

The State of Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences at ACPE Accredited Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy

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Background

- Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPEs) are an important component of experiential education that connect the didactic curriculum to practice and prepare students for Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs).
- Two prior studies^{1,2} described IPPE programs at schools and colleges of pharmacy (S/COPs) across the United States in 2014 and 2015, respectively, but no study has been conducted nationally since Standards 2016 were implemented.
- The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) released draft standards for comment in January 2024 and released the new standards, Standards 2025, in July 2024, which directly impact key components of IPPEs.³

Objective

- This study aims to provide a comprehensive description of the current landscape of IPPEs across S/COPs in the United States, focusing on compliance with Standards 2025.

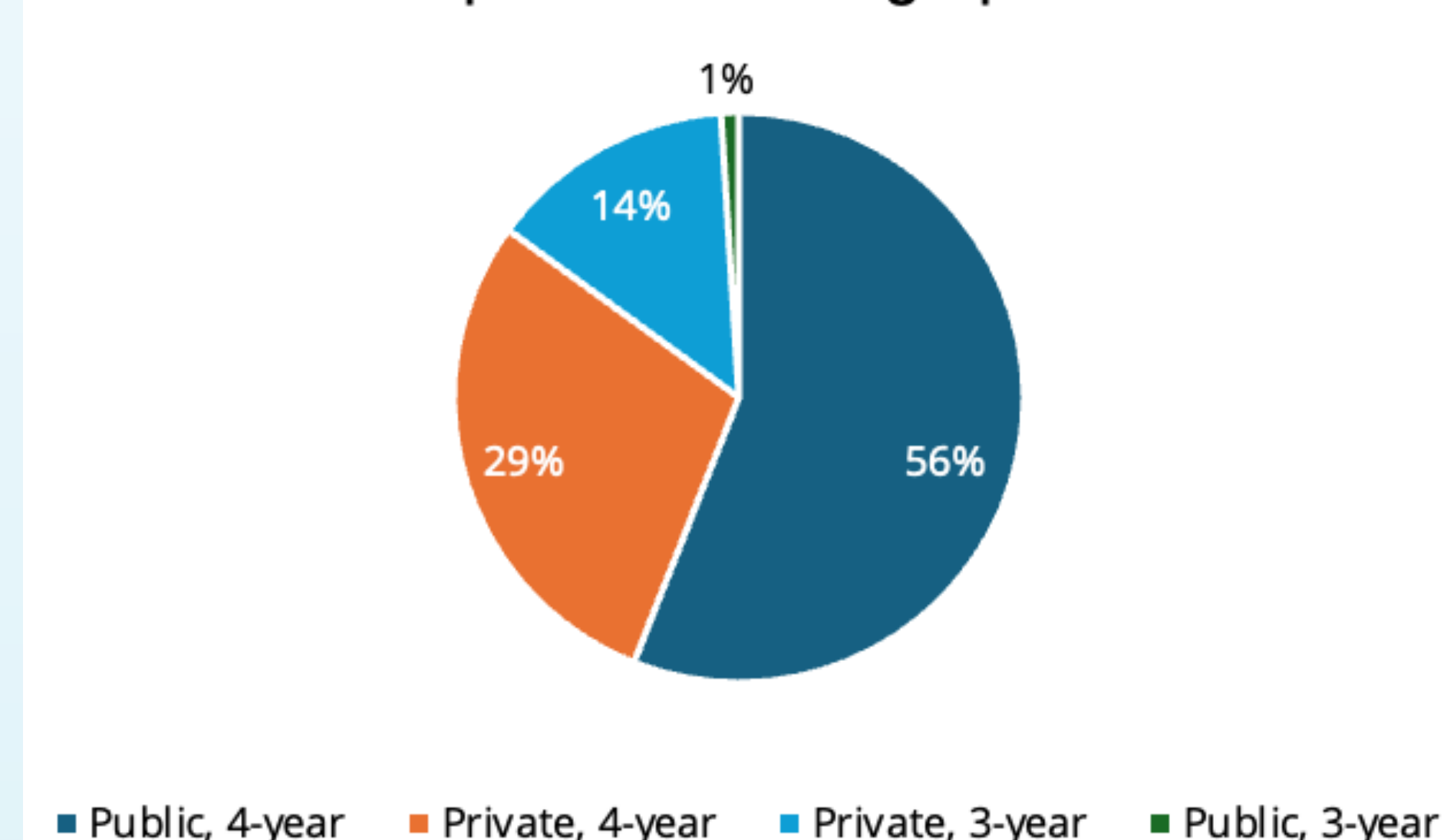
Methods

- A survey comprising 41 items was distributed between November 2023 and January 2024 to 140 ACPE fully-accredited S/COPs.
- Survey components included:
 - Demographics
 - Program Structure
 - Activities/Assignments
 - Assessments
 - Exemption Policies
 - Interprofessional Education
- Multiple choice and select all that apply questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics.
- Open-ended text responses were summarized and reported.

Results

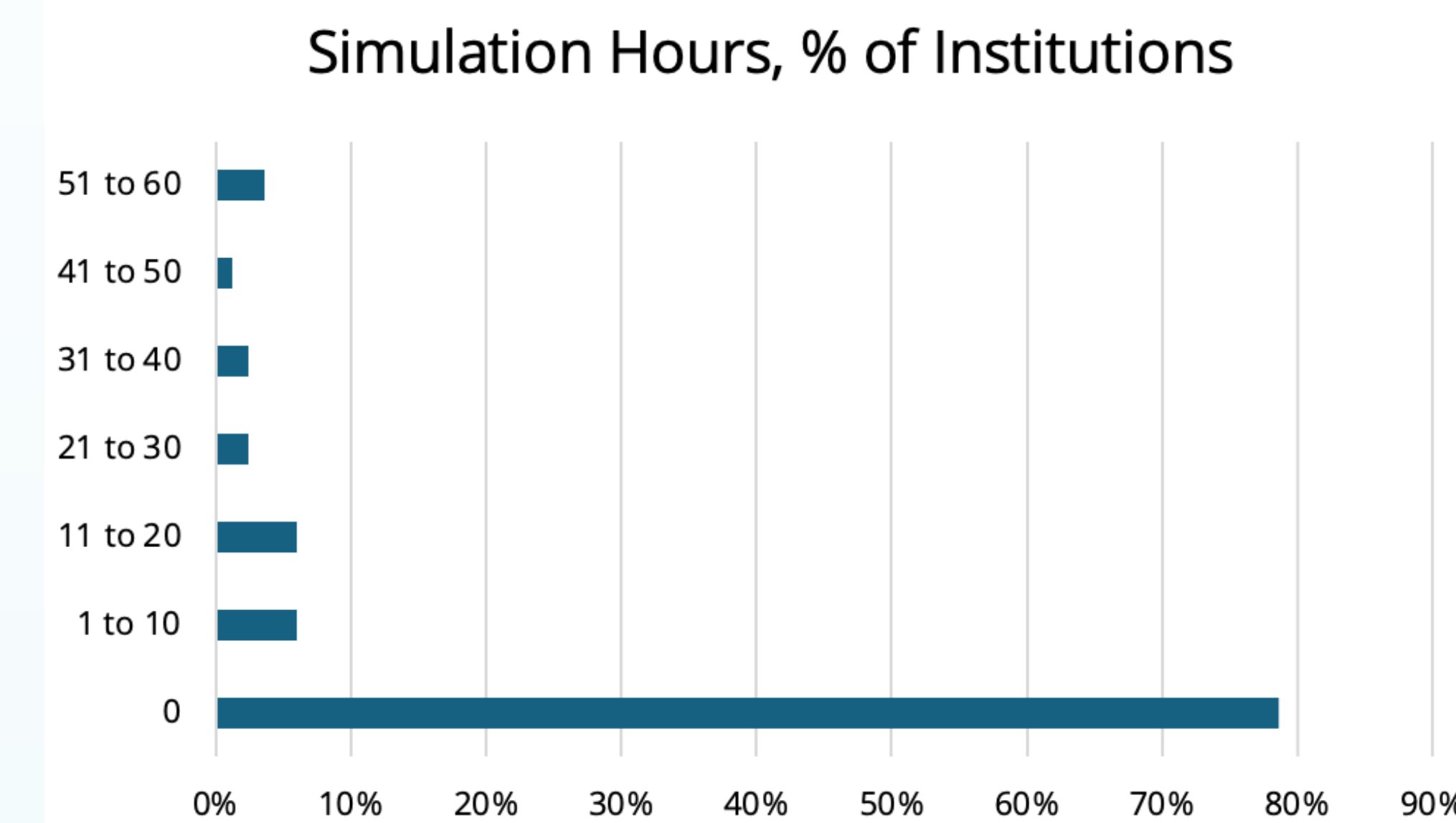
- Eighty-seven programs participated in the survey, yielding a response rate of 62.1%.

Respondent Demographics



Results, Continued

- Most institutions (78.6%) did not count simulation hours towards ACPE-hour requirements, with few allowing up to 60 hours.



- Layered learning was intentionally incorporated by some programs (15.7%) to enrich the learning experience.
- To further expose students to patient care, some programs (24%) included elective rotations.
- Several programs (7.2%) allowed students to be exempt from IPPE experiences.
- Over half of the programs (57.5%) utilized Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for summative assessments, aligning with emerging trends in pharmacy education.
- Most institutions (77%) utilized pass/fail grading for IPPEs instead of letter grades.

Conclusion

- This study provides valuable insights into the current state of IPPE programs, highlighting opportunities to meet evolving accreditation standards.
- The findings underscore the need for programmatic changes in response to Standards 2025, with an emphasis on the removal of simulation hours for ACPE-hour requirements and aligning assessments with EPAs.
- Strategies such as the intentional incorporation of layered learning can be beneficial, but programs should be cognizant of the maximum 2:1 student-to-preceptor ratio for IPPEs and APPEs in most situations.

References

1. Galinski CN, Horosz PJ, Spooner JJ, Kennedy DR. Comparison of introductory pharmacy practice experiences among US pharmacy programs. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2014;78(9): Article 162.
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3. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. Accreditation standards and key elements for the professional program in pharmacy leading to the doctor of pharmacy degree. Accessed July 1, 2024. <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/ACPEStandards2025.pdf>