



ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, AND GRADUATION TRENDS IN PROFESSIONAL NURSING PROGRAMS

This update presents information for the 126 pre-licensure registered nursing (RN) programs in Texas during the 2021 reporting year, including:

- 1 diploma program;
- 66 Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs, including 55 generic ADN programs and 11 licensed vocational nurse (LVN) to ADN stand-alone programs;
- 58 Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs; and
- 1 Master of Science in Nursing Alternate Entry (MSN AE) program.

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) collected data using the 2021 Board of Nursing’s (BON) Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) that was available online as of October 4, 2021. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2020-2021 (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021) unless otherwise noted. TCNWS collaborated with the BON in the design and dissemination of the survey.

Qualified Applications to Professional Nursing Programs

Table 1 presents data on qualified applications and admissions to professional nursing programs from 2011 through 2021. Qualified applications were those that met all criteria for admission.¹

- Seats for new students increased by 5.5% from AY 2019-2020 to AY 2020-2021.²
- The number of qualified applications increased by 3,394 (9.8% increase), between AY 2019-2020 and AY 2020-2021.

Table 1. Qualified Applications, Admissions and Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission (QANA), 2011-2021

	Seats for New Students ²	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission
2011 (n=105)	15,680	26,633	15,700	10,933 (41.1%)
2012 (n=106)	15,937	26,839	15,687	11,152 (41.6%)
2013 (n=113)	16,652	29,265	17,265	12,000 (41.0%)
2014 (n=114)	15,756	25,434	16,031	9,403 (37.0%)
2015 (n=119)	16,253	24,082	16,827	7,255 (30.1%)
2016 (n=116)	16,901	24,497	17,057	7,440 (30.4%)
2017 (n=119)	17,878	28,409	18,056	10,353 (36.4%)
2018 (n=122)	18,426	31,440	18,524	12,916 (41.4%)
2019 (n=124)	18,889	33,489	19,795	13,694 (40.9%)
2020 (n=125)	20,360	34,565	20,758	13,807 (39.9%)
2021 (n=126)	21,479	37,959	22,250	15,709 (41.4%)

Note: n = number of programs

- 22,250 qualified applications were offered admission in AY 2020-2021. This was a 7.2% increase from the previous academic year.

- 40 programs offered admission to all qualified applications. This number has been increasing from 29 in 2018-2019 and 35 in 2020.

The 86 programs that did not accept all qualified applications were asked to rate the importance of reasons why qualified applications were not accepted.

- 67 (78.0%) reported that lack of clinical space was the most or second most important reason why qualified applications were not accepted. Some of the specific problems cited regarding lack of clinical space included increased competition with other programs (36 programs), BSN programs receiving priority for space over ADN programs (14 programs), and facilities limiting the number of clinical groups or students in a cohort (21 programs). 27 programs specifically mentioned the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Other first or second most important reasons why qualified applications were not accepted were a lack of budgeted faculty positions (42 programs

¹ Qualified applications refers to applications submitted, not necessarily individual applicants, since candidates for admission may apply to more than one nursing program.

² Per the survey operational definition, seats for new students refers to the maximum number of seats for new students that a program can enroll in any given admission period. Seats for new students may be limited by Board of Nursing rules or logistical concerns (faculty size, classroom space, etc.).



or 48.8%), limited classroom space (26 programs or 30.2%), and lack of qualified applicants for budgeted faculty positions (23 programs or 26.7%).

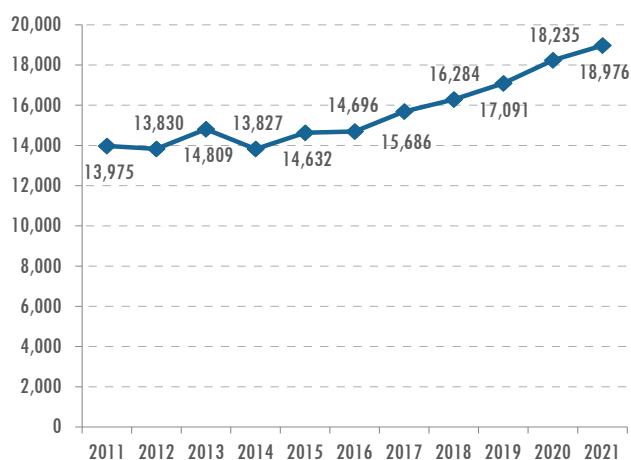
- Specific problems cited related to lack of qualified faculty applicants included non-competitive salary (16 programs) and no applicants for open positions (10 programs).

Newly Enrolled Students in Professional Nursing Programs

Figure 1 illustrates the number of newly enrolled, first year students from 2011 to 2021. Newly enrolled students are those who were offered admission and decided to register and enroll in the program.

- From AY 2019-2020 to AY 2020-2021, the number of newly enrolled students increased by 4.1%.
- The number of newly enrolled students has increased by 35.8% from 2011 to 2021.
- Despite increases in enrollment, 11.7% of seats for new students remained unfilled. 11 programs

Figure 1. Newly Enrolled Students, 2011-2021



had more than 50 unfilled seats: 1 LVN to ADN, 4 ADN, and 6 BSN programs.

Table 2 shows the number of newly enrolled students by program type.

- Newly enrolled students decreased in all program types except BSN and MSN alternate entry.

Table 2. Newly Enrolled Professional Nursing Students by Program Type, AY 2019-2020 and AY 2020-2021

	Newly Enrolled Professional Nursing Students, AY 2019-2020	Newly Enrolled Professional Nursing Students, AY 2020-2021	% Change from AY 2019-2020 to AY 2020-2021
ADN	6,966	6,541	-6.1%
BSN	9,701	10,874	12.1%
Diploma	199	196	-1.5%
LVN to ADN ³	1,315	1,307	-0.6%
MSN AE	54	58	7.4%
Total	18,235	18,976	4.1%

³ LVN to ADN numbers are based on the 11 stand-alone programs designated by the BON as LVN to ADN programs. These are separate from the ADN programs that have LVN to ADN tracks.

Total Enrollment in Professional Nursing Programs

Total enrollment, including both newly enrolled and returning students, in professional nursing program by

program type is shown in Table 3 and Figure 2.

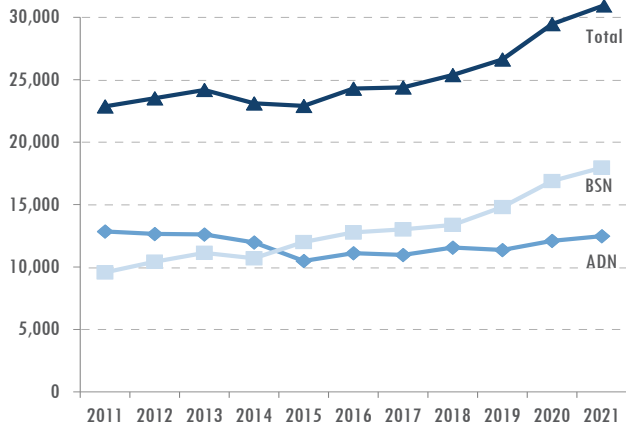
Table 3. Total Enrollment by Program Type, 2011-2021

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Diploma	270	281	281	277	248	256	241	280	281	302	296
ADN + LVN to ADN	12,850	12,651	12,610	11,970	10,488	11,108	10,968	11,558	11,364	12,096	12,471
BSN	9,571	10,422	11,130	10,701	12,001	12,769	13,018	13,370	14,803	16,885	17,958
MSN AE	175	161	157	161	163	158	159	167	176	170	165
Total	22,866	23,515	24,178	23,109	22,900	24,291	24,386	25,375	26,624	29,453	30,890

⁴ ADN and LVN to ADN programs combined.



Figure 2. Total Enrollment by Program Type, 2011-2021⁵



- BSN enrollment increased by 6.4% from 2020 to 2021, and ADN⁴ enrollment increased by 3.1%.
- Enrollment in ADN programs has decreased overall since 2011 but increased by 18.9% since its low in 2015.
- Diploma and MSN AE each represent 1 program and, therefore, made up a small percentage of enrolled students.

On September 30, 2021, as shown in Table 4, there were 30,890 students enrolled in professional nursing programs.

- Since 2011, professional nursing program enrollment has increased by 35.1% overall.
- From 2019 to 2020, total enrollment in professional

nursing programs increased by 4.9%.

- Of the 30,890 professional nursing students enrolled, 401 were transfer students from other professional nursing programs, and 1,055 were re-entry students.

Table 4. Professional Nursing Program Enrollment, 2011-2021

	Enrollment	Annual Enrollment Change	Enrollment Change from 2011
2011	22,866	-	-
2012	23,515	2.8%	2.8%
2013	24,178	2.8%	5.7%
2014	23,109	-4.4%	1.1%
2015	22,900	-0.9%	0.1%
2016	24,291	6.1%	6.2%
2017	24,386	0.4%	6.6%
2018	25,375	4.1%	11.0%
2019	26,624	4.9%	16.4%
2020	29,453	10.6%	28.8%
2021	30,890	4.9%	35.1%

⁵The “total” category in Figure 2 includes the diploma program, the MSN AE program, and all ADN, LVN to ADN, and BSN programs. The ADN enrollment includes LVN to ADN stand-alone program enrollment.

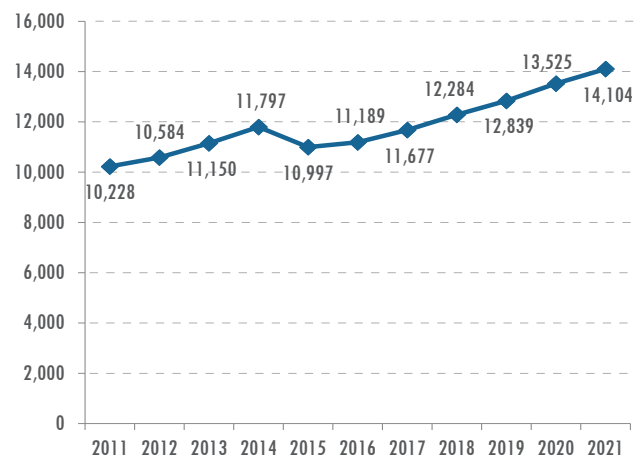
Graduates from Professional Nursing Programs

The number of graduates from professional nursing programs has been increasing steadily since 2011 except for a decrease in 2015, as shown in Figure 3.

A total of 14,104 students graduated from professional nursing programs during the reporting period,⁶ a 4.3% increase since 2020 and a 37.9% increase since 2011. 4 programs (3 new and 1 closing) reported having zero graduates during AY 2020-2021.

- Among the 118 programs that reported graduates on both the 2020 NEPIS and 2021 NEPIS, 67 (56.8%) increased their number of professional nursing graduates during AY 2020-2021.
- Programs that increased their number of graduates included 25 ADN, 6 LVN to ADN programs, and 36 BSN programs.

Figure 3. Professional Nursing Graduates, 2011-2021



⁶The number of graduates reported is for AY 2020-2021 academic year (September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021). Most nursing curricula can be completed in 2 years following pre-requisite liberal arts and science courses; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of the graduates reported for AY 2020-2021 enrolled in the professional nursing programs during AY 2019-2020.



Table 5 displays the number of professional nursing graduates by student type for the past 2 academic years.

- The majority of professional nursing graduates in 2021 were unlicensed students (79.1% of all graduates).
- LVNs who graduated from a professional nursing program made up 17.2% of the professional nursing graduates in 2021.
- The number of allied health professionals who graduated from a professional nursing program decreased by 63.9%, while the number of paramedics/EMTs who graduated from a professional nursing program increased by 91.9% between AY 2019-2020 and AY 2020-2021.

Table 5. Professional Nursing Graduates by Type

	Professional Nursing Graduates, AY 2019-2020	Professional Nursing Graduates, AY 2020-2021	% Change in Graduates
Unlicensed Students	10,628	11,154	4.9%
Paramedics/EMTs	161	309	91.9%
Allied Health	330	119	-63.9%
Military	56	46	-17.9%
LVNs	2,288	2,423	5.9%
MSN AE	62	53	-14.5%

Barriers to Increasing Pre-Licensure RN Graduates

The 122 programs that reported graduates were asked to describe any barriers they faced in increasing pre-licensure RN graduates.

- 55 programs (45.1%) mentioned the COVID-19 pandemic as a barrier to increasing pre-licensure RN graduates.
- Lack of available clinical sites was the number two cited reason programs were unable to increase the number of pre-licensure graduates (33 programs or 27.0%), followed by lack of faculty (21 programs or 17.2%).

Level of Difficulty for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing

All 122 programs also reported the perceived level of difficulty that their pre-licensure RN graduates experienced in finding a job in nursing.

- The majority of programs reported that it was easy (57 programs or 46.7%) or very easy (48 programs or 39.3%) for graduates to find a job in nursing.
- 2 programs reported that it was difficult and 1 program reported that it was very difficult for graduates to find a job in nursing.
- 14 programs (11.5%) reported being neutral about the level of difficulty of their graduates in finding a job in nursing.
- Perceived difficulty finding a job did not vary significantly by program type or geographic location.

