



ADMISSIONS, ENROLLMENT, AND GRADUATION TRENDS IN VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAMS

This update presents data for the 86¹ vocational nursing (VN) programs and the military-based VN program¹ in Texas during the 2020 reporting year, including:

- 81 generic programs
- 5 Multiple Entry/Exit Programs (MEEPs)

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) collected data using the 2020 Board of Nursing’s (BON) Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) that was available online as of October 5, 2020. The reporting period was academic year (AY) 2019-2020 (September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2020) unless otherwise noted. TCNWS collaborated with the BON in the design and dissemination of the survey.

¹Data collected from the military-based VN program were analyzed separately and can be found on page 5.

Qualified Applications to Vocational Nursing Programs

Table 1 lists data on qualified applications² and admissions to VN programs from 2010 through 2020.

- Seats for new students^{3,4} increased by 3.8% between 2019 and 2020.
- Qualified applications were those that met all criteria for admission based on the standards set by individual programs.
 - There were 8,098 qualified applications in 2020, a decrease of 1.7% from 2019.⁵
 - Of the qualified applications, admission was offered to 6,881, or 85.0%.
- While the number of qualified applications not offered admission (QANA) decreased by 14.4% from 2019 to 2020, the proportion of QANA (15.0%) was the highest its been since 2015.
- 39 programs accepted all qualified applications, 5 fewer than in 2019.

The 47 programs that did not accept all qualified applications were asked to rank the reasons why qualified applications were not offered admission in order of importance.

- Lack of clinical space was ranked as the first or second most important reason for not offering admission to all qualified applications by 30 programs (63.8% of 47 responding programs).
 - Programs that ranked lack of clinical space first or second cited reasons such as preference given to professional nursing students (14 programs) and lack of clinical availability in certain

Table 1. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and Qualified Applications Not Offered Admission (QANA), 2010-2020

Year	Seats for New Students ^{3,4,6}	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2010	8,685	13,681	8,654	5,027 (36.7%)
2011	9,776	15,648	9,480	6,168 (39.4%)
2012	8,989	13,839	8,929	4,910 (35.5%)
2013	8,947	11,061	8,114	2,947 (26.6%)
2014	8,743	10,529	8,238	2,291 (21.8%)
2015	8,719	9,305	7,698	1,607 (17.3%)
2016	7,770	7,964	6,956	1,008 (12.7%)
2017	8,220	8,843	7,693	1,150 (13.0%)
2018	7,483	8,433	7,174	1,259 (14.9%)
2019	7,165	8,240	6,819	1,421 (11.4%)
2020	7,438	8,098	6,881	1,217 (15.0%)

- locations or settings (19 programs).
- Limited classroom space was ranked first or second in importance for not offering admission to all qualified applications by 19 programs (40.4%).
- Lack of qualified faculty applicants was ranked first or second by 10 programs (21.3%) and lack of budgeted faculty positions was ranked first or second by 21 programs (44.7%).
- Other reasons programs cited for not offering qualified applications admission included students failing to meet requirements to enroll (2 programs).



²Qualified applications refer to applications submitted, not individual applicants, since candidates for admission may apply to more than one nursing program.

³In previous reports seats for new students was reported as enrollment capacity.

⁴Per 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.).

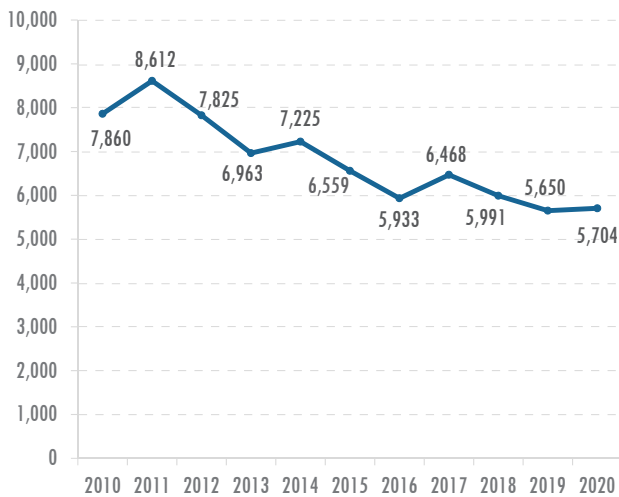
⁵Candidates for admission may apply and be accepted by more than one nursing program; therefore, these data may represent some duplicated counts of individuals.

Newly Enrolled Students in Vocational Nursing Programs

Figure 1 and Table 2 show the yearly change in the number of newly enrolled students from 2010 to 2020. Newly enrolled students are those who were offered admission and decided to register and enroll in the program.

- From 2019 to 2020, the number of newly enrolled students increased by 1.0%, from 5,650 to 5,704.
- VN enrollment has decreased each year since 2011

Figure 1. Newly Enrolled Students, 2010-2020



with the exception of 2014, 2017, and 2020.

- 23.3% of seats for new students were unoccupied. 15.0% of applicants were turned away, and programs did not fill all available seats.
- Since 2010, there was an overall decrease of 27.4% in the number of newly enrolled VN students.

Table 2. Change in Newly Enrolled Students, 2010-2020

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	% Annual Enrollment Change
2010	7,860	-
2011	8,612	9.6%
2012	7,825	-9.1%
2013	6,963	-11.0%
2014	7,225	3.8%
2015	6,559	-9.2%
2016	5,933	-9.5%
2017	6,468	9.0%
2018	5,991	-7.4%
2019	5,650	-5.7%
2020	5,704	1.0%

Total Enrollment in Vocational Nursing Programs

Table 3 presents the breakdown of total enrollment by program type and setting for AY 2019-2020.

- 98.5% of enrolled students were in generic programs. There were 122 students enrolled in MEEPs⁷ during AY 2019-2020.
- 58.2% of all enrolled students were enrolled in community, state, or technical colleges.
- 39.9% of students were enrolled in for profit or other institutions, even though these programs represented only 17.4% of VN programs.⁸

⁷Multiple Entry-Exit Program is an approved exit option which is a part of a professional nursing education program designed for students to complete course work and apply to take the NCLEX-PN® examination after they have successfully met all requirements needed for the examination.

⁸The military-based program was not included in this analysis.

Table 3. VN Program Enrollment by Program Type, AY 2019-2020

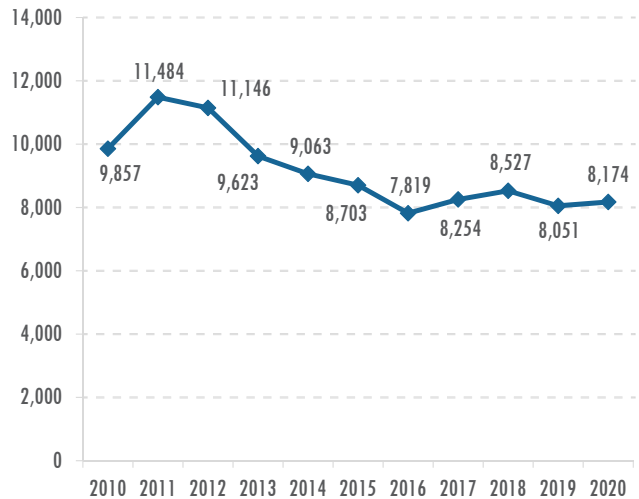
Program Type	Program Setting	Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	4,755	58.2%
	Independent College or University	35	0.4%
	For Profit and other institutions	3,262	39.9%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	122	1.5%
Total	All Settings	8,174	100.0%



Figure 2 shows the trend in total VN enrollment since 2010.

- Total VN student enrollment increased by 1.5% since 2019.
- The total number of students enrolled in VN programs decreased by 17.1% between 2010 and 2020.

Figure 2. Total VN Enrollment, 2010-2020



Graduates from Vocational Nursing Programs

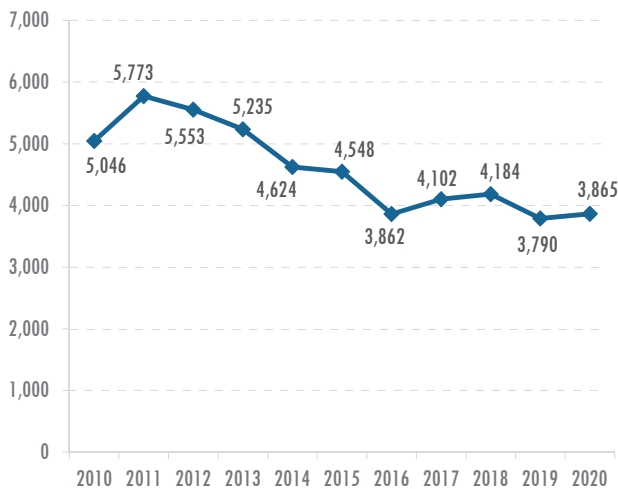
Figure 3 and Table 4 show the change in the number of VN graduates since 2010.

- A total of 3,865 students graduated in 2020, an increase of 2.0% from 2019.
- The total number of VN graduates decreased by 23.4% between 2010 and 2020.

Table 4. Change in VN Graduates, 2010-2020

Year	Graduates	% Annual Change in Graduates
2010	5,046	-
2011	5,773	14.4%
2012	5,553	-3.8%
2013	5,235	-5.7%
2014	4,624	-11.7%
2015	4,548	-1.6%
2016	3,862	-15.1%
2017	4,102	6.2%
2018	4,184	2.0%
2019	3,790	-9.4%
2020	3,865	2.0%

Figure 3. VN Graduates, 2010-2020



VN graduates by program and institution type are shown in Table 5.

- 97.3% of students graduated from generic programs. 105 students (2.7%) graduated from MEEPs.
- 66.8% of total graduates were from community, state, or technical colleges.
- For profit and other institutions graduated the second largest proportion (30.2%) of VN students during the reporting period.
- Independent college or university graduates comprised 0.3% of the total number of graduates.

Barriers to Increasing Graduates

Programs were asked to list barriers that they faced in increasing VN graduates in AY 2019-2020. 54 programs identified having barriers to increasing the number of graduates.⁹ Some of these barriers included:

- Academic failure or challenges (17 programs)
- Lack of clinical sites (16 programs)
- Shortage of faculty (11 programs)
- Student financial difficulties (10 programs)

18 programs specifically mentioned the COVID-19 pandemic as a barrier to increasing graduates.

Level of Difficulty for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing

Figure 4 shows the difficulty programs perceived with respect to their graduates finding a job in nursing.

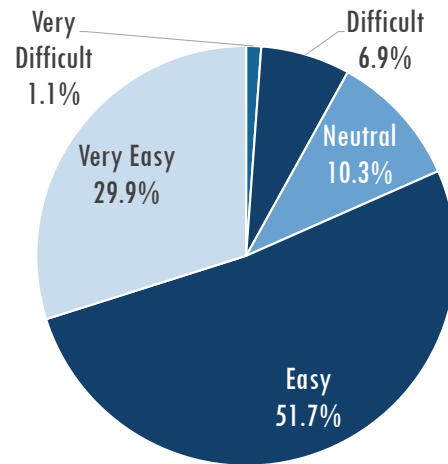
- Most VN programs perceived that it was easy or very easy for their graduates to find jobs (81.6%).
- 6.9% perceived that it was difficult for their graduates to find jobs. Only 1 program selected that it was very difficult for their graduates to find jobs.
- Programs whose graduates had difficulty finding jobs listed reasons such as employers preferring experienced nurses or registered nurses (1 program) and limited opportunities for VNs in acute care or hospital settings (5 programs).

⁹Programs could list more than one barrier to increasing the number of graduates.

Table 5. VN Graduates by Program Type, 2020

Program Type	Program Setting	Graduates	% of Total Graduates
Generic	Community, State, or Technical College	2,580	66.8%
	Independent College or University	11	0.3%
	For Profit and other institutions	1,169	30.2%
MEEP	Community, State, or Technical College	105	2.7%
Total		3,865	100%

Figure 4. Difficulty for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing



Military-Based Vocational Nursing Program

Table 6 lists data on qualified applications¹⁰ and admissions to the military-based VN program from 2010 to 2020.

- There were 458 qualified applications in 2020, a decrease of 22.4% from 2019.
- All qualified applications were offered admission in 2019.

Newly Enrolled Students, Total Enrollment, and Graduates

Table 7 reports the total number of newly enrolled students, total enrollment, and graduates for the military-based VN program from 2010 to 2020.

- There were 458 newly enrolled students, which was also the number of total enrolled students for the military-based VN program.
- In 2020, there were 364 graduates. This represented a 9.3% increase in graduates from 2019.

¹⁰ Qualified applications refer to applications submitted, not individual applicants, since candidates for admission may apply to more than one nursing program.

Table 6. Qualified Applications, Admissions, and QANA for Military-Based Program, 2010-2020

Year	Seats for New Students ^{4,5}	Qualified Applications	Offered Admission	QANA (%)
2010	569	-	569	0 (0%)
2011	375	307	307	0 (0%)
2012	465	307	307	0 (0%)
2013	465	193	193	0 (0%)
2014	600	391	391	0 (0%)
2015	610	457	457	0 (0%)
2016	561	560	560	0 (0%)
2017	631	566	566	0 (0%)
2018	620	558	558	0 (0%)
2019	640	590	590	0 (0%)
2020	650	458	458	0 (0%)

Note: Data were not available for cells with dashes (-).

Table 7. Newly Enrolled Students, Total Enrollment, and Graduates for Military-Based Program, 2010-2020

Year	Newly Enrolled Students	Total Enrollment	Graduates
2010	569	1,209	400
2011	307	601	422
2012	307	983	423
2013	191	338	277
2014	391	391	332
2015	457	457	352
2016	560	560	469
2017	566	566	375
2018	558	558	355
2019	590	590	333
2020	458	458	364