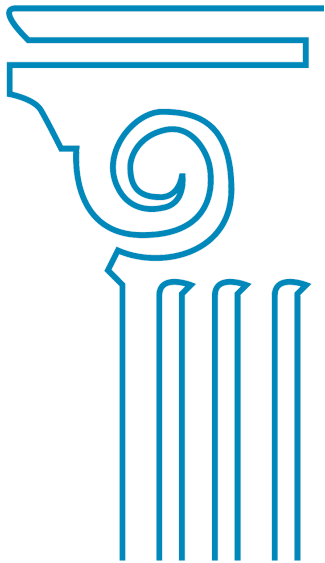


American Association
of Colleges of Nursing



Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions for Academic Year 2025-2026

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The Voice of Academic Nursing



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Faculty Vacancy Survey Report, 2025

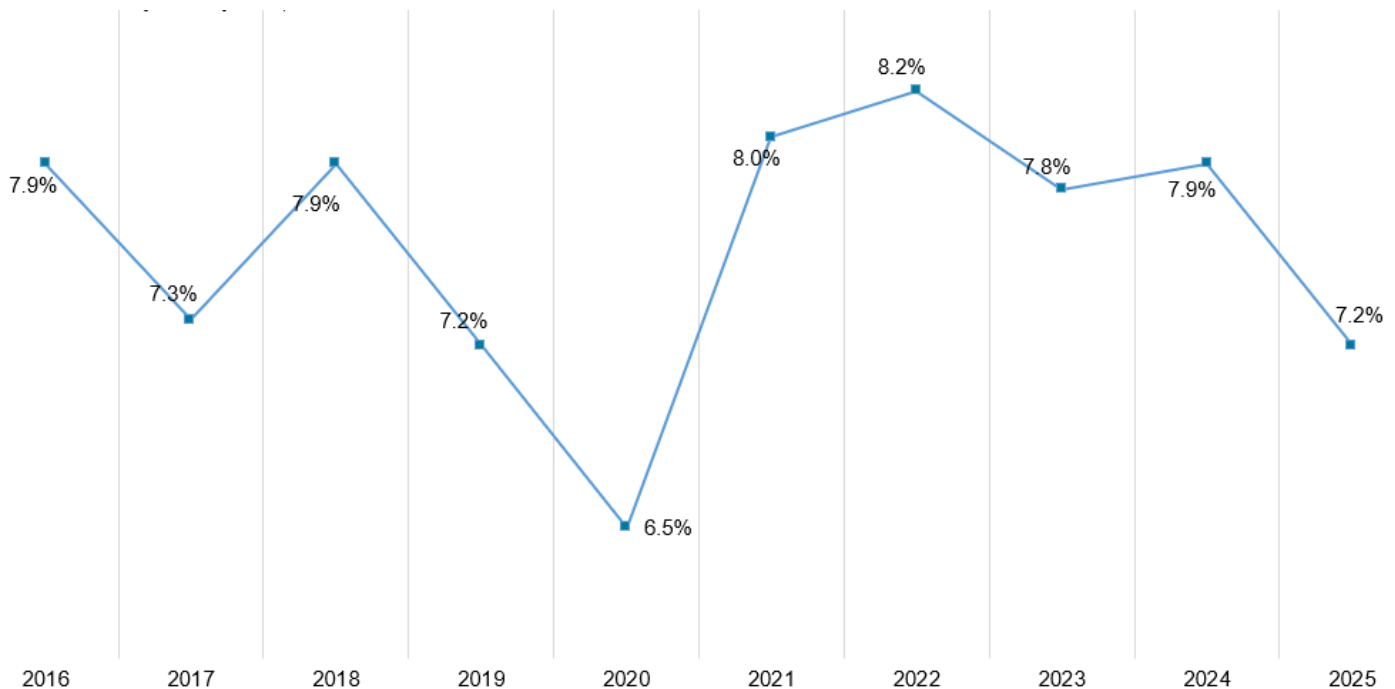
Executive Summary

As part of our work to follow key trends in academic nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) tracks the faculty vacancy rate at U.S. schools of nursing offering baccalaureate and higher degrees. This year, 1,075 schools were surveyed with 863 schools submitting responses (80.3% response rate). In 2024, 808 schools responded resulting in an overall 74.3% response rate. For the 2025 survey, 737 respondents were member schools (85.4%) and 126 were non-member schools (14.6%).

Key findings from the 2025 Faculty Vacancy Survey

- The overall vacancy rate was **7.2%**, a decrease from the 2024 rate of 7.9%.
- The vacancy rate for schools reporting vacancies was 9.6%, a decrease from the 2024 rate of 9.9%

Overall Vacancy Rate by Year, 2016-2025



Schools reported 471 (29.7%) vacancies that have been vacant for more than one year.

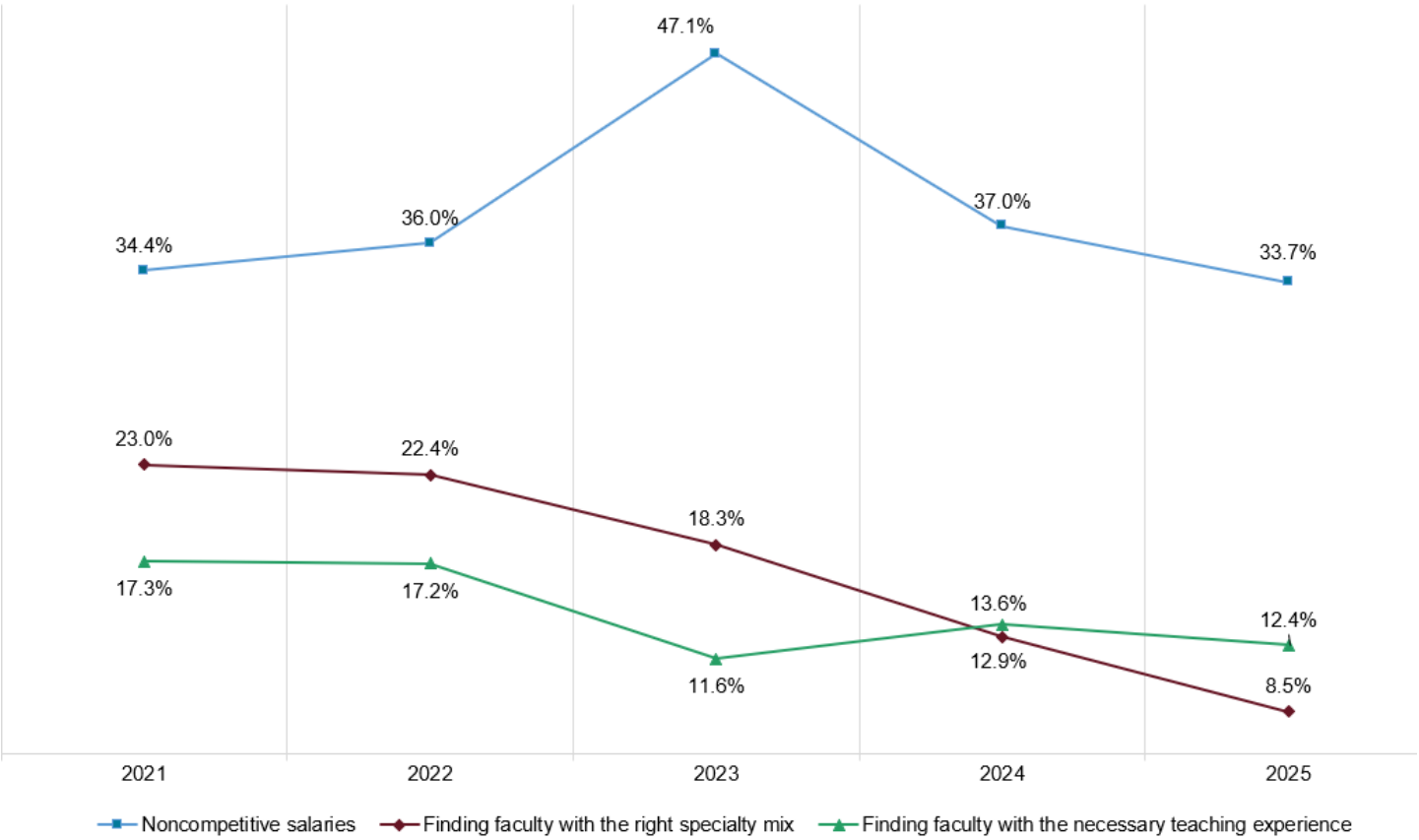
80.9% of all vacancies required or preferred a doctoral degree, a decrease from 2024 (84%).

The most common specialties for vacant positions were Generalist/no specialty (962, 60.6%), Other (218, 13.7%), and Family Nurse Practitioner (101, 6.4%). Nurse Practitioner specialties were a total of 346 (21.8%) of all vacancies.

The most common issues reported by schools (n = 863) related to faculty recruitment were **noncompetitive salaries** (291, 33.7%), **finding faculty with the necessary teaching experience** (107, 12.4%), and **finding faculty with the right specialty mix** (73, 8.5%).

As seen in the graph below, the issues related to faculty recruitment have remained relatively steady for the last five years. During this period the same issues - noncompetitive salaries, finding faculty with the necessary teaching experience, and finding faculty with the right specialty mix - have remained the three most critical issues for schools.

Most Critical Issues by Year, 2021-2025



Introduction

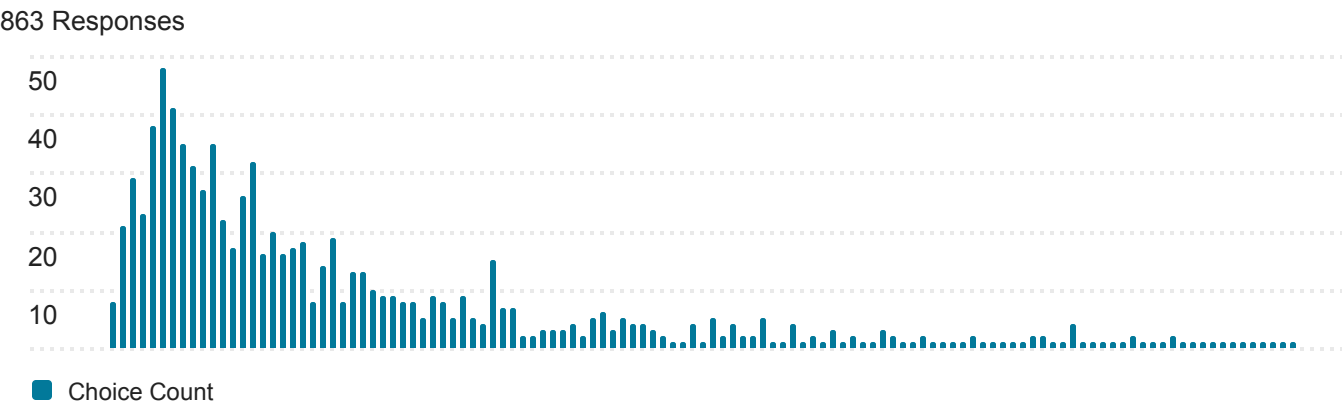
Since 2000, AACN has collected data from schools of nursing to assess the current state of the nursing faculty shortage. The annual Faculty Vacancy Survey collects data on budgeted but unfilled full-time faculty positions by rank, tenure, and level of teaching. This year, the survey was sent to 1,075 nursing schools offering baccalaureate and graduate degrees, 863 of which responded. The subsequent findings are based on those 863 responses. This report contains the aggregate data collected from this survey. It does not contain institution-specific responses such as school name or the contact information for the person who responded to the survey. For any institution-specific data or contact information, please contact AACN at datarequest@aacnnursing.org.

Findings

Total Budgeted Full-Time Faculty Positions

What is the number of budgeted full-time faculty positions in your school of nursing for the coming academic year (2025-2026)? Please only include faculty who teach in baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs. Do not include those who only teach in associate programs. **The total number of full-time faculty positions is 21,993.**

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Responses	Sum
Budgeted Full-Time Faculty	0	373	25	14	863	21993



The x-axis for the above graph reflects the number of faculty reported by an institution. The y-axis represents the frequency with which a number of faculty was reported by an institution. The minimum faculty an institution reported having was zero, the maximum was 373, and the mean was 25.

Full-time Faculty Vacancies

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had any vacancies within their department.

The number of schools that responded 'yes' to whether or not they had vacancies (478 reported vacancies):

863 Responses

Field	Choice Count	
Yes	55%	478
No	45%	385
Total		863

The total number of vacancies reported by schools was 1,588, with an average of 3.3 per school:

478 Responses

Field	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
Budgeted Full-Time Vacancies	28.00	3.32	3.89	15.15	478	1588.00

Respondents who reported vacancies were asked how many of those vacant positions have been vacant for more than one year (471 faculty positions vacant for more than one year):

478 Responses

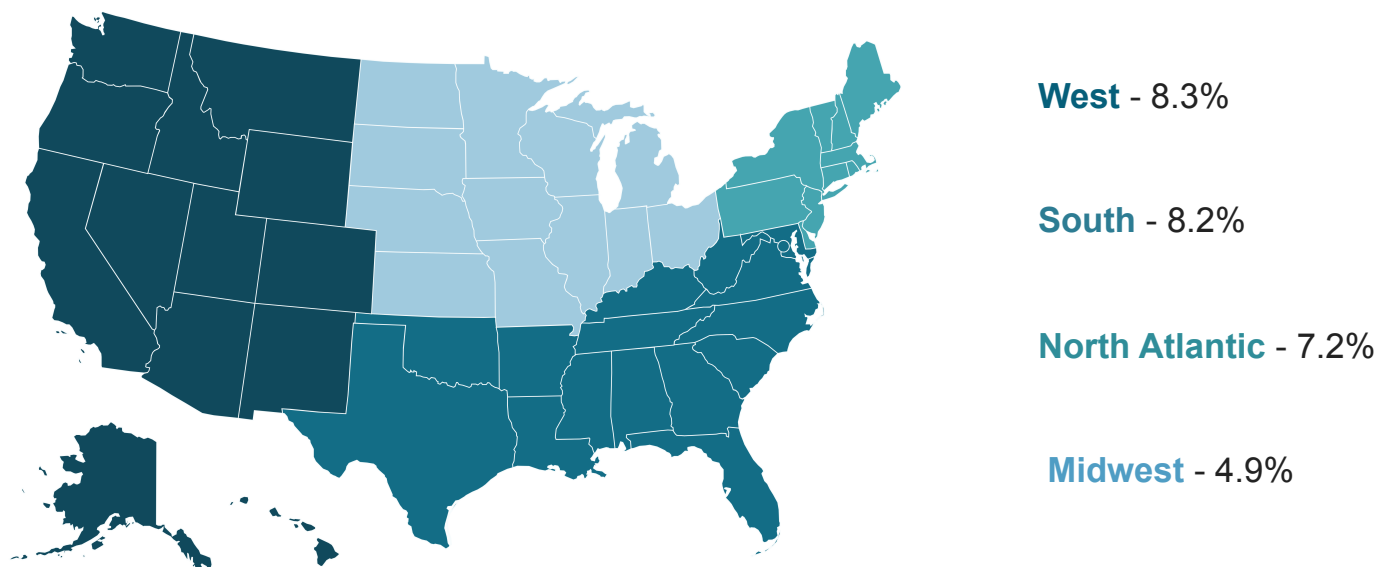
Field	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
Positions Vacant for More than One Year	15.00	0.99	1.72	2.95	478	471.00

Schools that reported no full-time budgeted vacancies were asked if they need additional faculty to support their programs (150 schools said yes):

385 Responses

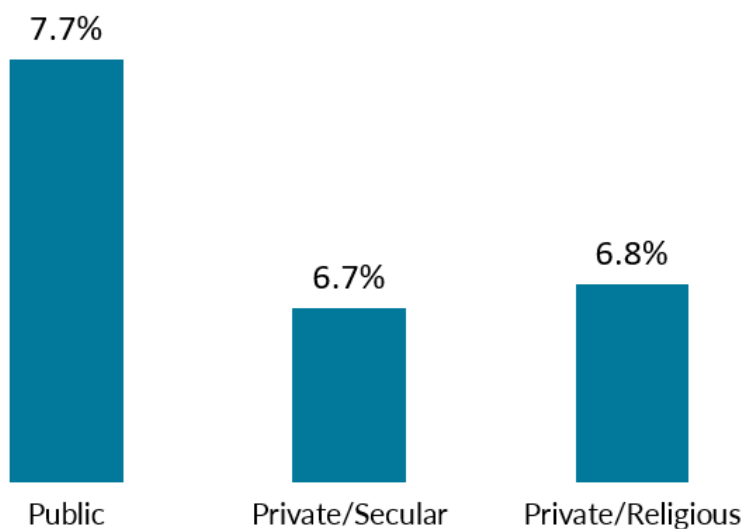
Field	Choice Count	
Yes	39%	150
No	61%	235
Total		385

Vacancy Rate by Region



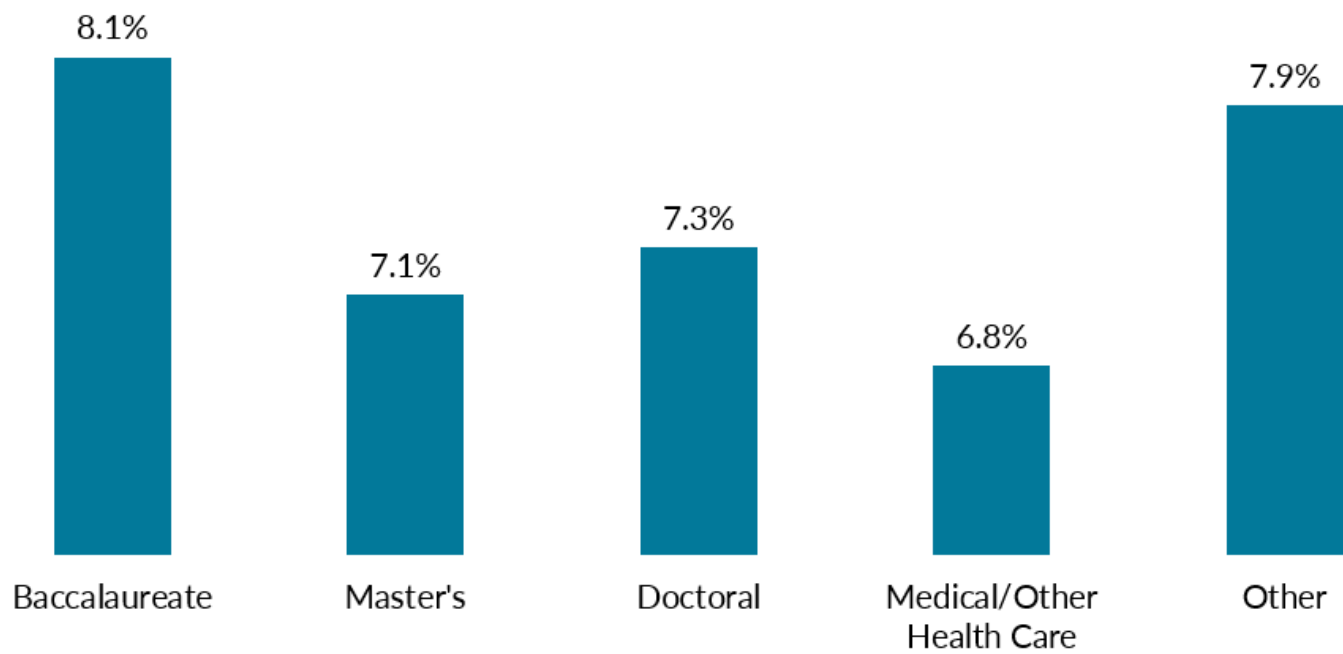
The overall vacancy rate by region is similar to 2024, when the West rate was 9.8%, the South was 8.6%, the North Atlantic was 7.8%, and the Midwest was 5.6%.

Vacancy Rate by Institutional Type



In 2024 the vacancy rate for public institutions was 8.3%, private/secular was 7.0%, and private/religious was 7.9%.

Vacancies by Carnegie Classification

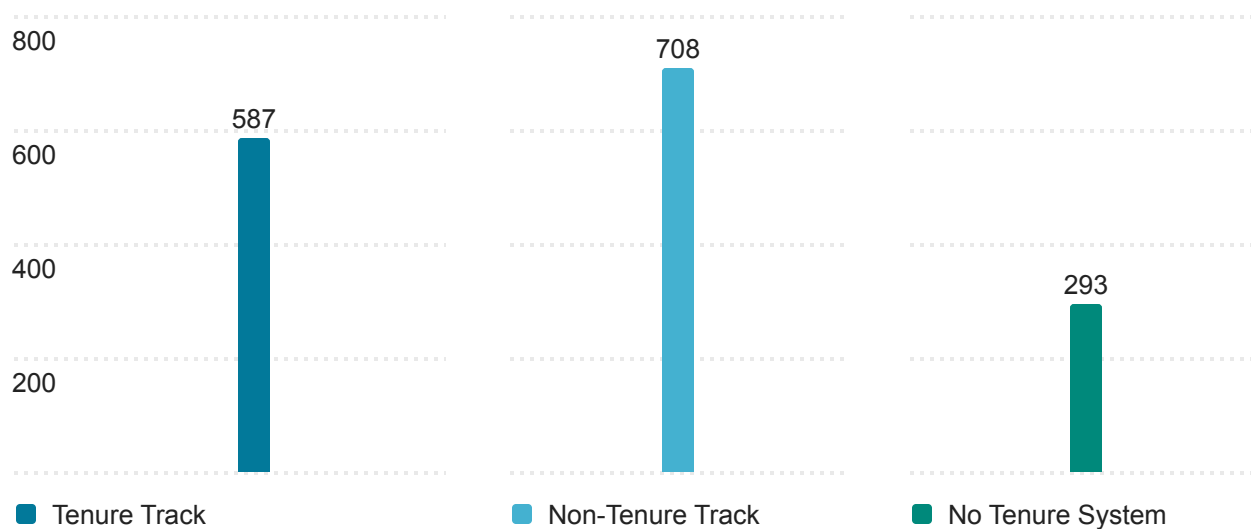


Characteristics of Vacant Positions

Within the 863 institutions responding to the survey, a total of **1,588** faculty vacancies were reported in 2025.

The totals by tenure status were: 587 (37.0%) tenure track vacancies, 708 (44.6%) non-tenure track, and 293 (18.5%) at schools with no tenure system.

Vacant Positions by Tenure Status



Degree Requirements

Of the 1,588 faculty vacancies reported, the majority of positions required an earned doctorate (772, 48.6%). 512 faculty vacancies (32.2%) required a master's degree in nursing but preferred a doctorate, and 289 (18.2%) required a master's degree in nursing.

Faculty Vacancies by Degree Type

Field	Sum
Research-Focused Doctoral (PhD; in nursing or related field) required	197
Doctor of Nursing Practice required	124
Doctoral Degree (PhD in nursing or related field, or DNP) required	451
Master's Degree in Nursing required, Doctoral preferred	512
Master's Degree in Nursing required	289
Other	15

Incoming Level of Appointment

Of the 1,588 vacant faculty positions, 43 (2.7%) were posted at the professor level, 100 (6.3%) at the professor or associate professor level, 28 (1.8%) at the associate professor level, 277 (17.4%) at the associate professor or assistant professor level, 373 (23.5%) at the assistant professor level, 157 (9.9%) at the assistant professor or instructor/lecturer level, 256 (16.1%) at the instructor or lecturer level, and 354 (22.3%) for any rank.

Faculty Vacancies by Incoming Level of Appointment (n = 478)

Field	Sum
Professor	43
Professor or Associate Professor	100
Associate Professor	28
Associate Professor or Assistant Professor	277
Assistant Professor	373
Assistant Professor or Instructor/Lecturer	157
Instructor/Lecturer	256
Open Rank	354

Level of Teaching

For the level of teaching expected of faculty positions for which there were vacancies, the most were at the baccalaureate only level (603, 37.9%). 59 (3.7%) positions required teaching master's students exclusively, 36 (2.3%) doctoral students only, 84 (5.3%) DNP students only, 198 (12.5%) baccalaureate and master's students, 9 (0.6%) baccalaureate and PhD students, 77 (4.8%) baccalaureate and DNP students, 10 (0.6%) master's and PhD students, 69 (4.3%) master's and DNP students, 26 (1.6%) DNP and PhD students, 157 (9.9%) teach baccalaureate, master's and DNP students, 33 (2.1%) teach baccalaureate, master's, and PhD students, 173 (10.9%) all students, 23 (1.4%) with no teaching responsibilities, and 32 (2.0%) with other teaching responsibilities.

Faculty Vacancies by Level of Teaching (n = 478)

Field	Sum
Baccalaureate Only	603
Master's Only	59
Doctoral (PhD) Only	36
Doctoral (DNP) Only	84
Baccalaureate and Master's	198
Baccalaureate and PhD	9
Baccalaureate and DNP	77
Master's and PhD	10
Master's and DNP	69
DNP and PhD	26
Baccalaureate, Master's, and DNP	157
Baccalaureate, Master's, and PhD	33
Baccalaureate, Master's, PhD, and DNP	173
No Teaching Responsibilities	23
Other	32

Instructional Responsibilities

Of the 1,588 vacant faculty positions, most teach didactic, clinical, and lab simulation courses (673, 42.4%). 329 (20.7%) only teach didactic courses, 306 (19.3%) teach both didactic and clinical courses, 137 (8.6%) teach didactic and lab/simulation courses, 40 (2.5%) teach only clinical courses, 37 (2.3%) teach clinical and lab/simulation courses, 33 (2.1%) have no teaching responsibilities, 23 (1.4%) teach only lab/simulation courses, and 10 (0.6%) have other teaching responsibilities.

Faculty Vacancies by Instructional Responsibilities (n = 478)

Field	Sum
Didactic Only	329
Clinical Only	40
Lab/Simulation Only	23
Didactic and Clinical	306
Didactic and Lab Simulation	137
Clinical and Lab Simulation	37
Didactic Clinical and Lab Simulation	673
No Teaching Area	33
Other Teaching Area	10

Specialty Type

Of the 1,588 vacant faculty positions, 962 (60.6%) were general or had no specialty area, 44 (2.8%) were in nurse anesthesia, 11 (0.7%) were in nurse midwifery, 7 (0.4%) were for certified nurse specialists, 101 (6.4%) were for Family Nurse Practitioners, 15 (0.9%) were for Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioners, 21 (1.3%) were for Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioners, 18 (1.1%) were for Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioners, 13 (0.8%) were for Pediatric Acute Care Nurse Practitioners, 3 (0.2%) were for Neonatal Nurse Practitioners, 22 (1.4%) were for Women's Health Nurse Practitioners, and 218 (13.7%) were for other specialties.

Faculty Vacancies by Specialty Type (n = 478)

Field	Sum
General/No Specialty Area	962
Nurse Anesthesia	44
Nurse Midwifery	11
Nurse Practitioner (Any Specialty)	82
Family NP	101
Adult Gerontology Primary Care NP	15
Adult Gerontology Acute Care NP	21
Pediatric Primary Care NP	18
Pediatric Acute Care NP	13
Psychiatric & Mental Health NP	71
Neonatal NP	3
Women's Health NP	22
CNS	7
Other	218

Common 'Other' specialties include medical surgery, obstetrics/women's health, behavioral and mental health, and leadership. Several respondents also noted that vacant positions were open to a variety of specialties.

Barriers to Hiring Full-Time Faculty

Schools (n = 150) needing additional full-time faculty but have no vacancies were asked their reasons for having no budgeted vacant positions.

Field	% of Responses	Responses
Insufficient funds to hire new faculty	61%	91
Administrative constraints around hiring additional full-time faculty	51%	77
Preference to use adjunct or part-time faculty rather than hiring full-time faculty with benefits	37%	56
Unable to recruit qualified faculty because of competition for jobs with other marketplaces	32%	48
Qualified applicants for faculty positions are unavailable in your geographic area	23%	34
Other (please specify):	20%	30

'Other' reasons included hiring freezes and low or decreased enrollment.

Issues Related to Faculty Recruitment

Schools (n = 863) were asked to rank issues related to faculty recruitment from 1 to 12 with 1 being the most critical issue.

The table below includes the most critical issues schools indicated related to faculty recruitment (ranking = 1).

Most schools (291, 33.7%) selected noncompetitive salaries as the most critical issue with respect to faculty recruitment.

863 Responses

Field	Most Critical Issue		Total
Noncompetitive Salaries	33.72%	291	863
Finding faculty with the necessary teaching experience	12.40%	107	863
Finding faculty with the right specialty mix	8.46%	73	863
Other (please specify):	8.11%	70	863
Limited pool of PhD prepared faculty	7.88%	68	863
Finding faculty willing/able to teach clinical courses	6.72%	58	863
Finding faculty willing/able to conduct research	6.60%	57	863
Finding faculty that match the institution's mission, values, and campus culture	4.29%	37	863
Limited pool of Master's prepared faculty	4.06%	35	863
Geographic area	3.82%	33	863
High faculty workload	3.71%	32	863
Institutional commitment to hiring historically underrepresented groups	0.23%	2	863

Issues Related to Faculty Recruitment, Continued

Common 'Other' responses included candidates wanting to teach online/remote, institutional budget cuts/restrictions, and competition with nursing practice and other nursing schools for qualified candidates.

Comparison to Previous Years, Most Critical Issues Related to Faculty Recruitment

In 2024 the most critical issues related to faculty recruitment were noncompetitive salaries (301, 40.1%), finding faculty with the necessary teaching experience (110, 14.7%), finding faculty with the right specialty mix (105, 14.1%), and limited pool of PhD prepared faculty (89, 12%).