

Purpose: Justification of clinical physics staffing levels is difficult due to the ever increasing time demands to implement new technologies and by lack of direction as how to equate clinical needs with the staffing levels and competency required. When a physicist negotiates staffing requests to administration, she/he often refers to “blue book” (ACR) staffing suggestions, and resources such as the Abt studies. This approach is often met with questions as to how to fairly derive the time it takes to perform tasks properly, and what level of experience is actually required. The result is often insufficient and/or inexperienced staff handling complex and cumbersome tasks. We undertook development of a staffing justification grid to equate the clinical needs to the quantity and quality of staffing required.

Method&Materials: The first step is using the Abt study, customized to the clinical setting, to derive time per task multiplied by the anticipated number of such tasks. Inclusion of vacation, meeting, and developmental time is incorporated along with allocated time for education and administration. This is followed by mapping the tasks to the level of competency/experience needed, for example in an academic setting the faculty appointment levels. Non-staff personal, such as IMRT QA technicians or clerical staff should also be part of the equation. This grid method not only equates the clinical needs with the quantity of staffing, but also generates the personnel budget, based on the type of staff and personnel required.

Results: By using the staffing justification grid, we derived strong documentation to justify a substantial budget increase.

Conclusion: Though our grid is for a large academic facility, the methodology can be extended to a non-academic setting, and to a smaller scale. The grid is easily adaptable when changes to the clinical environment change, such as an increase in IMRT or IGRT applications.