



### SE5 – Commitment to Professional Development

*SE5: Provide a description, with supporting evidence of the organization's action plan for RNs obtaining a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing. Include:*

- *How the target was established.*
- *What strategies were utilized to achieve/maintain the target of equal/above 80%.*
- *How the nurses are supported to achieve a BSN or higher.*

#### **Introduction**

In many healthcare organizations worldwide, holding a Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree has become the expectation. In 2018, the American Nurses Credentialing Centre (ANCC), in response to the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Report titled The Future of Nursing, recommended that 80% of nurses earn a BSN degree by 2020 (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Supporting nurses to obtain a BSN degree or higher has become an important priority for KFSHRC-J. The nursing workforce within KFSHRC-J represents an internationally diverse group of Registered Nurses (RNs) from more than 30 countries. Some countries only have BSN as entry to licensure to practice i.e., Philippines, Jordan and Lebanon. Each nurse brings with them their professional education from their respective countries and this educational diversity influences the nature of support required by RNs wishing to progress to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or higher. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the Diploma in Nursing ceased in 2019 and since then entry to the nursing profession was established at BSN level. Prior to 2019, Saudi nurses were recruited into KFSHRC-J with Diploma in Nursing and for many achieving a BSN is an important professional goal. Access to local universities within KSA for expatriate nurses to complete Bridging BSN or Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree is unavailable; university placements are reserved for Saudi nationals only. This creates a challenge for expatriate nurses who hold a nursing diploma as the only option for expatriate nurses at present is to enroll in part-time online BSN programs.

#### **Established BSN Target, Nursing Affairs, KFSHRC-J**

At KFSHRC-J, achieving, maintaining, or exceeding the 80% BSN rate is dependent upon the available manpower lines for RNs in Nursing Affairs; candidates recruited but still in process and RN turnover rates. In 2019, the baseline for RN BSN rates for Nursing Affairs

was 77.4%, which was 864/1115 total number of RNs. Targets for achieving a BSN or higher degree in nursing were established initially through email correspondence on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019 between Sandra Lovering DHSc RN, former Executive Director of Nursing Affairs and Soud Sbehat, BSN RN, CIPT, Nursing Recruitment and Retention Coordinator [Evidence SE5.AD1 Email Correspondence on BSN Rates and Goal Setting December 16-17, 2019](#)

A meeting was also held on December 17, 2019 to set the BSN target for 2020 with Sandra Lovering DHSc RN, former Executive Director of Nursing Affairs; Wadea Beheri, PhD RN, Deputy Executive Director, Nursing Affairs, John Sedgewick, PhD, RN, RMN, Dip.N, Renal Cert, Cert.ED, RNT, FETC, FFNM(RCSI), FInstLM, Program Director, Nursing Development and Saudization (NDS), Fiona Haines, MCur RN, RM, CPHQ, former Program Director Magnet® Hospital and Soud Sbehat, BSN RN, CIPT, Nursing Recruitment and Retention Coordinator. [Evidence SE5.AD2 Leadership Meeting to Review BSN Rates and Goal Setting 17 December 2019](#). Targets were set based on the BSN rate current at the time, RN turnover, candidates in progress for recruitment, the Saudization program and professional development opportunities for RNs to complete BSN. The goal was set which would see an annual increase in RN-BSN and higher rates of 0.25% with a progress towards achieving an 80% RN-BSN or higher rate. The RN-BSN rates and progress towards the set goal was agreed to be reviewed in the Nurse Executive Council (NEC). [Evidence SE5.AD3 NEC Minutes 18 August 2020](#)

### **Strategies utilized to Achieve/Maintain the Target of ≥ 80% BSN Rate**

- Job advertisements for internal promotion were updated to ensure that candidates applying must meet the BSN requirement for their application to be considered, implemented in **January 2019 onwards**.
- All international recruitment agencies were informed of the need to source only candidates with BSN qualifications, implemented in **January 2019**.
- To achieve the BSN target set, recruitment strategies were revised to ensure that only RNs with a BSN would be recruited into available nursing manpower lines. This decision was finalized by Dr. Lovering on **December 17, 2019**.
- Increasing the availability of nursing manpower lines. Approximately 35-50 lines annually are identified for Newly Registered Saudi Nurses to join KFSHRC-J as the preferred employer of choice, implemented in **April 2020**.
- Individual meetings to discuss potential research projects as part of Master's studies was provided by Gillian Sedgewick, BSN RN, MSc, former Program Director, Nursing Practice, and Research department, implemented in **April 2020**.
- Flexible rostering arrangements were implemented for RNs wishing to undertake in-kingdom Master's degree study. These arrangements were made at unit and department level by the Head Nurse and Program Directors with internal approval

being authorized through memorandums to Academic and Training Affairs Department, implemented in **June 2020**.

- Collaborative meetings were held with the Malaysian Allied Health Sciences Academy (MAHSA) University program coordinator Siti Maarof, PhD RN, at KFSHRC-Riyadh to provide opportunities for nurses to undertake BSN program, implemented in **January 2021**.
- Development of the KFSHRC-J Practice Transition Program for Newly Registered Saudi Nurses to offer a supported 1-year entry to practice. This program was awarded accreditation with distinction by the American Nurses Credentialing Center in **September 2021**.
- Availability of examination leave was provided to RNs pursuing degree level studies.
- Academic support and supervision with assignments and thesis work was provided by Dr. Sedgewick from **September 2021 onwards**.
- Amna Al-Shelali, BSN RN, MME, CM, CCNE, CIPT, Education Coordinator and Scholarship Coordinator provided dedicated meetings to Saudi nurses expressing an interest in Diploma to BSN bridging programs available in KSA.
- Promotional and recognition celebration events e.g., Annual Nursing Graduation ceremony to showcase the successful completion of BSN and Masters and PhD studies within Nursing Affairs.

## **Recruitment of International RNs**

For RNs employed at KFSHRC-J, a BSN qualification is preferred and thus the Staff Nurse 1, i.e., clinical nurse, job description was changed accordingly. Therefore, when nurse managers review potential candidates for employment, this is a key component. This is included as part of the organization's nursing recruitment requirement for both international and local candidates. This requirement is included for internal promotion opportunities as well. Since 2018, KFSHRC-J only recruits nurses with BSN and this helps to maintain the BSN rates above 80%. Nevertheless, there are nurses with a Diploma in Nursing (Dip.N) who joined KFSHRC-J prior to 2018 who are provided with opportunities to "Bridge to BSN".

## **Saudization Plan for Saudi RNs**

### *Practice Transition Program (PTP)*

The Saudization plan describes the recruitment of BSN qualified Saudi RNs as part of the Nursing Affairs workforce and the educational strategies to support the development of Saudi nurses. One strategy to meet the 80% BSN rates is the increased recruitment of Newly Registered Saudi Nurses. Newly Registered Saudi Nurses join the organization via the 1-year Practice Transition Program (PTP). As part of the strategy to maintain BSN

rates at 80% or higher, annual targets have been established for increasing Newly Registered Saudi Nurses. In 2020 this was set at 30, in 2021 this was set at 35 while in 2022 this has been set at 40.

In 2021, the nursing Saudization rate was set at 32.10%, this has been increased to 34% for 2022. This target will continue to ensure the BSN rate of 80% is maintained and /or exceeded. **Evidence SE5.1 Saudization Plan, 2022**

**Table SE5.1: Overview of Saudization Rate in Nursing Affairs, 2018-2022**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Annual Target to Increase Newly Registered Saudi Nurses</b>			30	35	40
<b>Total number of Saudi Nurses recruited</b>	60	67	52	77	26 (Up to 30 April)
<b>Total number of Saudi New Graduate Nurses recruited</b>	28	35	24	30	30 (Up to 30 April)
<b>Saudization Rate</b>	28%	29%	30%	32.10%	34%

### *Nursing Internship Program*

A well-established 1-year BSN Nurse Internship program exists within KFSHRC-J. This program has been developed in close collaboration with external academic partners with universities across KSA. The internship acts as a feeder program and a pipeline for future BSN graduates wishing to be employed within the organization. The Nursing Internship program has a dedicated education team who plan the program recruitment and implementation from April to September annually.

### *Scholarship Plan for Saudi Nationals*

One of the strategic priorities of KFSHRC General Organization is the focus on Saudization. KFSHRC offers scholarships to Saudi nurses who wish to obtain Master's degrees either through local universities within KSA or at an overseas university. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, no overseas scholarships were available from 2019; although plans are currently in place to offer four Saudi nurses to pursue Master's degrees at international universities in 2022. Opportunities are available for Saudi nurses holding Diploma in Nursing to undertake Bridging programs to BSN at universities within KSA. Kathy Sienko, O.B.E., BSN (Hon) RN, MSc, FInstLM, Executive Director, Nursing Affairs is the Nursing Affairs representative on the organization Scholarship Committee and presents scholarship applications to the committee for approval as seen in the Saudization Plan.

## **Monitoring of Progress Towards BSN or Higher Rates**

Annual progress and monitoring of targets towards BSN or higher in nursing is undertaken within the Nurse Executive Committee (NEC). Additionally, the Professional Development Sub-Council (PDS), formerly known as the Professional Development Council (PDC) and recently changed in February 2022 to the Nursing Professional Development Sub-Council (NPDS), presents quarterly reports to the NEC on progress towards the agreed target. The Executive Director of Nursing Affairs undertakes a quarterly review of turnover data with the Nursing Recruitment and Retention Office. [SE5.2 Reporting Saudization Rates and Turnover Data, February 06, 2022](#)

## **Support of RNs To Achieve BSN or Higher Degrees**

### *Professional Development Sub-Council Support*

Amna, Education Coordinator and Scholarship Coordinator is a member of the NPDS. In her scholarship coordinator role, she provides direct support and is a point of contact for nurses expressing an interest in scholarships. Amna meets individual nurses and provides guidance and information to assist with scholarship decision-making. Within the NPDS, Amna presents updates on specific strategies that have been implemented to support Saudi nurses to achieve BSN or higher. [Evidence SE5.3 Professional Development Plan, September 07, 2021, p. 6](#)

### *Career Clinics*

Nurses are provided with the opportunity to attend career clinics which are hosted by nurse educators from NDS. These monthly career clinics offer a “one-stop” centre of contact for nurses to explore personal career ambitions related to obtaining BSN or higher degrees. [Evidence SE5.4 Career Clinics Advertisement, September-December 2018](#)

### *Support with BSN/MSN Application Process and English language Success*

Support is provided to nurses completing applications for degree study. This may involve review of curriculum vitae or navigating the application process itself. Amna, offers guidance to ensure that chosen universities are accredited with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoE) in Saudi Arabia. The MoE accreditation is a pre-requisite to a chosen university being approved through the KFSHRC Scholarship Committee. In preparation for study, Saudi RNs are supported to achieve the required English language scores on the The International English Language Testing System examination (IELTS). IELTS is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers. International universities require 6-6.5 on the IELTS exams for entry to BSN and Master’s studies. NDS also collaborates with ATA department at KFSHRC-J who provide English language classes for nurses.

### *Collaboration with Malaysian Allied Health Sciences Academy (MAHSA) University*

RNs are offered the opportunity to pursue both Bridging Diploma to BSN and Master in Nursing at MAHSA university. This program is coordinated through KFSHRC-Riyadh where onsite classes are facilitated. The MAHSA programs can be studied by nurses on a part-time basis allowing them to obtain their degrees whilst still employed. Marketing events are held at KFSHRC-J to promote the MAHSA program to nurses. Table SE5.2 below lists RNs who are currently students at MAHSA. On January 25, 2021, two virtual events were held for nurses which was facilitated by Professor Zahrah Saad PhD, MSc, BSc. (Nsg), Edu (MU), SRN, SCM, Dean of International Affairs, MAHSA. [Evidence SE.5.5 Flyer for MAHSA Event](#)

**Table SE5.2: List of Staff Who Enrolled at MAHSA University Program**

#	Name	Unit	Year of Joining the Bridging Program	Current status
1	Jora Murat, Dip.N RN	Neuroscience	Intake April 2019	3rd year, Semester 1
2	Nurul Sidik, Dip.N RN	5S-Medical	Intake September 2019	2nd year. Semester 2
3	Ritha Manikam, Dip.N RN	OPD	Intake September 2021	1st year, Semester 1
4	Wala Mujali, Dip.N RN	Surgical	Intake April 2021	1st year, Semester 1

KFSHRC-J RN BSN or higher rates as of March 2022 reached 83.33%. Thus, the strategies described above demonstrate the success at achieving and maintaining BSN rates of  $\geq 80\%$ .

### **Reference**

Fitzpatrick, J. J. (2010). The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 31(6), 347-348.