (Van Schyndel *et al.*, 2019; Prescott Jr, 2020; Viswesh *et al.*, 2021). Outside of the United States, some universities have scholarship expectations for promotion; however, they may not allow time within the regular job expectations for research and may expect faculty to conduct research outside of work hours (Bowering & Reed, 2021; Sharma *et al.*, 2023; Dakhil *et al.*, 2024). Lack of clarity or wide ranges in workload expectations have led to faculty burnout (Prescott, Jr, 2020; Sabagh *et al.*, 2018). Even when time is allocated, it is not always possible to spend that allocated time on scholarly activity due to other workload demands (Escobar *et al.*, 2021).

Teaching is expected of all pharmacy academic faculty and there how this activity is accounted for in faculty workload varies widely. The teaching expectations vary in terms of percentage of workload, type of teaching (experiential versus didactic), and teaching-related activities at different universities and programmes (co-curricular or other). The time faculty spend on teaching-related activities outside of in-class teaching hours may be overlooked and contribute to workload issues (Park *et al.*, 2023; Cox *et al.*, 2024; Rhoney *et al.*, 2024). Pharmacy schools may experience understaffing, with a lack of specialised experts requiring academic faculty members to fulfil multiple teaching responsibilities (Draugalis *et al.*, 2006). This wide variation has led to concerns of workload inequity, low morale, and potential burnout among academic faculty members (Park *et al.*, 2023; Cox *et al.*, 2024; Rhoney *et al.*, 2024).

To more clearly define workload associated with teaching, Cox *et al.* recently proposed a set of definitions for the roles of the contemporary pharmacy educator (Cox *et al.*, 2024). These roles include developing new courses, enabling learner success, and conducting scholarship of teaching and learning (in addition to other declared areas of scholarship). A number of authors state that the development of policies to assess academic faculty member workload could lead to improvements in meeting not only individual goals, but also goals of the institution and student learning, and ultimately, could improve academic faculty member

morale and retention (Park et al., 2023; Cox et al., 2024; Rhoney et al., 2024).

The third area of expectation for an academic pharmacy faculty member is service. The service component can overlap with other areas, such as teaching or scholarship, and may include academic as well as clinical service. Additionally, service expectations in many institutions fall disproportionately on women and minorities (Lee et al., 2023). Schools, colleges, and programmes of pharmacy must provide clear expectations and guidelines for service to continue to promote this important role (Park et al., 2023; Cox et al., 2024).

Prescott states that, considering the wide range of pharmacy academic faculty members' responsibilities, there is no perfect model to account for the inclusion of scholarship in a job description. However, he indicates that leadership at his institution believes that a minimum of 10 - 20% of time is necessary for success (Prescott Jr, 2020). The lack of standardisation of expectations and transparency in terms of academic workload, hours worked per week, and scholarly productivity have led to a need for new methods for assessing academic faculty member workload and allotting dedicated time for scholarship across pharmacy academia.

Dedicated time for scholarship is the solution

Despite the challenges, a portion of each academic faculty member's job description should include scholarship. Scholarship is a vital component of the roles of pharmacy educators, yet research and writing may be neglected in favour of more pressing teaching and service responsibilities. It is essential for academic

faculty member advancement and productivity that dedicated time be set aside for scholarly pursuits. For the purposes of this white paper, dedicated time refers to designated periods within the normal working time that is allocated and supported by an institution to an academic faculty member for a specific academic activity such as scholarly activity. The percentage dedicated to scholarship may vary by the type of university setting, position, or region, but a designated portion of each academic faculty member's time in this area will provide academic faculty members the ability to pursue scholarship and clarity in their roles as educators and researchers.

Dedicated time for scholarship becomes merely lip service if the total workload of a faculty member is excessive. Workload assessment can ensure that the inclusion of scholarship is feasible within a faculty member's workload. For example, when examining burnout among pharmacy practice faculty in the US, El-Ibiary and colleagues found a direct correlation between working more than 40 hours per week and increasing emotional exhaustion as measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory for Educators Survey (El-Ibiary et al., 2017). Emotional exhaustion in faculty is likely to adversely affect scholarship productivity. Other factors, such as academic faculty member development and mentoring, clarity in the job description, and the presence of a supportive environment are key to success in supporting academic faculty members in meeting the varied expectations of the role (Bosso et al., 2015; Prescott Jr, 2020).

Three essential strategies for schools, colleges, and programmes of pharmacy are proposed: 1) establishing reasonable total work weeks; 2) establishing explicit minimums for scholarship time; and 3) developing individualised academic faculty member plans (Table I).

Table I: Strategies for and benefits of establishing dedicated time for scholarship

Strategy	Benefits of this strategy
Establishing reasonable total work weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances work planning - Provides a framework for prospective defining scholarship - Prevents academic faculty member burnout - Promotes retention of faculty in academia - Support achievement of work-life integration
Set clear scholarship time minimums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledges that junior academic faculty members require time to establish their research programmes - Enhances ability to achieve tenure and/or promotion
Working with faculty to prioritise job duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frees time for research - Streamlines bureaucratic processes - Maximises the efficacy of the team

Strategies

Strategy 1: Establishing reasonable total work weeks

The first step is defining an overall full-time work week standard for pharmacy educators based on their roles and responsibilities. Pharmacy schools should evaluate typical workloads and designate a standard work week (e.g., 40-50 hours per week) for full-time academic faculty members. This allows for enhanced work planning. Work weeks must include time for teaching, advising, service, administrative responsibilities, and scholarship (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, 2015). The sum of these domains should not exceed the established work week on a regular basis. For example, at University of Buffalo, the workload division for clinical pharmacy faculty includes 30% for teaching, 30% for clinical practice, 20% for research/scholarship, and 10% for service. (Prescott Jr, 2020). However, if total worked hours exceed that determined as appropriate by the institution, the workload becomes unreasonable and interferes with family/personal time, thus upsetting work-life integration. According to a survey conducted by the American College of Clinical Pharmacy Practice and Research Networks, 70% of clinical academic faculty members stated that they do not have sufficient time to carry out their nonclinical activities. This lack of time becomes even more important when they must participate in scholarly activities (Nutescu *et al.*, 2014). The advantages associated with establishing a reasonable total work week include helping to prevent academic faculty members' overwork and burnout and providing a framework for prospectively defining scholarship/research time (Snider *et al.*, 2021).

Strategy 2: Set clear scholarship time minimums

With a total work week in place, schools, colleges, and programmes of pharmacy can designate minimum percentages of time for scholarship, which may be based on academic faculty member rank, level of career, and past record of productivity (Prescott Jr, 2020; Farias-Ruiz *et al.*, 2023). Time minimums must be formalised and specified in workload policies and job descriptions. They must harmonise with the established productivity standards set at the institution level, where applicable.

Pharmacy schools may benchmark with medical or other professional school standards but still customise their own minimums based on teaching obligations for the particular institution. There may be a need for policy exceptions to standard research time minimums and expectations for educators with heavy course schedules. Most importantly, the minimum times

established must be respected and adhered to, if the academic faculty member is to flourish.

Strategy 3: Create individualised faculty scholarship plans

In addition to establishing work week standards and minimums for scholarship time, individualisation is essential. All academic faculty members should have a personalised plan outlining their teaching, service, and research obligations and time commitments. This strategy is better than a one-size-fits-all model (Park *et al.*, 2023). Clear expectations about scholarship productivity may help reduce concerns of expectations and fairness, but may come at the expense of individuality (Snider *et al.*, 2021). To ensure a fair and transparent distribution of academic faculty member workload, Park *et al.* emphasised the significance of defining workload and establishing agreed-upon expectations (Park *et al.*, 2023).

Each academic faculty member's strengths, interests, and professional goals should inform the distribution of work. Through a collaborative decision-making process, department chairs can assist academic faculty members in establishing priorities and identifying opportunities for directing their efforts toward scholarship. A review should be undertaken at least annually.

Benefits of dedicated time for scholarship

On the surface, it is clear that this solution benefits the educator. Indeed, a successful academic career often hinges on scholarship. With dedicated time in the academic faculty member's schedule and, therefore, accountability for scholarship, there is the potential to motivate academic faculty members to document innovations, explore new areas of discovery, and advance the profession. The scholarship endeavours can also inform academic faculty members' teaching which can directly impact the quality and effectiveness of didactic or experiential learning. The recognition of scholarship within and external to the institution, provides professional accomplishment and satisfaction to the academic faculty member, potentially increasing retention and productivity. Additionally, there are many benefits to the institution of dedicating time to scholarship, including: advancing knowledge, improving institutional reputation, and providing scholarship opportunities for students and other trainees.

The first benefit is the advancement of knowledge. High-quality thoughtfully designed and executed

scholarship advances science, the profession of pharmacy, teaching and learning, and improves patient outcomes and population health. Second, scholarly production enhances institutional reputations and prestige. Institutional reputation attracts students and talented faculty, influences policymakers, and improves the institution's public image (Robinson-Garcia *et al.*, 2019; Szluka *et al.*, 2023). Szluka *et al.* demonstrated that international rankings are highly correlated with the number of publications and citations. These correlations held true across all four ranking systems examined: the Times Higher Education World University Ranking, the QS World University Rankings, the ShanghaiRanking - Academic Ranking of World Universities, and the US News Best Global Universities Ranking (Szluka *et al.*, 2023). Robinson-Garcia *et al.* found similar results, with the Hirsch-index (H-index) being highly correlated across seven ranking systems: the Times Higher Education World University Ranking, the ShanghaiRanking - Academic Ranking of World Universities, the US News Best Global Universities Ranking, the Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities (also known as the National Taiwan University Ranking), the Centre for World University Rankings, the University Ranking by Academic Performance, and the Round University Rankings (Robinson-Garcia *et al.*, 2019).

The third benefit is the provision of scholarship opportunities for students. Learning the profession of pharmacy was originally based on an apprenticeship model. The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has called for interesting learners in academic careers through curricular programming and increased awareness (International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2021). Research skills can be developed through five techniques: asking questions, demonstration, supervised attempts, trial and error, and imitation (Wylie, 2019). Academic faculty members who engage in scholarship can serve as role models for students and other trainees. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that students learn some research skills through observation of academic faculty members performing research and students can also work with academic faculty members to develop research skills. If the academic faculty members must perform their scholarly work in isolation in the evenings or on the weekends, the learning through demonstration and imitation is greatly diminished. Therefore, to enhance learning, most scholarship should be conducted during regular working hours.

Dedicating scholarship time creates work-life integration

The achievement of work-life integration poses a significant challenge in academia. Academic careers are

associated with diverse expectations encompassing teaching, research, and service domains, which are typically unattainable within the confines of usual office hours (Kinman, 2014). Attaining professional satisfaction for academics is often contingent upon meeting specific criteria for promotion or tenure, which, for full-time academics, may be hindered or delayed due to the scarcity of promptly produced scholarly outcomes, overshadowed by their teaching and administrative commitments (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020).

Several reports have highlighted cases of professional burnout in academia that were associated with unmatched job-related demands and time, as well as the need to invade personal time to achieve the required scholarly outputs that were not normally scheduled (Woolston, 2020). A study of US pharmacy faculty found that excessive workload was the number one reason for leaving an academic institution. (Conklin & Desselle, 2007). With the increasing trend of stress and burnout experiences in academia, the well-being of academics suffers as well as their productivity and creativity, impacting the overall academic quality outcomes (Hammoudi Halat *et al.*, 2023). FIP has called for providing "enabling and equitable working conditions for the academic workforce" in the 2021 FIP Global Call to Action for Advancing Pharmaceutical Education (International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2021). Concern for burnout and overload necessitates action to be taken by academic institutions.

Academic institutions are required to implement strategies to support academics in achieving better work-life integration through setting realistic job-related expectations, setting clear boundaries between their work and personal lives, offering flexible work arrangements, and promoting regular self-time and well-being activities (Bartlett *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, support and training for academics to take advantage of technological advancements in boosting efficiency and productivity will also help to achieve a better work-life integration (Miao & Holmes, 2023). Setting clear and individualised expectations in the academic faculty member's job description with a designated time for scholarship helps the academic faculty member be fulfilled professionally without affecting their personal life commitments. This solution will contribute to a more balanced academic lifestyle. This, in turn, can be a sustainable way to retain the academic faculty member's productivity and career thriving, essential for achieving the institutional benefits desired.

Conclusion

The authors call on all schools, colleges, and pharmacy programs to dedicate a portion of each academic faculty member's time to scholarship. Schools, colleges, and programs of pharmacy can incorporate dedicated research time into standard academic faculty member workloads and expectations through coordinated strategies such as establishing reasonable workweek policies, setting scholarship time minimums, and creating individual plans for academic faculty members. This enables educators to innovate pharmacy education and practice through meaningful contributions.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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