

Characteristics in Graduate Nursing Education Programs

2019

This update presents data for 32 of the 33 universities/colleges that offer one or more graduate nursing education programs.¹ There were 35 programs that prepared graduates for licensure as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and 75 other programs. Table 1 breaks down these programs by education model:

Table 1. Program Type by Education Model, 2019

Program Type	Master's Degree	Post-Master's Certificate	Post-Baccalaureate DNP	Post-Master's DNP	PhD in Nursing
Nurse Practitioner (n=26)	23	19	5	5	0
Clinical Nurse Specialist (n=3)	3	3	1	0	0
Nurse Anesthetist (n=4)	0	0	4	2	0
Nurse-Midwife (n=2)	1	1	1	1	0
Nursing Leader/Admin (n=22)	20	7	1	9	0
Nursing Education (n=21)	21	11	0	0	0
Nursing Informatics (n=2)	1	1	0	1	0
Clinical Nurse Leader (n=6)	5	2	0	1	0
Nursing Research (n=7)	0	0	0	0	7
Public Health (n=1)	0	0	0	1	0
DNP-No Specialty/Generic (n=9)	0	0	0	9	0
Other (n=7)	6	1	0	0	0

Note: n=number of programs

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) collected data in the 2019 Board of Nursing's (BON) Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) that was available online as of October 1, 2019. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2019 (September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019) unless otherwise noted. TCNWS collaborated with the BON in the design and dissemination of the survey.

¹One university with nurse anesthetist programs did not respond to the 2019 Graduate NEPIS; decreases in nurse anesthetist program counts likely reflect the absence of this program's data.

Graduate Program Characteristics

Geographic Location of Main Campuses

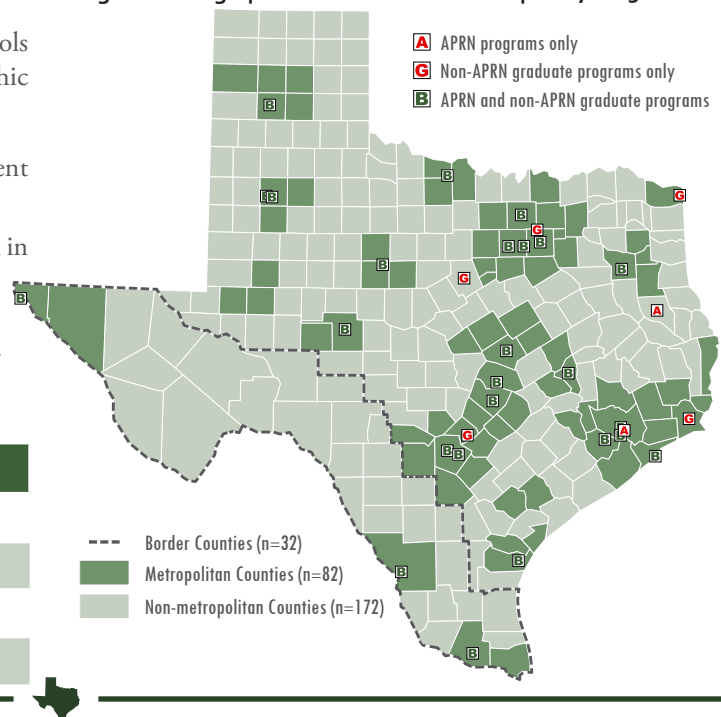
Table 2 and Figure 1 present the location of schools that offered graduate programs in Texas by geographic designation.

- The 32 responding schools were located in 26 different counties in Texas.
- The majority of schools (27 or 84.4%) were located in a metropolitan non-border county, 3 were located in a metropolitan border county, and 2 were located in a non-metropolitan, non-border county.

Table 2. Geographic Designation of Main Campuses, 2019

Geographic Designation	# of Schools	% of Schools
Metropolitan Border	3	9.4%
Non-Metropolitan Border	0	0%
Metropolitan Non-Border	27	84.4%
Non-Metropolitan Non-Border	2	6.3%

Figure 1. Geographic Location of Main Campuses, 2019



Graduate Program Types Over Time

Table 3 displays the changes over time in the number of graduate nursing programs.

- Since 2014, the number of nursing administration/leadership programs have more than doubled from 10 programs to 22 programs.
- The number of nursing education programs have increased by 6 since 2014.
- The number of nurse-midwife (NM) programs has remained unchanged for the past 6 years.
- In 2019, other programs included comprehensive, forensic nursing science, leadership in diverse settings, advanced pain management, RN post-baccalaureate master's, and a combined leadership and education program.

Table 3. Number of Graduate Nursing Programs by Program Type, 2014-2019

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Nurse Practitioner	21	23	26	26	27	26
Nurse Anesthetist	4	4	4	4	5	3
Clinical Nurse Specialist	4	3	3	3	3	4
Nurse-Midwife	2	2	2	2	2	2
Nursing Admin/Leader	10	13	19	19	23*	22
Nursing Education	15	17	22	20	22	21
Nursing Informatics	1	2	4	3	2	2
Clinical Nurse Leader	5	5	5	5	5	6
Nursing Research	5	5	7	7	7	7
Public Health	-	-	1	1	0	1
DNP-No Specialty	-	-	6	8	6	9
Other	3	4	7	7	6	7

Note: "-" indicates these data were not available

*Nursing leadership and nursing administration were combined into nursing leadership/administration for 2018.

**DNP-no specialty refers to DNP programs that don't identify any of the other categories as the focus of their program.

Models of Education

Programs were also asked to select the models of education they provided for their graduate tracks (Table 1, Page 1).

- Nurse practitioner (NP) programs were most frequently offered as master's degrees or post-master's certificates.
- Post-baccalaureate DNPs were mainly offered for APRN tracks, with the exception of 1 nursing leadership/administration program offering a post-baccalaureate DNP.
- All 7 nursing research programs offered a PhD in nursing.

Length of Curriculum for Non-APRN programs

In the 2019 NEPIS, the responding graduate schools were asked to report the length of their nursing curriculum in credit hours. An average was used when a range was provided. Table 4 shows the median length of curriculum by program type and model of education for non-APRN programs.

- PhD programs required the most hours overall with a median of 63 credit hours.
- Among master's degrees and post-master's certificates, clinical nurse leader programs required the most hours with a median of 40 credit hours.
- Among DNP models of education, nursing informatics required the most credit hours with a median of 50.
- DNP education models required more credit hours than master's degrees and post-master's certificates overall.

Table 4. Median Length of Non-APRN Curriculum in Credit Hours, 2019

Program Type	Master's Degree and Post-Master's Certificate	Post-Baccalaureate and Post-Master's DNP	PhD in Nursing
Nursing Admin/Leader	36	40.5	-
Nursing Education	37	-	-
Nursing Informatics	39	50	-
Clinical Nurse Leader	40	-	-
Nursing Research	-	-	63
Public Health	-	48	-
DNP - No Specialty	-	42	-
Other	36	-	-

Note: "-" indicates these data were not available



Online Availability

Programs were asked whether they offered nursing courses via online technology.² Of the 32 schools that offered graduate nursing education programs:

- Just one program (a DNP program) did not offer nursing courses via online technology.
- 66.7% of master's/post-master's certificate programs offered the didactic content of all nursing courses entirely online, compared to 35.3% of DNP programs and 42.9% of PhD programs.

- 64.7% of DNP programs offered select nursing courses as blended/hybrid courses, compared to 57.1% of PhD programs and 43.3% of master's/post-master's certificate programs.
- Just 14.3% of PhD programs offered select nursing courses entirely online compared to 41.2% of DNP and 30.0% of master's/post-master's certificate programs.

²Please 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, require hands-on, face-to-face clinical experiences.

APRN Program Characteristics

Interprofessional Collaboration

The 2019 NEPIS again included a question on interprofessional collaboration, based on a recommendation from the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing report. APRN programs were asked to indicate the number of required nursing courses that offer clinical or simulation experiences for both APRN students and one or more types of other graduate level health professional students (Table 5). Other graduate level health professional students may include physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, and others.

- Of the 26 NP programs, 16 (61.5%) had at least one required interprofessional collaboration course.
- Half of nurse anesthetist (NA) and NM programs required at least one interprofessional collaboration course, compared to two thirds of clinical nurse specialist (CNS) programs.
- The number of courses involving interprofessional collaboration ranged from 1 course to 20 courses.

Table 5. APRN Programs With Required Interprofessional Collaboration Courses, 2019

Program Type	Programs Participating	Range of required classes
Nurse Practitioner (n=26)	16	1-20
Nurse Anesthetist (n=4)	2	5-18
Clinical Nurse Specialist (n=3)	2	3-4
Nurse-Midwife (n=2)	1	1

Note: n=the number of programs

Diagnosis and Management Course

CNS programs were asked to report whether they offer a course on diagnosis and management, preparing the CNS to make medical diagnoses and medically manage individuals within the specialty area. This is one of the courses that APRNs are required to take to be approved for prescriptive authority by the Board of Nursing.

- All 3 of the CNS programs offered a course on diagnosis and management and reported that the course was required.



Population Focus Areas

A population focus area is the section of the population for which the student has been prepared to apply for APRN licensure to practice by the Texas Board of Nursing. Tables 6 and 7 list the number of schools that offered NP and CNS programs, respectively, in each population focus area.

- All 3 CNS programs offered the adult/gerontology focus area, and 1 offered the pediatric focus area.
- Family was the most commonly offered population focus area in NP programs, offered by all 26 NP programs.
- The second most common NP focus areas were acute care adult/gerontology and psychiatric/mental health, each offered by 9 NP programs

Schools were also asked if they offered any dual-track APRN programs.

- One school reported offering dual-track programs in “adult gerontology acute and primary care” and “pediatric acute and primary care.”

Curriculum Length

Table 8 shows the median APRN curriculum length in credit hours by program type, education model, and where applicable, population focus area.

- Post-baccalaureate DNP models had the longest curriculum overall, with median credit hours ranging from 65 to 117 hours.

Table 6. Nurse Practitioner Population Focus Areas, 2019

Nurse Practitioner (n= 26 programs)	
Population Focus Area	Number of Programs
Acute Care Adult/Gerontology	9
Acute Care Pediatric	3
Family	26
Neonatal	3
Pediatric	6
Primary Care Adult/Gerontology	4
Psychiatric/Mental Health	9
Women's Health	1

Table 7. Clinical Nurse Specialist Population Focus Areas, 2019

Clinical Nurse Specialist (n= 3 programs)	
Population Focus Area	Number of Programs
Adult / Gerontology (Primary care)	3
Pediatric	1

- NM programs had the longest median curriculum among master's degree models (51 credit hours), while NP programs focusing on women's health had the longest median curriculum for post-master's certificate models (34 credit hours).

Table 8. Median APRN Curriculum Length in Credit Hours by Education Model, Program Type, and Population Focus Area, 2019

Program Type	Master's Degree	Post-Master's Certificate	Post-Baccalaureate DNP	Post-Master's DNP
NP-Acute Care Adult/Gerontology	48	30	66	-
NP-Acute Care Pediatric	49	30	-	-
NP-Family	48	29.5	74.5	39
NP-Neonatal	44	27	75	33
NP-Pediatric	47	27.5	-	-
NP-Primary Care Adult/Gerontology	43.5	33	-	-
NP-Psychiatric/Mental Health	48	28	75	-
NP-Women's Health	46	34	-	-
CNS-Adult/Gerontology	42	24	65	-
CNS-Pediatric	38	20	65	-
Certified Nurse-Midwife	51	33	75	33
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist	-	-	117	34

Note: “-” indicates these data were not available

Precepted Practice Hours

In the 2019 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. Precepted practice hours were defined as the designated portion of a formal APRN education program that is offered in a health care setting and affords 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 are planned and monitored by either a designated faculty member or qualified preceptor.

Table 9 shows the median number of precepted practice hours by program type, education model, and where applicable, population focus area.

- NA post-baccalaureate DNP programs required the most hours overall—2,000 hours.
- Master’s degree programs required a range of median hours from 525 in NM programs to 690 in neonatal and primary care adult/gerontology NP programs.
- Neonatal NP and NM programs in the post-master’s DNP model required the fewest median hours overall—500 hours.

Table 9. Median Precepted Practice Hours by Education Model, Program Type, and Population Focus Area, 2019

Program Type	Master's Degree	Post-Master's Certificate	Post-Baccalaureate DNP	Post-Master's DNP
NP-Acute Care Adult/Gerontology	660	630	1,000	-
NP-Acute Care Pediatric	675	630	-	-
NP-Family	660	630	925	1,000
NP-Neonatal	690	600	1,125	500
NP-Pediatric	660	630	-	-
NP-Primary Care Adult/Gerontology	690	630	-	-
NP-Psychiatric/Mental Health	640	550.5	909	-
NP-Women's Health	630	630	-	-
CNS-Adult/Gerontology	540	577.5	540	-
CNS-Pediatric	540	540	540	-
Certified Nurse-Midwife	525	525	1,125	500
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist	-	-	2,000	-

Note: “-” indicates these data were not available

