

# Remote Work in Pharmacy Academia and Implications for the New-Normal

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## Bottom-Line

- During the pandemic, 94% of US pharmacy faculty worked remotely at least "some-of-the-time", a 5-fold increase compared to pre-pandemic.
- Most faculty indicated no change or an improvement in their productivity (85%) and effectiveness (80%). Similarly, most administrators indicated no change or an increase in their unit's productivity (81%) and effectiveness (85%).
- Faculty who worked remotely at least "some-of-the-time" perceived they were more productive ( $p < .0001$ ) and effective ( $p < .005$ ), and perceived better work-life balance ( $p < .0001$ ), than those who "never/rarely" worked remotely.
- Considering most faculty and administrators believe productivity and effectiveness were not compromised, and that there appear to be benefits to work-life balance, schools of pharmacy should consider permitting some amount of remote work.

## Objectives

- To determine the extent pharmacy faculty engaged in remote-work during the COVID-19 pandemic, and secondarily to characterize faculty and administrator perceptions of remote-work.

## Methods

- A 28-question online survey was piloted and distributed to AACP members during May 2021. Questions centered on the extent of remote-work and perceptions of its impact on productivity, effectiveness, and work-life balance.
- Overall productivity and effectiveness were determined by calculating the mean Likert score for each respondent based on their ratings in didactic teaching, experiential teaching, research, clinical practice, college/school service, professional service, and administration.
- Data pertaining to the extent of remote-work and perceived productivity, effectiveness, and work-life balance were analyzed statistically, with sub-analyses run by demographics.

## Results

**Response Rate:** 1293/6322 (21%) - At least one faculty and administrator response were received from 139/141 (99% response rate) and 126/141 (89% response rate) schools, respectively.

Respondent Demographics	
Demographic	No. (%)
Type of position	
Faculty	940 (72.7)
Faculty administrator	337 (26.1)
Track	
Non-Tenure	710 (54.9)
Tenure-Track/Tenured	572 (44.2)
Academic Rank	
Assistant Professor	365 (28.2)
Associate Professor	476 (36.8)
Professor	401 (31.0)
Distinguished Professor	14 (1.1)
Other	28 (2.2)
Academic Area	
Medicinal/Pharmaceutical Chemistry	82 (6.3)
Pharmaceutics	71 (5.5)
Pharmacology/Biological Sciences	150 (11.6)
Pharmacy Practice	844 (65.3)
Social/Administrative Sciences	137 (10.6)

Respondent Demographics	
Demographic	No. (%)
FTE	
1.0	1231 (95.2)
< 1.0	54 (4.2)
Sex	
Female	710 (54.9)
Male	471 (36.4)
Prefer not to answer / No response	112 (8.7)
Marital Status	
Married or domestic partnership	963 (74.5)
Single	206 (15.9)
Prefer not to answer / No response	124 (9.6)
Dependents	
Infants aged < 1 year	88 (6.8)
Children aged 1-5 years	246 (19.0)
Children aged 6-12 years	310 (24.0)
Adolescents aged 13-17 years	226 (17.5)
Dependent adults aged > 18 years able to care for self	268 (4.6)
Dependent adults aged > 18 years with special needs	59 (4.6)

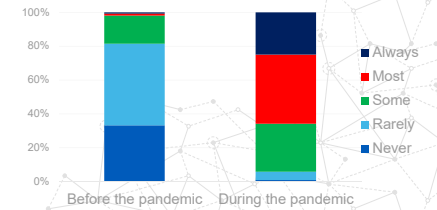
Demographic	Productivity and Effectiveness Among Faculty Working Remotely		Faculty who worked remotely at least some of the time <sup>a</sup>	Faculty who never/rarely worked remotely <sup>a</sup>
	No perceived change, No. (%)	Perceived improvement, No. (%)		
Overall productivity (n=1241) <sup>b</sup>			Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD
Teaching, didactic (n=1218)	591 (48.5)	383 (31.4)	3.2 ± 0.9 <sup>c</sup>	2.7 ± 0.8
Teaching, experiential (n=817)	372 (45.5)	150 (18.4)	2.8 ± 1.0	2.7 ± 0.6
Research (n=1190)	338 (28.4)	364 (30.6)	2.9 ± 1.2 <sup>d</sup>	2.5 ± 1.0
Service, college (n=1230)	623 (50.7)	383 (31.1)	3.2 ± 0.9 <sup>d</sup>	2.9 ± 0.8
Service, profession (n=1200)	596 (49.7)	355 (29.6)	3.2 ± 1.0 <sup>e</sup>	2.8 ± 0.9
Administration (n=832)	455 (54.7)	269 (32.3)	3.3 ± 0.9 <sup>e</sup>	2.9 ± 0.7
Clinical practice (n=647)	322 (49.8)	100 (15.5)	2.8 ± 0.9	2.8 ± 0.7
Overall effectiveness (n=1238) <sup>b</sup>			3.0 ± 0.7 <sup>e</sup>	2.8 ± 0.5
Teaching, didactic (n=1218)	378 (31.0)	309 (25.4)	2.8 ± 1.0 <sup>d</sup>	2.6 ± 0.9
Teaching, experiential (n=814)	342 (42.0)	134 (16.5)	2.7 ± 1.0	2.6 ± 0.7
Research (n=1186)	406 (34.2)	340 (28.7)	2.9 ± 1.2 <sup>d</sup>	2.6 ± 1.0
Service, college (n=1224)	645 (52.7)	359 (29.3)	3.2 ± 0.9 <sup>e</sup>	3.0 ± 0.7
Service, profession (n=1192)	638 (53.5)	314 (26.3)	3.1 ± 0.9 <sup>f</sup>	2.8 ± 0.8
Administration (n=832)	454 (54.6)	235 (28.2)	3.2 ± 0.9 <sup>e</sup>	2.8 ± 0.8
Clinical practice (n=653)	337 (51.6)	110 (16.8)	2.8 ± 0.9	3.0 ± 0.7

<sup>a</sup> 5-point Likert scale: Significantly declined to significantly improved; <sup>b</sup> Calculated based on respondent means for each category; <sup>c</sup>  $p < .0001$ ; <sup>d</sup>  $p < .05$ ; <sup>e</sup>  $p < .005$ ; <sup>f</sup>  $p < .01$ .

**Faculty:** More than half of respondents indicated experiencing no change in overall productivity (62%) or effectiveness (59%) while working remotely, and an increase was noted by 23% and 21% of respondents, respectively. Faculty who worked remotely at least "some of the time" perceived they were more productive ( $p < .0001$ ) and effective ( $p < .005$ ) than those who "never" or "rarely" did so.

**Administrators:** More than half of administrators indicated no change in their unit's overall productivity (63%) or effectiveness (61%) while faculty worked remotely, and an increase was noted by 18% and 14% of respondents, respectively. Nearly 90% of administrators believed faculty should be permitted to work remotely at least some of the time after the pandemic abates.

## Extent of Remote Work Among US Pharmacy Faculty



Prior to the pandemic, 19% of faculty worked remotely at least "some of the time". During the pandemic, 97% of faculty were permitted to work remotely, 94% of whom did so at least "some of the time" and 66% of whom did so "most of the time" or "always".

## Work-Life Balance Among Faculty Working Remotely

Demographic	Work-life balance among faculty who worked remotely at least some of the time <sup>a</sup>
	Mean ± SD
Type of Position	
Faculty (n=906)	3.5 ± 1.3
Faculty Administrator (n=325)	3.4 ± 1.2
Sex	
Female (n=686)	3.6 ± 1.3 <sup>b</sup>
Male (n=451)	3.3 ± 1.2
Marital Status	
Married or Domestic partnership (n=931)	3.5 ± 1.3
Single (n=197)	3.3 ± 1.3
Respondents with ≥ 1 dependent (n=774)	
Respondents with ≥ 1 dependent < 18 years (n=600) <sup>c</sup>	3.5 ± 1.3
Infants aged < 1 year (n=87)	3.8 ± 1.2
Children aged 1-5 years (n=236)	3.7 ± 1.3
Children aged 6-12 years (n=302)	3.5 ± 1.4
Adolescents aged 13-17 years (n=216)	3.4 ± 1.2
Frequency at which faculty worked remotely	
At least some of the time	3.5 ± 1.3 <sup>d</sup>
Never/rarely	2.7 ± 1.3

<sup>a</sup> 5-point Likert scale: Significantly declined to significantly improved; <sup>b</sup>  $p < .0005$  vs. male; <sup>c</sup>  $p < .05$  vs. faculty with no dependent children/adolescents; <sup>d</sup>  $p < .0001$  vs. never/rarely

Faculty who worked remotely "at least some of the time" during the pandemic perceived that they had better work-life balance than those who never/rarely did so ( $p < .0001$ ).

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