



## Trends in Nursing Education in France

### 1. Brief Overview of Nursing Education Pathways

- In France, there is only one main category of nurses. Following the 2009 reform, nursing education has moved from vocational programmes to higher education (university) programmes, with a requirement for nurses to obtain a Bachelor degree to align these educational requirements with other European countries.
- Following completion of a nursing diploma and a few years of experience, registered nurses can pursue further training in some specialisations. This additional training may take the form of a professional degree or a master's degree, depending on the area of specialisation. requirements for different categories of nurses in France.

**Table 1. Nursing categories in France and related education requirement**

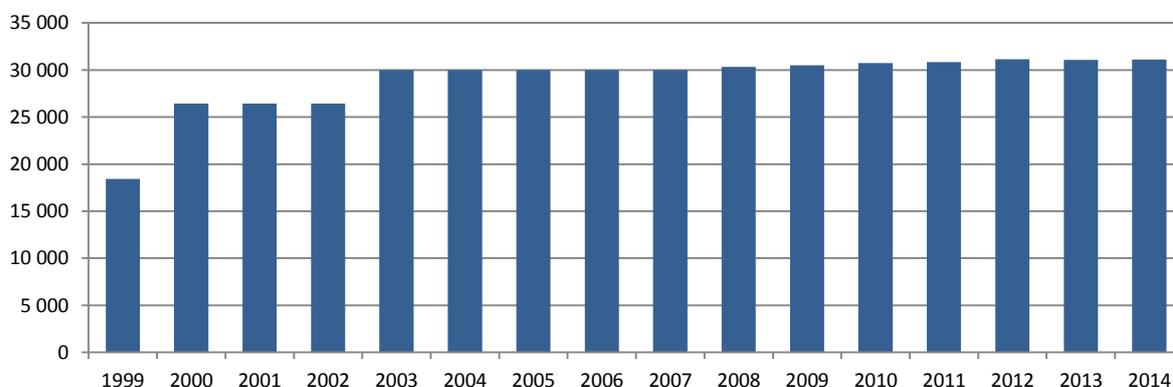
Nursing Education level	Nursing Title	Education Requirement
Initial Nursing Education	Nurse (general)	To become a Registered Nurse (RN) in France students must first take part in a competitive entrance exam at the <i>Institut de Formation en Soins Infirmiers (IFSI)</i> .  Upon successful completion of this exam, students enter a 3 year training programme, now provided in or in partnership with a university.
Advanced Nursing Education	Specialised Nurse  Advanced Nurse Practitioner	After 2 or more years of experience, Registered Nurses can go on to specialise in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating theatre nursing</li> <li>• Paediatric nursing</li> <li>• Nurse anaesthetist (since 2012, this diploma is recognised as a Master's degree)</li> <li>• Nurse Manager</li> <li>• Occupational Health Nursing</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced nurse practitioner (<i>Infirmière de la pratique avancée</i>) in either oncology or gerontology.</li> </ul>

Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/qualifications/docs/nurses/2000-study/nurses\\_france\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/nurses/2000-study/nurses_france_en.pdf).

## 2. Trends in Admissions to Nursing Schools

- Since 1979, the number of students admitted in nursing education programs has been subject to a *numerus clausus* policy (i.e., an annual quota) determined by the Ministry responsible for health. The number can fluctuate each year based on a needs assessment. The quotas are established both at the national level and at the regional level, with the number of students allocated among the different training institutions (universities) in each region.
- Since 1999, the number of students admitted in nursing education programmes in France has increased by 66%, rising from 18,436 in 1999/2000 to 31,128 in 2014/15. However, most of this growth took place in one year only (2000/01) when the number of student admitted rose by over 40%. This substantial increase was a response to the reduction of legal working hours to 35 hours per week and the expected retirement of a large number of nurses in the following years. Since 2003/2004 student intakes in nursing programmes have been fairly stable at about 30 000 per year (Figure 1).

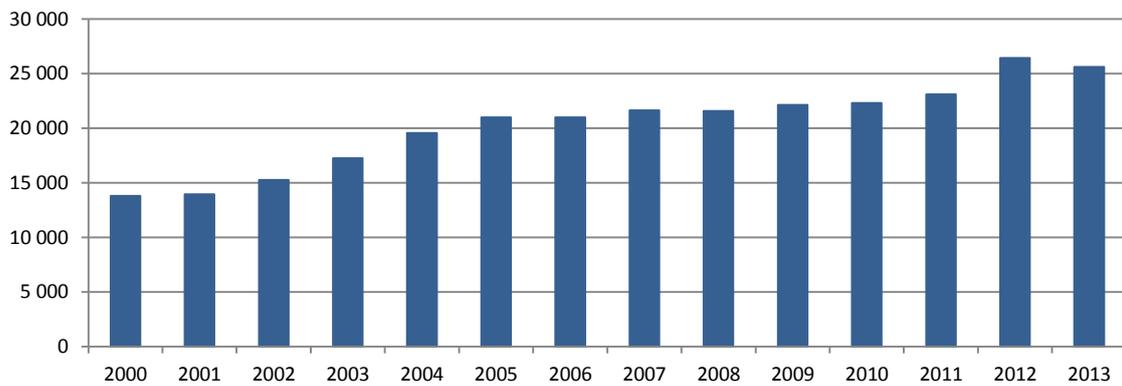
**Figure 1. Admissions to nurse education programmes, France, 1999 to 2014**



Sources: Arrêtés du ministre de la santé fixant pour chaque année scolaire le nombre d'étudiants à admettre en première année d'études préparatoires au diplôme d'État d'infirmier, parus au Journal Officiel (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>).

- Figure 2 shows the number of graduates from nursing education programmes in France from 2000 to 2013. Consistent with the growth in the number of students admitted, graduates from nursing programmes have increased during this period, particularly in 2003 and 2004 reflecting the large increase in student intakes in 2000/01. The number of nursing graduates also increased fairly markedly in 2012, exceeding 25 000 graduates. This is partly due to the 2009 reform moving nursing education programmes from vocational education and training to a university Bachelor's degree and bridges that were built to make it easier for students to transfer from other fields into nursing education (Debout, Chevallier-Darchen, Petit dit Dariel, & Rothan-Tondeur, 2012).

**Figure 2. Graduates from nurse training programmes, France, 2000 - 2013**



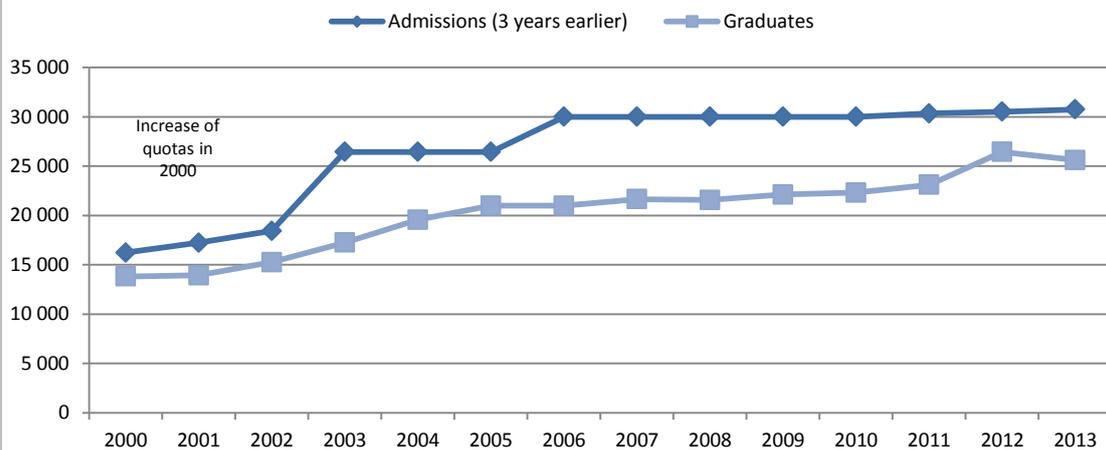
Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015.

**Box: What is the evidence about student dropout rates from nursing education programmes in France?**

It is possible to come up with a rough estimate of the dropout rate from nursing education programmes by looking at the gap between admission rates in programmes three years earlier and graduation rates in a given year (based on the assumption that it usually takes 3 years to complete the degree).

Figure 3 shows the trend in graduations and admissions three years earlier in France between 2000 and 2013. It suggests that between 2000 and 2002, more than 80% of students who enrolled in the first year of the programme obtained their diploma 3 years later. Between 2003 and 2011, this number dropped to approximately 75%, before going up again to over 80% in 2012 and 2013. The lower completion rate starting in 2003 may be due to the large increase in student intake in 2000 and the greater access to nursing education, possibly leading to the enrolment of more students who may not have been as motivated or able to complete the course.

**Figure 3. Admissions versus Graduates, France, 2000 - 2013**



Sources: Arrêtés du ministre de la santé fixant pour chaque année scolaire le nombre d'étudiants à admettre en première année d'études préparatoires au diplôme d'État d'infirmier, parus au Journal Officiel

(<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>).

OECD Health Statistics 2015.

### 3. Advanced Nursing Education

As already noted, nurses can pursue further specialisations in France. These additional studies are of various length and lead to various types of diploma. These specialisations include:

- Nursery nurse: 1 year training for people with a nursing diploma, with no previous experience required.
- Operating Room Nurse: 18 months training, after 2 years minimum experience.
- Nurse anaesthetist: 2 years training, after 2 years minimum experience, leading to a Master's degree (since 2012)
- Nurse Manager: 1 year training, after 4 years minimum experience.
- Occupational Health Nurse: 1 year leading to Diploma or Professional Degree (while this degree is not mandatory to take on these positions, it is highly valued by employers).

In addition, there is a movement in France to introduce a Nurse Practitioner role to respond to the challenges arising from population ageing, the rising number of people living with chronic diseases and the shortage of doctors in certain areas. The first Master's level programme in Nursing Science was introduced in 2012 as a collaboration between the University of Aix-Marseille and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique (EHESP – French School of Public Health). This programme of a duration of 2 years prepares nurses to work as advanced nurse practitioners (IPA – Infirmière de la pratique avancée) in either cancer care or gerontology. After graduation, a Nurse Practitioner needs to get approval from the French National Authority for Health to practice (Bonnell, 2013).

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