2017–2018
ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS
In Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing

Di Fang, PhD, Director of Institutional Research and Data Services
Yan Li, MA, Manager of Data Services
Michael D. Turinetti, BA, Data Services Assistant
Deborah E. Trautman, PhD, RN, President and Chief Executive Officer

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF NURSING
655 K Street, NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001
(202) 463-6930 | Fax (202) 785-8320
www.aacnnursing.org

All data in this publication pertaining to nurse practitioner educational programs are the result of a collaborative effort between the
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF NURSING
and
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF NURSE PRACTITIONER FACULTIES
1615 M Street, NW, Suite 270
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 289-8044 | Fax (202) 289-8046
www.nonpf.com

All data in this publication pertaining to clinical nurse specialist educational programs are the result of an agreement between the
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF NURSING
and
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALISTS
100 North 20th Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 320-3881 | Fax (215) 564-2175
www.nacns.org
Special gratitude goes to all institutions that responded to this survey.

Consultation for the nurse practitioner data was provided by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. Special acknowledgement goes to Susan Weber Buchholz, PhD, RN, FAANP, Professor, Adult Health and Gerontological Nursing, Rush University College of Nursing, and Mary Beth Bigley, DrPH, APRN, FAAN, Chief Executive Officer, National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

Consultation for the clinical nurse specialist data was provided by the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists. Special acknowledgement goes to Ann M. Mayo, RN, DNSc, CNS, FAAN, Professor, University of San Diego Hahn School of Nursing & Health Science and Beyster Institute for Nursing Research.

Suggested Citation: 2017-2018 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Copyright © 2018 by American Association of Colleges of Nursing
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in print, by photostatic means, or in any other manner, without the expressed written permission of the Association.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing is not responsible for errors in reporting by responding institutions.

Publication No. 17-18-01
**HIGHLIGHTS**

**NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND RESPONSE RATE**

- The findings in this report are based on responses from 896 of the 1,009 institutions in the United States and its territories with baccalaureate and graduate-degree programs that were surveyed in fall 2017. The overall response rate was 88.8 percent (Table 1a).

**ENROLLMENT (FALL 2017) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2016 TO JULY 31, 2017)**

- A total of 211,450 students were enrolled in generic (entry-level) baccalaureate nursing education programs. RN-to-baccalaureate enrollment totaled 133,494 (Table 8).

- Enrollment at the master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) levels totaled 134,777; 4,632; and 29,093, respectively (Table 8).

- Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates totaled 71,025 and RN-to-baccalaureate totaled 62,725. Master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) levels totaled 43,520; 796; and 6,090, respectively (Table 8).

- Males accounted for 13.1 percent of all baccalaureate graduates (generic and RN-to-baccalaureate). The percentage of men graduating from master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) programs was 12.0, 10.8, and 12.9, respectively (Table 9).

- 32.5 percent of undergraduate enrollees and 34.0, 32.5, and 32.4 percent of enrollees in master’s, research-focused doctoral programs, and DNP programs were from racial and ethnic minorities, respectively (Table 10).

**Enrollment (Fall 2017) Diversity in Undergraduate and Master’s Programs**

**Diversity of Enrollment in Undergraduate Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black of African American</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>Am. Indian or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black of African American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Diversity of Enrollment in Master’s Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black of African American</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>Am. Indian or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black of African American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Percentage                | 66.0% | 14.7%                     | 8.2%               | 7.9%                         | 0.6%                               | 0.5%              | 2.2%
TWO-YEAR COMPARISONS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS (BASED ON DATA FROM SCHOOLS REPORTING IN BOTH 2016 AND 2017)

Percent Change in Enrollment and Graduations in Schools Reporting in Both 2016 and 2017.

- Enrollment of generic (entry-level) baccalaureate students increased by 4.3 percent (8,562 students, Table 12). The increase was 6.0, 2.4, 5.9, and 2.4 percent in the North Atlantic, Midwest, South, and West, respectively (Table 14). Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates increased by 4.2 percent (2,865 graduates, Table 13). Despite this increase, 56,397 qualified applications were not offered admission to generic baccalaureate programs mostly due to insufficient clinical sites and insufficient numbers of faculty (Tables 41 and 42).

- RN-to-baccalaureate enrollment decreased by 2.0 percent (2,712 students) and graduations increased by 3.3 percent (1,975 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

- Master’s-level students increased by 5.2 percent (6,576 students) and graduations increased by 8 percent (3,222 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

- Enrollment in doctoral (research-focused) programs decreased by 5.2 percent (254 students) and graduations increased by 2.7 percent (21 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs experienced an enrollment increase of 15 percent (3,794 students) and graduations increased by 24.8 percent (1,208 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).
FIVE-YEAR TRENDS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS (BASED ON DATA FROM SCHOOLS REPORTING EACH YEAR SINCE 2013)

Five-Year Trends in Enrollments and Graduations by Type of Degree (2013–2017).

<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>6,114</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN-to-Bacc.</td>
<td>3,596</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>6,614</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral (Research)</td>
<td>-110</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNP</td>
<td>3,503</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</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 14.1 percent in the past five years, increasing from 176,430 in 2013 to 201,385 in 2017. There was an overall average increase of 6,114 (p<0.001) students per year (Table 21). Graduates also increased from 2013 to 2017 by 15.3 percent. Although the dramatic 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 increased by 23.9 percent in 2013-2017. Graduations also increased by 42.3 percent in 2013-2017 (Table 23).

- At the doctoral (research-focused) level, enrollment decreased by 9.6 percent over the past five years. Graduations increased by 27.2 percent between 2013 and 2017 (Table 24).

- The number of DNP enrollees increased by 97.3 percent in 2013-2017. Graduations also increased by 149.3 percent in 2013-2017 (Table 25).

MASTER’S PROGRAMS

- In fall 2017 there were 1,009 institutions with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs in nursing in the United States and its territories. Nationwide, 598 (59.3%) institutions offered master’s programs; of these, 389 (65.1%) offered master’s-level NP programs. Eighty-four (14%) schools offered master’s-level CNS programs. The AACN database contains data on 559 (93.5%) institutions with master’s programs, 369 (94.9%) schools with master’s-level NP programs, and 81 (96.4%) institutions with CNS programs (Table 1b).

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

- NP majors accounted for 59.1 percent (79,684 students) of master’s enrollees, and 56.3 percent of master’s graduates (N=24,519). CNS majors comprised 0.7 (N=941) and 0.8 (N=368) percent of master’s enrollees and graduates, respectively. In addition, combined NP/CNS majors accounted for 0.1 percent (N=68) of master’s enrollees and 0.1 percent (N=39) of master’s graduates. Combined NP/CNS refers to those programs where the NP and CNS roles are merged in the
curriculum (Table 26).

- Administration comprised 13.8 percent of master’s enrollees, followed by education (12.9%), generalist (3.2%), clinical nurse leader (2.4%), informatics (2.3%), and nurse anesthesia (1.9%) majors. Education graduates and administration graduates each accounted for 14 percent of master’s graduates, followed by generalist (3.7%), clinical nurse leader (3%), nurse anesthesia (2.5%), and informatics (2.2%) majors (Table 26).

**Master’s-Level Clinical Nurse Specialist Enrollment (Fall 2017) and Graduations (August 1, 2016 to July 31, 2017) by Population Focus**

- Fall 2017 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s clinical nurse specialist (CNS) programs totaled 988. Graduations/completions from these programs totaled 393 (Tables 28a and 29).

- Master’s Adult Gerontology (Wellness through Acute Care) comprised 89.1 percent of CNS enrollees, followed by Pediatric (Wellness through Acute Care (6.6%) and Neonatal (Wellness through Acute Care) (2.3%). The proportions for graduations of these three population foci were 87.8, 6.8, and 2.4 percent, for each (Table 28a).

- No national CNS-specific certification examination existed for 1.7 percent of master’s enrollees and 2.7 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 (87.2%) and completions (88%, Table 29).

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

![Bar Chart]

**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 2017) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2016 TO JULY 31, 2017) BY POPULATION FOCUS

- Fall 2017 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s nurse practitioner (NP) programs totaled 84,807; and Master’s-level NP enrollees comprised 94 percent of all master’s and post-master’s NP enrollees. (Tables 31a and 32).

- There were 26,627 master’s and post-master’s NP graduations/completions from August 1, 2016 to July 31, 2017; and master’s-level programs accounted for 89.1 percent of graduates (Tables 31a and 32).

- Master’s family (68.6%), adult gerontology primary care (8.6%), adult gerontology acute care (8.4%), and psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (7.5%) accounted for the largest percentages of the 79,673 master’s NP students (Table 31a).

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

- Of the 5,123 post-master’s NP students, 49.8 percent were enrolled in family NP programs, followed by psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (27.1%), adult gerontology acute care NP (9.7%), and adult gerontology primary care (7.8%). The proportions for completions of these four population foci were 51.6, 18, 12.8, and 10 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.
COMBINED NURSE PRACTITIONER/CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS

- There were 68 students and 39 graduates from master’s-level combined NP/CNS programs. Combined NP/CNS refers to those programs where the NP and CNS roles are included in the curriculum. Graduates are eligible to sit for one NP and one CNS national certification examination (Table 35).

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 (75.5%, 12,850 students) and graduates (79.4%, 2,101 graduates, Table 37).

- For students and graduates entered in DNP programs at the post-master’s level, leadership accounted for 26.8 percent of enrollees, followed by major area not specified (26%), NP (22.9%), and administration/management DNP (9.9%). The proportions for graduations of these four majors were 28.5, 23.8, 24.9, and 8.4 percent, respectively. (Table 37).

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 (57.2%), adult gerontology primary care (10.4%), adult gerontology acute care (10.5%), and psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (10.3%) NP population foci accounted for the largest percentages of the 12,850 students (Table 38).

- 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 (59.2%, 1,758 students; 70.3%, 602 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 38).
Key Indicators and Trends

Enrollment and Graduations in Nursing Programs
896 Schools

- Generic Baccalaureate Programs: 211,450
- RN to Baccalaureate Programs: 71,025
- Total Baccalaureate: 133,494
- Master’s: 62,725
- Doctoral (research-focused): 133,750
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP): 134,777

Enrollments: Fall 2017 | Graduations: August 2016-July 2017

Qualified Applications Turned Away from Entry-Level Baccalaureate Nursing Programs: 2005-2017

- 2005: 37,514
- 2006: 38,415
- 2007: 36,400
- 2008: 41,385
- 2009: 42,981
- 2010: 52,115
- 2011: 58,327
- 2012: 58,114
- 2013: 57,944
- 2014: 50,681
- 2015: 47,341
- 2016: 50,598
- 2017: 56,397

Percentage Change in Enrollments in Entry-Level Baccalaureate Nursing Programs: 1996-2017

- 1996: -6.2%
- 1997: -6.6%
- 1998: -5.5%
- 1999: -4.6%
- 2000: -2.1%
- 2001: 3.7%
- 2002: 8.1%
- 2003: 16.6%
- 2004: 16.6%
- 2005: -6.1%
- 2006: 9.6%
- 2007: 7.6%
- 2008: 5.4%
- 2009: 2.2%
- 2010: 3.6%
- 2011: 5.1%
- 2012: 2.7%
- 2013: 4.2%
- 2014: 3.1%
- 2015: 3.6%
- 2016: 4.3%
- 2017: 4.3%
Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Generic Baccalaureate Education
Percentage of Graduates Who Are Minorities by Types of Nursing Programs, 2008-2017

Growth in Doctoral Nursing Programs: 2008-2017

Enrollments in Doctoral Programs: 2008-2017