



# NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM INFORMATION SURVEY

TEXAS CENTER FOR NURSING WORKFORCE STUDIES  
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING



2012

## Advanced Practice Nursing Education Program Characteristics

### Introduction & Methodology

An advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) is a registered nurse who has completed graduate-level education that prepared him/her for practice in one of the four recognized advanced practice roles: Nurse Anesthetist, (NA) Nurse-Midwife (NM), Nurse Practitioner (NP), or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). An APRN has been educationally prepared to assume responsibility and accountability for health promotion and/or maintenance as well as the assessment, diagnosis, and management of patient problems, including the use and prescription of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions. The APRN has advanced clinical knowledge and skills that have prepared him/her to provide direct and indirect care to patients with greater role autonomy. An APRN must apply to be licensed by the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) in order to practice in Texas in this expanded role.

The number of APRNs actively practicing in Texas who reported a position type of NA, NM, NP, or CNS in the 2011 BON licensure file was 10,995. APRNs have been gradually expanding their roles and responsibilities. With growing need for APRNs to meet the current and future health care needs of patients, it is important to understand the infrastructure of advanced practice nursing education programs and collect information on supply of APRNs in Texas.

On October 8, 2012, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) to all 23 schools offering advanced practice nursing education programs in Texas to collect data on the supply of APRN students and faculty in Texas. The 23 schools offer Master of Science degree programs, post-master's certificate programs, post-baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and post-baccalaureate Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (DNAP) programs. Post-Master's level DNP and DNAP programs that prepare APRNs for a doctorate degree in nursing practice are NOT included in this report. However, in a separate section of the survey, the schools were asked to report the enrollment, graduation and admission data for all DNP/DNAP programs regardless of point of entry.<sup>1</sup> The TCNWS collaborated with the BON in the design and implementation of the survey. The 48-question survey was online as of October 8, 2012. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2011-2012 (September 1, 2011– August 31, 2012) unless otherwise noted. Only those programs that prepare graduates for licensure and certification in an advanced practice nursing role and population focus area recognized by the Texas BON were included. Following are advanced practice roles recognized in Section 301.152(a) of the *Texas Occupations Code* (Nursing Practice Act) and population focus areas identified by Board of Nursing rules:

<sup>1</sup> To view the DNP/DNAP Admissions, Enrollment, & Graduation spreadsheet, go to the following link: [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/cnws/2012APRNDNP\\_EnrIGradAdm\\_Final.pdf](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/cnws/2012APRNDNP_EnrIGradAdm_Final.pdf)

- **Nurse Anesthetist**
- **Nurse-Midwife**
- **Nurse Practitioner** in one of the following population focus areas:
  - » *Acute Care Adult*
  - » *Acute Care Pediatric*
  - » *Adult*
  - » *Family*
  - » *Gerontological*
  - » *Neonatal*
  - » *Pediatric*
  - » *Psychiatric/Mental Health*
  - » *Women's Health*
- **Clinical Nurse Specialist** in one of the following population focus areas:
  - » *Adult Health/Medical Surgical*
  - » *Critical Care*
  - » *Gerontological*
  - » *Pediatric*

Definitions for the four APRN roles can be found at the Interagency Collaborative on Nursing Statistics' (ICONS) website: <http://www.iconsdata.org/educationrelated.htm>

22 of the 23 schools included in this survey offered a Master of Science degree that prepared graduates to practice in one of the four APRN roles. 20 of the 23 schools offered a post-master's certificate program. 3 of the 23 schools offered a post-baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice/Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) to DNP/DNAP) program.

Note: All data gathered from this survey include master's students as well as post-master's certificate and post-baccalaureate DNP/DNAP students. The data may include nurses that are already authorized to practice as an APRN.

## Geographic Location of Advanced Practice Nursing Programs

The 23 schools offering advanced practice nursing education programs in Texas during the AY 2011-2012 represented the following types of programs:

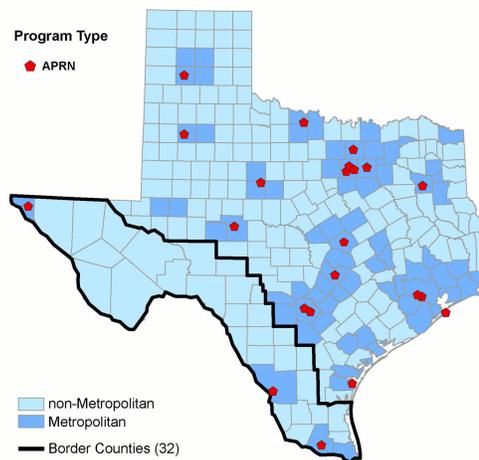
- ♦ 4 Nurse Anesthetist programs,
- ♦ 2 Nurse Midwife programs,
- ♦ 19 Nurse Practitioner programs, and
- ♦ 5 Clinical Nurse Specialist programs.

Note: Seven schools offered more than one type of program.

**Table 1. Geographic Designation of the Main Campuses**

Geographic Designation	# of Schools	Percent
Metropolitan Border	3	13%
Non-Metropolitan Border	0	0%
Metropolitan Non-Border	20	87%
Non-Metropolitan Non-Border	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 1. Geographic Location**



Map source: Texas Center for Health Statistics, GIS 2012

Figure 1 presents the location of schools that offered APRN programs in Texas by the metropolitan and border status of counties in which they were located.

- ♦ The 23 schools were located in 18 counties.
- ♦ There were three schools offering APRN programs in the metropolitan border region.
- ♦ 20 of 23 (87.0%) schools were located in a metropolitan non-border county.

## Program Tracks in Advanced Practice Nursing Programs

- ♦ Tables 2 and 3 list the number of schools that offered Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Nurse Specialist programs, respectively, in each population focus area.
- ♦ 19 of 23 schools offered a Nurse Practitioner program with tracks in nine population focus areas (See Table 2.) 12 programs offered tracks in multiple focus areas.
- ♦ Five of 23 schools offered a Clinical Nurse Specialist program with tracks in 4 population focus areas (See Table 3).
- ♦ 15 schools reported that they also offered tracks that do not lead to authorization for advanced practice in Texas: 10 schools offered a nursing education track, 2 schools offered a nurse/healthcare administration track, and 4 schools offered a clinical nurse leader track.

**Table 3. Clinical Nurse Specialist Population Focus Areas**

Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) (n=5 schools)	
Population Focus Area	Number of Schools
Adult Health/ Medical Surgical	4
Critical Care Nursing	1
Gerontological	1
Pediatric	1

**Table 2. Nurse Practitioner Population Focus Areas**

Nurse Practitioner (NP) (n=19 schools)	
Population Focus Area	Number of Schools
Acute Care Adult	6
Acute Care Pediatric	3
Adult	3
Family	19
Gerontological	3
Neonatal	4
Pediatric	8
Psychiatric / Mental Health	5
Women's Health	2

## Length of Curriculum in Advanced Practice Nursing Education Programs

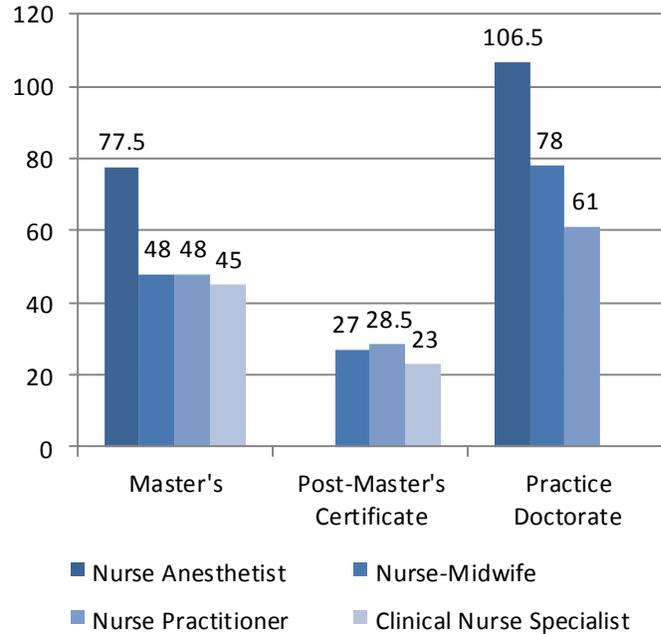
In the 2012 NEPIS, the programs were asked to report the length of their nursing curriculum in credit hours. An average was used when a range was provided. Table 4 below shows the range (minimum and maximum value), median, and mean value of length of curriculum by program type and level of education. Figure 2 below illustrates the variability in the median length of curriculum by program type and level of education.

**Table 4. Length of Curriculum in Credit Hours by Program Type and Level of Education**

Master's					
Program Type	Min	Max	Median	Mean	n
Nurse Anesthetist	60	100	77.5	78.8	4
Nurse-Midwife	48	48	48	48	1
Nurse Practitioner	38	53	48	47.4	19
Clinical Nurse Specialist	40	48	45	44	5
Post-Master's Certificate					
Program Type	Min	Max	Median	Mean	n
Nurse Anesthetist	-	-	-	-	-
Nurse-Midwife	27	27	27	27	1
Nurse Practitioner	14	37	28.5	28.1	17
Clinical Nurse Specialist	18	33	23	24.3	4
Practice Doctorate (Post-Baccalaureate)					
Program Type	Min	Max	Median	Mean	n
Nurse Anesthetist	84	129	106.5	106.5	2
Nurse-Midwife	78	78	78	78	1
Nurse Practitioner	47	75	61	61	2
Clinical Nurse Specialist	-	-	-	-	-

n= Number of schools

**Figure 2. Median Length of Curriculum in Credit Hours by Program Type and Mode of Education**



### Master's (n=22 schools)

22 of 23 schools offered a master's degree program, the entry-level degree required to become an APRN.

- ◆ Nurse Anesthetist programs ranged from 60 to 100 credit hours in length. Nurse Anesthetist programs required an average of about 30 more hours than Nurse-Midwife, Nurse Practitioner, or Clinical Nurse Specialist programs.
- ◆ The one Nurse-Midwife program was 48 credit hours in length.
- ◆ The length of Nurse Practitioner tracks ranged from 38 to 53 credit hours. The mean and median lengths for Nurse Practitioner tracks were 47.4 and 48 hours, respectively.
- ◆ Clinical Nurse Specialist tracks ranged from 40 to 48 credit hours in length. The mean and median lengths for Clinical Nurse Specialist tracks were 44 and 45, respectively.

### Post-Master's Certificate (n=19 schools)

19 of 23 schools offered a post-master's certificate program. Post-master's certificate programs prepared registered nurses with master's degrees for clinical practice in a specialty area. Graduates of this program are not awarded another master's degree.

- ◆ Post-Master's certificate programs ranged from 14 to 37 credit hours.
- ◆ No Nurse Anesthetist programs offered a post-master's certificate program.

### Practice Doctorate (Post-Baccalaureate) (n=4 schools)

Four of 23 schools offered a post-baccalaureate DNP/DNAP program (BSN to DNP/DNAP). Graduates of this program are awarded a DNP/DNAP degree and are eligible to take the APRN certification exam in a specialty area.

- ◆ The two Nurse Anesthetist practice doctorate programs were 84 and 129 credit hours in length.
- ◆ The one Nurse-Midwife practice doctorate program was 78 credit hours in length.
- ◆ The two Nurse Practitioner practice doctorate programs were 47 and 75 credit hours in length.

### Program of Study: Diagnosis and Management

In the 2012 NEPIS, Clinical Nurse Specialist programs were asked to report whether they offer a course on diagnosis and management. The course prepares the Clinical Nurse Specialist to make medical diagnoses and medically manage individuals within the specialty area. This is also one of the courses that APRNs are required to take in order to be approved for prescriptive authority by the Board of Nursing.

- ♦ All five Clinical Nurse Specialist programs offered a course on diagnosis and management.
- ♦ Three programs reported that a course on diagnosis and management was required and 2 schools indicated that the course on diagnosis and management was optional.

### Program of Study: Online Availability

Of the 23 schools that offered advanced practice nursing education programs,

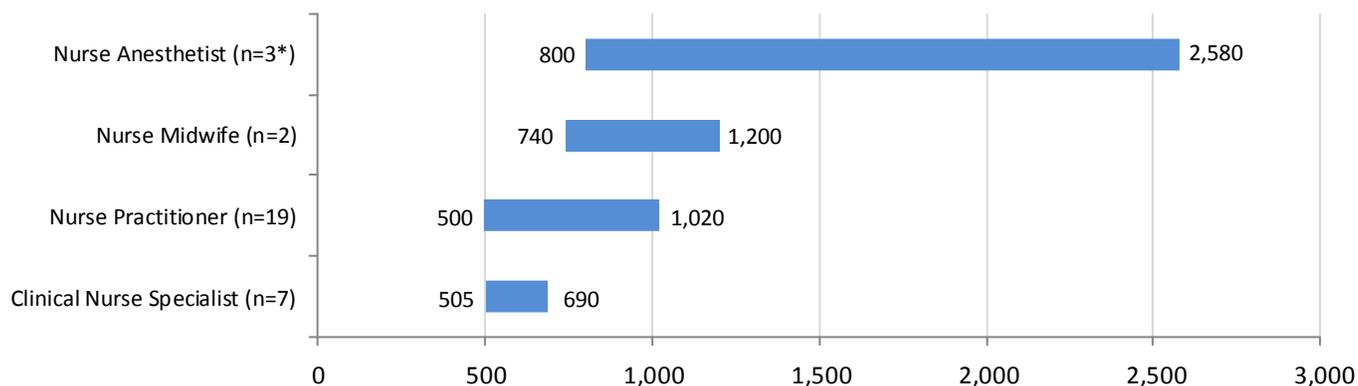
- ♦ Four schools (17.4%) offered the entire didactic curriculum online.
- ♦ Eleven schools (47.8%) offered select courses entirely online.
- ♦ Thirteen schools (56.7%) offered web-enhanced sections of courses online (blended/hybrid courses).
- ♦ Two schools (8.7%) had no online course availability.

*Please note that programs may offer select courses entirely online and select courses as hybrids. Also note that all programs, whether or not they offer any portion of their program online, offer clinical experiences.*

### Precepted Practice Hours in Advanced Practice Nursing Programs

In the 2012 NEPIS, schools were asked to report the total number of precepted practice hours required (including assessment labs, simulation, and clinical practice) for their APRN programs of study. In this report, precepted practice hours were defined as the designated portion of a formal APRN education program that was offered in a health care setting and that afforded students the opportunity to integrate theory and role preparation in both the population focus area and advanced nursing practice through direct patient care/client management. Precepted practice hours were planned and monitored by either a designated faculty member or qualified preceptor.

**Figure 3. Range of Precepted Practice Hours**



n= Number of schools

\* One Nurse Anesthetist program was excluded—this program does not require a set number of precepted practice hours, instead requires number of cases to be completed.

Figure 3 above represents the range of total number of precepted practice hours required. The minimum and maximum values of precepted practice hours are shown.

- ♦ The total precepted practice hours reported by advanced practice nursing programs ranged from 500 hours in the Nurse Practitioner programs to 2,580 hours for the Nurse Anesthetist programs.
- ♦ The two Nurse-Midwife programs reported 740 and 1,200 hours of total precepted practice hours.
- ♦ Total precepted practice hours required by Nurse Practitioner programs ranged from 500 to 1,020 hours.
- ♦ Total precepted practice hours required among Clinical Nurse Specialist programs ranged from 505 to 690 hours.