2022–2023
ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS
In Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing

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INTRODUCTION

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) was established in 1969 to answer the need for a national organization dedicated exclusively to furthering nursing education in America’s universities and colleges. Representing nursing education programs at 865 public and private universities and colleges, AACN serves the public interest by assisting deans and directors to improve and advance nursing education, research, and practice.

The Department of Research and Data Services is the nucleus of the Association’s authoritative national databank. Annually, the department reports the most current statistics available on student enrollment, graduations, and faculty salaries.

This is the 42nd report on enrollment and graduations and the 25th report that includes detailed information about nurse practitioner (NP) programs, which is the result of joint efforts between AACN and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF). This compact to jointly own data on NP educational programs has resulted in the creation of the most complete repository of data on NP education in the United States. This report also marks the 20th enumeration of clinical nurse specialist (CNS) students and graduates by clinical specialty area and the seventh year of a joint data collection initiative between AACN and the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS). Both cooperative agreements are aimed at creating a single data source to support health workforce planning and policy analysis.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The definition of terms used in the questionnaires can be found on page x. Survey forms and instructions for accessing the survey website were emailed to 1,075 institutions with baccalaureate and higher degree programs in nursing on September 6, 2022. Responses to the enrollment and graduation surveys were received from 974 institutions by December 31, 2022.

To ensure the quality of the data, rigorous validity and internal consistency checks were programmed in the Web-based survey instrument. Additional validity checks were conducted prior to data analysis. Frequency distributions were obtained on all variables and inspected for outliers. If inconsistencies and misclassifications were detected, institutions were contacted to resolve the problems.

RESPONSE RATE

The overall response rate was 90.6 percent for the enrollment and graduation survey (Table 1a).

Questions about the survey in general, or requests for more specific data to meet the needs of individual institutions through AACN’s customized report service, should be directed to Dr. Di Fang: (202) 463-6930 x225, dfang@aacnnursing.org; Jenny C. Keyt: (202) 463-6930 x244, jkeyt@aacnnursing.org; or Carrie S. Byrne: (202) 463-6930 x236, cbyrne@aacnnursing.org.
HIGHLIGHTS

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND RESPONSE RATE

- The findings in this report are based on responses from 974 of the 1,075 institutions in the United States and its territories with baccalaureate and graduate-degree programs that were surveyed in fall 2022. The overall response rate was 90.6 percent (Table 1a).

ENROLLMENT (FALL 2022) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2021 TO JULY 31, 2022)

- A total of 254,630 students were enrolled in generic (entry-level) baccalaureate nursing education programs. RN-to-baccalaureate enrollment totaled 98,734 (Table 8).
- Enrollment at the master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) levels totaled 131,524; 4,381; and 41,021, respectively (Table 8).
- Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates totaled 91,428 and RN-to-baccalaureate totaled 61,764. Master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and DNP levels totaled 52,121; 713; and 11,149, respectively (Table 8).
- Males accounted for 13.0 percent of all baccalaureate graduates (generic and RN-to-baccalaureate). The percentage of men graduating from master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and DNP programs was 11.7, 11.4, and 14.3, respectively (Table 9).
- 43 percent of undergraduate enrollees and 40.5, 35.8, and 40.7 percent of enrollees in master’s, research-focused doctoral programs, and DNP programs were from racial and ethnic minorities, respectively (Table 10).

Enrollment (Fall 2022) Diversity in Undergraduate and Master’s Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity of Enrollment in Undergraduate Programs</th>
<th>Diversity of Enrollment in Master’s Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 57.0% White
- 13.8% Black or African American
- 15.7% Hispanic or Latino
- 8.8% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 3.2% Two or More Races

- 59.5% White
- 16.0% Black or African American
- 11.7% Hispanic or Latino
- 9.2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 2.8% Two or More Races

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Enrollment of generic (entry-level) baccalaureate students decreased by 1.4 percent (3,518 students, Table 12). The decrease was 3.2, 4.0, and 0.3 percent in the North Atlantic, Midwest, and South, respectively. The increase was 6.4 percent in the West (Table 14). Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates increased by 3.4 percent (3,947 graduates, Table 13). Despite this increase, 66,261 qualified applications were not offered admission to generic baccalaureate programs mostly due to insufficient clinical sites and insufficient numbers of faculty (Tables 39 and 40).

RN-to-baccalaureate enrollment decreased by 16.9 percent (19,871 students) and graduations decreased by 9.3 percent (6,256 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

Master’s-level students decreased by 9.4 percent (13,695 students) and graduations decreased by 1.2 percent (622 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

Enrollment in doctoral (research-focused) programs decreased by 4.1 percent (183 students) and graduations decreased 5 percent (37 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs experienced an enrollment increase of 0.6 percent (242 students) and graduations increased by 10.4 percent (1,043 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).
**FIVE-YEAR TRENDS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS (BASED ON DATA FROM SCHOOLS REPORTING EACH YEAR SINCE 2018)**

Five-Year Trends in Enrollments and Graduations by Type of Degree (2018–2022).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEGREE</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
<th>GRADUATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AVERAGE CHANGE</td>
<td>SIGNIFICANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PER YEAR*</td>
<td>(p value)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic Bacc.</td>
<td>8,006</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN-to-Bacc.</td>
<td>-9,925</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>-1,876</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral (Research)</td>
<td>-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNP</td>
<td>2,109</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bold values indicate a statistically significant (p<0.05) average change per year.

- The number of generic (entry-level) baccalaureate students increased by 14.0 percent in the past five years from 217,521 in 2018 to 248,074 in 2022. There was an overall average increase of 8,006 (p=.027) students per year (Table 21). Graduates also increased from 2018 to 2022 by 28.5 percent. Although the rise in enrollments and the increase in graduations over the past five years are encouraging, many more baccalaureate-prepared nurses will be needed to meet the healthcare needs of the population.

- The number of master’s enrollees decreased by 7.2 percent in 2018-2022. Graduations increased by 12.7 percent in 2018-2022 (Table 23).

- At the doctoral (research-focused) level, enrollment decreased by 6.4 percent over the past five years. Graduations also decreased by 11.0 percent between 2018 and 2022 (Table 24).

- The number of DNP enrollees increased by 26.8 percent in 2018-2022. Graduations also increased by 59.8 percent in 2018-2022 (Table 25).

**MASTER’S PROGRAMS**

- In fall 2022 there were 1,075 institutions with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs in nursing in the United States and its territories. Nationwide, 659 (61.3%) institutions offered master’s programs; of these, 416 (63.1%) offered master’s-level NP programs and 56 (8.5%) offered master’s-level CNS programs. The AACN database contains data on 626 (95.0%) institutions with master’s programs, 404 (97.1%) schools with master’s-level NP programs, and 55 (98.2%) institutions with CNS programs (Table 1b).

**MASTER’S-LEVEL ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS BY MAJOR AREA OF STUDY**

- NP majors accounted for 62.7 percent (82,476 students) of master’s enrollees, and 59.3 percent of master’s graduates (N=30,897). CNS majors comprised 0.5 percent (N=660) and 0.6 percent (N=296) of master’s enrollees and graduates, respectively (Table 26).
Education comprised 12.1 percent of master’s enrollees, followed by Administration (11.5%), generalist (4.5%), informatics (2.6%), clinical nurse leader (1.4%), nurse midwifery (1.4%), and nurse anesthesia (0.4%) majors. Administration graduates accounted for 13 percent of master’s graduates, followed by education (12.7%), generalist (5.3%), informatics (2.5%), clinical nurse leader (1.9%), nurse midwifery (1.1%), and nurse anesthesia (1%) majors (Table 26).

**MASTER’S-LEVEL CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST ENROLLMENT (FALL 2022) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2021 TO JULY 31, 2022) BY POPULATION FOCUS**

- Fall 2022 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s clinical nurse specialist (CNS) programs totaled 729. Graduations/completions from these programs totaled 327 (Tables 28a and 29).

- Master’s Adult Gerontology (Wellness through Acute Care) comprised 79.1 percent of CNS enrollees, followed by other CNS (7.3%) and Neonatal (Wellness through Acute Care, 4.5%). The proportions for graduations of these three population foci were 77.7, 9.1, and 3.0 percent, for each (Table 28a).

- No national CNS-specific certification examination existed for 8.9 percent of master’s enrollees and 10.1 percent of master’s graduates for their respective population focus (Tables 28a and 28b).

**POST-MASTER’S CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST (CNS) ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETIONS BY POPULATION FOCUS**

- Adult Gerontology (Wellness through Acute Care) accounted for the largest percentage of post-master’s CNS enrollees (73.9%) and completions (90.3%, Table 29).

Master’s- and Post-Master’s Clinical Nurse Specialist Population Foci Comprising the Largest Percentage of Enrollees and Graduates.

![Chart](chart.png)

**Note:** Information in this report concerning clinical nurse specialists is the result of an agreement between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists. All clinical nurse specialist data are jointly owned by the two organizations.
MASTER’S-LEVEL NURSE PRACTITIONER ENROLLMENT (FALL 2022) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2021 TO JULY 31, 2022) BY POPULATION FOCUS

- Fall 2022 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s nurse practitioner (NP) programs totaled 91,923; Master’s-level NP enrollees comprised 89.7 percent of all master’s and post-master’s NP enrollees (Tables 31a and 32).

- There were 30,897 master’s and post-master’s NP graduations/completions from August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022; Master’s-level programs accounted for 86.5 percent of graduates (Tables 31a and 32).

- Master’s family (59.6%), psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (19.6%), adult gerontology acute care (8.5%), and adult gerontology primary care (6.2%) accounted for the largest percentages of the 82,476 master’s NP students (Table 31a).

POST-MASTER’S NURSE PRACTITIONER ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETIONS BY POPULATION FOCUS

- Of the 9,447 post-master’s NP students, 55.6 percent were enrolled in psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan NP programs, followed by family (26.9%), adult gerontology acute care NP (9.3%), and adult gerontology primary care (4.3%). The proportions for completions of these four population foci were 48.3, 25.8, 14.6, and 4.9 percent, for each (Table 32).

Master’s-Level and Post-Master’s Nurse Practitioner Population Foci Comprising the Largest Percentages of Enrollees and Graduates.

Note: Information in this report pertaining to nurse practitioners is the result of a collaborative effort between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. All nurse practitioner data are jointly owned by the two organizations.
ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS IN DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP) PROGRAMS BY MAJOR AREA OF STUDY

- For students and graduates entered in DNP programs at the post-baccalaureate level, NP majors accounted for the largest percent of enrollees (70.2%, 17,132 students) and graduates (67.6%, 3,670 graduates, Table 35).

- For students and graduates entered in DNP programs at the post-master’s level, leadership accounted for 41.6 percent of enrollees, followed by NP (25.7%), major area not specified (19.7), and administration/management DNP (4.4%). The proportions for graduations of these four majors were 38.3, 25.1, 22.5, and 4.5 percent, respectively (Table 35).

ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS IN NURSE PRACTITIONER-FOCUSED DNP PROGRAMS

- For students and graduates entered in NP-focused DNP programs at the post-baccalaureate level, family (51.7%), psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (15.5%), adult gerontology acute care (11.9%), and adult gerontology primary care (6.6%) NP population foci accounted for the largest percentages of the 17,132 students (Table 36).

- For students and graduates entered in NP-focused DNP programs at the post-master’s level, most students and graduates are in the category Previously Certified as NP (55.4%, 2,246 students; 59.9%, 837 graduates), which indicates that students and graduates already had an NP certification and will not seek a new NP certification in their DNP education (Table 36).
Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education
Percentage of Graduates Who Are Underrepresented Minorities by Types of Program: 2012-2022

Growth in Doctoral Nursing Programs: 2013-2022

Enrollments in Doctoral Programs: 2013-2022