EAB
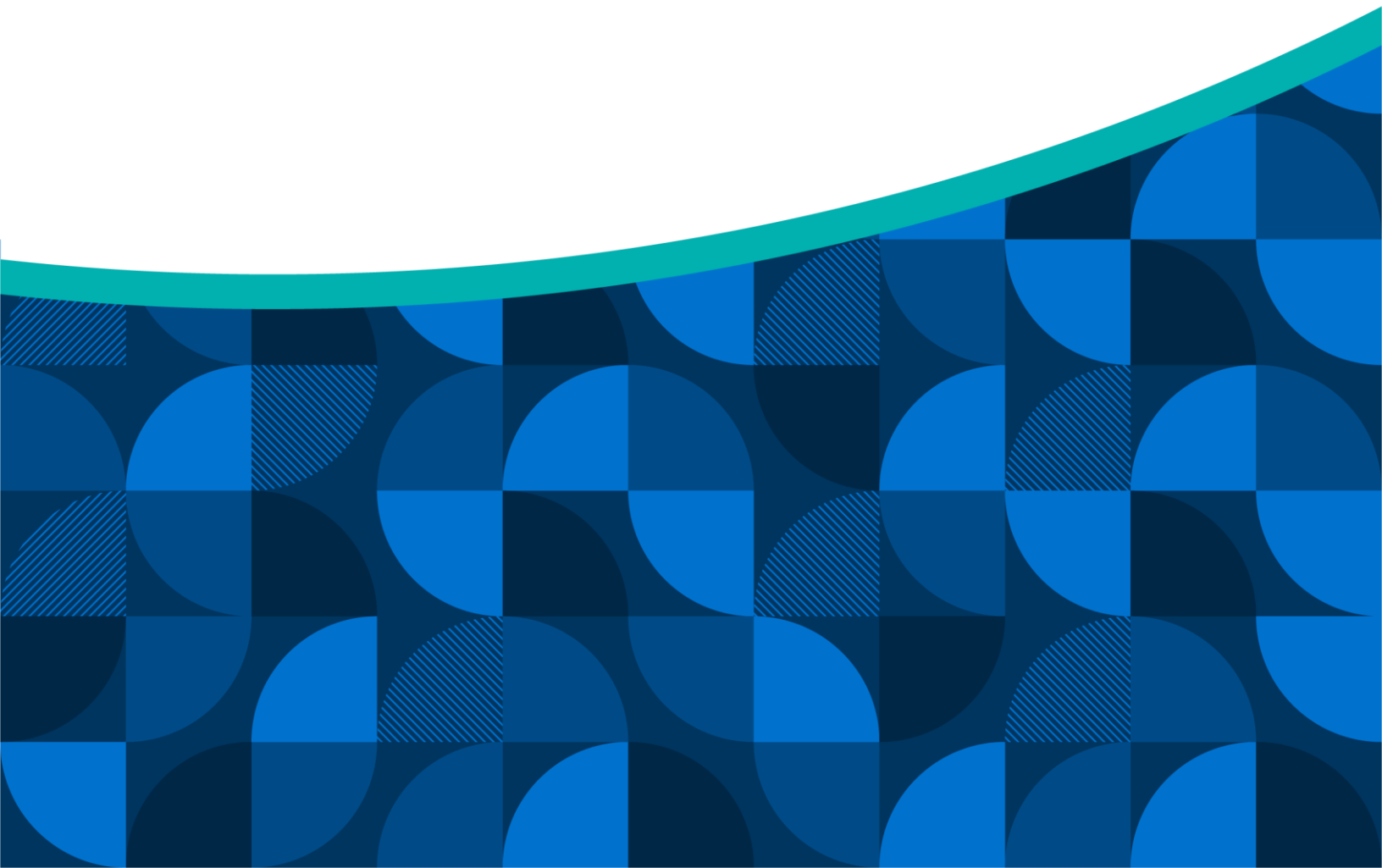
Assessment of the RN to BSN Program

360° Program Assessment

EAB Market Insights

Market Insights Associate

Research Manager

eab.com

Report Introduction and Table of Contents

This report outlines opportunities to revitalize an existing program to better align with market demand and better position the program to recruit and serve prospective students. The sections outlined below recommend updates to the program's curriculum, positioning, and/or recruitment practices by analyzing employer demand and competition in the field and auditing the program's website and inquiry process.

Executive Overview

This assessment determined that high growth in employer demand and rising student demand indicate potential for program growth. To maximize applications and compete with comparable programs, consider offering a self-paced degree track and offering additional program start dates to attract more prospective students. Additionally, admissions staff members should be fully prepared for phone calls with prospective students and stress the program's professional value. Improve the program webpage by adding calls to action at the top of the webpage and incorporating interactive features such as a live chatbot feature or a tuition calculator.

Diagnosing Program Growth Potential

1. Labor Market and Competitive Landscape

Labor market analysis suggests a strong need for bachelor's-level nursing program graduates, while competitive analysis highlights strong local competition. Across November 2019 to October 2022, average monthly employer demand growth for relevant professionals outpaced demand for all bachelor's-level professionals nationally. Additionally, employers advertised a high number of job postings in the past year (i.e., 1,046,613). These trends suggest program graduates will face a robust job market. Between the 2016-2017 and 2020-2021 academic years, the increase in student degree completions outpaced the increase in the number of institutions reporting completions on average annually. This indicates that student demand outpaced competition. However, Ohio University, which ranked sixth nationally in reported degree completions in the 2020-21 academic year, may pose strong competition for the requesting institution on a local level.

2. Comparator Program Analysis

Enhance flexible delivery options to appeal to working nurses. Consider offering a self-paced degree track to better accommodate working RNs. EAB research finds that flexible options appeal to adult students balancing continuing education with professional commitments.

Consider offering more program start dates to align with competitors' offerings. Two of the profiled programs offer at least six program start dates, providing more opportunities for prospective students to start their programs. Currently, the requesting institution advertises only three start dates for prospective students.

Capturing Missed Enrollment Opportunities

3. Secret Shopping and the Inquiry Process

After scheduling conversations with prospective students, send follow-up emails with a link to the application, encouraging them to apply. The researcher scheduled a conversation with the admissions staff, and the admissions staff called the researcher at the agreed-upon time. However, the researcher did not receive a follow-up email after the call.

Encourage admissions staff members to ask prospective students about their backgrounds and professional goals. Although the admissions staff member answered all the researcher's questions about the program, the admissions staff member never asked the researcher about their background or the reason for their inquiry. By acquiring background information on prospective students, the admissions staff could better tailor information for prospective students and drive them towards the application process.

4. Web and Mobile Optimization

Add more calls to action to the top third of the webpage to encourage further engagement. This top third is the most important section for prospective students. There are two relevant calls to action (i.e., "Apply now," "Schedule a visit") on the page, and both require scrolling to see, one on the left-hand side and one near the bottom.

Integrate interactive features on the program webpage to engage prospective students. Currently, the requesting institution does not utilize any program webpage features such as a live chatbot feature, a course demo, or a tuition calculator.

Executive Overview (cont.)

Action Items

Detailed next steps and supporting EAB resources and services appear on page 37

Within Institution

- Streamline your webpage to ensure prospects have easy access to decision-supporting program details.

- Refine your communication strategy for program prospects to increase the impact of prospects' interactions with recruitment staff.

- Develop resources that encourage alumni, current students, and others associated with your program to serve as informal program ambassadors and promote the program through their individual networks.

- Highlight expected outcomes for program graduates in marketing materials and the program webpage.

- Align programming to fit the needs of the adult student market.

In Partnership with EAB

- Request a call with the EAB subject matter experts to review the report and discuss how EAB's best practice research can aid you in further differentiating your program from competitors and increase its alignment with student and employer needs.

- If your team is interested in pursuing additional research on a new topic, consider the following options:

  - Request a Market Opportunity Scan to evaluate your regional labor market and competitive landscape and identify new program opportunities with high growth potential.

  - Request a Portfolio Health Check to identify further growth opportunities within your existing portfolio using labor market and competitive opportunity data.

  - Request further validation of desired new program opportunities via a Program Feasibility Study.

Market Pulsecheck

1

An evaluation of employer demand for graduates from the existing RN to BSN program in the national market, and student demand for similar programs.

Analysis Includes:

- Job Posting Trends
- Top Titles
- Top Skills
- Top Employers
- Top Industries
- Top Cities
- Experience Levels
- Education Levels
- Degree Completion Trends

The analysis considered demand nationally.

Growing National Student and Employer Demand Suggest Favorable RN-to-BSN Program Outlook

Preliminary Program Outlook

National employer demand trends suggest high demand for bachelor's-level nursing professionals. Between November 2021 and October 2022, national employers advertised a high number of job postings (i.e., 1,046,613). Further, relevant employer demand growth outpaced employer demand growth for bachelor's-level professionals overall (i.e., a monthly average of 1.71% compared to 1.08%, respectively). Taken together, these trends suggest a large and growing labor market for nursing professionals.

Growing degree completions indicate increasing student demand for bachelor's-level nursing programs. Across the 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 academic years, relevant degree completions increased by an annual average of 3.49%, outpacing the growth in the number of institutions reporting degree completions (i.e., 1.25% average annual growth). These trends suggest a favorable competitive landscape for the existing program as student demand grew faster than competition.

National Analysis of Job Postings for Bachelor's-Level Nursing Professionals

National employer demand trends suggest a strong need for bachelor's-level nursing professionals. Employers posted a high number of relevant job postings in the last 12 months (i.e., 1,046,613). Further, employer demand growth for relevant professionals outpaced employer demand growth for all bachelor's-level professionals between November 2019 and October 2022 (i.e., an average monthly 1.71% compared to 1.08%, respectively). Taken together, these trends suggest a large and growing labor market for bachelor's-level nursing professionals.

+1.71%

Average Monthly Demand Growth

November 2019 - October 2022, National Data

- Average monthly growth of 2,659 postings.
- During the same period, demand for all bachelor's-level professionals grew 1.08%.

181,512 job postings

Average Monthly Demand

November 2019 - October 2022, National Data

1,046,613 job postings

Relevant Jobs Posted in the Past Year

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

Job Postings for Bachelor's-Level Nursing Professionals over Time

November 2019 - October 2022, National Data
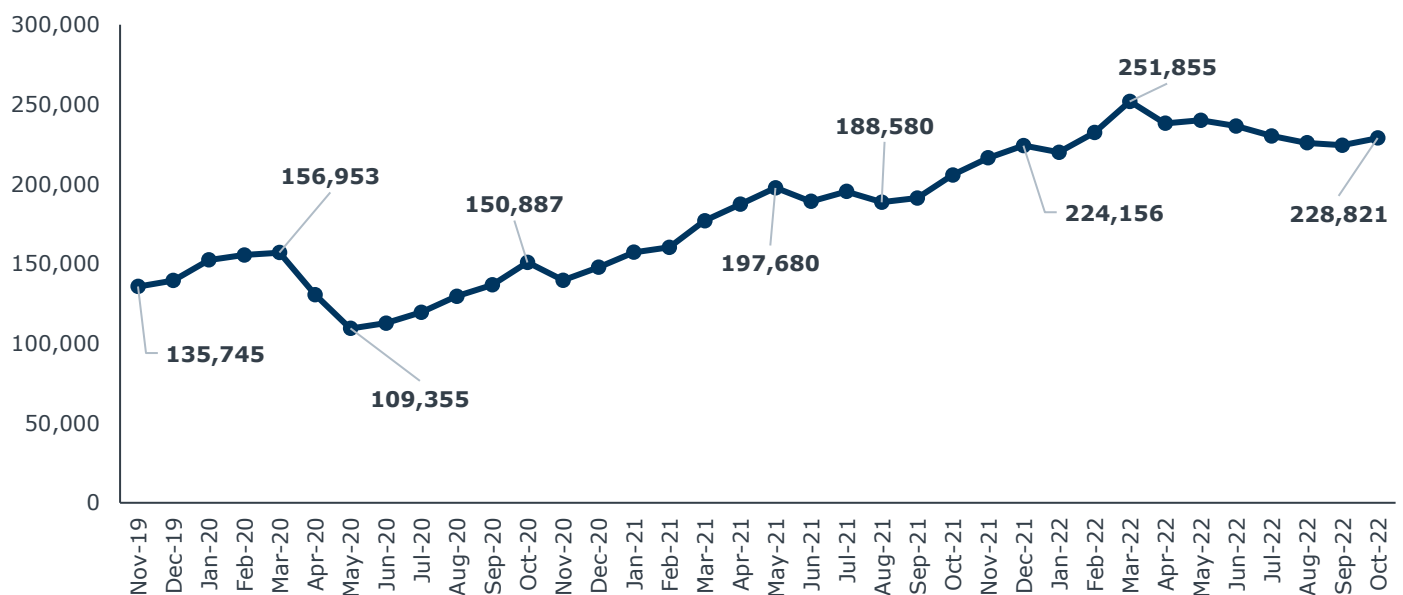
Source: EAB analysis. Lightcast Analyst.

Analysis of Employment for Nursing Professionals

National employment is projected to increase faster than average in all top three relevant occupations. This indicates employment opportunities for graduates will likely increase in coming years.

While these occupations represent the most common occupations appearing in job postings for bachelor's-level nursing professionals, the projected employment data considers all jobs within an occupation at all degree levels.

Projected Employment in Top Occupations[1]

2022-2032, National Data

Registered Nurses — 9.67%
Medical and Health Services Managers — 28.47%
Health Education Specialists — 12.43%
All Occupations — 9.22%
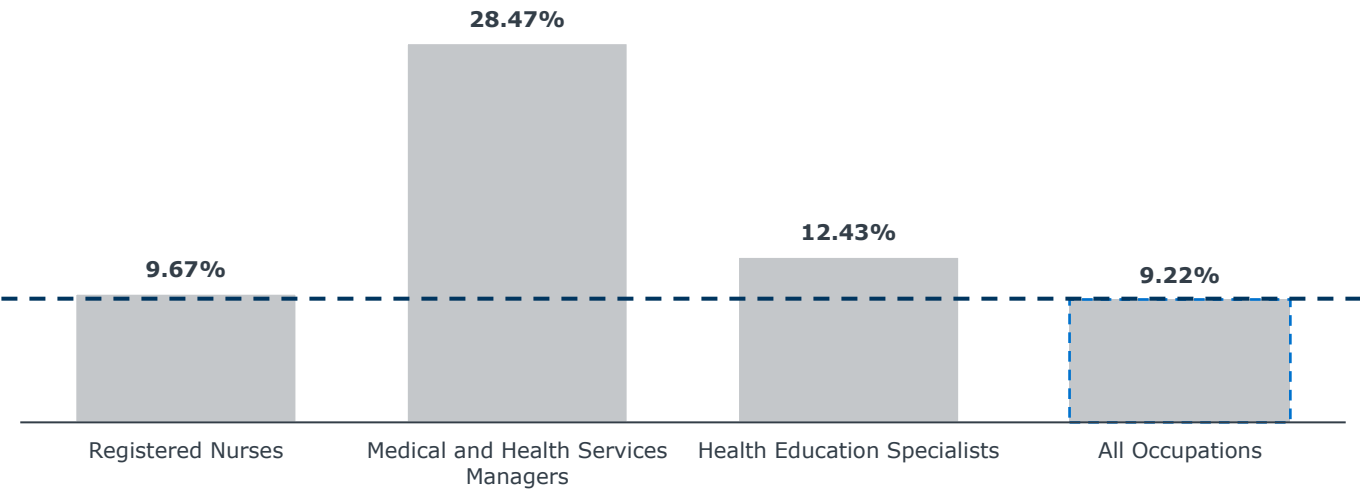
The dashed blue line represents the projected employment growth across all occupations from 2022 to 2032.

1) Top occupations refer to the occupations in which employers most often seek relevant professionals.

Source: EAB analysis. Lightcast Analyst.

eab.com

Top Titles in Job Postings for Bachelor's-Level Nursing Professionals

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

n = 1,046,613 job postings

Title	Percentage
Registered Nurses	5.47%
Medical Surgical Registered Nurses	2.93%
ICU Registered Nurses	1.59%
Operating Room Registered Nurses	1.27%
Emergency Department Registered Nurses	1.25%
Registered Nurse Case Managers	1.11%
Emergency Room Registered Nurses	1.04%
NICU Registered Nurses	1.00%
Labor and Delivery Registered Nurses	0.96%
Home Health Registered Nurses	0.90%
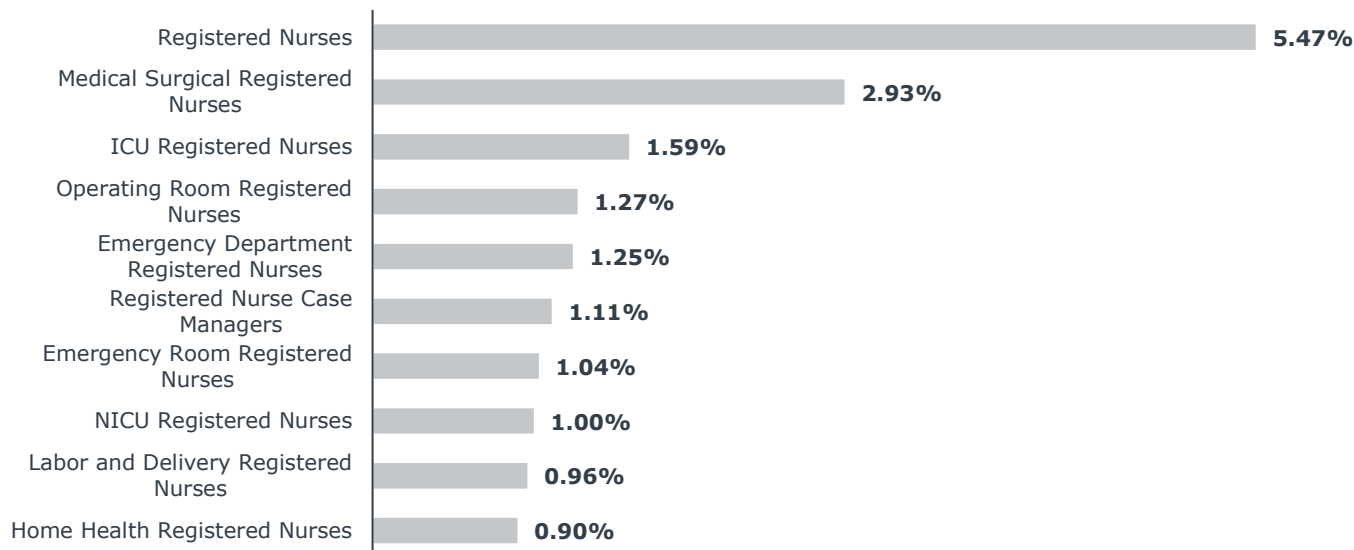
Top Skills Requested of Bachelor's-Level Nursing Applicants

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

n = 1,046,613 job postings

Skill	Percentage
Nursing	98.49%
Nursing Care	31.59%
Nursing Process	21.41%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	17.02%
Nursing Practices	14.81%
Acute Care	14.79%
Clinical Nursing	11.97%
Care Coordination	11.55%
Direct Patient Care	11.38%
Medical Records	10.77%

Source: EAB analysis. Lightcast Analyst.
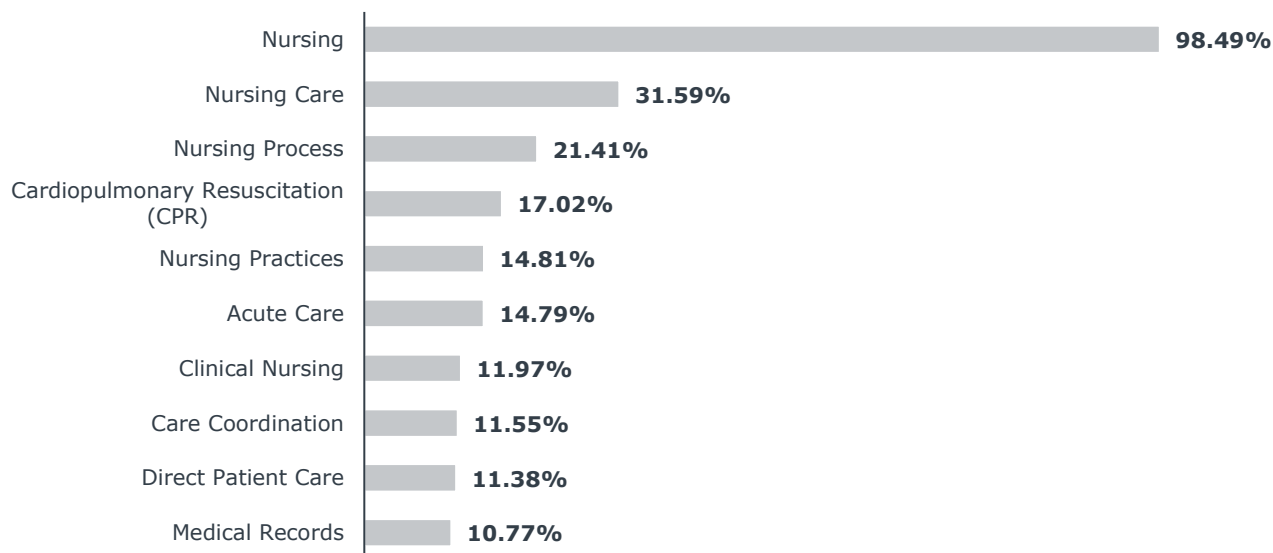
Top Employers Seeking Bachelor's-Level Nursing Applicants

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

n = 1,046,613 job postings

Employer	Percentage
HCA Healthcare	3.06%
United States Department of Veterans Affairs	1.95%
DaVita	1.55%
AdventHealth	1.41%
UC Health	1.41%
Providence	1.24%
Kindred Healthcare	1.17%
Cleveland Clinic	0.96%
Triage	0.95%
Anthem Blue Cross	0.68%
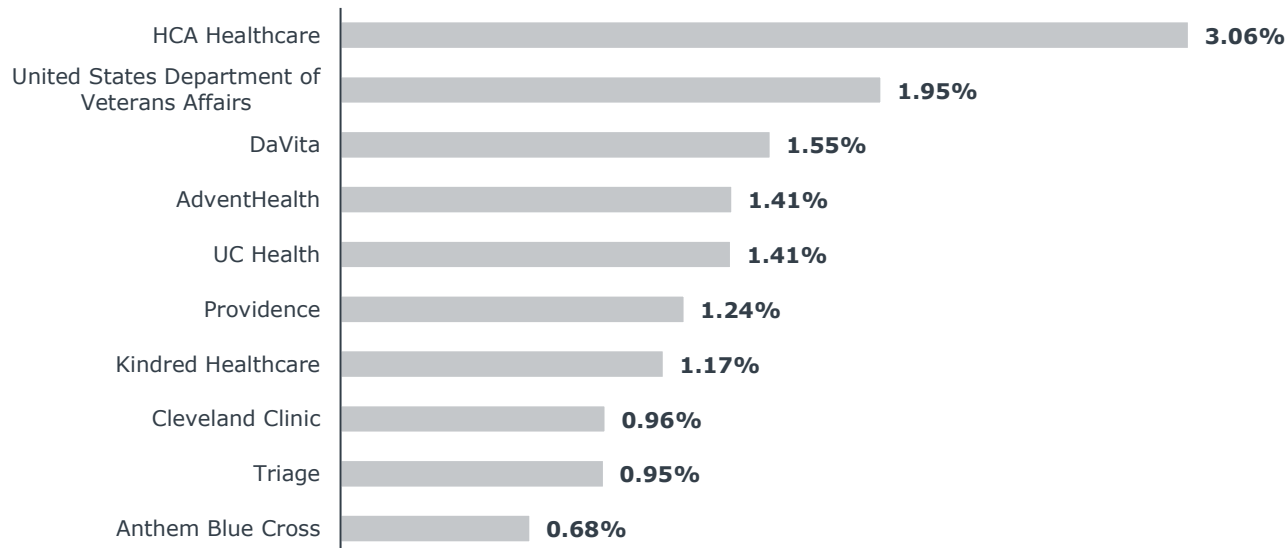
Top Industries Advertising Bachelor's-Level Nursing Job Postings

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

n = 1,046,613 job postings

Industry	Percentage
Health Care and Social Assistance	57.33%
Educational Services	7.07%
Admin and Support Services*	3.75%
Finance and Insurance	3.59%
Public Administration	3.04%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2.15%
Manufacturing	1.12%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1.01%
Retail Trade	0.67%
Wholesale Trade	0.55%
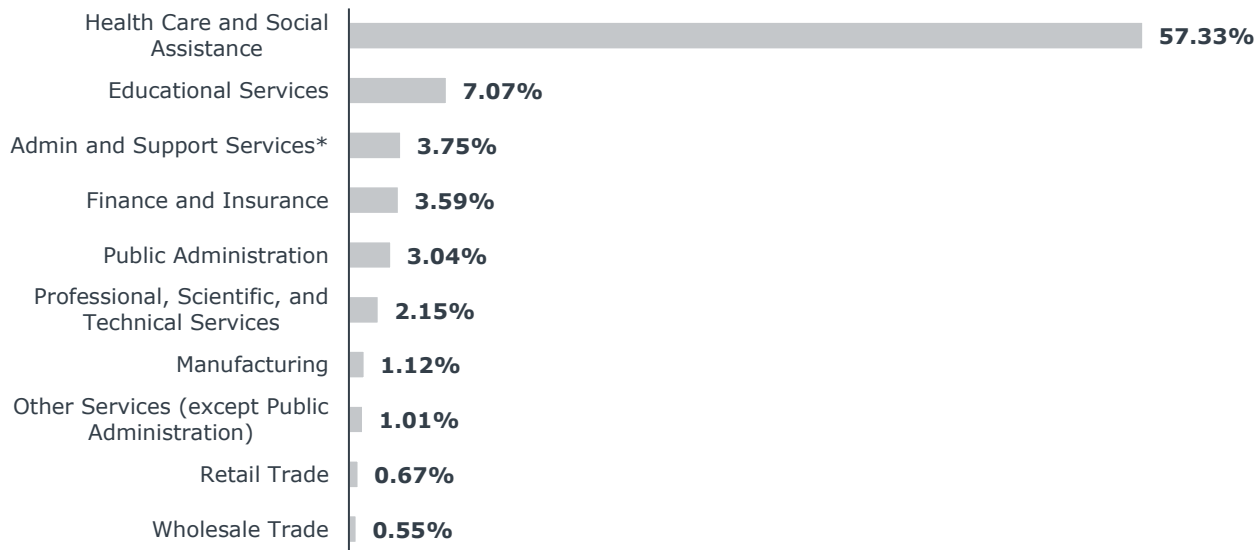
"Admin and Support Services*" represents "Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services," in which Lightcast Analyst often classifies job postings from staffing companies.

Source: EAB analysis. Lightcast Analyst.

eab.com

Top Cities Seeking Bachelor's-Level Nursing Applicants

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

n = 1,046,613 job postings

City	Percentage
Houston, TX	1.89%
New York, NY	1.66%
Dallas, TX	1.06%
Los Angeles, CA	0.93%
San Antonio, TX	0.90%
Miami, FL	0.83%
Boston, MA	0.82%
Denver, CO	0.77%
Philadelphia, PA	0.77%
Chicago, IL	0.74%

Source: EAB analysis. Lightcast Analyst.

eab.com
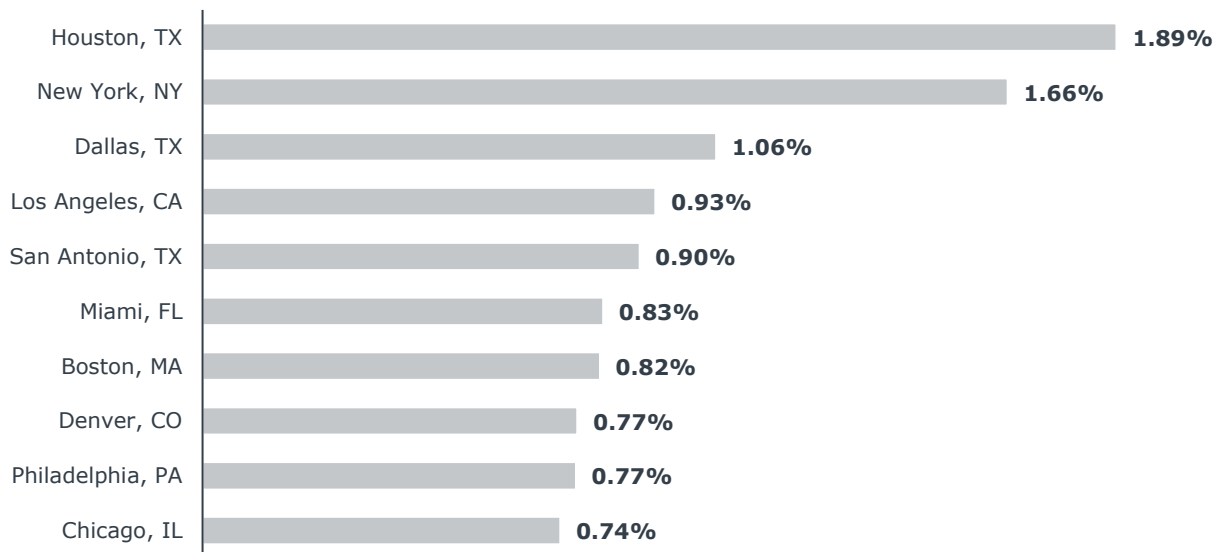
Top Experience Levels Requested of Bachelor's-Level Nursing Applicants

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

n = 1,046,613 job postings

Experience Level	Percentage
No Experience Listed	30.47%
0 - 1 Years	23.44%
2 - 3 Years	33.63%
4 - 6 Years	10.53%
7 - 9 Years	1.06%
10+ Years	0.87%
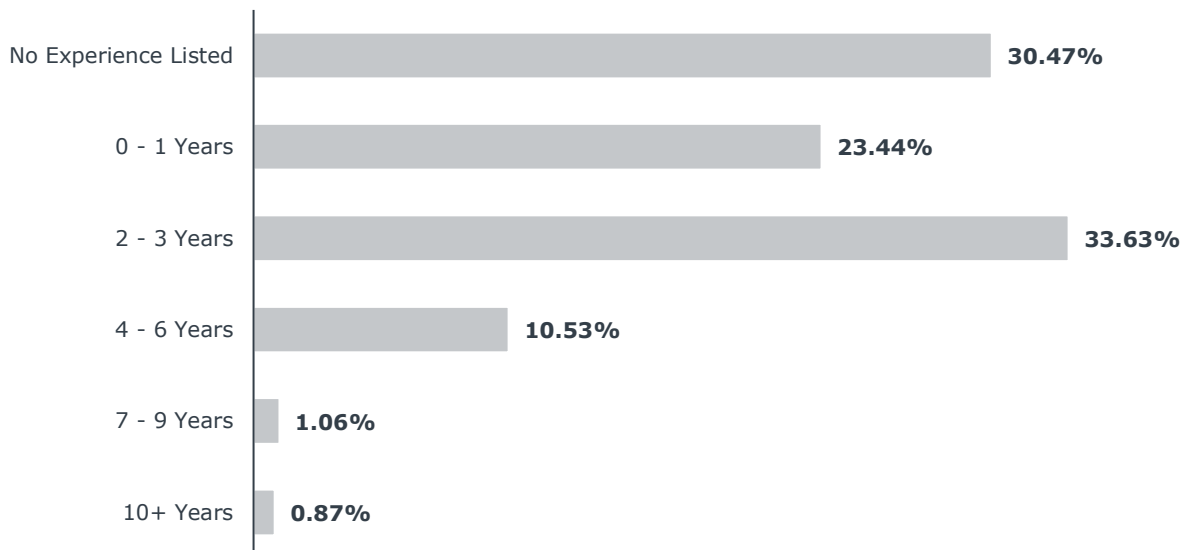
Top Education Levels Requested of Nursing Applicants

November 2021 - October 2022, National Data

n = 3,591,433 job postings[1]

Education Level	Percentage
No Education Listed	38.56%
High school or GED	15.34%
Associate degree	27.22%
Bachelor's degree	29.14%
Master's degree	8.96%
Ph.D. or professional degree	2.80%
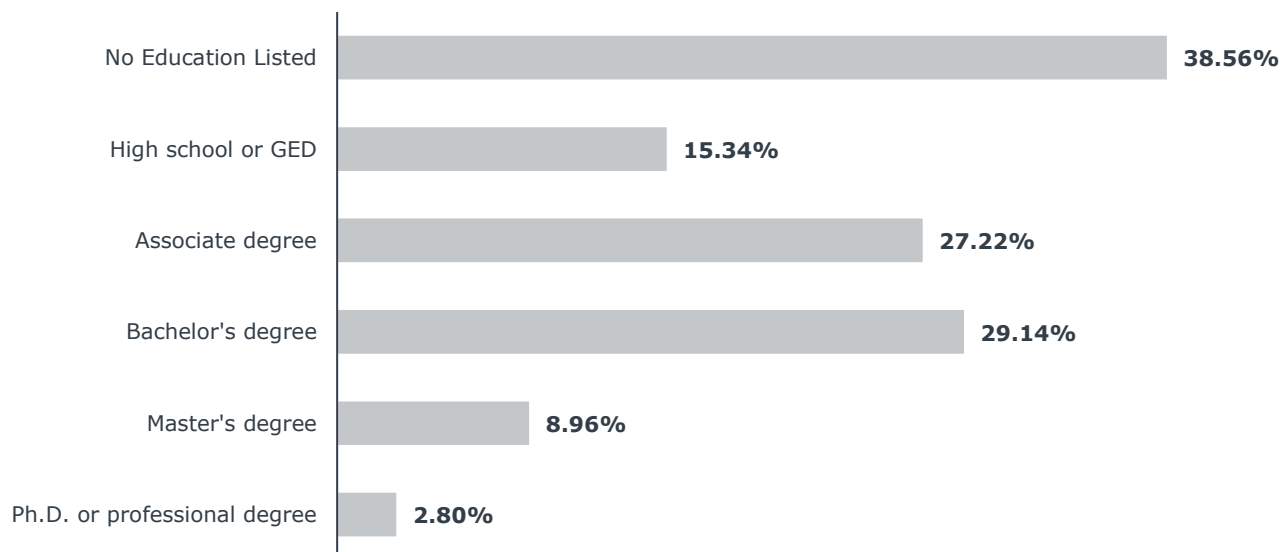
1) The n-value reflects the number of job postings requesting any degree level nursing applicants rather than the number of postings requesting bachelor's-level nursing applicants.

eab.com

National Analysis of CIP Code 51.3801 ("Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse") Bachelor's-Level Completions

Between the 2016-2017 and 2020-2021 academic years, relevant completions increased by an annual average of 3.49%, outpacing the growth in the number of institutions reporting completions (i.e., an annual average 1.25% increase). These trends suggest a favorable competitive landscape for existing programs since student demand grew faster than competition.

Completions Reported over Time

2016-2017 to 2020-2021 Academic Years, National Data

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
134,658	140,097	143,390	148,842	154,475

+3.49%

Average Annual Completions Growth

2016-2017 to 2020-2021 Academic Years, National Data

- Average annual 1.25% growth in number of institutions in the same period.
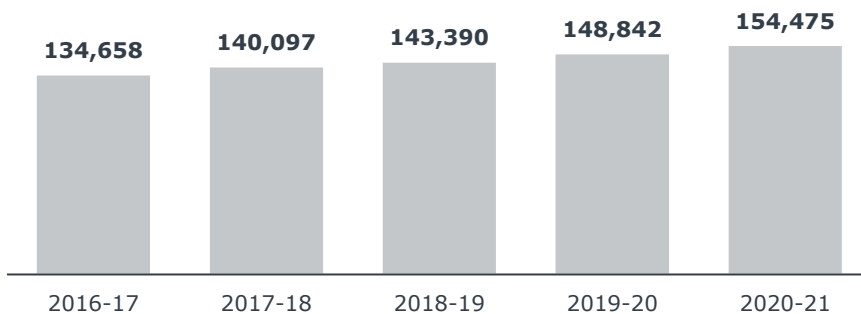
Institutions Reporting Completions over Time

2016-2017 to 2020-2021 Academic Years, National Data

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1,024	1,050	1,060	1,054	1,076

48.23%

Institutions Reporting Completions with a 100% Distance-Delivery Option

2020-2021 Academic Year, National Data
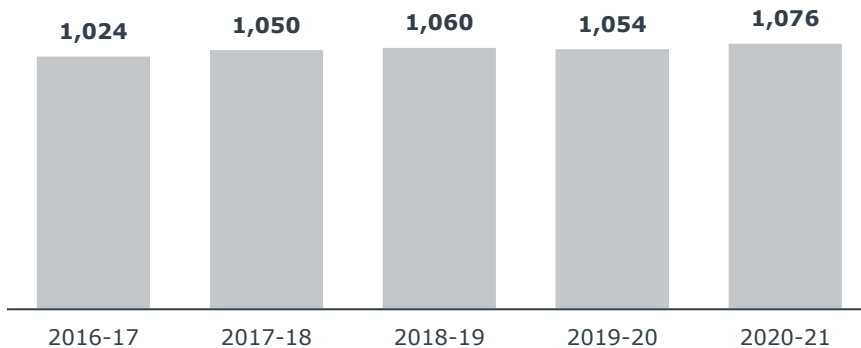
143.56

Mean Completions per Institution Reporting

2020-2021 Academic Year, National Data

- An increase from the 131.50 mean completions reported in the 2016-2017 academic year.

73.00

Median Completions per Institution Reporting

2020-2021 Academic Year, National Data

- An increase from the 72.00 median completions reported in the 2016-2017 academic year.

Source: EAB analysis. National Center for Education Statistics.

eab.com

National Analysis of CIP Code 51.3801 ("Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse") Bachelor's-Level Completions

Between the 2016-2017 and 2020-2021 academic years, five of the top 10 institutions reporting the most completions increased in completions while four increased in market share. The requesting institution's existing program should expect strong local competition from Ohio University as Ohio University reported the sixth-most completions (i.e., 2,089) nationally in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Institutions with Most Reported Completions

2016-2017 and 2020-2021 Academic Years, National Data

Institution	Reported Completions, 2016-2017 Academic Year	Market Share, 2016-2017 Academic Year	Reported Completions, 2020-2021 Academic Year	Market Share, 2020-2021 Academic Year
Western Governors University*	7,179	5.33%	10,730	6.95%
Chamberlain University-Illinois*	7,080	5.26%	8,124	5.26%
Grand Canyon University*	4,855	3.61%	4,530	2.93%
The University of Texas at Arlington*	3,563	2.65%	3,456	2.24%
Capella University*	558	0.41%	3,199	2.07%
Ohio University-Main Campus*	2,563	1.90%	2,089	1.35%
West Coast University-Orange County*	547	0.41%	971	0.63%
Southern New Hampshire University*	603	0.45%	945	0.61%
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center*	1,114	0.83%	917	0.59%
Walden University*	936	0.70%	900	0.58%

*Institutions offered a distance-delivery modality in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Source: EAB analysis. National Center for Education Statistics.

Credential Design and Curriculum Analysis

2

Credential Design and Curriculum Analysis

Section Includes:

- Profiled Program Review

- Fundamental and Emerging Skills

- Curriculum Analysis

Credential Design

Consider offering a self-paced degree track to better accommodate working professionals. Although all profiled programs offer a part-time program option, only Institution C offers a unique "FlexPath" degree that allows students to learn at their own pace and manage costs. EAB research finds that flexible delivery options appeal to adult students balancing continuing education with professional commitments. Currently, the requesting institution's RN to BSN program does allow for flexible programming with permission from the faculty advisor, but this option is not standard practice. The requesting institution should offer a self-paced degree track along with its full-time and part-time program options to attract working registered nurses.

Potential Graduate Outcomes

Advertise career outcome information or career development resources for post-graduation success. Three profiled programs promote either graduate outcomes information or career development resources. By advertising career support and development resources for post-graduation success, the requesting institution would demonstrate a continued commitment to students and their professional advancements.

Prominently advertise career and salary information on the program webpage. The requesting institution does not advertise relevant career and outcome information on the program webpage. Highlighting the increased compensation will stress the program's return-on-investment and may motivate prospective students to finish their BSN.

Admissions

Offer additional program start dates to potentially attract more students. Currently, the existing RN to BSN program at the requesting institution advertises three start dates, one for each semester. However, Institution A and Institution D offer six to eight start dates per year. By offering more start dates, the requesting institution can provide more program flexibility by accommodating working professionals.

Analysis of Profiled Program Design

Profiled programs require between 28 and 45 credits across approximately 10 courses. All profiled programs offer online programming. On average, programs cost $14,183. In comparison, the requesting institution's program is more expensive than competitor programs on average. Programs do typically advertise accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

Profiled Program Characteristics

Competitor RN to BSN Programs

Title	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Institution D	Institution
	RN to BSN	RN to BSN	RN to BSN	RN to BSN	RN to BSN
Modality	Online	Online	Online	Online	Online
Program-Specific Credits	31 Credits	45 Credits	32 Credits[1]	28 Credits	30 Credits
Number of Courses	9 Courses	14 Courses	8 Courses	9 Courses	10 Courses
Advertised Tuition[2]	• In-State: $307 per credit • Out-of-State: $312 per credit	590 per credit	• Guided Path: $357-$380 per credit • FlexPath: $3,295 every 12-week billing session	$275 per credit	• In-State: $4,909 per semester • Out-of-State: $5,109 per semester
Estimated Total Program Tuition[3]	• In State: $9,517 • Out-of-State: $9,672	$26,550	• Guided Path: $17,100–$23,157 • FlexPath: $6,590–$13,180	$7,700	• In-State: $14,728 • Out-of-State: $15,328
CCNE-Accredited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1) The credits reflect the conversation from quarter credits to semester credits.
2) Advertised tuition indicates the tuition cost as presented on the program website. Program fees are not included given the significant variance in institutional fees.
3) Estimated total program tuition calculates the tuition for full program completion (e.g., total credits awarded, total length of program time) depending on tuition unit.

Source: EAB analysis. Comparator Program Websites.

eab.com

Career Outcomes and Career Development Resources

Three profiled programs advertise career outcome information and career development resources. For example, Institution C advertises potential job titles and employment settings. Currently, the requesting institution does not advertise career advancement resources on the program webpage. By offering information such as potential employers and salary information, the requesting institution could align its messaging with competitors.

Institution C

- Advertises potential job titles (e.g., pediatric nurse, home health nurse) and employer settings (e.g., insurance company, pharmaceutical company, government).

Institution A

- Advertises resources on developing soft skills for nurses, a student community, and information on why a BSN is important for career development.

Institution D

- Prepares graduates for potential roles such as nurse manager, clinical nurse, and case manager.

Recommended Career Outcome Information

- Salary
- Employers
- Career Advancement Resources
- Alumni Network

Admission Requirements

All profiled programs require similar admissions requirements (e.g., an associate degree in nursing, 2.0 minimum GPA, and active RN license). The requesting institution's admission requirements align with competitors' requirements.

Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Institution D	Institution
• Associate degree or diploma in nursing • Minimum 2.0 GPA • Resident with an active RN license • Official transcripts	• Associate degree or diploma in nursing • Minimum 2.0 GPA • A current, active, and unrestricted RN license in the U.S.	• Associate degree or diploma in nursing • Minimum 2.0 GPA (2.8 GPA for FlexPath) • A current, active, and unrestricted RN license in the U.S. • Official transcripts • $50 application fee	• Associate degree or diploma in nursing • Minimum 2.0 GPA • Current, unencumbered RN license • Official transcripts • $45 application fee	• Associate degree or diploma in nursing • Minimum 2.0 GPA • Reside in authorized state • An active and unrestricted RN license • Official transcripts

Experiential Learning and Research Opportunities

Three profiled programs require capstone courses, which provide research and experiential learning opportunities for students to explore ideas and interests in the field of nursing. The requesting institution should consider offering a capstone course to align with competitors' offerings while giving students the opportunity to explore their interests during their studies.

Institution C	Institution B	Institution D
Capstone Project for Nursing: "Learners integrate new knowledge from the literature into practice via direct practicum hours in a patient, family, or group setting to demonstrate proficiency and create high-quality deliverables to apply in future practice. In the capstone experience, learners also further apply their knowledge of the program outcomes."	• **RN Capstone Course:** "An evidence-based project that grows out of the student's interest in a specific patient population, professional nursing role and/or healthcare setting." • **RN Community Health Nursing:** "This course will investigate the needs of aggregates in the community setting, including promoting health and preventing illness; planning for disasters; addressing environmental health problems; and managing information and communication technology."	• **Senior Capstone:** "Provides students with opportunities to integrate and synthesize nursing knowledge through research, writing, and presentations on current topics and issues. Total experiential learning 20 hours."

National Analysis of Job Postings' Skill Requirements for Bachelor's-Level Nursing Professionals

Across November 2019 to October 2022, employers demonstrated sustained demand for skills such as "nursing" and "nursing care." Emerging skills include "computerized physician order entry" and "infection control"; developing these skills will prepare graduates to meet today's employer needs.

The Forum excluded the following skills from the plot due to relevancy and/or to improve readability.
Skills highlighted in orange ranked at or above 17% proportion of all postings:
- "Nursing,"
- "Basic Life Support Certification,"
- "Nursing Care,"
- "Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support Certification,"
- "Nursing Process," and
- "CPR."

Fundamental and Emerging Skills for Bachelor's-Level Nursing Professionals

November 2019 – October 2022, National Data

N = 2,242,465 job postings
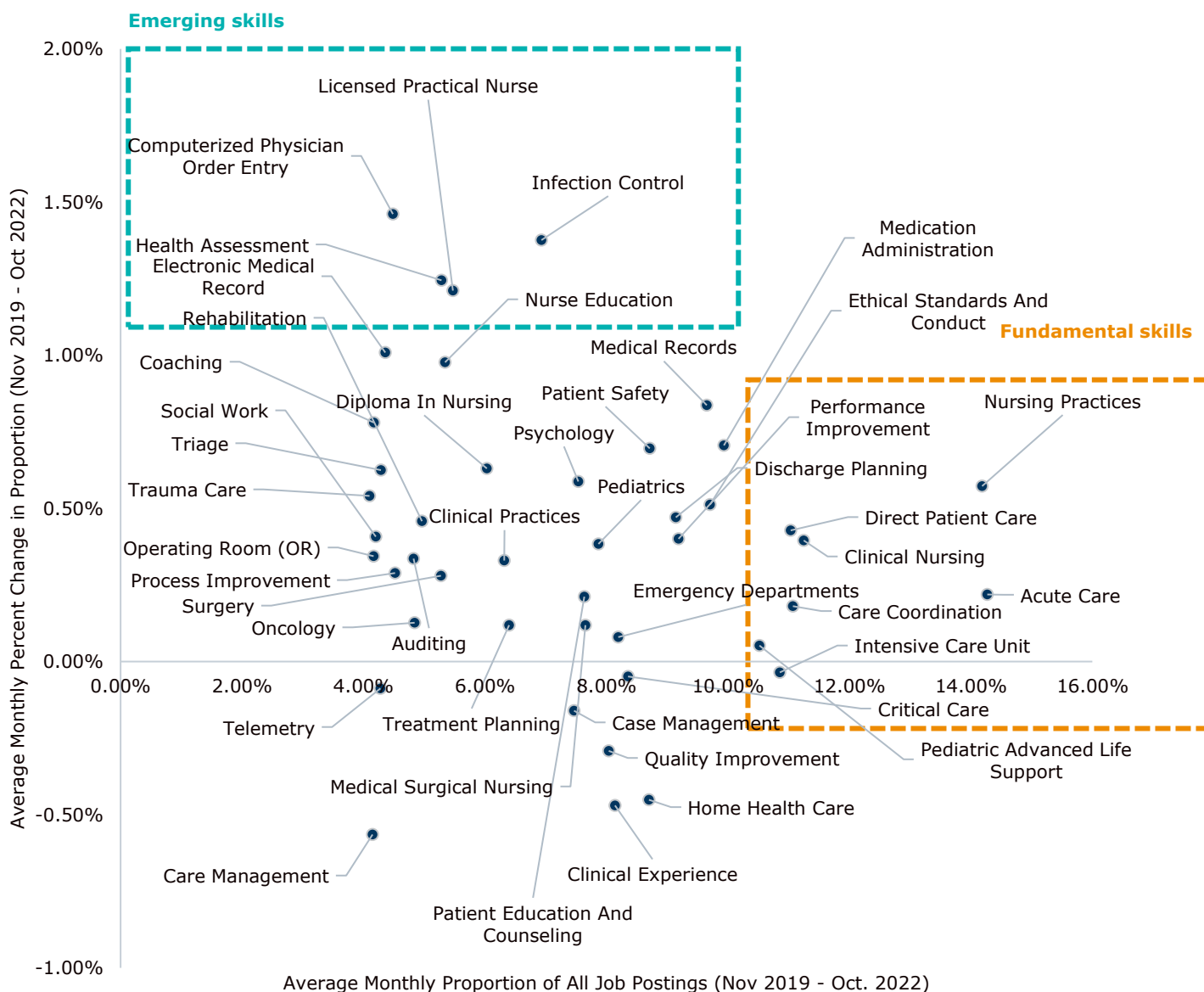
Alignment of In-Demand Skills to Profiled Programs' Curricula

National Data

	In-Demand Skills	Sample Courses at Profiled Institutions
Patient Care	• "Acute Care" • "Direct Patient Care" • "Critical Care" • "Trauma Care"	• "Gerontologic Nursing Care" at Institution A • "Improving Quality of Care and Patient Safety" at Institution C • **"Practice in Primary Care" at the requesting institution**
Care Coordination	• "Discharge Planning" • "Case Management" • "Care Coordination" • "Treatment Planning"	• "Coordinating Patient-Centered Care" at Institution C • "RN Collaborative Healthcare" at Institution B • **"Care Coordination and Transition in Care" at the requesting institution**
Nursing Information Technology	• "Computerized Physician Order Entry" • "Medical Records" • "Health Assessment Electronic Medical"	• "RN Information Systems in Healthcare" at Institution B • "Managing Health Information and Technology" at Institution C • "Nursing Informatics" at Institution D • **"Health Care Informatics" at the requesting institution**

Trends in Profiled Programs' Curricula

Leadership Coursework	Health Assessment Coursework	Community Health Nursing Coursework
• "Leadership in Nursing" at Institution A • "Leading People, Processes, and Organizations in Interprofessional Practice" at Institution C • "Nursing Leadership" at Institution D • **"Evolving Concepts in Leadership and Management" at the requesting institution**	• "Health Assessment and Promotion" at Institution A • "Health Assessment for the Practicing RN" at Institution B • "Health Assessment for RNs" at Institution D • **"Health Assessment Across the Lifespan" at the requesting institution**	• "Community Health Nursing" at Institution A • "RN Community Health Nursing" at Institution B • "Practicing in the Community to Improve Population Health" at Institution C • "Community Health Nursing for RNs" at Youngstown University • **"Concepts in Community Health Nursing" at the requesting institution**

Profiled programs' full curricula can be found in Appendix A on page 32.

Source: EAB analysis. Comparator Program Websites.

eab.com

Prospective Student Experience Audit

3

Prospective Student Experience Audit

Analysis Includes:

- Interactions Audit
- Web and Mobile Presence Audit

Interactions with Prospective Students Along with Web and Mobile Prescence Will Benefit From Minor Improvements

Audited Interactions with Prospective Students

Audited Web and Mobile Presence

Recommended next steps include:

- Require all admissions staff to ask prospective students about their background to better tailor information for future conversations.

- Ensure the admissions staff follow up conversations with prospective students with emails containing additional program information to further student engagement.

- Ensure calls to action are immediately visible upon visiting the program webpage to encourage student engagement.

Interactions Audit Findings

An audit of interactions with admissions staff revealed minor room for improvement. Both automated and staff-written emails were prompt and contained detailed information about the assessed program but lacked polling questions. Staff offered to connect with the researcher in the introductory email, easily scheduled the call with the researcher, and conducted the call as scheduled. Although the staff member thoroughly answered all the researcher's questions, they did not ask the researcher any questions about the researcher's interests or professional goals.

Web and Mobile Presence Audit Findings

The program webpage displays vital program information but does not include any interactive tools. The program webpage should incorporate interactive tools, such as a chatbot feature or course demo, to encourage student engagement with the program's admissions staff. Additionally, the program webpage should move calls to action to the top of the program webpage.

The mobile program webpage is clean and easy to read, but the calls to action are not visible upon visiting the site. Display calls to action in the top-third of the mobile webpage to encourage student engagement.

Evaluation of Email Interactions with RN to BSN Admissions Staff

Email Interactions Performance

Best Practice Behavior	Evaluation*	Audited Behavior	Recommended Action
Inquiry submission triggers automated or staff-written email within 24 hours.	✔ ✖		
Emails feel personalized and encourage prospective student to continue process, whether from staff or automated lead management.			
Introductory emails address all or some of: how to complete application and FAFSA, FAQs, testimonials and outcomes, financial aid, faculty profiles, curriculum.			
Additional emails address all or some of: testimonials, career outcomes, faculty profiles.			
Email frequency aligns with program type (e.g., maximum once per week for bachelor's degree). • See Communications Plan Builder for program types and aligned communication features.			
Quick poll questions within email communication collect additional prospect information.			
Program admissions staff reply to all emails promptly and answer questions directly.			
All emails include links to the program webpage and application.			

*A completed audit will analyze how well the requesting institution executes each best practice behavior.

Source: EAB analysis.

Evaluation of Phone Interactions with RN to BSN's Admissions Staff

Phone and Phone-Related Interactions Performance

Best Practice Behavior	Evaluation*	Audited Behavior	Recommended Action
Recruitment staff invite prospective student to schedule a phone conversation. Alternatively, if staff do not offer, they agree to prospective student's request for phone conversation.	✔ ✖		
Recruitment staff schedule phone conversation, and conduct the conversation as planned.			
Recruitment staff plan for phone conversation, including what to share if prospective student does not have questions. Provided information includes: program curriculum, application process, and student outcomes.			
Recruitment staff ask about prospective student's background and professional goals, and address how program relates to those.			
Recruitment staff answer prospective student's questions thoroughly.			
Recruitment staff follow conversation with email, including relevant links or additional program information.			

*A completed audit will analyze how well the requesting institution executes each best practice behavior.

Source: EAB analysis.

eab.com

Interactions Log

Total time: 3.5 weeks

Researcher inquires via email on program webpage.
MM/DD/YYYY

Automated email response to confirm prospective student inquiry.
MM/DD/YYYY

Admissions staff sends an introductory email with program information.
MM/DD/YYYY

Researcher replies to the introductory email requesting a phone conversation.
MM/DD/YYYY

Admissions staff replies to the researcher's email requesting a phone conversation with a link to schedule an appointment.
MM/DD/YYYY

Admissions staff member sends an email cancelling the phone conversation due to illness.
MM/DD/YYYY

Researcher reschedules phone appointment for 11/30/2022.
MM/DD/YYYY

Admissions staff member conducts phone conversation with researcher.
MM/DD/YYYY

Key

● Interaction initiated by researcher

● Interaction initiated by program admissions staff

○ Automated email

Source: EAB analysis.

Evaluation of the RN to BSN's Web Presence

Web Presence Performance
Website URL:

Best Practice Behavior	Evaluation*	Audited Behavior	Recommended Action
Visitors can easily find information on: • Tuition and financial aid • Number of credits • Curriculum • Modality • Application deadline(s) and start date(s), or schedule • Student profile • Career outcomes	✔ ✖		
Visitors encounter program differentiators, including: • Program description and program value proposition • Courses and tracks • Thesis, capstone, or other experiential learning options • Expected time requirement • Academic success rate • Instructors • Accreditation or references to industry organizations			
Program webpage appeals to visitors with a case to "people like me" via text and images.			
Webpage includes program-specific FAQs.			

*A completed audit will analyze how well the requesting institution executes each best practice behavior.

Source: EAB analysis.

Evaluation of the RN to BSN's Web Presence (Cont.)

Web Presence Performance
Website URL:

Best Practice Behavior	Evaluation*	Audited Behavior	Recommended Action
Webpage features interactive tools (e.g., tuition calculator, course demo) to engage visitors.	✔ ✖		
Program web presence includes strong calls to action.			
Visitors see program-specific testimonials to simulate word of mouth recruitment.			

*A completed audit will analyze how well the requesting institution executes each best practice behavior.

Ensure Program Webpage Aligns with Digital Accessibility Standards

When digital content is not accessible, prospective students unable to access your resources will not inquire about or apply to your institution. Further, by limiting your digital reach, you also risk litigation and lawsuits. Based on a study by WebAIM, 98% of the world's top one million websites do not offer full accessibility, and of those million nearly 50,000 were in the education space.

When creating online content, institutions should follow the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to ensure all web content is accessible and to increase webpage engagement. Build webpages that appeal to individuals with visual, auditory, and other sensory needs to increase your institution's reach. Arizona State University's Web Accessibility Audit tool and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights' video series on digital access in education provide further resources.

Consider Using Outcomes Focused Marketing Messages to Attract Career-Oriented Students

With the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the economy, adult learners place more importance on the return on their education and may demonstrate hesitation to pursue a degree with uncertain job prospects. Ensure marketing materials emphasize potential career outcomes to convey the program's professional value. For example, consider including program graduates' employers or average salaries on the program webpage. See EAB research Competing on Student Outcome to Attract Today's Career Changer and Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on the Adult Learner Mindset for more information.

Source: EAB analysis.

Evaluation of the RN to BSN's Mobile Presence

Mobile Presence Performance
Website URL:

Best Practice Behavior	Evaluation*	Audited Behavior	Recommended Action
Mobile program webpage is geared to serve prospective students.	✔ ✖		
Program webpage can be viewed without zooming.			
Every page offers a link at the top back to the homepage.			
Within 20 seconds of viewing the site, prospective students can find: • Search • Program differentiators • Calls to action			
Calls to action seen without scrolling include: apply, click to call/email, request information.			
Webpage offers more than three calls to action, framed in active language, such as: • Apply/enroll • Request information, connect, etc. • Call • Email • Register for/attend an event • Make an appointment • Browse career resources • Explore commitment details (e.g., price, time to completion) • Evaluate credit transfer • Test the online platform or a course • Find a location			
Contact information (i.e., phone numbers, email addresses) is interactive so students can click to email or call.			

*A completed audit will analyze how well the requesting institution executes each best practice behavior.

Source: EAB analysis.

EAB

Appendix

- Sample Curricula
- Research Process and Sources

Sample RN to BSN Curricula

RN to BSN, Institution A

[Course names redacted]

RN to BSN, Institution B

[Course names redacted]

RN to BSN, Institution C

[Course names redacted]

RN to BSN, Institution D

[Course names redacted]

Research Process and Sources

EAB conducted a five-part analysis to identify opportunities to update an existing program's curriculum, positioning, and recruitment practices.

All workforce demand data was collected from Lightcast, EAB's labor market intelligence partner. Competitive data was collected from the National Center for Education Statistics via the Lightcast Analyst platform.

1 Step One: Labor Market Analysis

This report includes an analysis of external labor market needs to determine demand for program graduates. Researchers evaluate historical job postings and future employment projections to determine if the labor market supports program growth.

2 Step Two: Competitive Landscape Analysis

The volume and growth of degree conferrals serves as an indicator of student demand for the program being evaluated. Researchers use conferral data to determine if the selected program is facing a crowded market or if it may struggle to attract students due to declining student interest.

3 Step Three: Comparator Program Analysis

Researchers analyzed how the design and curricula of similar programs aligns with the program being audited. The researchers collect information publicly available on profiled programs' webpages.

4 Step Four: Prospective Student Experience Audit Process

To audit the inquiry experience, researchers create a fictional persona and submit an inquiry via a call to action on the program webpage (e.g., "Request More Information"). The researchers participate in any email and/or phone correspondence offered by program recruitment staff. The inquiry audit process typically takes between four to six weeks. This exercise provides insight into the prospective student's experience when researching programs.

5 Step Five: Web and Mobile Presence Audit

To audit the program's web and mobile presence, researchers visit the program page on a laptop computer and a mobile device. The researchers compare page content and navigability to benchmarks developed by EAB.

 eab.com

Research Questions

The requesting partner asked:

- How has demand for graduates of my program evolved over time?
- In which industries should the program prepare students to work?
- Which employers demonstrate the greatest demand for graduates?
- What skills should the program teach to prepare students to meet employer demand?
- In what positions do employers demonstrate the greatest need for graduates?
- How many students graduate from similar programs regionally, and how has this changed over time?
- How are similar programs structured?
- How are similar programs delivered?
- What experiential or practical learning do similar programs offer?
- What accreditation do similar programs hold?
- Does the program website landing page align with best practices in marketing and web presence? How can the program landing page be improved?
- Does the program inquiry process align with best practices in recruitment? How can our lead management during the inquiry phase be improved?

Research Limitations

This analysis evaluates employer demand and conferrals for bachelor's-level nursing professionals overall, not specific to a degree completion program. Employers do not distinguish between registered nurses who earned their bachelor's degree via a four-year or degree completion program and thus labor market data reflects all bachelor's program graduate demand. Reported degree conferrals similarly do not distinguish whether graduates entered a four-year or degree completion program, only that they completed a bachelor's degree.

Due to the self-reported nature of data to the NCES, some comparable and competitor programs may report completions for a bachelor's-level nursing program under a less relevant CIP code not included in this analysis. As a result, the reported completions under the chosen CIP code "Nursing/ Registered Nurse (RN, ASN, BSN, MSN)" (51.3801) in this report may not accurately represent the number of students who completed similar competitor programs.

Definitions

"CIP" code refers to the Classification of Instructional Programming code.

Profiled Institutions

The Forum profiled programs via secondary research at the following institutions. The Forum profiled online programs with a similar curricular focus as the existing program at the requesting institution.

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Carnegie Classification
Institution A	Doctoral Universities: Higher Research Activity
Institution B	Special Focus Four-Year: Other Health Professions Schools
Institution C	Doctoral Universities: Moderate Research Activity
Institution D	Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs

Source: EAB analysis. National Center for Education Statistics.

Data Sources

Lightcast
https://lightcast.io/

This report includes data made available through EAB's partnership with Lightcast (formerly known as Emsi Burning Glass), a labor market analytics firm serving higher education, economic development, and industry leaders in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Lightcast curates and maintains the most comprehensive labor market data sets available for academic program planning, providing real-time job posting data, workforce and alumni outcomes data, and traditional government sources of data. Under this partnership, EAB may use Lightcast proprietary Analyst™ and Alumni Insight™ tools to answer partner questions about employer demand, the competitive landscape, in-demand skills, postings versus actual hires, and skills gaps between job postings and professionals in the workforce. The Lightcast tools also provide EAB with in-depth access to unsuppressed, zip-code-level government data for occupations, industries, programs, and demographics. For more complete descriptions of the Lightcast tools, visit:

• https://lightcast.io/solutions/education/analyst
• https://lightcast.io/solutions/education/alumni-pathways

To learn more about Lightcast and its software and services, please contact Bob Hieronymus, Vice President of Business Development at bob.hieronymus@lightcast.io.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) core postsecondary education data collection program. Information is collected annually from all providers of postsecondary education in fundamental areas such as enrollment, program completion and graduation rates, institutional costs, student financial aid, and human resources.

Data collected through IPEDS is publicly released and can be accessed through the IPEDS Data Center by postsecondary education institutions and the general public. The IPEDS Data Center is designed as a centralized, web-based tool for the retrieval and analysis of IPEDS data, the system allows users to access and evaluate institutional data using a wide-range of analytical features that includes the ability to construct customized data sets, download full data files, and create statistical and trend analyses reports.

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/

EAB Research and Insights Library
https://eab.com/research-and-insights/

Next Steps from this Program Analysis

Follow These Steps to Begin Revitalizing Your Program

Internal

Share the report with relevant leadership and faculty on campus. Use the recommended EAB resources below to guide conversations with stakeholders and make informed decisions.

Streamline your webpage to ensure prospects have easy access to decision-supporting program details. Drawing upon industry best practices from across the public and private sectors, EAB's Web Presence Optimization Toolkit features a suite of tools focused on actionable strategies for institutional leaders to use in assessing the current performance of their site, recognizing gaps in functionality, creating content that is appealing, and identifying opportunities for targeted investments.

Refine your communication strategy for program prospects to increase the impact of prospects' interactions with recruitment staff. Refer to EAB's Lead and inquiry Management Software Toolkit for guidance on developing and implementing an effective communications plan to field prospect inquiries. This toolkit is also designed to help partners understand the capabilities of the most prominent software options, assess which solution is best suited to meet their needs, and prepare institutions to accelerate implementation.

Develop resources that encourage alumni, current students, and others associated with your program to serve as informal program ambassadors and promote the program through their individual networks. Among the various marketing and recruitment strategies best suited for schools, word of mouth marketing remains one of the most effective, affordable techniques available. Campus admissions teams can use EAB's Word-of-Mouth Marketing Toolkit to develop a structured approach to word-of-mouth marketing in an effort to maximize its impact on recruitment.

Highlight expected outcomes for program graduates in marketing materials and the program webpage. To better attract adult learners, recruitment staff need to understand adult learners' evolving expectations as consumers and unique focus on program outcomes. EAB's Outcomes Marketing Toolkit helps you audit your current program advertisements, program webpages, and unit or institutional homepage to ensure that you are communicating program outcomes clearly.

Align programming to fit the needs of the adult student market. Today's workforce requires short-format programs more than ever. However, too often campus stakeholders chase innovative-sounding credentials like badges or micro-degrees, rather than focusing their programs on the skills these programs will confer. Use EAB's Designing Credentials to Meet Adult Student Needs Roadmap to determine the audience for your program and how to best serve that market.

In Partnership with EAB

Request a project debrief call with EAB research team to review the report. Meet with members of our research team to discuss the findings of the report and potential next steps.

Evaluate the labor market and competitive landscape to identify new program opportunities with high growth potential. Request a Market Opportunity Scan to guide decision-making for new program development.

EAB

Education's Trusted Partner to Help Schools and Students Thrive

Your Imperatives Determine Ours

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Prepare Your Institution for the Future
Executive guidance rooted in research to support your strategic priorities

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT

Achieve Your Enrollment and Growth Goals
Tailored partnerships powered by a recruitment ecosystem with unrivaled reach to enroll your future classes

STUDENT SUCCESS

Build a Student-Centric Campus
Technology trusted by 850 schools to retain, graduate, and empower more students

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Advance DEI on Campus and in Your Community
Technology, research, and bold initiatives to strengthen your DEI strategy and eliminate equity gaps

DATA AND ANALYTICS

Embrace Digital Transformation
Data and analytics solutions built for higher education to guide decisions and accelerate innovation

We partner with 2,500+ institutions to accelerate progress and enable lasting change.

95%+ of our partners return to us year after year because of results we achieve, together.

ABOUT EAB

At EAB, our mission is to make education smarter and our communities stronger. We work with thousands of institutions to drive transformative change through data-driven insights and best-in-class capabilities. From kindergarten to college to career, EAB partners with leaders and practitioners to accelerate progress and drive results across five major areas: enrollment, student success, institutional strategy, data analytics, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We work with each partner differently, tailoring our portfolio of research, technology, and marketing and enrollment solutions to meet the unique needs of every leadership team, as well as the students and employees they serve. Learn more at eab.com.