



# NURSING PROFESSIONALS QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

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## Definitions:

**Authority:** National Health Regulatory Authority

**Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** A range of learning activities through which healthcare professionals maintain and develop/improve their knowledge and skills/professional performance throughout their career to ensure that they retain their capacity to practice safely, effectively and legally within their evolving scope of practice. CPD is also sometimes referred to as Continuing Medical Education (CME).

**Credentialing:** A process whereby specific licensing title is assigned to a healthcare professional based on recognized and accredited qualifications, training, experience and current practice.

**Direct Care:** Refers to nursing care provided to individuals or families that is intended to achieve specific health goals or achieve selected health outcomes. Direct care may be provided in a wide range of settings, including acute and critical care, long-term care, home health, community-based settings, and educational settings.

**Educator in Nursing/Midwifery:** educators are registered nurses/midwives who combine their clinical experience and academic expertise to train students in nursing skills. They determine educational curriculum and standards, prepare students to successfully transition out of academia, empower new nurses to thrive in the nursing profession, and improve the systems that uphold nursing/midwifery education.

**Experience:** Hands on clinical experience gained by a licensed healthcare professional during a salaried employment/contractual period and it excludes volunteer jobs, observer-ship, or clinical attachment.

**Fitness to practice:** A status where the healthcare professional is able to consistently demonstrate ability to practice without any

impediments i.e. physical or others.

**Gap of Practice:** A defined period of discontinuation of clinical experience/ practice.

**Certificate of Good Standing (CGS):** A certificate showing evidence that the healthcare professional is competent to practice the profession, has not been found guilty of unprofessional conduct, and that there are no pending or previous disciplinary orders or criminal proceedings against the healthcare professional.

**Healthcare Profession:** A field of healthcare recognized by the Authority

**Healthcare Professional:** A person who by education, training, certification and licensure is qualified to provide healthcare services.

**Indirect Care:** refers to nursing decisions, actions, or interventions that are provided through or on behalf of individuals, families, or groups. These decisions or interventions create the conditions under which nursing care or self-care may occur. Nurses might use administrative decisions, population or aggregate health planning, or policy development to affect health outcomes in this way. Nurses who function in administrative capacities are responsible for direct care provided by other nurses. Their administrative decisions create the conditions under which direct care is provided

**License:** A permission granted by the authority to practice a healthcare profession.

**Licensing:** A process of granting a legally protected professional title by the authority.

**Primary Source Verification:** A process of validating documents required for licensure from the issuing organization.

**Qualification:** An educational evidence granted by universities, colleges, academic institutes or schools that are nationally accredited or formally recognized.

## Acronyms:

**BNLE:** Bahrain Nursing Licensing Examination

**CGS:** Certificate of Good Standing

**CME:** Continuing Medical Education

**CPD:** Continuing Professional Development

**NHRA:** National health regulatory authority

**PQR:** Professional Qualification Requirements

**SHC:** Supreme Council of Health

**WHO:** World Health Organization

## Preface:

The Supreme Council of Health (SCH) in the Kingdom of Bahrain is pleased to present the revised PQR. The first PQR was issued in 2017. This revision was necessary in order to keep up with the advancements in the healthcare professions to ensure the quality of services provided for the healthcare recipients.

This document applies to all healthcare facilities both in the governmental and private sector to assess the documents submitted by applicants within their geographical jurisdiction to ensure safe and competent delivery of services. Moreover, it places an emphasis on educational standards, experience and licensure requirements for healthcare professionals to be licensed to practice safely in the Kingdom of Bahrain and in accordance with Bahrain laws and benchmarked international best practices.

# 1. Licensure General Requirements

- All applicants must fulfill all the following requirements in order to qualify for licensure
- Non-Bahraini nurses applying for a license must be no more than 65 years of age. Certain cases may be exempted by the SCH

## 1.1. Educational Qualifications

- Academic qualifications will be evaluated by NHRA
- Qualifications must be issued by institutions/colleges recognized in home country
- The Educational program must meet the national standards for nursing/midwifery education.
- At the entry level, minimum qualification requirement is high school certificate as per country specific education
- Professional qualifications are evaluated in accordance to the following criteria:
  - The country and institution from which the qualification was awarded
  - The level of national recognition of the qualification.
  - The duration and content of study, and the presence of clinical practice/practical training.
  - Qualifications acquired through honorary nature, correspondence or online distance learning are not counted towards the PQR.
- Qualifications not mentioned in this document may be evaluated and reviewed by NHRA, to determine the eligibility for an appropriate professional title.

## 1.2. Professional Experience

- The applicant must provide evidence of meeting the minimum required experiences for the applied title.
- The applicant's clinical experience must be relevant to the category applied for and must have been accomplished in an appropriate setting licensed by NHRA or the professional regulatory and licensing authority in the country of practice.
- Bahraini nationals, new graduates are exempted from experience requirements for the basic entry level.
- All other applicants are required to fulfill experience as per their relevant titles according to the PQR.
- Note: for any required licensed work experience, a continuous recent 6 months of work experience (within the last 3 years ) is mandatory .

## 1.3. Professional License and Certificate of Good Standing

- Non-Bahraini applicants must be registered and have a valid professional license to practice in their home country and/or country of last employment (where applicable).
- The applicant must provide evidence of meeting the minimum required experiences for the applied category
- Certificate of Good Standing (CGS) must meet the following requirements:
  - Valid and not older than **six (6) months** at the time of application for licensure
  - Issued by the professional regulatory and licensing authority in the country(s) of last employment
- NHRA may request more evidence or conduct investigations if deemed necessary to prove the status of good conduct of the healthcare professional
- The applicant must declare that he/she has never been convicted of any legal cases, medical malpractice during his/her practice of the healthcare profession, or he/she is currently under investigation



## 1.4. Primary Source Verification

- The documents required for licensing shall be verified directly from the original or primary source.
- These documents include but are not limited to: educational qualification(s), experience certificate(s), professional license(s), good standing certificate and/or any other documents deemed necessary by NHRA.

## 1.5. Bahrain Nursing Licensure Examination (BNLE):

All nursing professional applicants must pass NHRA's BNLE in order to obtain the professional license in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

- **BNLE Exemption Policy**

Only Bahraini or GCC nationals holding a valid GCC license will be exempted from the licensure examination.

- **BNLE Result Validity**

The validity of the license examination is 5 years

- **BNLE Attempts**

Nurses have a total of **four** examination attempts provided the following conditions are adhered to:

- Each applicant may attempt the examination four consecutive times provided the attempts are done within a maximum of three years from the date of the first attempt.
- Only Bahraini applicants who does not pass after the forth attempt, he/she is required to go through a period of training in a licensed health care facilities accredited by NHRA for minimum six months.
- Bahraini applicants After proof of completion of training, two more consecutive exam attempts may be permitted provided that the attempts are within two years from the date of completion of training.

*\*UAE (DHA & HAAD), Qatar, Oman Prometric "Registered Nurse" and Saudi "Nurse Specialist" are accepted, Saudi (Nurse Technician) Prometric not accepted. Kuwait Don't have Prometric exam yet.*

## 1.6 Discontinuity (Gap) of Practice:

This section applies to Bahrainis ONLY

- Professionals who discontinue their practice for at **least three (3) years** and opt to be licensed in the Kingdom of Bahrain are required to **pass the NHRA licensure assessment as the first step** to obtain the license to practice and must undertake the following actions:
  - 1- Apply directly to take the NHRA licensing exam **if passed the first exam attempt** professional will obtain a license to practice and work under the supervision of a licensed professional in same profession for one year
  - 2- A professional who fails in the first exam attempt will be required to go through CPD credits and a clinical training program and

must follow the requirements below:

- A. All training programs & CPD credits shall be carried out in an approved practice setting by NHRA in: -
    - (6) months of training on a full-time basis (7 hours a day/ 5 days a week)
    - 100 CME/CPD credits
  - B. All CPD credits must be related to the practice specialty of the healthcare professional, and according to the CPDspecific requirements of NHRA
  - C. All applicants are required to complete a training program which shall be determined by NHRA in the specialty field
- 3- Applicants after completion of CPD credits, and the clinical training required to re-attempt the NHRA licensure exam (according to the number of attempts NHRA exam policy) if passed the re-attempt exam professional will obtain a license to practice and work under the supervision of a licensed professional for one year

**Non-Bahraini nationals** will not be able to apply for a license (as a new profession license) if they have a gap of clinical practice of three (3) years and above.

- Applicants are required to provide health fitness certificate to practice and a certificate of good conduct.  
Non-Bahraini nationals will not be able to apply for a license (as a new profession license) if they have a gap of clinical practice of at least three (3) years and above.

Applicants are required to provide fitness to the practice certificate and a certificate of good conduct.

## 2. Renewal of Licenses

- All nurses must accumulate a minimum of 20 CPD hours annually
- CPD must be relevant to the field of the specialty
- CPD hours should be submitted annually to NHRA even if the license is renewed for two years or more
- Bahraini nurses who are issued licenses without the specification of a facility must:
  - Renew their license one year at a time
  - Prove the continuity of their practice (must provide proof of a minimum of one full year of practice during the 3 years)
  - Failure to provide continuity of practice will lead to the nurse being considered in a gap of practice and will need to fulfill the discontinuity of practice requirements as per the requirements of this PQR prior to their license being renewed
- License can be renewed up to a maximum of three years each time
- A health fitness certificate is required every three years

### 3. License Re-categorization

- Nurses may apply for a re-categorization of their license supported by the following documents:
  - A formal competency letter from the nursing administration
  - Additional qualification obtained
  - Verification of the qualification if obtained from outside of the kingdom of Bahrain
  
- All re-categorization applications must fulfill the years of experience required post qualification as per this PQR

## 4. General Regulatory Items

- Professional licensure and registration titles are independent from employment grade and titles.
- Healthcare facilities should not employ a nurse at a higher category than that given by NHRA.
- All Nursing & Midwifery Categories should practice within their specified Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework.
- For recategorization requests for Bahraini and Bahrain residents who started the educational program before this PQR was approved, the old PQR will be applied for their license recategorization
- NHRA reserves the right to reevaluate any healthcare professional should the need arise
- All Nursing & Midwifery categories employed as administrators, educators and/or other roles (involved in providing indirect care/education/training) must maintain licensure and registration requirements through proof of employment within NHRA approved establishments and completion of the required CPD/CME.
- Practical Nurses cannot work independently and shall work under the supervision of a registered nurse or Midwife.
- All healthcare professionals must uphold the highest standards of professional practice and in accordance with The Code of Professional Standards in Bahrain, NHRA
- This PQR shall be reviewed once every three years.
- Non-Bahrainis wife married to Bahraini husband nationals will be treated as Bahraini in regard to the policies of experience, number of examination attempt and discontinuity of practice.
- Bahraini's who are issued license without the specification of a facility must:
  - apply for a transfer of their license as soon as they obtain an offer letter
  - they should not start their practice in the prospective facility except after the transfer of the license

## 5. Specific Licensure Requirements and Considerations for Nursing and Midwifery:

In addition to the general licensure and registration requirements, all applicants for specific nursing and midwifery professional titles must fulfill the following requirements:

Title	Qualifications	Experience
General Nurse	Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing – Minimum of four (4) academic years educational program duration	For Non-Bahraini graduates a minimum of (1) year clinical experience post qualification and registration
	Diploma/Associate Degree in Nursing - Minimum of three (3) academic years educational program duration	
	Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery Degree- Minimum of three and half (3 ½ ) academic years educational program duration <b>(applicable to graduates of overseas programs)</b>	
Practical Nurse	Practical Nursing Program - Minimum of 18 months educational program duration	For Non-Bahraini a minimum of one (1) year clinical experience post qualification and registration
	Nursing Program - Minimum of 18 months to less than three (3) academic years educational program duration that does not meet the General Nurse qualification requirements <b>(applicable to graduates of overseas programs)</b>	

Title	Qualifications	Experience
<b>Specialist Nurse</b>	Meet the requirements of General Nurse and Post-Graduate Diploma in one of the approved clinical nursing specialties (list below)- Minimum one (1) academic year educational program duration Or Master's (minimum two (2) academic years) or Doctoral Degree in a Clinical Nursing Specialty that does not meet the Advanced Practice Nurse/Midwife qualification requirements	For non-Bahraini minimum of one (1) year experience in the related specialty field post qualification and registration
<b>Midwife</b>	Bachelor's Degree in Midwifery - Minimum of four (4) years educational program duration	For Non-Bahraini three (3) years clinical practice in labor & delivery unit, ante- natal, intra-natal, and postnatal care post qualification and registration as a midwife
	Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and Midwifery - Minimum of four (4) years educational program duration where the midwifery content should not be less than nine (9) months ( <b>applicable to graduates of overseas programs</b> )	
	Meet the requirements of General Nurse and Post-Graduate Diploma in Midwifery -Minimum of one (1) academic year educational program duration Or Post-Graduate Diploma in Midwifery - Minimum of nine (9) months educational program (immediately after completion of a general nursing program) (applicable to graduates of overseas programs)	



Title	Qualifications	Experience
<p><b>Advanced Practice Nurse/Midwife</b></p>	<p>Meet the requirements of a General Nurse or Midwife (with a Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing/Midwifery)</p> <p>And</p> <p>Educational preparation beyond that of a generalist or specialized nursing/midwifery education at a minimum requirement of a Full Master’s (minimum two (2) academic years) or Doctoral Degree Program in one of the clinical nursing/midwifery specialties at an Advanced Clinical Practice Level (Master’s level modules taken as detached courses do not meet this requirement).</p> <p>The educational program must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formally recognized as an Advanced Practice Nursing/Midwifery Clinical Master’s/Doctoral Degree (recognized and approved/authorized by NHRA and a regulatory body in the country of origin (for international program)</li> <li>- Includes a minimum of 500 clinical practice hours during the program and under supervision of Advanced Practice Nurse/Midwife.</li> <li>- Approved by a formal system of credentialing linked to defined educational qualification standard</li> </ul>	<p>For Non-Bahraini two (2) years of clinical practice post qualification and registration in a clinical setting in the same specialty area</p>

## Recognized Specialty Titles for Nursing Licensure

	Nursing Specialty Titles
1	Anesthesia Nurse
2	Cardiac Care Nurse
3	Community Health Nurse
4	Emergency Nurse
5	Intensive / Critical Care Nurse
6	Mental Health and Psychiatric Nurse
7	Neonatal Intensive Care Nurse
8	Nephrology Nurse
9	Occupational Health Nurse
10	Oncology Nurse
11	Operation Theatre/ Perioperative Nurse
12	Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing
13	Pediatric Nurse

**\* All the above recognized specialties in nursing should meet the qualification requirements specified for the Specialist Nurse.**

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