



U.S. Nursing Education, 2015

Education is not a static process. It evolves with newly discovered best-practices, technology, and innovation in the classroom. As our nation’s healthcare system transforms and more services are provided outside the hospital walls, nurses must be educated for these opportunities and challenges. A life-long learning approach is required for nurses to stay current, which includes higher levels of education and continual learning beyond the academic setting. Given the great need for registered nurses (RNs), including Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), and nurse faculty in a newly reformed healthcare system, it is crucial to maximize funding for professional nursing education and research.

In 2015, nursing schools in the United States enrolled **477,758 students** in baccalaureate and graduate programs in nursing and produced **163,408 graduates** across program levels (122,017 baccalaureate and 41,391 graduate).

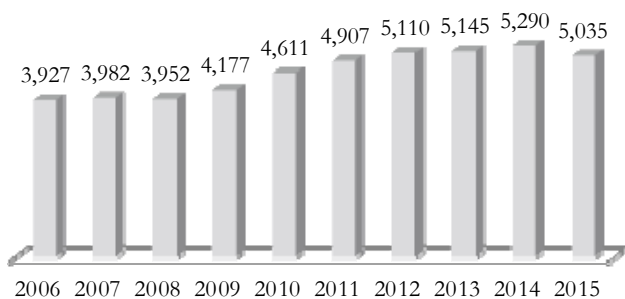
Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Student Diversity by Program Level¹

	Baccalaureate	Master's	PhD	DNP	All Programs
Minority*	31%	32%	31%	29%	31%
Men	13%	11%	10%	12%	12%
Total	331,703	119,025	5,035	21,995	477,758

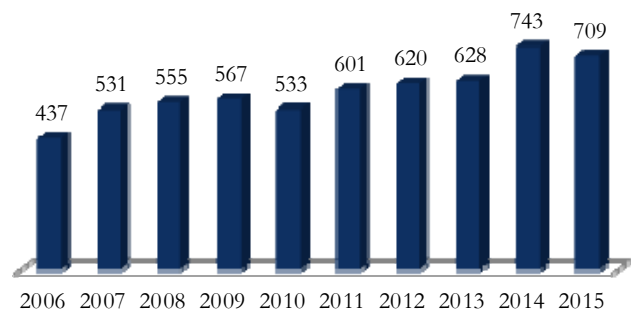
Additionally, there were **88,219** nursing students studying to become APRNs, including **80,613** Nurse Practitioners, **4,391** Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, **1,518** Clinical Nurse Specialists, and **1,697** Certified Nurse-Midwives.¹

Elevating the role of nursing science for healthcare advances is more critical than ever. As the nation works to ensure adequate nursing capacity in high need areas, nurses with research-focused doctorates (PhD) will be essential to creating the evidence that will inform and support contemporary nursing practice, improvements in patient care, and reductions in health disparities.

10 Years of PhD Enrollments
United States



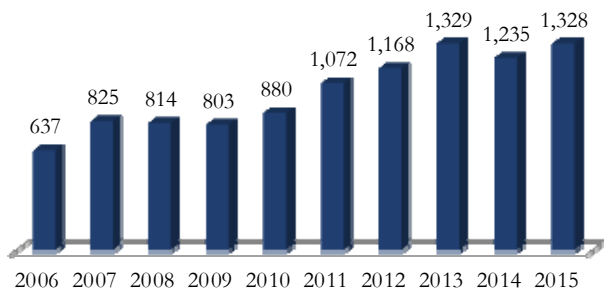
10 Years of PhD Graduates
United States



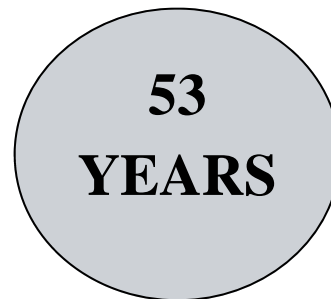
Understanding the Faculty Shortage

A shortage of faculty is a primary obstacle to expanding the nation’s nursing workforce and meeting care demand. In 2015, AACN reported that nearly two-thousand qualified applicants were not offered admission to doctoral (1,941) programs due to a faculty shortage as well as other resource constraints. According to AACN’s Survey on *Vacant Faculty Positions for Academic Year 2015-2016*, most of the over 1,300 vacant faculty positions either require (58.9%) or prefer (31.8%) doctorally-prepared faculty members. ***Of the schools surveyed, approximately two-thirds report insufficient funding as one of the biggest obstacles to hiring additional faculty.*** The problem will exacerbate as many faculty reach retirement age in the next decade. According to AACN’s report on *2015-2016 Salaries of Instructional and Administrative Nursing Faculty in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing*, the average ages of doctorally-prepared nurse faculty holding the ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor were 62, 57, and 51 years, respectively. An increased focus and investment must be placed on educating more doctorally-prepared nurses for faculty positions.

10 Years of Faculty Vacancies
United States



Average Age of U.S Nurse Faculty



Employment Commitment of Doctoral (Research-Focused) and Doctor of Nursing Practice Graduates¹

PhD	Employment Commitment	DNP
49%	Faculty	12%
9%	Hospital/Ambulatory Research and/or Clinical	—
—	Hospital/Ambulatory Clinical	31%
7%	Hospital/Ambulatory Administrative/Executive	8%
1%	Government	2%
1%	Military	2%
1%	Consulting/Business	1%
25%	Unsure	37%

March 2016

¹ American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2016). *2015-2016 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing*. Washington, DC.

* Minority Enrollment includes African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.