2018–2019
ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS
In Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing

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HIGHLIGHTS

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND RESPONSE RATE

➢ The findings in this report are based on responses from 909 of the 1,022 institutions in the United States and its territories with baccalaureate and graduate-degree programs that were surveyed in fall 2018. The overall response rate was 88.9 percent (Table 1a).

ENROLLMENT (FALL 2018) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2017 TO JULY 31, 2018)

➢ A total of 223,846 students were enrolled in generic (entry-level) baccalaureate nursing education programs. RN-to-baccalaureate enrollment totaled 139,587 (Table 8).

➢ Enrollment at the master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) levels totaled 142,551; 4,698; and 32,678, respectively (Table 8).

➢ Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates totaled 74,244 and RN-to-baccalaureate totaled 66,530. Master’s, doctoral (research-focused), and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) levels totaled 46,622; 802; and 7,039, respectively (Table 8).

➢ Males accounted for 12.4 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 11.8, 9.1, and 12.9, respectively (Table 9).

➢ 33.6 percent of undergraduate enrollees and 34.7, 33, and 34.6 percent of enrollees in master’s, research-focused doctoral programs, and DNP programs were from racial and ethnic minorities, respectively (Table 10).

Enrollment (Fall 2018) 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>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TWO-YEAR COMPARISONS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS (BASED ON DATA FROM SCHOOLS REPORTING IN BOTH 2017 AND 2018)

Percent Change in Enrollment and Graduations in Schools Reporting in Both 2017 and 2018.

➢ Enrollment of generic (entry-level) baccalaureate students increased by 5.7 percent (12,007 students, Table 12). The increase was 4.7, 7.6, 3.2, and 8.7 percent in the North Atlantic, Midwest, South, and West, respectively (Table 14). Generic (entry-level) baccalaureate graduates increased by 4.6 percent (3,212 graduates, Table 13). Despite this increase, 60,085 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 increased by 0.6 percent (784 students) and graduations increased by 4.6 percent (2,928 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

➢ Master’s-level students increased by 5.4 percent (7,220 students) and graduations increased by 7.2 percent (3,097 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).

➢ Enrollment in doctoral (research-focused) programs increased by 0.7 percent (33 students) and graduations did not change between the two years (Tables 12 and 13).

➢ Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs experienced an enrollment increase of 12.3 percent (3,551 students) and graduations increased by 15.9 percent (966 graduates, Tables 12 and 13).
FIVE-YEAR TRENDS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATIONS (BASED ON DATA FROM SCHOOLS REPORTING EACH YEAR SINCE 2014)

Five-Year Trends in Enrollments and Graduations by Type of Degree (2014–2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEGREE</th>
<th>STUDENTS AVERAGE CHANGE PER YEAR*</th>
<th>STUDENTS SIGNIFICANCE (p value)</th>
<th>GRADUATES AVERAGE CHANGE PER YEAR*</th>
<th>GRADUATES SIGNIFICANCE (p value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generic Bacc.</td>
<td>7,569</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>2,091</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN-to-Bacc.</td>
<td>2,410</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>3,209</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>7,169</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>3,196</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral (Research)</td>
<td>-104</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNP</td>
<td>3,446</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>959</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 16.6 percent in the past five years from 183,108 in 2014 to 213,501 in 2018. There was an overall average increase of 7,569 (p=0.003) students per year (Table 21). Graduates also increased from 2014 to 2018 by 13.5 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 25.7 percent in 2014-2018. Graduations also increased by 38.7 percent in 2014-2018 (Table 23).

➢ At the doctoral (research-focused) level, enrollment decreased by 6.8 percent over the past five years. Graduations increased by 8.3 percent between 2014 and 2018 (Table 24).

➢ The number of DNP enrollees increased by 76 percent in 2014-2018. Graduations also increased by 124.8 percent in 2014-2018 (Table 25).

MASTER’S PROGRAMS

➢ In fall 2018 there were 1,022 institutions with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs in nursing in the United States and its territories. Nationwide, 602 (58.9%) institutions offered master’s programs; of these, 389 (64.6%) offered master’s-level NP programs and 75 (12.5%) offered master’s-level CNS programs. The AACN database contains data on 572 (95%) institutions with master’s programs, 376 (96.7%) schools with master’s-level NP programs, and 74 (98.7%) institutions with CNS programs (Table 1b).

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

➢ NP majors accounted for 60.6 percent (86,328 students) of master’s enrollees, and 56.2 percent of master’s graduates (N=26,207). CNS majors comprised 0.6 (N=891) and 0.7 (N=324) percent of master’s enrollees and graduates, respectively (Table 26).
➢ Administration comprised 14 percent of master’s enrollees, followed by education (12.2%), generalist (3.1%), informatics (2.3%), clinical nurse leader (1.9%), and nurse anesthesia (1.6%) majors. Administration graduates accounted for 16.3 percent of master’s graduates, followed by education (13.1%), generalist (3.7%), clinical nurse leader (2.5%), informatics (2.2%), and nurse anesthesia (2.1%) majors (Table 26).

**MASTER’S-LEVEL CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST ENROLLMENT (FALL 2018) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2017 TO JULY 31, 2018) BY POPULATION FOCUS**

➢ Fall 2018 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s clinical nurse specialist (CNS) programs totaled 953. Graduations/completions from these programs totaled 357 (Tables 28a and 29).

➢ Master’s Adult Gerontology (Wellness through Acute Care) comprised 88.7 percent of CNS enrollees, followed by Pediatric (Wellness through Acute Care (5.2%) and Neonatal (Wellness through Acute Care) (0.9%). The proportions for graduations of these three population foci were 87.7, 7.1, and 1.5 percent, for each (Table 28a).

➢ No national CNS-specific certification examination existed for 5.3 percent of master’s enrollees and 3.7 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 (83.9%) and completions (75.8, Table 29).

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

![Diagram showing enrollment and completions by population focus.](image)

**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 2018) AND GRADUATIONS (AUGUST 1, 2017 TO JULY 31, 2018) BY POPULATION FOCUS

➢ Fall 2018 enrollment in master’s-level and post-master’s nurse practitioner (NP) programs totaled 93,037; and Master’s-level NP enrollees comprised 92.8 percent of all master’s and post-master’s NP enrollees. (Tables 31a and 32).

➢ There were 28,986 master’s and post-master’s NP graduations/completions from August 1, 2017 to July 31, 2018; and master’s-level programs accounted for 90.4 percent of graduates (Tables 31a and 32).

➢ Master’s family (66.8%), psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (9.4%), adult gerontology acute care (8.8%), and adult gerontology primary care (8%) accounted for the largest percentages of the 86,328 master’s NP students (Table 31a).

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

➢ Of the 6,709 post-master’s NP students, 41.2 percent were enrolled in family NP programs, followed by psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (33.2%), adult gerontology acute care NP (11.6%), and adult gerontology primary care (7.7%). The proportions for completions of these four population foci were 45.2, 23.3, 13.1, and 10.7 percent, for each (Table 32).

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

![Bar chart showing enrollment and completions by population focus]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Focus</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Gerontology Primary Care</td>
<td>7,415</td>
<td>3,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Gerontology Acute Care</td>
<td>8,409</td>
<td>2,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric &amp; Mental Health-Across the Lifespan</td>
<td>10,364</td>
<td>1,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>60,415</td>
<td>19,468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 57 students and 27 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 (78.7%, 14,350 students) and graduates (79.2%, 2,497 graduates, Table 37).

➢ For students and graduates entered in DNP programs at the post-master’s level, leadership accounted for 32.5 percent of enrollees, followed by major area not specified (24.7), NP (24.1%), and administration/management DNP (5.2%). The proportions for graduations of these four majors were 28.1, 26.1, 24.7, and 5.1 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 (56.9%), psychiatric & mental health-across the lifespan (11%), adult gerontology acute care (10.3%), and adult gerontology primary care (9.6%) NP population foci accounted for the largest percentages of the 14,353 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 (59.7%, 2,079 students; 74.2%, 712 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
909 Schools

Qualified Applications Turned Away from Entry-Level Baccalaureate Nursing Programs: 2006-2018

Percentage Change in Entry-Level Baccalaureate Nursing Programs: 1997-2018

Enrollments: Fall 2018
Graduations: August 2017-July 2018

Enrollments and Graduations in Nursing Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollments</th>
<th>Graduations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>56,397</td>
<td>57,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>58,114</td>
<td>58,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>58,327</td>
<td>58,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>57,944</td>
<td>57,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>57,944</td>
<td>57,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>58,114</td>
<td>58,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>58,327</td>
<td>58,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>57,944</td>
<td>57,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>57,944</td>
<td>57,944</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<td>58,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>58,327</td>
<td>58,327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education
Percentage of Graduates Who Are Minorities by Types of Nursing Programs, 2009-2018

Growth in Doctoral Nursing Programs: 2009-2018

Number of DNP Programs  Number of Research-Focused Doctoral Programs

Enrollments in Doctoral Programs: 2009-2018

- Research-Focused Doctorate
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)