

American Association
of Colleges of Nursing



Assessing the Impact of Federal Loan Limits on Post- Baccalaureate Nursing Education: Perspectives from Deans and Students

December 2025

AACN 2025 Survey of Deans on Impact of Proposed Loan Limits

Executive Summary

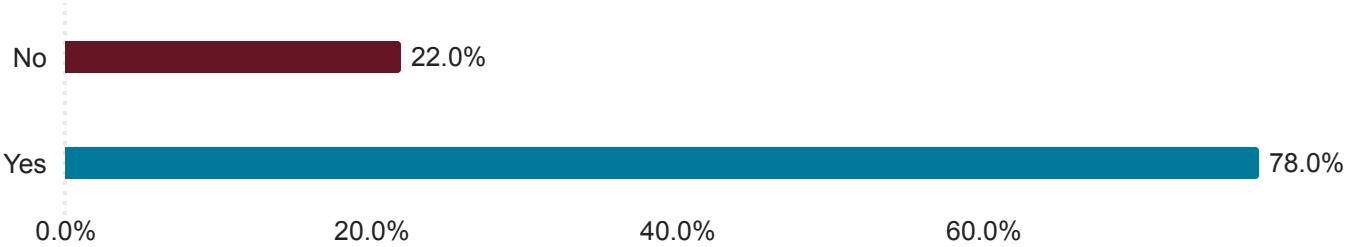
In November 2025 AACN conducted a survey to assess the impact that new "graduate degree" loan caps would have on nursing education. Deans from 909 AACN member schools were invited to participate. Of these 469, or 51.5%, of schools responded.

Key Findings:

- 78% of respondents said that the \$20,500 annual loan cap will negatively impact their post-baccalaureate enrollment.
- 70% of respondents said that the \$100,000 lifetime loan cap will negatively impact their post-baccalaureate enrollment.
- 77% of respondents said that the new loan caps will negatively impact faculty at their college of nursing.
- 71% of respondents said they anticipate the new loan caps will have negative downstream consequences on their baccalaureate enrollment.

Findings

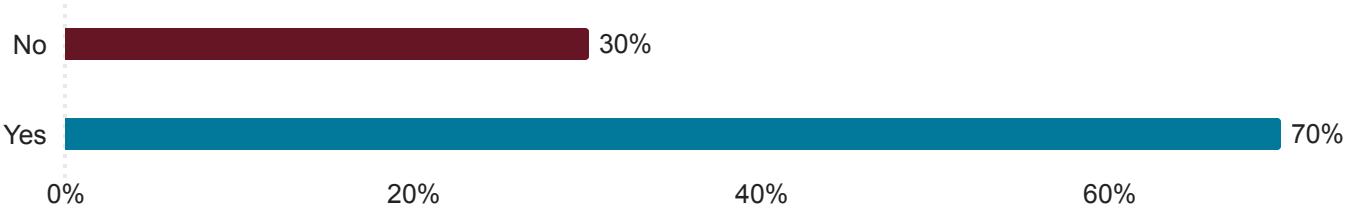
Will the new loan caps of \$20,500 annually for "graduate degree" students negatively impact post-baccalaureate enrollment in your college of nursing?



Options Responses

| | |
|-----|-----|
| No | 103 |
| Yes | 366 |

Will the new loan caps of \$100,000 aggregate lifetime limit for "graduate degree" students negatively impact post-baccalaureate enrollment in your college of nursing?



Options Responses

| | |
|-----|-----|
| No | 141 |
| Yes | 328 |

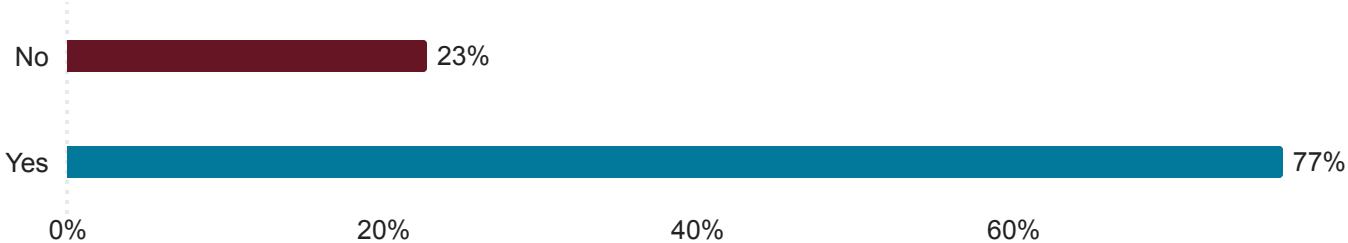


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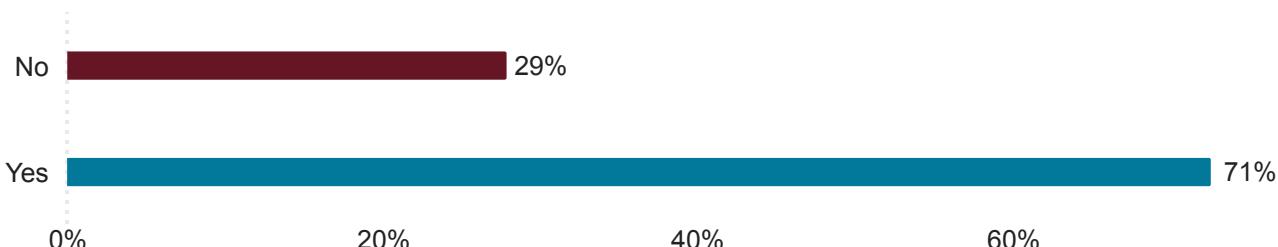
The Voice of Academic Nursing

AACN 2025 Survey of Deans on Impact of Proposed Loan Limits

Will the new graduate degree student loan caps of \$20,500 annually/\$100,000 aggregate lifetime limit negatively impact faculty in your college of nursing?



Do you anticipate any negative downstream effects from these new student loan caps on your baccalaureate programs?



AACN 2025 Survey of Students on Impact of Proposed Loan Limits

Executive Summary

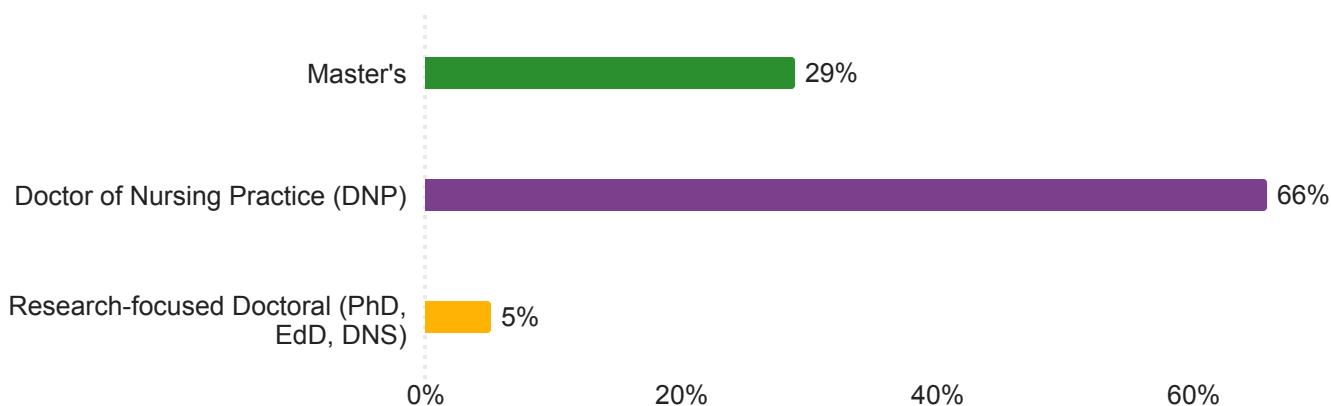
In November 2025 AACN conducted a survey to assess the impact that new "graduate degree" loan caps would have on nursing education. 1,713 graduate students from 330 schools responded to the survey.

Key Findings:

- 82% of respondents said that the \$20,500 annual loan cap will negatively impact their ability to finance their education.
- 81% of respondents said that the \$100,000 aggregate federal loan cap will negatively impact their ability to finance their education.

Findings

Degree respondents are currently pursuing



Program Structure of Respondents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Traditional Two-Semester Academic Year (Fall/Spring) | 27% |
| Other Structure, Trimester (Fall/Spring/Summer) or Quarters | 73% |

Average Annual Cost of Post-Baccalaureate Nursing Education*

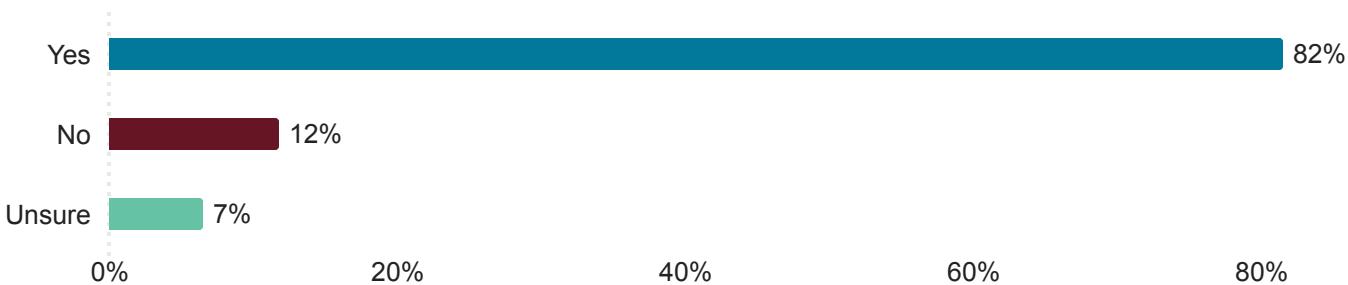
Mean cost: \$38,542

Median cost: \$37,040

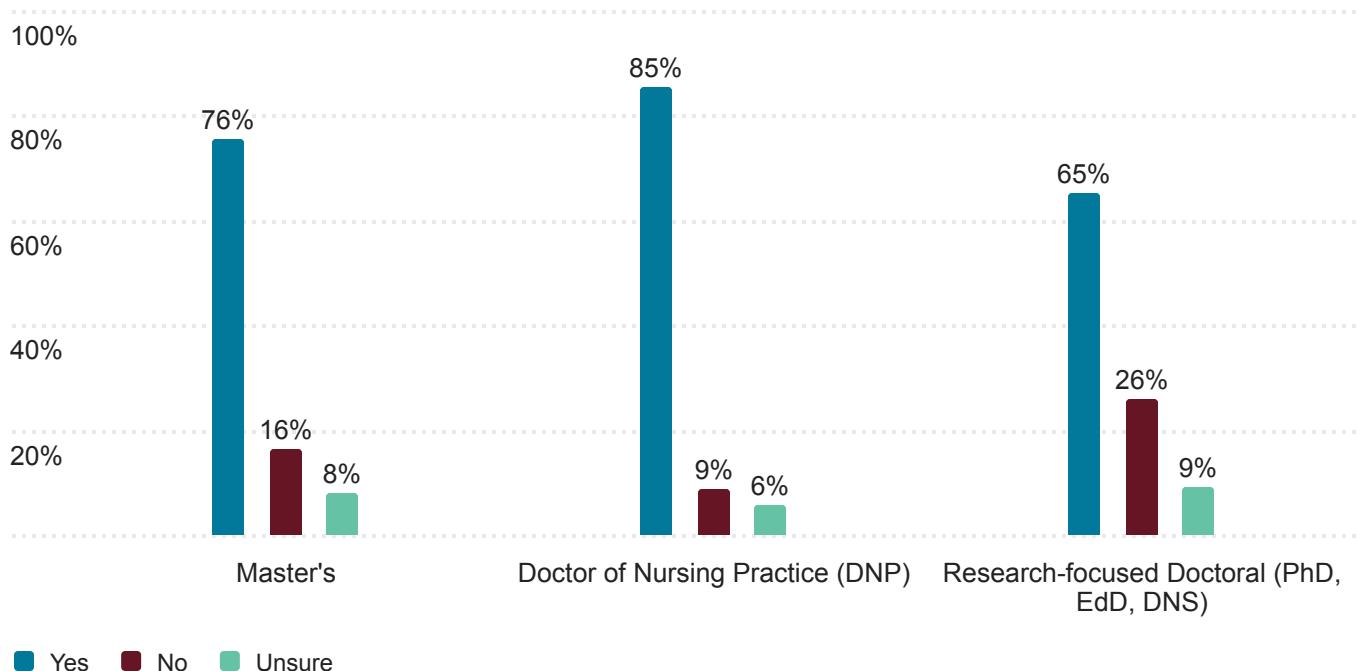
*Calculated by multiplying the per semester total tuition and fees by the program structure (two or three semesters). Data includes a range of graduate nursing specialties.

AACN 2025 Survey of Students on Impact of Proposed Loan Limits

Do you expect the new annual federal loan limits of \$20,500 to impact your ability to finance your education?

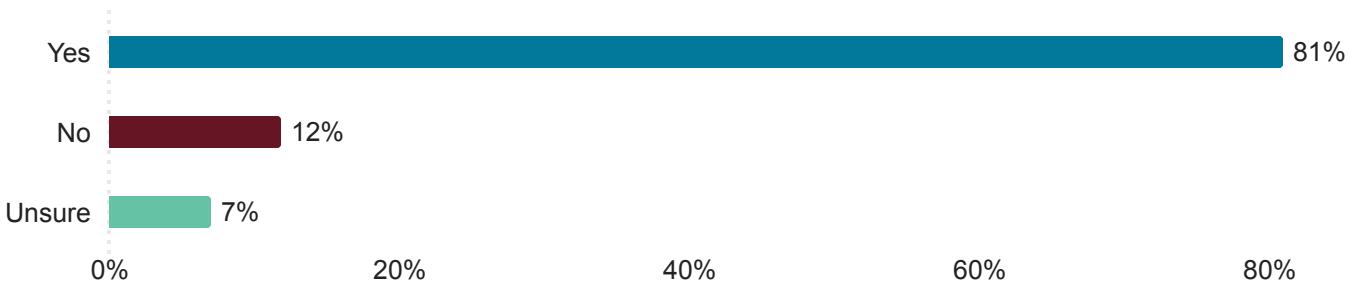


Do you expect the new annual federal loan limits of \$20,500 to impact your ability to finance your education? By degree type



AACN 2025 Survey of Students on Impact of Proposed Loan Limits

Do you expect the new aggregate (lifetime) federal loan limits of \$100,000 to impact your ability to finance your education?



Do you expect the new aggregate (lifetime) federal loan limits of \$100,000 to impact your ability to finance your education? By degree type

