

National Perfusion Student Survey

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Introduction:

The Canadian Society of Clinical Perfusion conducted a survey of perfusion departments across the country regarding current and projected future staffing vacancies this past summer. This was done to examine growing concerns from members that hospitals were having difficulties recruiting perfusionists to replace retiring staff.

At the time of this survey, there were 16 vacancies, with projections of 21, 34 and 58 vacancies in the next 1, 2 and 5 years. This will be offset somewhat by the perfusion schools (three in Canada) graduating 7 this past summer, 12 in March and 3 in the summer.

Based on the findings of this survey, the *Michener Institute of Education at UHN* committed to enrolling 12 students every 18 months for the foreseeable future. However, the current labor gap remains a concern for a number of centers. With the Foreign-trained perfusion program now closed, the only source of perfusionists is the perfusion schools.

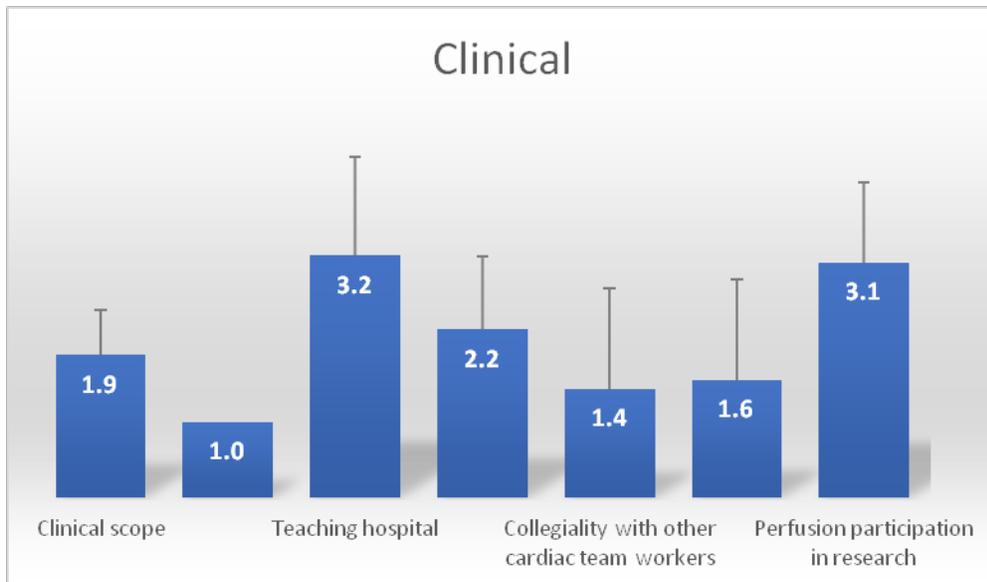
Based on the apparent skewed demand-and-supply, new graduates are in a privileged position in terms of choosing their first site of employment. It therefore stands to reason that the opinions of these individuals becomes critical to centers looking to replace retiring staff.

To address this issue, a perfusion student survey was developed and sent to the lead educators at each of our three national schools to distribute to current students. The survey was divided into a number of sections including: clinical (ie scope of practice), peripheral (ie educational support), financial, lifestyle (ie closeness to family), and work-life balance. Students were asked to rate different aspects of these categories with "1" being of most importance and "5" being of least importance. Data displayed in figures are mean \pm standard deviation with low means representing high importance. A total of 9 students responded out of a possible 28 (32%).

Results:

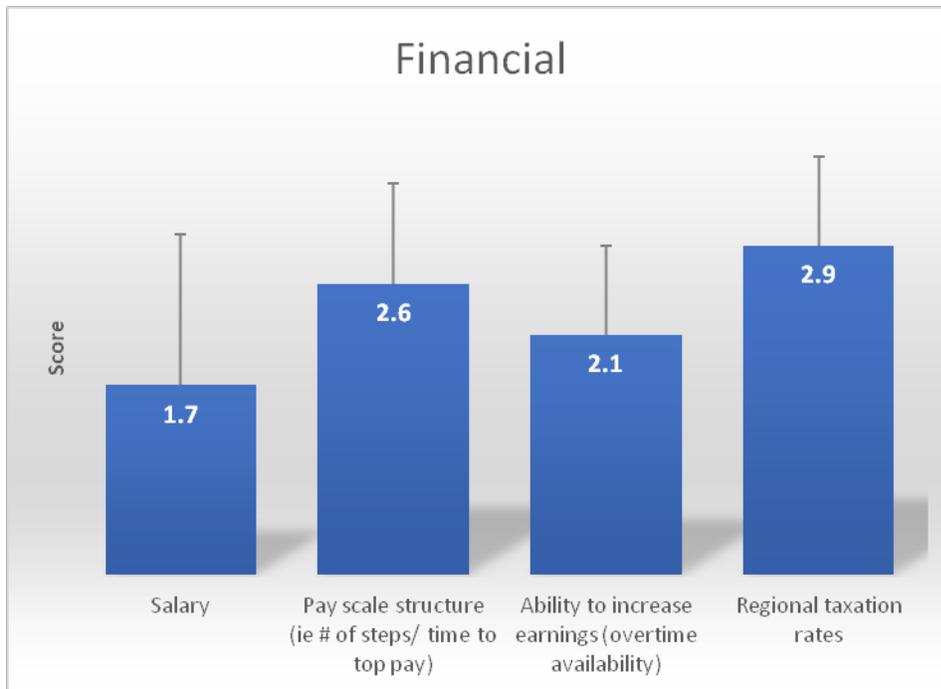
A total of 9 perfusion students participated in the survey (3 of 6 *University of Montreal* students, 3 of 12 *Michener Institute of Education at UHN* students and 3 of 10 *British Columbia Institute of Technology* students). The overall response rate for the survey was 32 %.

Clinical: Seven clinical metrics were assessed with *collegiality with perfusion co-workers*, *collegiality with other cardiac team workers* and *clinical scope* (ie involvement with VADs, heart transplants) being rated the highest and *perfusion-lead research* and *pediatrics* being of least importance.



Peripheral: Three peripheral aspects were evaluated. *Educational support* was the most important, followed by *support to do mission work* and *support for CSCP business*.

Financial: The most important financial consideration was *salary*, followed by the *ability to increase earnings* (ie overtime availability) and *regional taxation rates* and *pay scale structure* (ie the number of steps/time to get to top pay) being of lower importance.



Lifestyle: *Location* was indicated to be of greatest importance, followed by *access to recreation* and *access to entertainment*. In terms of location desired work location, the **Central** was the most popular followed by the **Western** region.

Work-life-balance: The *ability to take time off* was identified as the most important aspect of work-life balance, followed by the *ability to afford housing* and *low-callback frequency*. In terms of callback, the most popular frequency was *1 in 4*, followed by *1 in 5*, *1 in 6* and finally *1 in 3*. For work shifts, *10 hour shifts* were most popular followed by *8* and then *12 hour shifts* being equivalent.

A few additional 'situational' preferences were queried that allowed participants to enter text freely.

The first was: "If salary was the same at the hospitals you were applying to, list the top factors that would influence your choice?" A number of factors were identified including:

- Location (closeness to friends and family) (**Most frequent response**)
- Ability to take time off
- Cost of housing/living,
- Professional work environment
- Quality leadership
- Broad clinical practice
- Staffing number and dynamic
- Mixed adults/pediatric practice

The second was: “If you were applying to hospitals in a similar location that were close to friends/family, list the factors that would influence your choice?” A number of factors were listed, including:

- Salary (**Most frequent response**)
- Leadership
- Reputation of the center
- Healthy work environment
- Affordable housing or pay increase to account for market surrounding the hospital
- Broad clinical practice
- Ability to have time off
- Ability to exchange shifts
- Case variety

The third was: “If the work-life balance was similar in the hospitals you were applying to work, list factors that would influence your choice?” The factors identified included:

- Salary (**Most frequent response**)
- Location/ proximity to friends and family
- Healthy work environment
- Cost of living
- Staff demographics
- Broad clinical practice
- Variety of cases
- Ability to increase earnings with overtime

Conclusions:

Given the high demand for new graduates to replace retiring staff, the expectations/priorities of these graduates becomes increasingly important to the centers competing for limited staffing resources. Unfortunately, the survey had a low response rate which could affect the reflectiveness of the survey to the entire student cohort. Identifying these priorities was the underlying basis for the current survey. Some of the important points from these results are that the **Central** and **Western** regions are the most popular regions to work, *salary, collegiality with perfusion co-workers/work environment, being close to family and friends, the ability to take time off* and *educational support* appear to be the highest priorities of our soon-to-be perfusion colleagues.