

Evaluation of Resource Allocation for Undergraduate Nursing Professional Experience Placements Coordination in Australian Higher Education: A Mixed Method Study

Abdi D. Osman*; Leah Bradley; Judith Needham; Virginia Plummer

Theme: The WIL to Thrive: A Brave New World; Quality Assurance



Background

- Professional experience placement is an essential element of all accredited Nursing Programs in Australia.
- The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) is an external accrediting body established by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and are responsible for developing accreditation standards approved by the Board.
- NMBA and ANMAC mandate a minimum of 800 hrs of Professional Experience Placement scaffolded across curriculum for Bachelor of Nursing and about 1600hrs for BN/BM dual degree.

Background cont.

- Higher Education Providers set the minimum as their exact baseline for clinical placement duration.
- There is variation in exact hours set above the minimum standard hours across Higher Education Providers. The minimum hours required and reasons for the minimal hours have also been questioned by experts (Schwartz, 2019).

Aim and Objectives

- Evaluation of resource allocation for undergraduate nursing professional experience placements coordination in Australian Higher Education.
- To assess BN and BN/BM Professional Experience Placement (PEP) processes in Australian higher education and clinical settings.
- To evaluate higher education institution's resource allocation to PEP academic roles.

Method

- Mixed method study of quantitative approach with descriptive qualitative thematic analysis of resources allocation to PEP in HEP.

Results

Quantitative phase.

- Target population 37 Higher Education Providers (HEP).
- Using Open epi statistical calculator with the following assumptions: 50 % anticipated frequency (participation), 95 % confidence interval and design effect of 1.0 % and 80 % statistical power, the sample size was 33.
- Thirty three HEP were randomly selected and invited to participate out of the 37 who were identified to be offering BN or BN/BM degrees.
- Response rate was at 51.5 % (n = 17)

Demographic/Experience

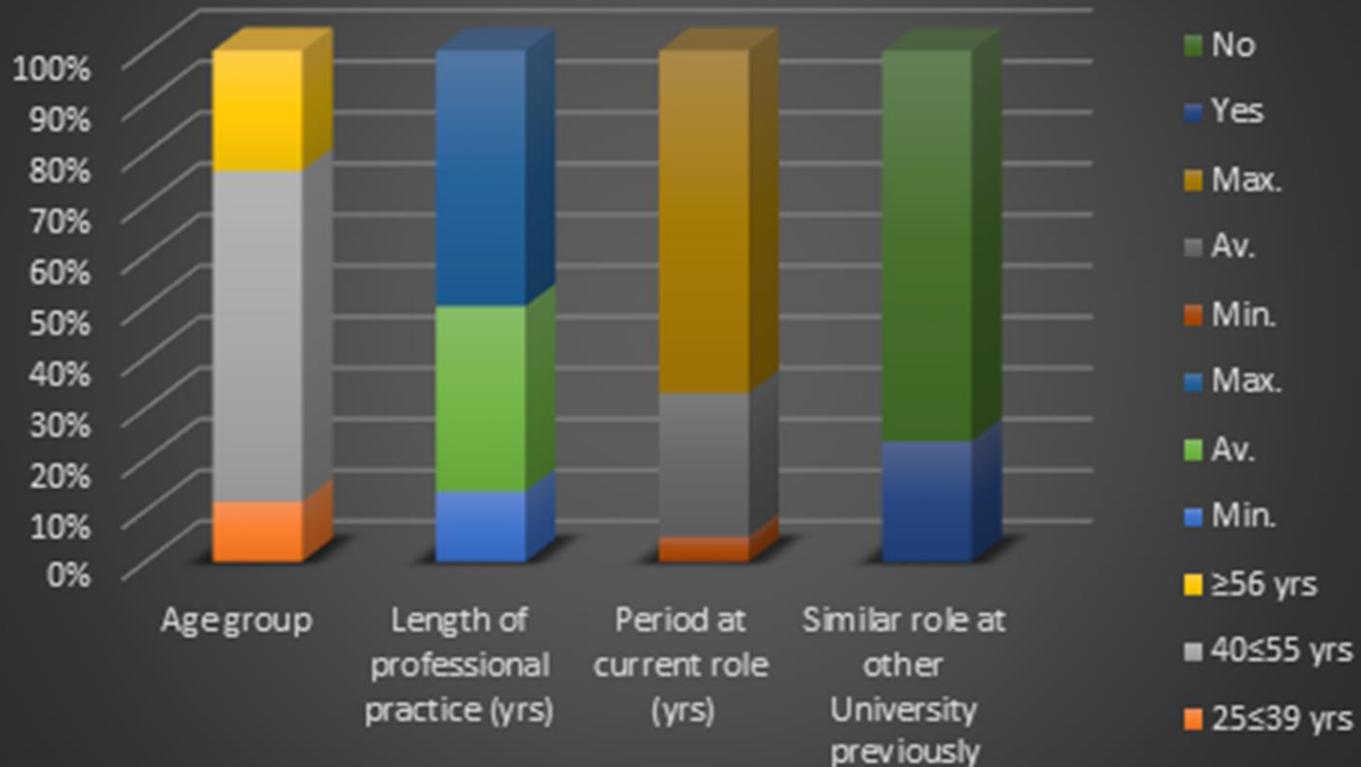


Figure 1

Demographics and Profile of PEP Staff (n=17)

| Variables | Minimum | Mean | Maximum | SD |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| Age group range (yrs) | 25-39 | | ≥56 | |
| Total practice period (yrs) | 11 | 29 | 40 | 8.581 |
| Current role practice period (yrs) | 2 | 8.84 | 21 | 5.131 |
| Practice period in other HEP | 1 | 7.5 | 15 | 6.245 |

Qualifications, Positions, Support and Responsibilities

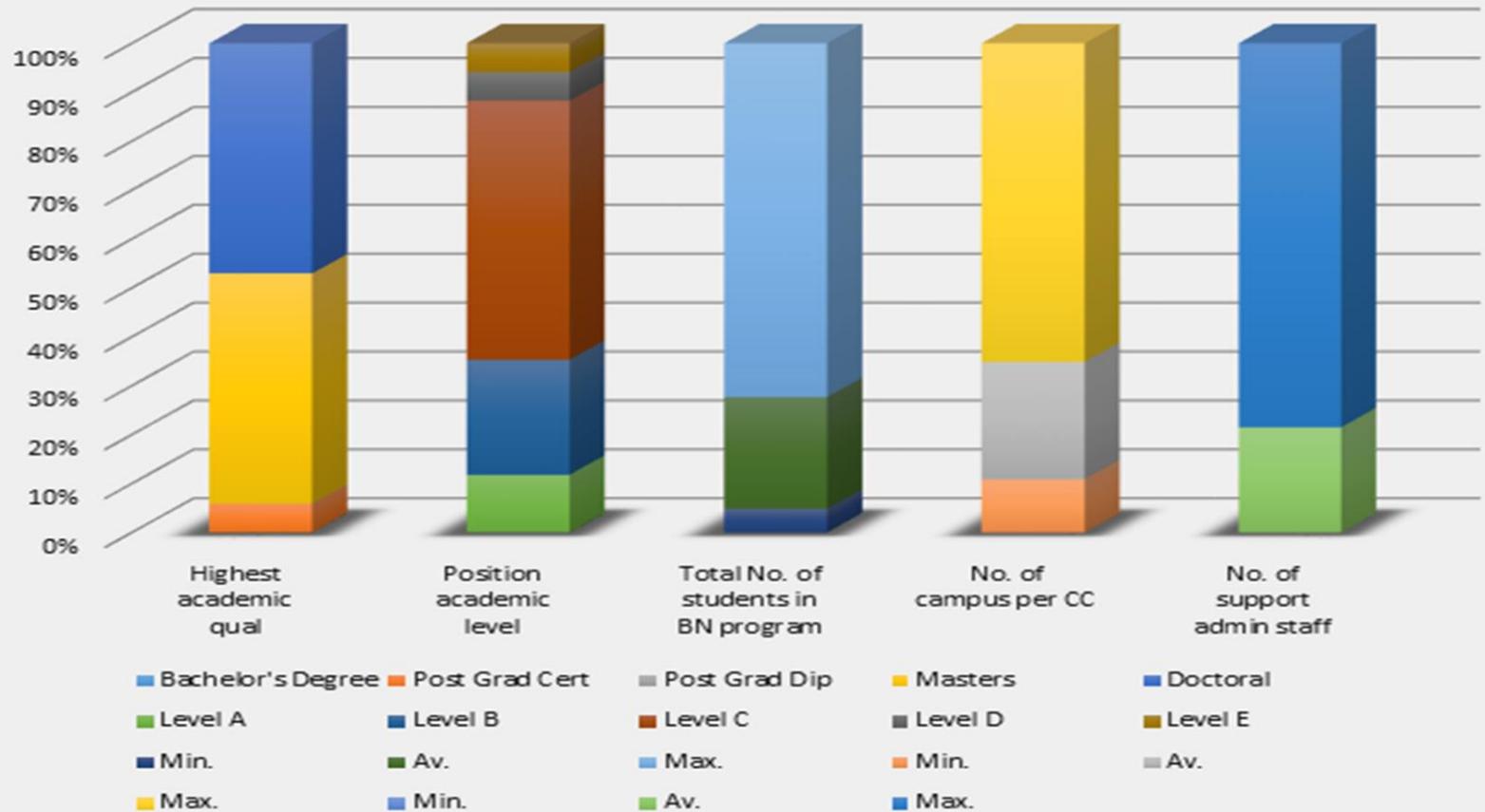


Figure 2

PEP Resources Identified (n=17)

| | Academic Level (Dependent Variable) | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------|---------|---------|------------|----------------|---------|
| Variables | A (2) | B (4) | C (9) | D (1) | E (1) | Mean | SD | CI | P-Value |
| Total number of BN students (n =13) | 500-550 | 1500-3500 | 1000-7500 | 1000 | 3000 | 2365.38 | 1881.199 | -0.278 – 0.758 | 0.258 |
| Campuses responsible for (n=14) | 1-2 | 1-5 | 1-6 | 1 | 2 | 2.21 | 1.578 | -0.597 – 0.484 | 0.789 |
| No. of admin/support staff (n=14) | 1-2 | 4-15 | 1-8 | 3 | 6 | 4.11 | 3.763 | -0.427 – 0.641 | 0.606 |
| Clinical placement proportion (%) (n=14) | 29-95 | 4-33 | 27-58 | 40 | 25 | 36/61 | 20.534 | -0.569 – 0.515 | 0.897 |
| Annual unsuccessful placement reported by %(n) (n=13) | 15.4 (2) | 23.1 (3) | 46.2 (6) | 7.7 (1) | 7.7 (1) | 1.07 | 1.07 | -0.460 – 0.617 | 0.706 |
| Related cost (\$) to Unsuccessful completion (n=9) | 0-8000 | 1200000 | 2000-82500 | 42000 | 17500 | 160000 | 390806.938 | -0.524 – 0.788 | 0.539 |

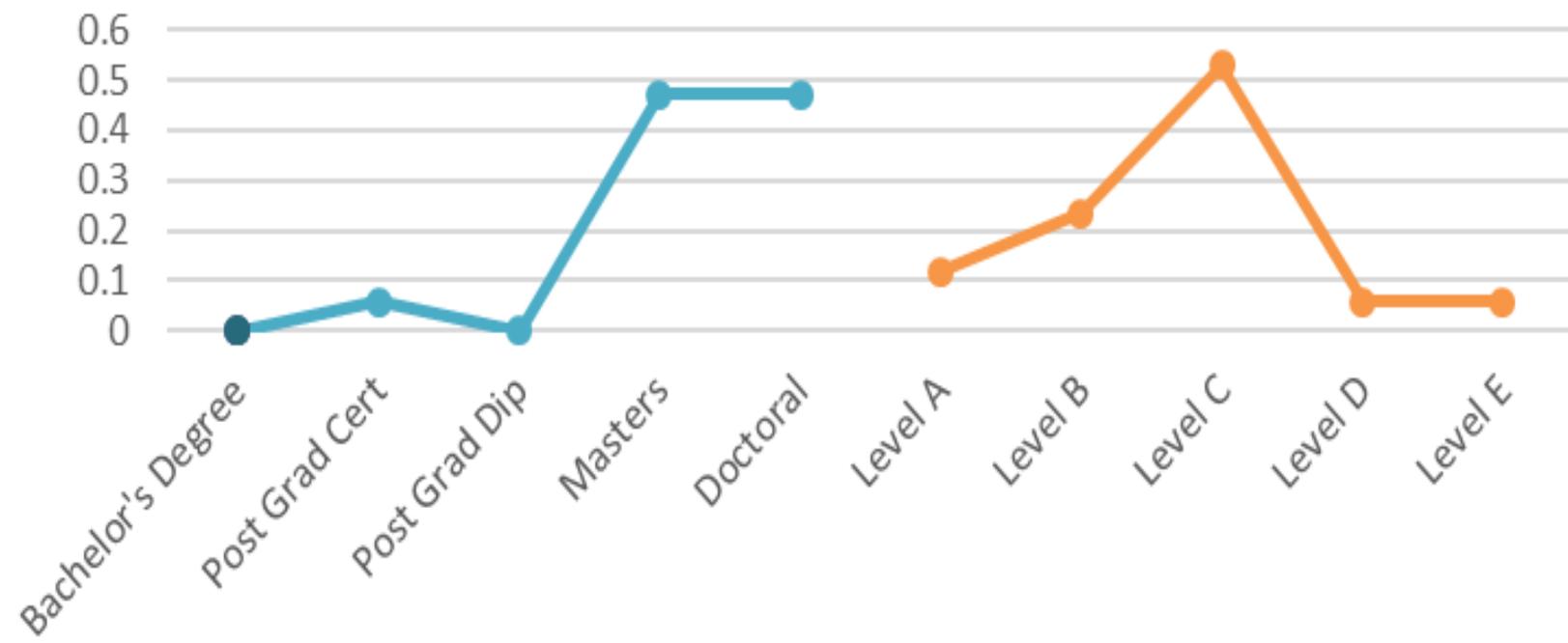
Related question

What is the proportion of total clinical placement duration in your organisation/university in comparison to the total program time?
_____ %

Hint- (total number of clinical placement weeks/total number of entire BN program weeks which is No. of weeks in Semester X No. of Semesters in a program).

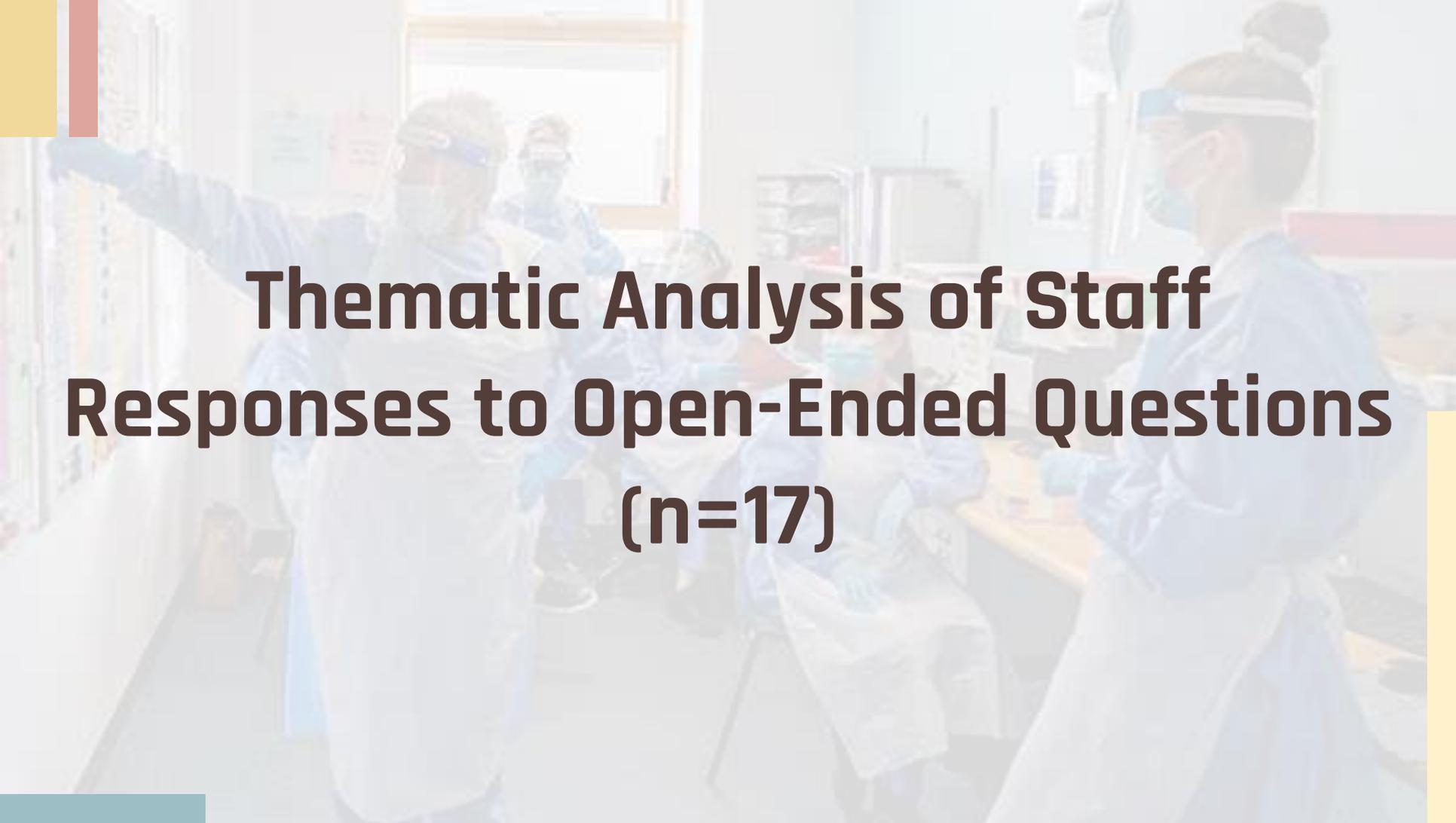
Example. 800hrs placement=20 weeks therefore, $20 \div (16 \times 6) \% = 21\%$

Qualification/Position comparator

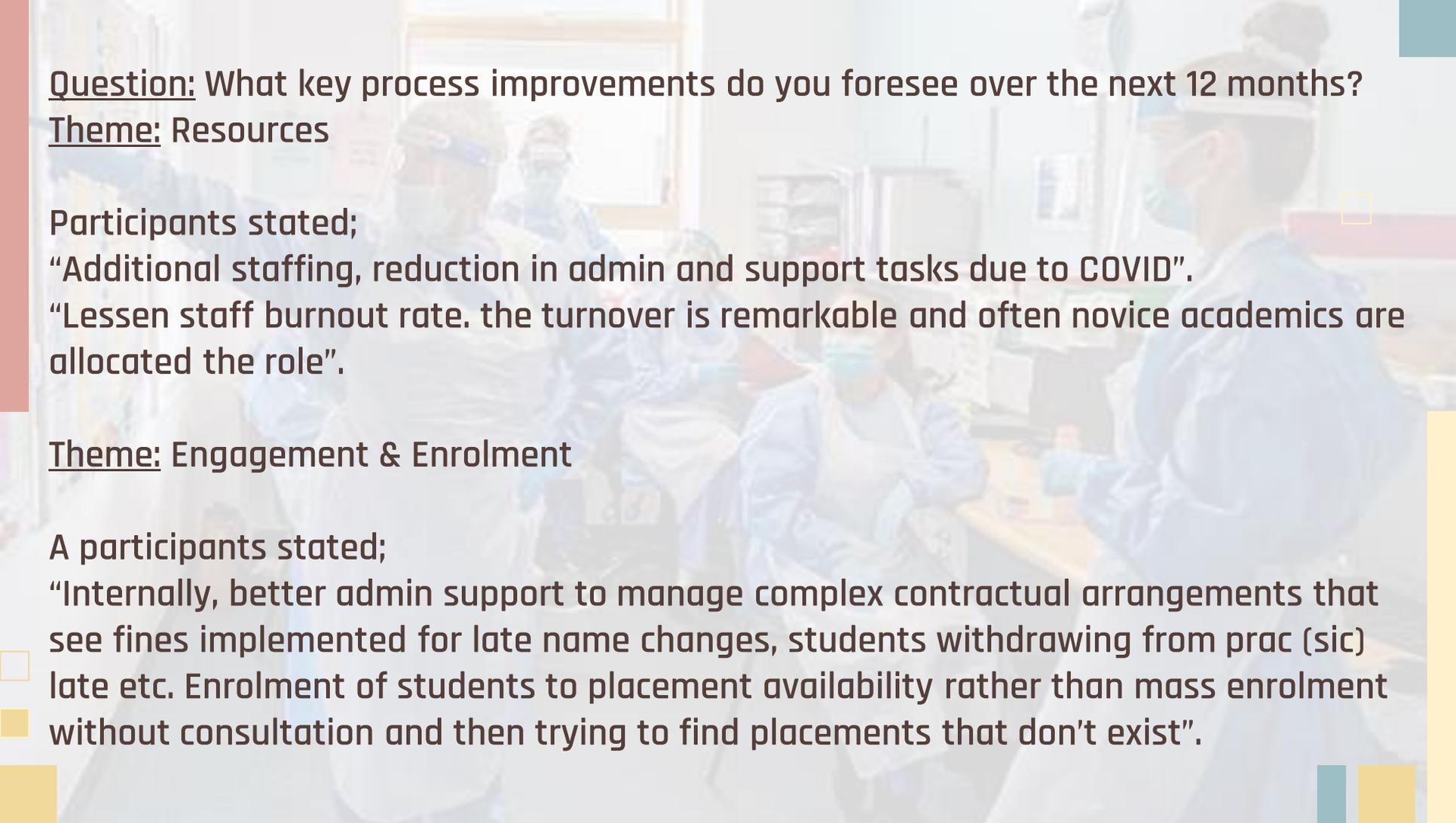


Clinical Coordinators Frequency of Visits to Clinical Venues (n=14)

| VISIT FREQUENCY | Occurrence | Percent | Mean | SD |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Random days in a week | 1 | 7.1 | 6.50 | 1.653 |
| Weekly | 2 | 14.3 | | |
| Monthly | 1 | 7.1 | | |
| Once every few months | 6 | 42.9 | | |
| Never | 4 | 28.6 | | |



**Thematic Analysis of Staff
Responses to Open-Ended Questions
(n=17)**



Question: What key process improvements do you foresee over the next 12 months?

Theme: Resources

Participants stated;

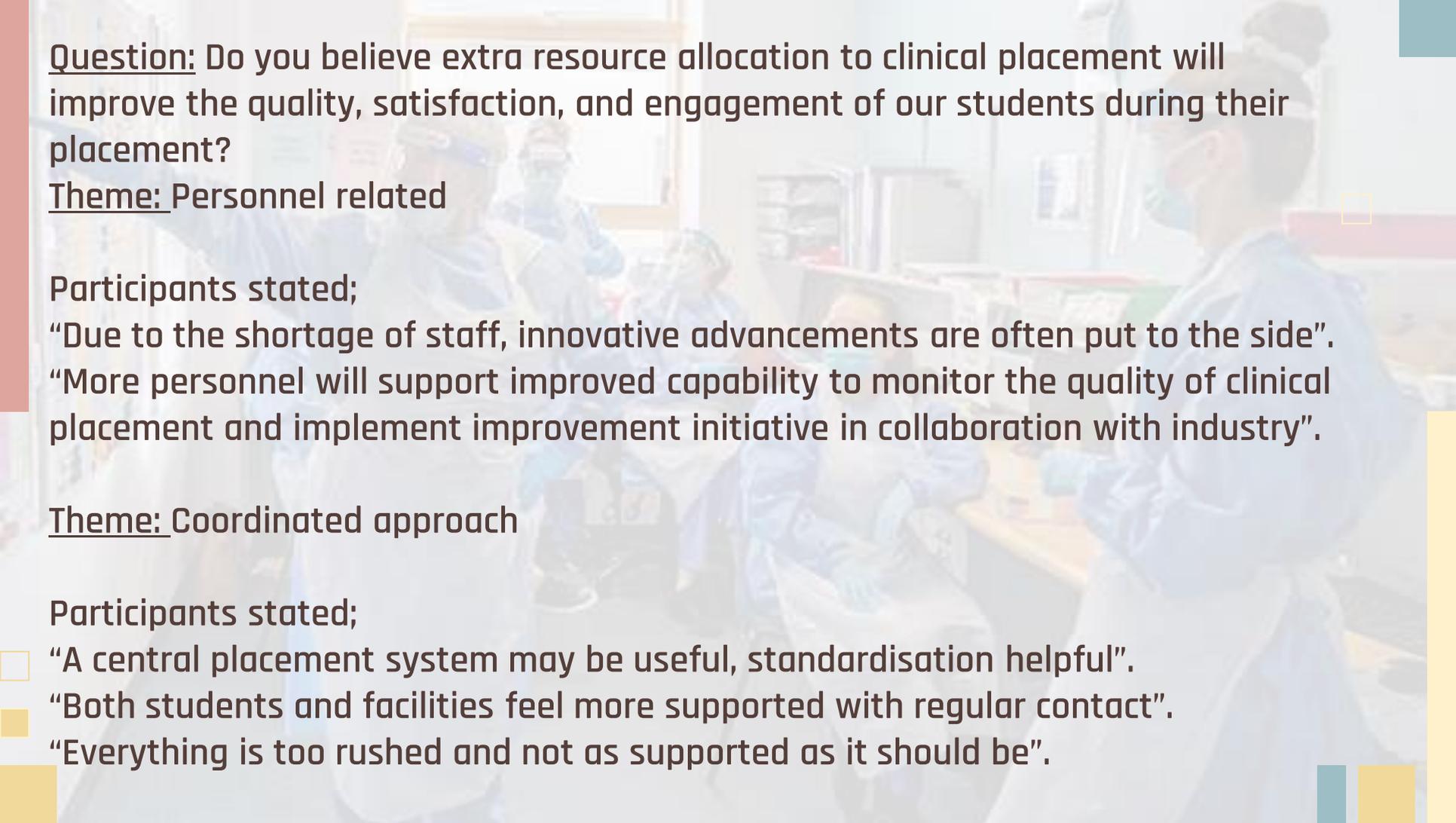
“Additional staffing, reduction in admin and support tasks due to COVID”.

“Lessen staff burnout rate. the turnover is remarkable and often novice academics are allocated the role”.

Theme: Engagement & Enrolment

A participants stated;

“Internally, better admin support to manage complex contractual arrangements that see fines implemented for late name changes, students withdrawing from prac (sic) late etc. Enrolment of students to placement availability rather than mass enrolment without consultation and then trying to find placements that don't exist”.



Question: Do you believe extra resource allocation to clinical placement will improve the quality, satisfaction, and engagement of our students during their placement?

Theme: Personnel related

Participants stated;

“Due to the shortage of staff, innovative advancements are often put to the side”.
“More personnel will support improved capability to monitor the quality of clinical placement and implement improvement initiative in collaboration with industry”.

Theme: Coordinated approach

Participants stated;

“A central placement system may be useful, standardisation helpful”.
“Both students and facilities feel more supported with regular contact”.
“Everything is too rushed and not as supported as it should be”.

Question: Do you have any further information you wish to share?

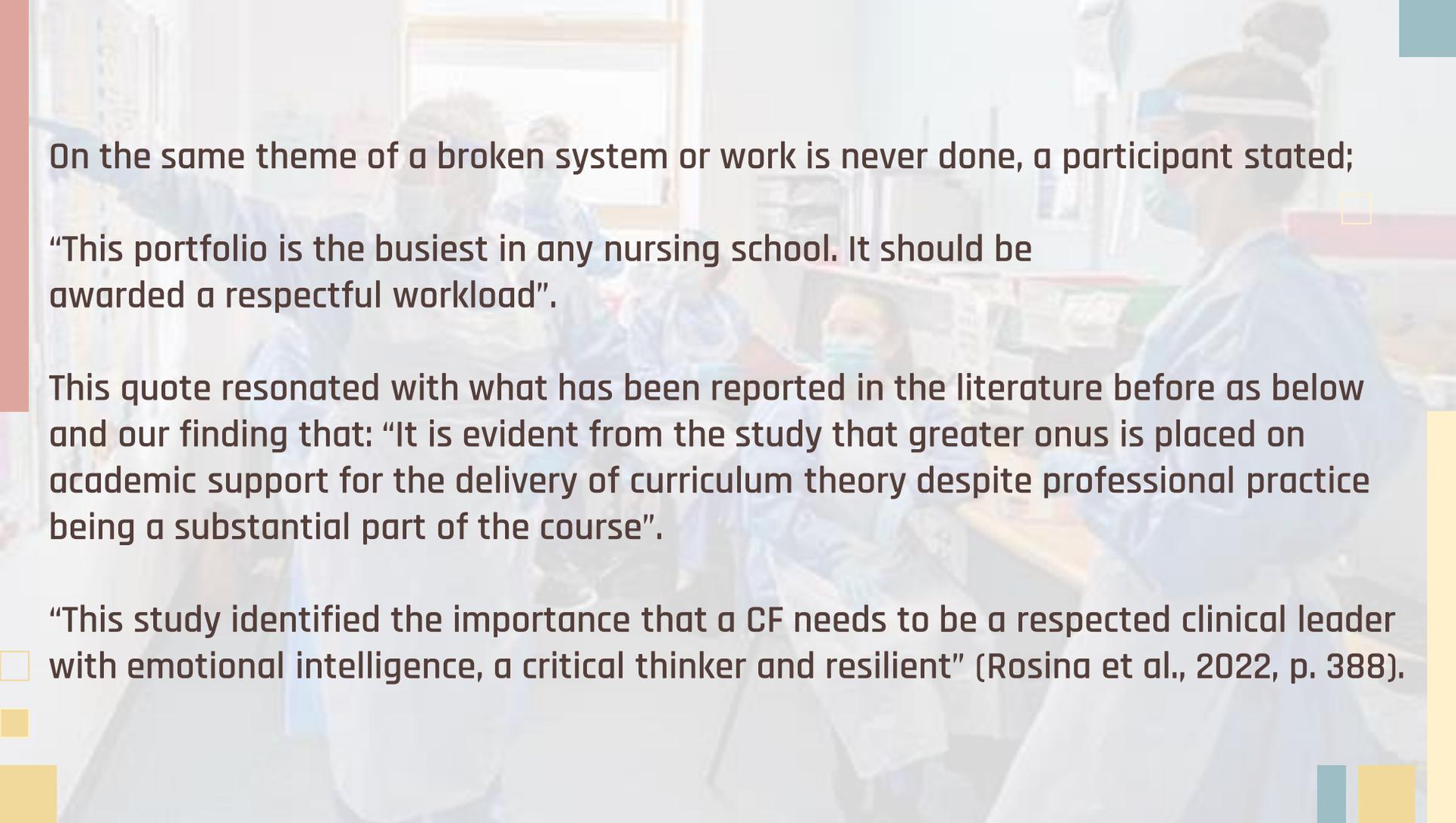
Theme: A broken system or work is never done

Participants stated;

“I burnt out from this job. I had to be the main point of contact for private and public organisations and each organisation has something different in regard to pre-requisites to having”.

“I also had to manage complaints between staff and students and also visit sites. I was on-call at night and on the weekends and I did not get paid for this. I got burnt out”.

“It is a great job but it is very constant. E.g never lets up - commences Jan 1 and goes to Dec 24th! More staff would support this. Very difficult to get any research done so well done to you!”.



On the same theme of a broken system or work is never done, a participant stated;

“This portfolio is the busiest in any nursing school. It should be awarded a respectful workload”.

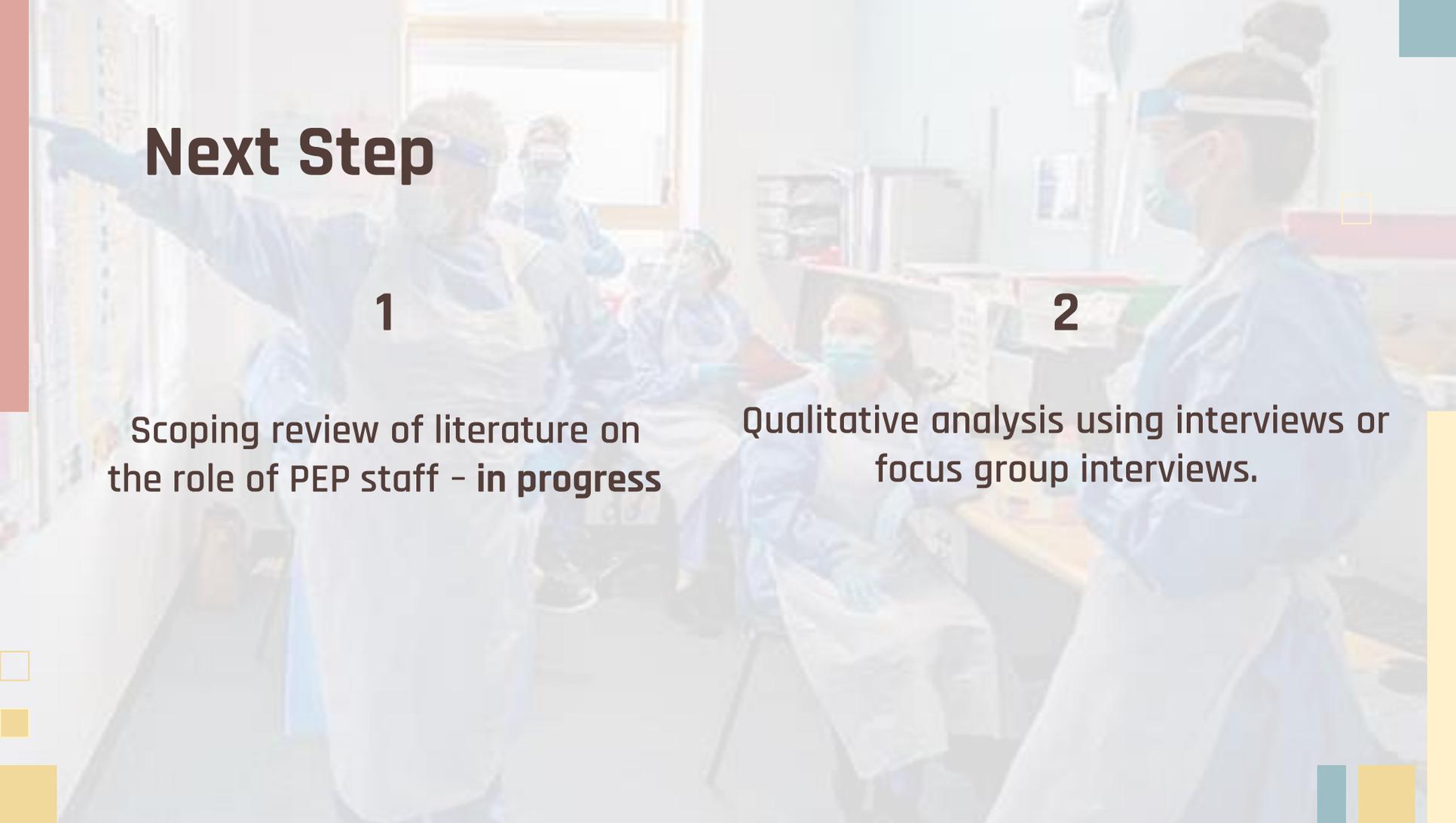
This quote resonated with what has been reported in the literature before as below and our finding that: “It is evident from the study that greater onus is placed on academic support for the delivery of curriculum theory despite professional practice being a substantial part of the course”.

“This study identified the importance that a CF needs to be a respected clinical leader with emotional intelligence, a critical thinker and resilient” (Rosina et al., 2022, p. 388).

Conclusion

- Encouraging progress has been made in the formalization of nursing in higher education. However, there still exist important challenges across the nation that need to be addressed.
- Structured support for academic staff in professional experience placement roles, standardization of the roles' positions and unified terms of references across institutions nationally may mitigate some of the challenges.
- Increased involvement of professional experience placement staff in role related financial planning and resource allocation processes. Improved recognition of the important role the PEP staff play in enabling higher education providers meet their curriculum accreditation.

Next Step



1

Scoping review of literature on the role of PEP staff - **in progress**

2

Qualitative analysis using interviews or focus group interviews.

References

- ANMAC, 2019. Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2019. https://anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/registerednurseaccreditationstandards2019_0.pdf
- Bowles, K.-A., Haines, T., Molloy, E., Kent, F., Sevenhuysen, S., Tai, J., 2014. The costs and benefits of providing undergraduate student clinical placements for a health service organisation: a rapid review. An evidence check review by the Sax Institute for the Health Education Training Institute (HETI).
- Rosina, R., McMaster, R., Cleary, E., Gilbert, S., West, S., Cleary, M., 2022. Preparing for the real world: clinical facilitators and nursing student clinical placements. *Issues Ment. Health Nurs.* 43 (4), 386-389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840.2021.1986761>
- Schwartz, S., 2019. Educating the Nurse of the Future. Report of the Independent Review of Nursing Education. <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019/12/educating-the-nurse-of-the-future.pdf>
- Strandell-Laine, C., Salminen, L., Blöndal, K., Fuster, P., Hourican, S., Koskinen, S., Leino-Kilpi, H., Lyytyniemi, E., Stubner, J., Truša, M., Suikkala, A., 2022. The nurse teacher's pedagogical cooperation with students, the clinical learning environment and supervision in clinical practicum: a European cross-sectional study of graduating nursing students. *BMC Med. Educ.* 22 (1), 509. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03445-0>
- Usher, K., Fagan, A., Brown, J.A., Mather, C., Marlow, A., Power, T., van de Mortel, T., West, C., Hutchinson, M., Zhao, L., Terry, V., Woods, C., Lea, J., 2022. The financial challenges for Australian nursing students attending placement-based work-integrated learning. *Collegian* 29 (2), 154-160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.colegn.2021.07.005>
- Wenham, K.E., Valencia-Forrester, F., Backhaus, B., 2020. Make or break: the role and support needs of academic advisors in work-integrated learning courses. *High. Educ. Res. Dev.* 39 (5), 1026-1039. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1705254>



Thank You