

## THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE PROFESSOR IN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

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The evaluation of post-graduate studies in Brazil - and in the world - presents an excellent opportunity for the enhancement of our programs since it turns our attention to their social, political and technological responsibilities. Moreover, it permits us to propose ambitious goals for the formation of human resources in masters and doctoral programs that will measure up to those graduated from international centers. For the nursing field this is not different. The experience accumulated through the production, organization and communication of the knowledge of the science of nursing places us in a prominent place within the global context and in relation with other fields of knowledge.

Graduate studies in the field of Nursing have undergone profound changes. An example of this is the evaluation that the Brazilian Federal Agency for the Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education (CAPES) has done on this filed in the past three years (2007-09). The data obtained from the last report sheds light on the fact that nursing is a growing field; a greater number of nursing programs has been approved, the quality of the publications on nursing has improved and the means for the diffusion of these have been diversified. Another interesting fact is that in the last decade, the demand of better theoretical, methodological and technological training for nurses in the care field has risen.

Nursing research has evolved rapidly and dynamically following the progress of science and the rigor and demands of other areas. The social and political contributions of this field – in its three aspects of teaching, research and care – have increasingly become one of its distinctive features, giving way to a greater exposure of the researchers and, consequently, of the science of nursing in the context of the production of scientific knowledge and technology both in Brazil and in other countries. It is within this arena that we highlight the strategic role that graduate teaching has played in the advancement of nursing.

The professors of a post-graduate (stricto-sensu) program can be considered its essential element. All other elements of the program depend on the professors' maturity and experience. The teachers' responsibility must embrace the history of the program along with its strategies for growth, improvement and achievement of goals.

Despite other indicators of quality and for evaluation, one cannot deny the crucial role of the professor. The program's project defines the main content areas and the lines of research, but the training of high quality human resources depends on the aggregative capacity of the professors and their contributions. Around them and their production the program is organized and credited.

A professor certified in a graduate program must be involved both in undergraduate and post-graduate courses, must lead research groups and perform integrated research projects in conjunction with her/his students from all levels – scientific initiation, masters, doctorates and post doctorates – while at the same time forming talents for the future generations of researchers. The experience and perseverance of the professor-researcher, who in her/his group discussions fosters creativity and stimulates the production of knowledge, is directly held accountable for robust outcomes in the field of science.

In this sense, the communion of interests and investments is essential -of the program in relation to its professors and of the relation of these to the program- in order to facilitate quality formation and the production of knowledge. Moreover, we cannot overlook the fact that doing research in Brazil - as anywhere in the world - can be quite expensive; nevertheless, material resources and infrastructure are fundamental for quality training of human resources and for the production of high quality research. Here again the role of the professor must be emphasized, because it is also the teacher's responsibility to guide the projects so they can participate in specific funding programs and to raise funds towards the production of research and the equipment of laboratories that will attract more interest. This preparation for financial and scientific competition makes all the difference in a graduate program and must become a part of its theoretical and research training.

The progress, consolidation and excellence of postgraduate programs depend greatly on the commitment and dedication of the professors that participate in them. This commitment and dedication must be shared by the students and combined with institutional support in order to ensure a history of success and achievements.

This means that the professors who are part of the postgraduate programs need to be aware of their commitment and social responsibility in the formation and training of teachers and doctors. And the diffusion of knowledge and the proposition of technology and innovation that result from research are configured in compliance with the obligation to give back to society the investments made on behalf of public and free institutions.