

Demand and Supply for Doctoral-Prepared PA Faculty: A Five Year National Longitudinal Study

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Background

- The interest in pursuing doctoral degrees is increasing exponentially among various health professions.
- PAs have been debating the doctoral degree option for the past few decades.
- PA specific doctoral programs (early adopters) are being established in various institutions. But there are no standardized guidelines for their design.
- Little is known about the outcomes and benefits (value) of doctoral degrees among PAs.
- There is a need for a summarized resource for institutions and potential students about these pioneering PA specific doctoral programs

Purpose

This study examined current trends, demand and economic opportunities for doctoral prepared PA faculty using Job ads.

Methodology

This longitudinal study assessed commonly preferred academic credentials in PA faculty job postings. Data was obtained from Burning Glass Technologies (BGT) and other academic job search engines.

Table 1: Wage Gap Analysis: Comparing Annual Base Faculty Salary with Income of a certified PA in clinical practice.

PA position	Mean	Median	Σ of future cash flows
Certified PA in clinical practice	\$113,186	\$105,000	\$11,400,652
Certified PA-faculty	\$99,819	\$97,000	\$10,532,031
Certified PA-Program director	\$134,306	\$131,000	\$14,223,670
PA-faculty with Doctoral degree	\$106,203	\$103,000	\$11,183,497
PA-Program Director with Doctoral degree	\$142,215	\$140,000	\$15,200,869
Wage Gap between clinical and academic PA	(\$13,367)	(\$8,000)	(\$868,621)
Gap between clinical & academic PA+ a doctoral degree	(\$6983)	(\$2,000)	(\$217,155)

Results

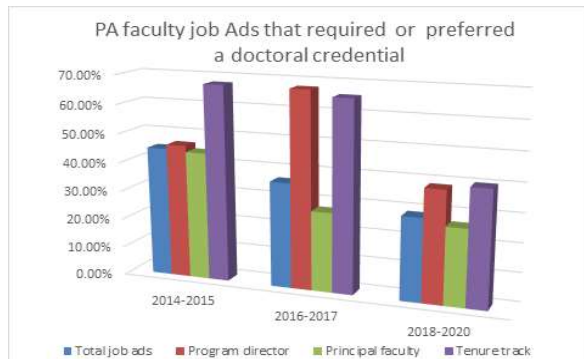


Figure 1: PA Faculty Positions Requiring/Prefering Doctoral Degrees

- Of the 612 unique job ads that were posted from 232 PA programs between 2014 and 2020, approximately 38.9% (238) stated that they preferred or required a candidate with a doctoral degree.
- Approx. 50% of chair and/or program director job ads preferred or required a doctoral degree.
- Approx. 36% of regular faculty positions analyzed, preferred or required a doctoral degree.
- Seventy-seven (62.6%) of the 123 positions that offered tenure, preferred or required a doctoral credential. However, trend analysis shows that the proportions of those preferring/requiring a doctoral degree compared to the total job ads posted has been declining.

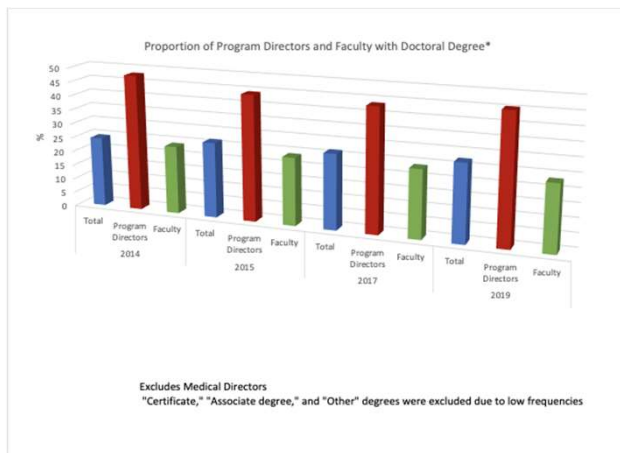
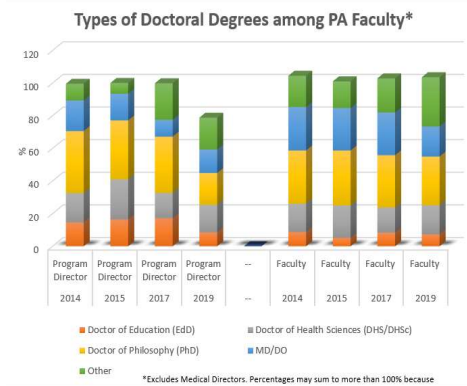


Figure 2: Proportion of Program Directors and Faculty with Doctoral Degrees Between 2014 and 2020

- Although the number of doctoral degree holders increased between 2014 and 2019, the proportion of PA faculty and program directors with doctoral degrees remained steady with a combined statistic of 27%. During this period, approx. 24% PA faculty and 45-48% of program directors reported having a doctoral degree
- Doctoral degrees were reported in more than 10 areas of study. Figure 3 shows the distribution and areas of study commonly held by PA faculty and program directors over time.
- The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) was the most frequently held doctoral credential for both faculty and program directors

Results

Figure 3: Types of Doctoral Degrees among PA Faculty*



Discussion & Conclusions

- For almost all jobs postings, a master's degree was the required minimum credential but there is a significant trend towards a doctoral expectation for PA faculty.
- There may be a need for more doctoral programs to meet this growing demand.
- Further studies are needed to address which type of doctoral education is most relevant for PAs and to evaluate the impact of doctoral credentials on PA education and practice

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