



## Admission, Enrollment, and Graduation Trends in Professional Nursing Programs

# 2016

This update presents information for the 116 pre-licensure registered nursing (RN) programs that reported data for the 2016 reporting year, including:

- 1 Diploma program,
- 67 Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs, including 59 generic ADN programs and 8 Licensed Vocational Nurse to Associate Degree in Nursing (LVN to ADN) stand-alone programs,
- 47 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 2016 Board of Nursing’s (BON) Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) that was available online as of October 3, 2016. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2015-2016 (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016) 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 2006 through 2016. Qualified applications were those that met all criteria for admission.<sup>1</sup>

- 2 programs were new and did not admit new pre-licensure applicants in AY 2015-2016.
- The enrollment capacity increased by 4.0% from AY 2014-2015 to AY 2015-2016.<sup>2</sup>
- The number of qualified applications increased by 415 (1.7% increase), between AY 2014-2015 and

AY 2015-2016.

- 17,057 qualified applications were accepted in AY 2015-2016. This was a 1.4% increase from the previous academic year.
- 34 programs offered admission to all qualified applications, down from 39 programs in 2015.

The 80 programs that did not accept all qualified applications were asked to rate the importance of reasons why qualified applications were not accepted.

- Of the 74 responding programs, 50 (67.6%) 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 (28 programs) and BSN programs receiving priority for space over ADN programs (10 programs).

**Table 1. Qualified Applications, Admissions and Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission, 2006-2016**

	Enrollment Capacity <sup>2</sup>	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission
2006	-	22,885	10,766	12,119 (53.0%)
2007	-	19,035	11,270	7,765 (40.8%)
2008	11,468	21,383	12,338	9,045 (42.3%)
2009	12,391	21,137	12,403	8,734 (41.3%)
2010	14,048	26,053	14,836	11,217 (43.1%)
2011	15,680	26,633	15,700	10,933 (41.1%)
2012	15,937	26,839	15,687	11,152 (41.6%)
2013	16,652	29,265	17,265	12,000 (41.0%)
2014	15,756	25,434	16,031	9,403 (37.0%)
2015	16,253	24,082	16,827	7,255 (30.1%)
2016	16,901	24,497	17,057	7,440 (30.4%)

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

<sup>2</sup>Per the survey operational definition, enrollment capacity refers to the maximum number of students that a program can enroll in any given admission period. Enrollment capacity may be limited by Board of Nursing rules or logistical concerns (faculty size, classroom space, etc.).

<sup>3</sup>The number of students offered admission may exceed enrollment capacity in order to account for students who apply to multiple programs. Data were not available for cells with dashes (-).



- Other first or second most important reasons why qualified applications were not accepted were a lack of qualified applicants for budgeted faculty

positions (35 programs or 47.3%), lack of budgeted faculty positions (32 programs or 43.2%), and limited classroom space (18 programs or 24.3%).

## Newly Enrolled Students in Professional Nursing Programs

Figure 1 illustrates the number of newly enrolled, first year students from 2006 to 2016. Newly enrolled students are those who were offered admission and decided to register and enroll in the program.

- From AY 2014-2015 to AY 2015-2016, the number of newly enrolled students increased by 0.4%.
- The number of newly enrolled students has increased by 53.6% from 2006 to 2016.
- However, the number of newly enrolled students was lower (by 2,205 enrollment spaces or 13.0% of enrollment capacity) than the total enrollment capacity of professional nursing programs.

Figure 1. Newly Enrolled Students, 2006-2016



<sup>4</sup>LVN to ADN numbers are based on the 8 stand-alone programs designated by the BON as LVN to ADN programs. These are separate from the 59 ADN programs that have LVN to ADN tracks.

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

- Newly enrolled students decreased or stayed the same in all program types except BSN, which increased by 527 students (7.8%).
- The Diploma program experienced the greatest percentage decrease in newly enrolled students from AY 2014-2015 to AY 2015-2016 (23.2%).
- There was also a considerable decrease (15.7%) in newly enrolled students in LVN to ADN programs from AY 2014-2015 to AY 2015-2016.

Table 2. Newly Enrolled Professional Nursing Students by Program Type, AY 2014-2015 and AY 2015-2016

	Newly Enrolled Professional Nursing Students, AY 2014-2015	Newly Enrolled Professional Nursing Students, AY 2015-2016	% Change from AY 2014-2015 to AY 2015-2016
ADN	6,654	6,380	-4.1%
BSN	6,737	7,264	7.8%
Diploma	151	116	-23.2%
LVN to ADN <sup>4</sup>	1,045	881	-15.7%
MSN Alt. Entry	55	55	0%

## Total Enrollment in Professional Nursing Programs

Enrollment in professional nursing programs by program type is shown in Table 3 and Figure 2.

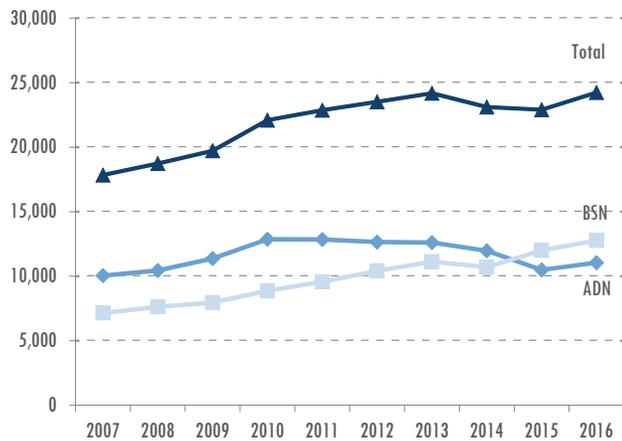
- BSN enrollment increased by 6.4% from 2015 to 2016, while ADN enrollment increased by 5.9%.

Table 3. Total Enrollment by Program Type, 2004-2016

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Diploma	396	354	407	505	536	261	280	270	281	281	277	248	256
ADN	8,534	8,934	9,387	10,043	10,449	11,371	12,867	12,850	12,651	12,610	11,970	10,488	11,108
BSN	6,268	6,930	6,773	7,148	7,626	7,957	8,874	9,571	10,422	11,130	10,701	12,001	12,769
MSN Alt. Entry	120	132	144	145	121	132	160	175	161	157	161	163	158
Total	15,318	16,350	16,711	17,841	18,732	19,721	22,095	22,866	23,515	24,178	23,109	22,900	24,291



**Figure 2. Total Enrollment by Program Type, 2007-2016<sup>5</sup>**



- Enrollment in ADN programs had been decreasing since 2010 but increased by 5.9% from 2015 to 2016.
- Diploma and MSN Alternate Entry each represent 1 program and therefore made up a small percentage of enrolled students.

On September 30, 2016, as shown in Table 4, there were 24,291 students enrolled in professional nursing programs.

- Since 2005, professional nursing program enrollment has increased by 48.6% overall.
- From 2015 to 2016, total enrollment in professional nursing programs increased by 6.1%.

- Of the 24,291 professional nursing students enrolled, 914 were transfer students from other professional nursing programs, and 1,256 were re-entry students.

**Table 4. Professional Nursing Program Enrollment, 2005-2016**

Year	Enrollment	Annual Enrollment Change	Enrollment Change from 2005
2005	16,350	-	-
2006	16,711	2.2%	2.2%
2007	17,841	6.8%	9.1%
2008	18,732	5.0%	14.6%
2009	19,721	5.3%	20.6%
2010	22,181	12.5%	35.7%
2011	22,866	3.1%	39.9%
2012	23,515	2.8%	43.8%
2013	24,178	2.8%	47.9%
2014	23,109	-4.4%	41.3%
2015	22,900	-0.9%	40.1%
2016	24,291	6.1%	48.6%

<sup>5</sup>The total enrollment in Figure 2 includes the Diploma program, the MSN Alternate Entry program, and all ADN, LVN to ADN, and BSN programs. The ADN enrollment includes LVN to ADN stand-alone program enrollment.

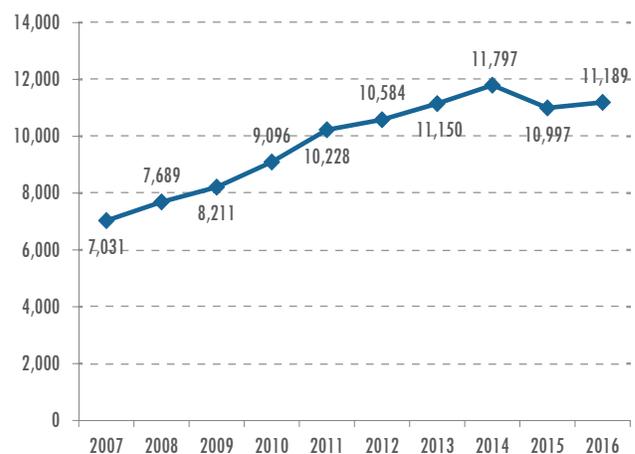
## Graduates from Professional Nursing Programs

The number of graduates from professional nursing programs had been increasing steadily for 11 years before it decreased slightly in 2015, as shown in Figure 3.

A total of 11,189 students graduated from professional nursing programs during the reporting period,<sup>6</sup> a 1.7% increase since 2015 and a 97.1% increase since 2004. 8 recently opened programs reported having zero graduates.

- 64 of the 113 programs that reported graduates on both the 2015 NEPIS and 2016 NEPIS (56.6%) increased their number of professional nursing graduates during academic year 2015-2016.
- Programs that increased their number of graduates included 30 ADN programs, 5 LVN to ADN programs, 28 BSN programs, and 1 MSN Alternate Entry program.

**Figure 3. Professional Nursing Graduates, 2007-2016**



<sup>6</sup>The number of graduates reported is for the 2015-2016 academic year (September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016). 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 the 2015-2016 academic year enrolled in the professional nursing programs during the 2014-2015 academic year.



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 2016 were unlicensed students (80.6% of all graduates).
- Vocational nurses who graduated from a professional nursing program made up 15.3% of the professional nursing graduates in 2016.
- The number of paramedics/EMTs who graduated from a professional nursing program decreased by 6 students, while the number of allied health professionals who graduated from a professional nursing program increased by 225.5% between AY 2014-2015 and AY 2015-2016.

**Table 5. Professional Nursing Graduates by Type**

	Professional Nursing Graduates, AY 2014-2015	Professional Nursing Graduates, AY 2015-2016	% Change in Graduates
Unlicensed Students	8,955	9,017	0.7%
Paramedics/EMTs	111	105	-5.4%
Allied Health	94	306	225.5%
LVNs	1,793	1,711	-4.6%
MSN Alt. Entry	46	50	8.7%

## Barriers to Increasing Pre-Licensure RN Graduates

The 108 programs that reported graduates were asked to describe any barriers they faced in increasing pre-licensure RN graduates.

- Lack of qualified faculty was the number one cited reason programs were unable to increase the number of pre-licensure graduates (33 programs or 30.6%).
- Lack of available clinical sites was the second most often cited reason (29 programs or 26.9%). Lack of clinical sites was the number one cited reason from 2011 to 2014.
- 10 programs (9.3%) reported a lack of classroom or lab space as a barrier to increasing pre-licensure RN graduates.

## Level of Difficulty for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing

These 108 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 (50 programs or 46.3%) or very easy (33 programs or 30.6%) for graduates to find a job in nursing.
- 7 programs reported that it was difficult (5 programs or 4.6%) or very difficult (2 programs or 1.9%) for graduates to find a job in nursing.
- 18 programs (16.7%) reported being neutral about the level of difficulty of their graduates in finding a job in nursing.

