



EDITORIAL

Jordanian Nursing Council: A National Regulatory Institution

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Development and Mandate/History

The history and progress of nursing in Jordan over the past years, particularly during the eighties and nineties of the last century, included nurse leaders who worked diligently to establish a body that grants them the authority to regulate the profession and empower nurses to perform tasks that they are academically prepared for. After many years of perseverance and deliberation, the Jordanian Nursing Council (JNC) was founded in 2002 by the Royal Decree of His Majesty King Abdullah II, with continuous support and follow-up by HRH Princess Muna Al-Hussein.

HRH Princess Muna Al-Hussein was appointed as the President of the Council and serves as the WHO Patron for Nursing and Midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The governing board of the JNC consists of 15 leading members representing governmental, military, and private academic and health organizations in Jordan, in addition to a community member. The legislative power of the JNC and its supporting law have given the Council the opportunity to develop its regulatory processes and work towards public protection by regulating the nursing and midwifery professions in education, practice, and research according to current legislation. This includes the following:

- Participating in setting the national health strategy and implementing established plans and programs regarding the profession.
- Developing human resources in the field of nursing to raise the standards of nursing performance in accordance with scientific and practical developments.

- Supporting scientific research to enhance the development of the profession.

The JNC strategy aims to translate the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II and meet the sustainable-development goals that will benefit all citizens in Jordan. Guided by an ambitious vision of becoming a "valued and recognized pioneer in nursing and midwifery profession regulation nationally and regionally," the JNC has achieved several milestones. These milestones include launching national strategies for nursing and midwifery, issuing national nursing research priorities, regulating nursing specialization and advanced nursing practice, conducting competency-based national nursing licensure exams, accrediting continuous professional development activities (CPD), implementing capacity-building training, and regulating the profession through participation in and development of nursing regulations and policies (JNC, 2024).

Legislation and Regulations

The JNC has achieved significant accomplishments in terms of regulations. The main nursing and midwifery regulations include:

1. JNC Permanent Law 2006;
2. Nursing Specialization Levels Bylaws No. (74) 2006;
3. JNC Specialization and Professional Ladder Bylaw 2016, replacing the 2006 version;
4. National Licensure Bylaw for Nurses and Midwives No. (36) 2019; and
5. Licensure Examination Instructions No. (1) 2019.

The JNC has worked to modernize professional

nursing regulations in Jordan and played a key role in developing the scope of practice, standards, competencies, exams, and advocacy plans. This includes creating a competency-based nursing education framework, establishing clinical training standards during emergencies and the COVID-19 pandemic, and setting CPD regulations. The JNC has also issued policy and advocacy letters regarding nursing education and practice.

Additionally, the JNC carried out national activities under the “Nursing Now Campaign” in Jordan, including training young Jordanian nurses and leading national nursing dialogues in collaboration with its partners through the Nursing Managers & JNC Nursing Deans Forum.

The JNC guided the development and implementation of various regulatory policies and actions, limiting basic nursing education in Jordan to two levels: Associate Degree and B.Sc. level in the nursing profession.

In response to the shortage of female nurses, the JNC developed an admission policy for nursing schools based on gender, initially setting a ratio of 70% female and 30% male. This policy was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. In 2022, the JNC forum recommended changing this ratio to 60% female and 40% male based on a new needs'-assessment study and focused group discussions with nursing leaders. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research activated this new ratio in the first semester of 2023/2024 (JNC, 2024).

Specialization and Advanced Practice Nursing

JNC regulations for Nursing and Midwifery that support advanced roles were legally approved in 2006, and later replaced by the Specialization and Professional Ladder Bylaw in 2016. This bylaw unified the professional ladder for nurses and midwives to meet the emerging needs of the healthcare system. It recognizes and authorizes two levels of specialties in nursing: Nurse Specialist (NS) and Advanced Nurse Specialist (ANS). Standards, competencies, and criteria are established for each level and specialty.

Although the specialization and professional ladder is mandatory, there are many challenges facing its implementation, including a lack of awareness, role models, experience, a clear scope of practice, delineated job descriptions, and role ambiguity. In response to these challenges, JNC is currently amending the Specialization

and Professional Classification Bylaw and instructions. Efforts are underway to institutionalize this across all healthcare organizations and sectors through:

- Designating a title and specific post for Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) and Nurse Specialist (NS) to be endorsed at all levels and across all sectors.
- Developing job descriptions and scopes of practice for general nurses, NS, and APN that align with national competencies of specialization and the professional ladder.
- Increasing awareness about the credentials required for APN and NS.
- Developing related professional and organizational policies to enhance the APN and NS roles in strengthening national healthcare sectors (JNC, 2024).

Health Professions Relicensing & Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The health professional license renewal bylaw was approved in April 2018. This bylaw mandates all licensed healthcare professionals in Jordan to complete a required number of CPD units every five years to renew their licenses. The body responsible for accrediting continuous professional activities for registered nurses and midwives is the JNC.

JNC has taken solid steps in implementing the accreditation of CPD activities, initially through establishing an accreditation unit and a national accreditation committee with a clear scope of service. Nowadays, the accreditation experience within JNC is considered a model for other institutions (JNC, 2024).

National Licensure Nursing and Midwifery Exams

Nursing leaders in Jordan have made early efforts to develop a national nursing licensure examination process. These efforts date back to 2008 and have gone through various stages, starting from frequent meetings of policymakers and nursing leaders, policy letters, and advocacy. The JNC initiated communication with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to create the necessary laws and legislation that make JNC eligible for conducting national nursing licensure examinations. These efforts, in collaboration with JNC partners, resulted in passing the Nursing and Midwifery Professions Licensure Bylaw No. (36) in 2019. The bylaw exam is mandatory for all nurses and midwives to obtain licensure as a registered nurse/midwife. The aims of the exam include:

- Improving patient safety within the Jordanian health

system by evaluating the competency of new nursing graduates and nurses who graduated from non-Jordanian universities.

- Improving educational outcomes of nursing schools in Jordan.
- Ensuring that all nurses have the competencies required to care for patients.
- Improving healthcare outcomes by minimizing medical errors that may be caused by new graduates.

JNC has accomplished the automation of the nursing and midwifery profession licensure exam. The JNC worked to build structured and reliable exams based on international standards, the current nursing curriculum, and national nursing competencies. National and scientific committees were established to develop exam questions, oversee exam sessions, and analyze exam results. The national exam committee provides suggestions for further improvement. Analysis reports are disseminated to all universities and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher-education Institutes to improve nursing students' competencies in light of exam results.

JNC is looking forward to gaining regional recognition of the exam and integrating OSCE stations and simulation-based education to enhance the evaluation process (JNC, 2024).

Simulation Center

In 2021, JNC initiated a state-of-the-art clinical simulation center and life support training center, known as the "Health Professions Clinical Skills and Simulation Center (CSSC)." It consists of two main units:

- Life Support Unit: An AHA center.
- Simulation Unit: Contains resources ranging from simple simulation tools to task trainers and low to high fidelity simulators. It includes a customized audio-visual system to control, record, and review simulation-based sessions for debriefing, as well as to provide statistical data for reports, improvement plans, and research. The unit also features high-fidelity training and six OSCE rooms (JNC, 2024).

Capacity Building for Nurses and Midwives

Since 2009, JNC has been accredited as a provider of professional development activities by the American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC) and serves as a training center for the American Heart Association (AHA) for Basic Life Support (BLS) and Neonatal

Resuscitation Program (NRP) courses. JNC conducts high-quality training programs and projects. Recent programs include conducting primary healthcare diplomas for UNRWA staff in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, as well as strengthening mental-health services in collaboration with the WHO Jordan office.

JNC aims to achieve excellence in providing continuous nursing professional development programs according to the highest international standards (JNC, 2024).

Partnership and Collaboration

JNC has many success stories and strong partnerships with national and international bodies, such as the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC), the Health Care Accreditation Council (HCAC), the Ministry of Health, and Royal Medical Services. Collaboration with the Jordan Medical Council includes conducting family medicine OSCE exams for 2023 and 2024 (residency exam). Additionally, there is collaboration with the Romanian government to strengthen emergency services by training 20 Jordanian nurses and physicians. JNC maintains a strong relationship with the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the American Nurses Credentialing Center, and Pearson VUE (JNC, 2024).

Future Strategic Directions

Despite the significant challenges that JNC faces as a regulatory body for the nursing profession, including regulatory compliance and enforcement, funding and resource management, workforce management, and lack of data, JNC's working plans to develop the nursing and midwifery professions in Jordan include:

1. Empowering nursing decision-making, investing in nursing leadership, and allocating more nursing leaders in different sectors.
2. Encouraging policymakers and nursing leaders to continue modernizing professional nursing regulation in Jordan.
3. Investing in a massive quality acceleration of nursing education.
4. Adopting a new educational and clinical model, "residency programs leading to specializations in nursing."
5. Enforcing the implementation of the specialization bylaw and policies to institutionalize the specializations and roles of advanced practice nurses

and midwives across all Jordanian healthcare organizations and sectors.

6. Supporting incentives and improving the salaries of nurses based on the specialization and professional ladder.
7. Forming a national committee to develop a national plan to strengthen midwifery in Jordan.

The JNC acts as a forum for all nurses, ensuring that their voices are heard and their autonomy is protected and supported. It serves as a resource for training, data, consultation, and dissemination of updates in education, practice and service (JNC, 2024).

Conclusion

The Jordanian Nursing Council (JNC) has made significant strides in advancing the nursing and midwifery professions in Jordan. Through its robust regulatory framework, strategic partnerships, and commitment to

continuous professional development, the JNC has positioned itself as a leader in healthcare reform. The establishment of the Health Professions Clinical Skills and Simulation Center and the implementation of national licensure exams underscore its dedication to excellence and patient safety.

Looking forward, the JNC remains committed to overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities to enhance nursing education, practice, and leadership. By fostering innovation, supporting specialization, and advocating for policy reform, the JNC aims to ensure that Jordanian nurses and midwives are equipped to meet the evolving needs of the healthcare system. As a trusted partner and advocate, the JNC invites stakeholders to join in its mission to elevate the standards of nursing and midwifery, ultimately benefiting the health and well-being of all citizens in Jordan.

REFERENCES

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<https://jnc.gov.jo/Default/EN>