

تمكين
Tamkeen

Healthcare Sector

Skills Report 2024

مهارات البحرين
Skills Bahrain

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Executive Summary

Bahrain's healthcare sector has witnessed a transformative shift in the delivery of patient-centered care as a result of the increasing use of telemedicine and digital health platforms. The adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning play a central role in enhancing diagnostics, treatment, and reforming patient data management and analysis. In parallel with the technological advancements, personalized medicine and preventive care have become focal points within the sector. These trends have the ability to address Bahrain's unique health challenges, particularly in managing prevalent chronic diseases within the region.

Workforce dynamics are creating challenges and opportunities for Bahrain's healthcare sector. The global shortage of nurses, which has also affected Bahrain, has led to an increase in demand for general nurses. Beyond general nursing, the sector seeks specialized professionals such as ICU nurses and midwives to elevate the standard of patient care. Similarly, there's an increased demand for existing General Practitioners (GPs) as well as newly graduated medical practitioners to advance into consultancy roles or specialize further, in areas like anesthesiology, echoing the sector's need for deeper expertise.

Specialization is also required within dental care, particularly in fields like orthodontics, periodontics, and implantology, are also in high demand, highlighting a broad spectrum of specialization opportunities for locals. Moreover, the healthcare sector has many opportunities across pharmacists and medical

delegates, which presents a career opportunity for qualified medical professionals. Lastly, it is anticipated that the rollout of the National Health Insurance Program will cause a surge in the demand for medical coders as Bahrain transitions to a more structured, insurance-based healthcare system.

The healthcare workforce requires a set of core skills such as collaboration and teamwork, communication, digital literacy, planning and organizing, and empathy to complement technical medical expertise and knowledge. These skills enhance patient care and facilitate smoother interactions within the workplace. The Sector Working Group has explicitly pinpointed communication as a key area for enhancement, noting its potential to amplify other core competencies and deliver substantial benefits for healthcare professionals and their employers. Moreover, the ability to engage in empathetic interactions with patients and navigate professional hierarchies with ease is essential to providing high-quality patient care. Strengthening these skills is crucial for the sector's ongoing adaptation to rapid advancements and maintaining high standards in healthcare delivery.

To maintain the growth of the healthcare sector, it is crucial to direct healthcare professionals towards careers and specialties that are aligned with the demands of the healthcare system, whilst also enhancing the core competencies within the workforce. This proactive approach is vital for increasing local employment and effectively bridging the existing core skill gaps.

Introduction & Purpose

Purpose

The Sector Skills Report is designed to benefit current and future healthcare professionals to offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of healthcare, highlighting the trajectory of sectoral growth and development. This report focuses on identifying job roles that are in high demand within the Bahraini healthcare sector, particularly those offering promising opportunities for local hires.

Additionally, the report delves into the key core skills that are sought after in the healthcare industry, depicting the competencies that are key to professional success. This report thus serves as a tool for strategic workforce planning by identifying the demands of the sector for healthcare professionals, as well as the core skills required to succeed within the industry. It acts as a roadmap for individuals seeking to augment their skills, guiding them towards areas where they can further develop their expertise for enhanced career progression. Overall, this report is an instrumental resource in aligning individual career aspirations with the broader need and direction of Bahrain's healthcare sector.

Intended Audience

Individuals
Provides insights into sector trends, jobs and skills in demand, as well as relevant trainings and programs, aiding in informed career planning.



Employers
Provides insights into sector trends, current and emerging skills landscape, and relevant trainings to guide workforce planning.

Academia & Training Providers
Provides insights to support curriculum and training program development in alignment with industry needs.

Methodology

Research Methodology

A robust and systematic approach was followed with several key research activities, starting with an international benchmarking exercise to implement best practices in the development of a sector skills report. This initial step, in addition to guidelines from the International Labour Organization (ILO), informed the design of the engagement methodology outlined in the following section.

Extensive desktop research established an understanding of the current landscape within Bahrain's healthcare sector, ensuring alignment of findings with national strategic priorities. Economic and labor market data were sourced from official Governmental sources.

The primary workforce data used in the report was obtained from the NHRA and analysed by the team at Skills Bahrain to extract data-driven insights on the demand for healthcare professionals. These insights were then shared and discussed with the relevant sector stakeholders before being included in the report.

Moreover, engagement with sector representatives (see 'Engagement Methodology') provided the core insights into the sector's specific dynamics and requirements embedded throughout the report. Collectively, findings from these research activities have been consolidated into the sector skills report, which serves as a valuable resource for individuals, employers, academic institutions, and training providers.

Engagement Methodology

To gather insights, a Sector Working Group was formed, serving as a collaborative platform for engagement and knowledge exchange. The Sector Working Group aimed to uncover trends, opportunities, and challenges within the sector, and to identify the skills gaps in the workforce.

This group included an array of stakeholders and experts from both local and regional contexts, encompassing representatives from clinics to large established hospitals, academic institutions, and vocational training centers. This wide-ranging representation ensured a holistic view of the sector's needs and dynamics.

Over a period of 8 weeks, from September to October 2023, the Sector Working Group conducted a series of workshops with the active participation of over 20 representatives, ranging from large hospitals to smaller medical clinics including academic institutions. These collaborative sessions, in conjunction with data retrieved from the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), were crucial in validating job demands and career pathways in the healthcare sector (please refer to the Career Pathway Maps for further details).

The contributions of the Sector Working Groups were instrumental in the development of a Core Skills Framework that is specifically tailored to the sector's requirements within the country. The insights and findings from the Sector Working Group's engagement have been thoroughly integrated into this report, offering detailed guidance and strategic recommendations for the sector's development.

Sector Overview

The healthcare sector plays a vital role in Bahrain's economy. It comprises of four primary job families, aligned with NHRA categorization: physicians and dentists, nursing, allied health professionals, and pharmacists. Within each job family, only the clinical job roles that are in line with NHRA licensing have

been analyzed. A sector Career Pathway Map has also been created, clearly showing the NHRA career progression requirements. The Career Pathway Map assist individuals in exploring opportunities through further specialization to meet the demands of highly sought-after positions within the healthcare sector.

Bahrain's Healthcare Sector Comprises of Four Job Families:

1



Physicians & Dentists

Medical and dental practitioners, commonly known as doctors and dentists

2



Nursing

Patient care and support, assisting in medical treatment and promoting overall health (e.g. midwives, hospice care)

3



Allied Health Professionals

Diagnostic, technical, therapeutic, and support services (e.g. physiotherapists, medical lab technologists)

4



Pharmacists

Preparation, dispensing, and management of medications. Also responsible for providing pharmaceutical advice and guidance

Bahrain's Healthcare Sector in Numbers

GDP Contribution



Government & Private Health Services*

Government & Private Health Services contributed
3.4%
to the country's real GDP in 2022

With a total output of
BHD 438.9 Million

*Government & Private Health Services used as a proxy to represent the GDP contribution of the sector released by the Bahrain Information & e-Government Authority (IGA)

Foreign Direct Investment



Human Health and Social Work Activities*

In 2022, Human Health and Social Work
Activities attracted

BHD 21.7 Million

in Foreign Direct Investment

*Human Health and Social Work Activities used as a proxy to represent the Foreign Direct Investment of the sector released by the Bahrain Information & e-Government Authority (IGA)

Trends in Bahrain's Healthcare Sector

Global trends are continuously reshaping the nature of work in the healthcare sector. According to the World Economic Forum and confirmed by the Sector Working Group participants; the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the rapid pace of technological advancements have prompted the adoption of multiple transformative practices. These practices include the implementation of telemedicine and artificial intelligence (AI) as well as the utilization of data analytics to improve patient care. The pandemic has also brought personalized medicine and preventive care to the forefront of healthcare, through a focus on tailored medical interventions to meet individual needs and the prioritization of proactive measures to enhance public health outcomes.

Healthtech and Artificial Intelligence

Globally, technology is disrupting and reshaping the healthcare landscape and fundamentally changing doctor-patient interaction and improving the quality of patient care. Telemedicine and digital health platforms have transformed patient engagement and have provided healthcare providers with the tools to diagnose and prescribe treatment to patients with no physical interaction. The technological progress of telemedicine was expedited during the COVID-19 pandemic and today allows healthcare providers broader and borderless access to patients. Through telemedicine, doctors in Bahrain can easily treat patients in the region and around the world with the potential to catalyze growth in the sector. Simultaneously, AI and machine learning are revolutionizing diagnostics, personalized treatment, and healthcare data analysis¹. These

technologies that are being rolled out in areas like radiology are improving the precision of diagnosis and the efficiency of patient treatment and care. In Bahrain, the integration of these technologies present an opportunity to advance the healthcare sector. A study published in the 2021 by Derasat has emphasized the necessity of integrating telemedicine in Bahrain's healthcare system. The study highlights technological (or Digital Literacy) skills gaps, and the lack of insurance coverage for telemedicine services as the main challenges of widespread adoption. Embracing these technologies can improve access to care and reduce the strain on traditional healthcare facilities through increased efficiencies. Additionally, AI's potential in enhancing disease diagnosis, treatment plans, and predictive health analytics align with Bahrain's ambition to offer state-of-the-art healthcare services as a leader of innovation in the region.

Personalized Medicine and Preventive Care

Personalized medicine and preventive care are becoming more common as a result of advances in genomics and biotechnology. Individualized treatments have been particularly effective in managing chronic diseases and complex conditions due to the ability to analyze individual genetic profiles. Preventive care, particularly in the form of early detection and subsequent lifestyle intervention mechanisms, have served to promote healthier lifestyles, therefore reducing overall healthcare costs on individuals.

¹ Source: McKinsey & Company. (n.d.). Transforming healthcare with AI: The impact on the workforce and organizations. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/transforming-healthcare-with-ai>

Bahrain has taken steps towards personalized medicine and preventive care. Bahrain has launched the National Genome Program in 2019 which aimed to collect 50,000 samples from citizens to draw Bahrain's genetic map and create a comprehensive database that contributes to monitoring and preventing genetic diseases. Genomic research and biotechnological therapies provide more effective, personalized treatments for the population, particularly in addressing prevalent chronic diseases. This shift entails adopting new technologies while reorienting the healthcare workforce towards primary care settings rather than traditional hospital-based care. It necessitates a different skillset for healthcare professionals, focusing on long-term patient management, lifestyle coaching, and preventive care strategies. By bolstering the capacity and expertise of primary care staff, Bahrain can align its healthcare system with these emerging needs, enhancing public health and effectively managing healthcare expenditures. This transition to a more proactive, patient-centered approach promises to significantly improve the quality of life and well-being of Bahrain's residents, shaping a healthcare system that is both responsive and forward-looking.

Healthcare Analytics and Big Data

The successful implementation of personalized and preventive care is reliant on access to high-quality data. By analyzing giant pools of data from a patient's electronic health records to wearable devices and genomics, healthcare providers can easily start identifying trends, predicting outcomes, and offering personalizing treatment plans with a high degree of precision. Data supports the early detection of diseases and enables preventive care to reduce the overall cost of healthcare.

With the launch of the National Social Health Insurance Program, data is becoming even more important in the healthcare sector. Digital infrastructure investments provide a foundation for the integration of health systems and patient electronic health records to offer high quality and integrated service delivery for all citizens and residents. As the volume of healthcare data grows, Bahrain can leverage data-driven insights to customize healthcare services according to the needs of the population, effectively manage health trends, and enhance the overall efficiency of the healthcare system.

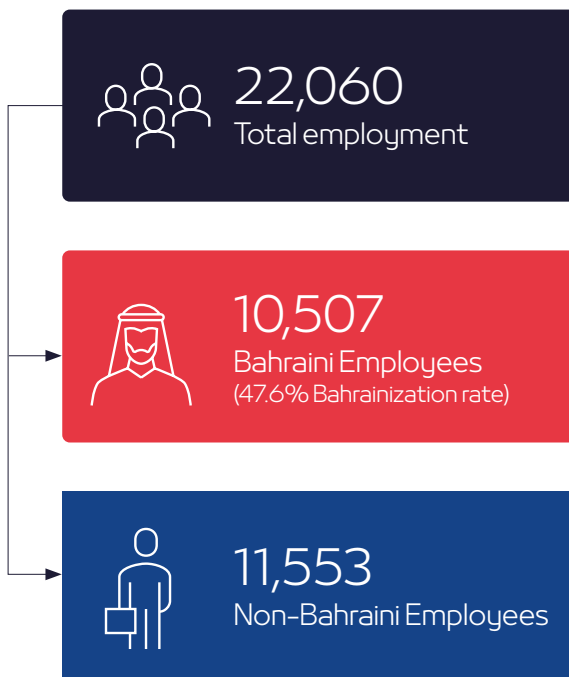


Workforce

There are over 22,000 certified medical professionals in Bahrain's public and private healthcare sector. The private sector plays a key role and is responsible for employing of over 10,000 clinical roles as of the end of 2023, representing close to 47% combined clinical workforce. Across both the private and public sector, NHRA data shows over 10,500 Bahraini medical professionals occupying clinical roles, representing 48% of the overall workforce.

Employment by Occupation

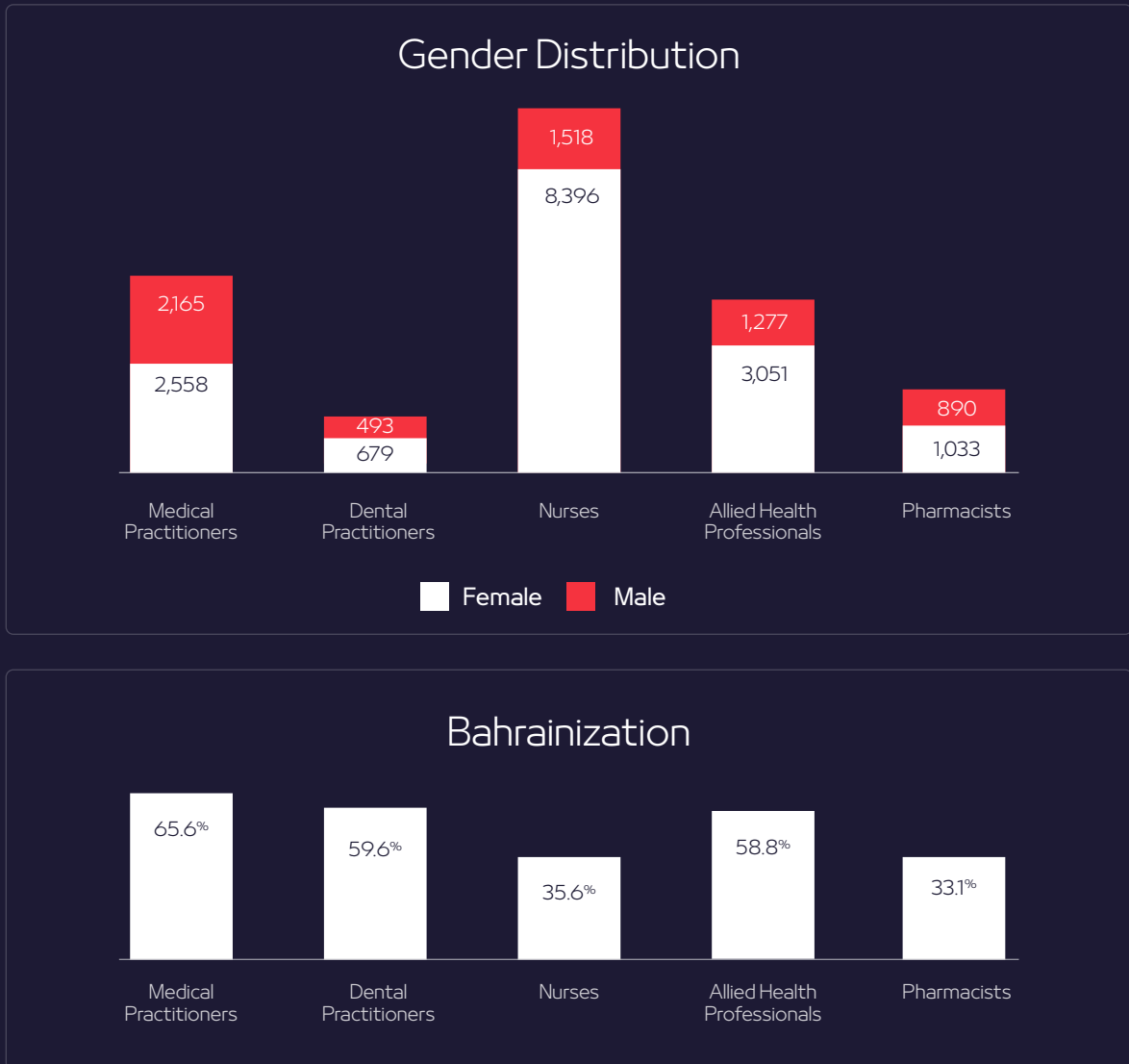
Figure 1: Clinical Roles Workforce Breakdown (Bahraini and Non-Bahraini)²



When analysing employment levels by occupation, the sector exhibits a diverse gender distribution, with a strong presence of female professionals in nursing. Additionally, the varying Bahrainization rates across different roles signal specific areas dominated by local talent, particularly in medical and dental professions. There appears to be an opportunity for Bahraini professionals in nursing and pharmacy where the Bahrainization rate is relatively lower in comparison to the other job families. As we delve deeper into each family, there is a recurrent theme of generalists across most of the job families, presenting a clear career progression opportunity for driven Bahraini medical professionals who aspire to specialize in a clinical field.

² National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), (December 2023).

Figure 2: Clinical roles workforce breakdown (by job family)²



² National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), (December 2023)

Key Roles Shaping the Healthcare sector

Medical practitioners

GPs, including Residents, make up 49% of medical practitioners in Bahrain. When only analyzing the Bahraini general practitioners, the proportion of GPs increases to almost 63%. This prevalence underscores the foundational role GPs play in healthcare delivery, whilst also indicating that there is an opportunity for GPs to upskill and specialize in a medical field of interest.

For GPs aspiring to advance their expertise, there are opportunities to specialize in various medical fields, such as anesthesiology or pediatrics. Means of attaining specializations include dedicated residency programs or pursuing a clinical master's degree in the chosen specialty. Advanced academic studies and training develops the individual practitioner's skills and knowledge and addresses the sector's current and emerging needs with qualified and specialized local talent.

Dental practitioners

The majority of dental practitioners (69%) are generalists and residents, with that number increasing to almost 86% when analyzing only Bahraini dental practitioners. This statistic highlights an opportunity for Bahrainis within specialized dentistry. Specializing in specific fields of dentistry, such as orthodontics or periodontics, equips dental practitioners with the ability to offer nuanced care, tailored to their area of expertise.

Dentists with specialist licenses play a vital role in the healthcare system. Their advanced skills are key to addressing specific dental conditions and providing highly specialized treatments. The presence of such specialists ensures patients with unique or complex dental needs have access to the targeted, expert care they require.

Figure 3: Medical practitioners breakdown (by job role category)²

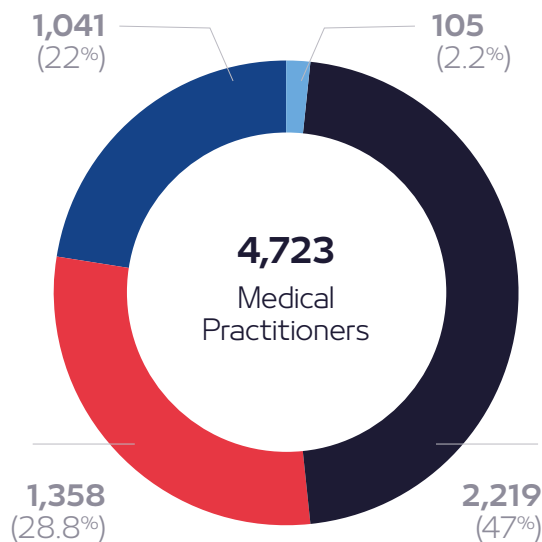
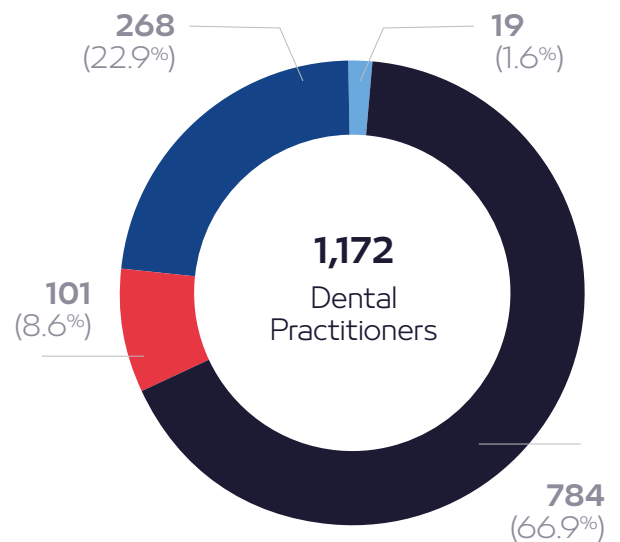


Figure 4: Dental practitioners breakdown (by job role category)²



General
 Consultant
 Specialist
 General/Residents

² National Health Regulatory Authority Open Data, (December 2023)

Nurses

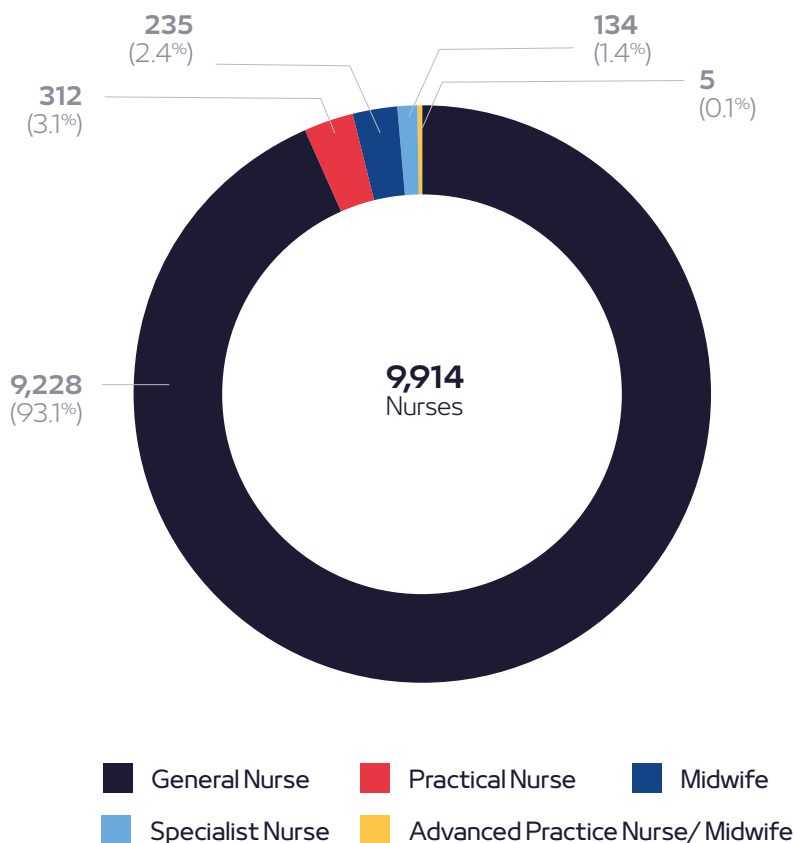
The global nursing shortage, intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, has also impacted Bahrain. Globally, the shortage contributes to strained healthcare systems, compromised patient care, and higher workloads for existing staff. This crisis has exemplified the need for a balanced mix of generalist and specialized nurses. Generalist nurses provide broad-based care crucial for diverse patient needs, while specialized nurses offer expertise in specific areas like intensive care or geriatrics. In Bahrain, 96% of nurses are either general or practical nurses, underscoring the potential for nurses to upskill and pursue specialized paths to meet the needs of the sector.

There are multiple routes for general nurses to pursue specialization and build clinical expertise. Midwifery, for example, is a viable option for nurses, and may be achieved through an accredited postgraduate

diploma. Alternatively, individuals aiming to become specialist nurses are able to pursue advanced studies, including master’s or doctoral degrees in one of the NHRA-approved clinical nursing specialties. Moreover, a nurse or specialist nurse can develop expertise and become an advanced nurse by pursuing further education. Nurses can play a more versatile and impactful role in healthcare facilities through the expansion of their scope of practice.

Ambulance nursing is another attractive field with minimal Bahraini representation within the workforce. Entry into ambulance nursing is possible for registered nurses who have received Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), and Pediatric advanced life support (PALS) certifications. It provides registered nurses with the chance to play a vital role in pre-hospital care and emergency medical services.

Figure 5: Nurses breakdown (by job role category)²



² National Health Regulatory Authority Open Data, (December 2023)

Allied Health Professionals

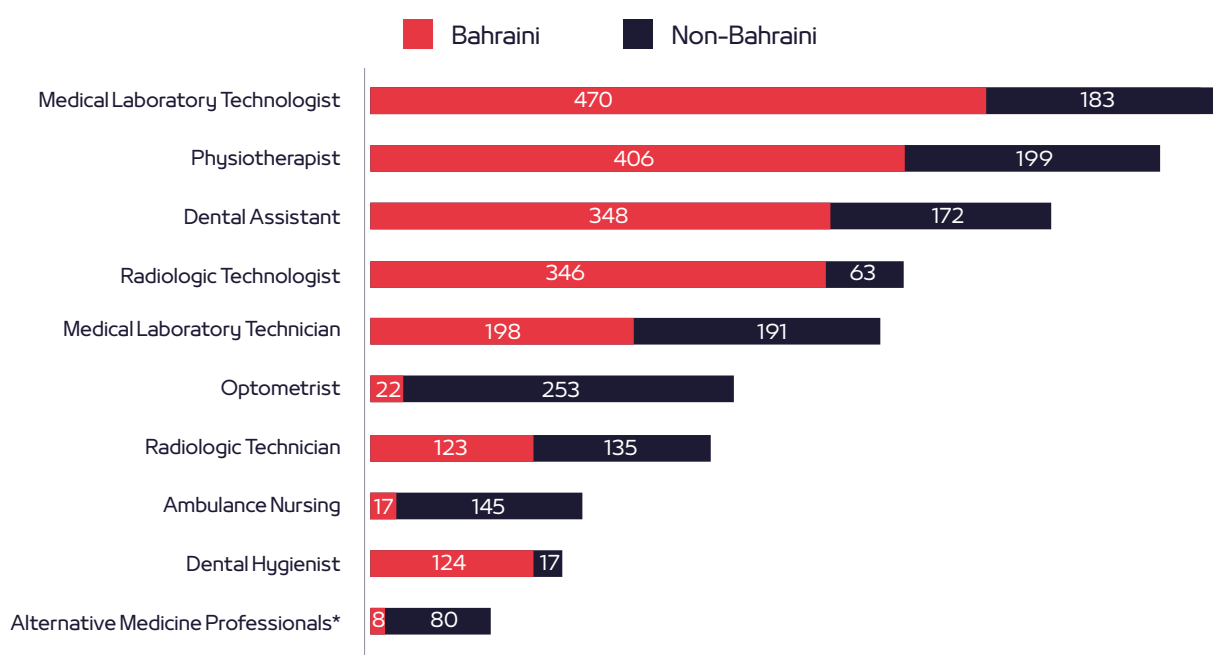
The composition of allied health professionals in Bahrain shows a mixed level of Bahrainization some specialties have many Bahraini professionals, while others have noticeably few. There are over 4,300 allied health professionals in Bahrain with a Bahrainization rate which is relatively higher than the overall healthcare sector at 59%. Allied health offers an interesting career choice for job seekers as the academic or vocational years of study required are fewer than the other roles within the medical field.

Medical laboratory technologists represent the majority of roles within the allied health job family, and have a Bahrainization rate of 72%. Individuals interested in becoming medical laboratory technologists can gain entry into the occupation through a bachelor's degree in medical laboratory science. Further specialization as a specialized medical laboratory technologist can be achieved through the attainment of a master's degree in a medical specialty.

Physiotherapy and optometry are allied health fields that are in high demand for local talent and present an attractive opportunity for Bahrainis interested in the specialty. Optometry is notable for having the lowest Bahrainization rate among the top ten allied health professions, and may represent an opportunity for Bahrainis, aiming to enter into the sector. Individuals with a fascination for the intricacies of the human eye have the opportunity to enter a field, with high patient demand, while helping to reduce the sector's dependence on foreign optometrists.

Lastly, alternative medicine presents a potential entry point for Bahrainis considering a career in healthcare. It represents a growing segment globally as well as within Bahrain's healthcare ecosystem. GPs today can train to become alternative medicine physician practitioners by undertaking academic or training programs in alternative medicine.

Figure 6: Top Ten Allied Health Professions by Employment ²



* Includes Alternative Medicine Technicians and Practitioners

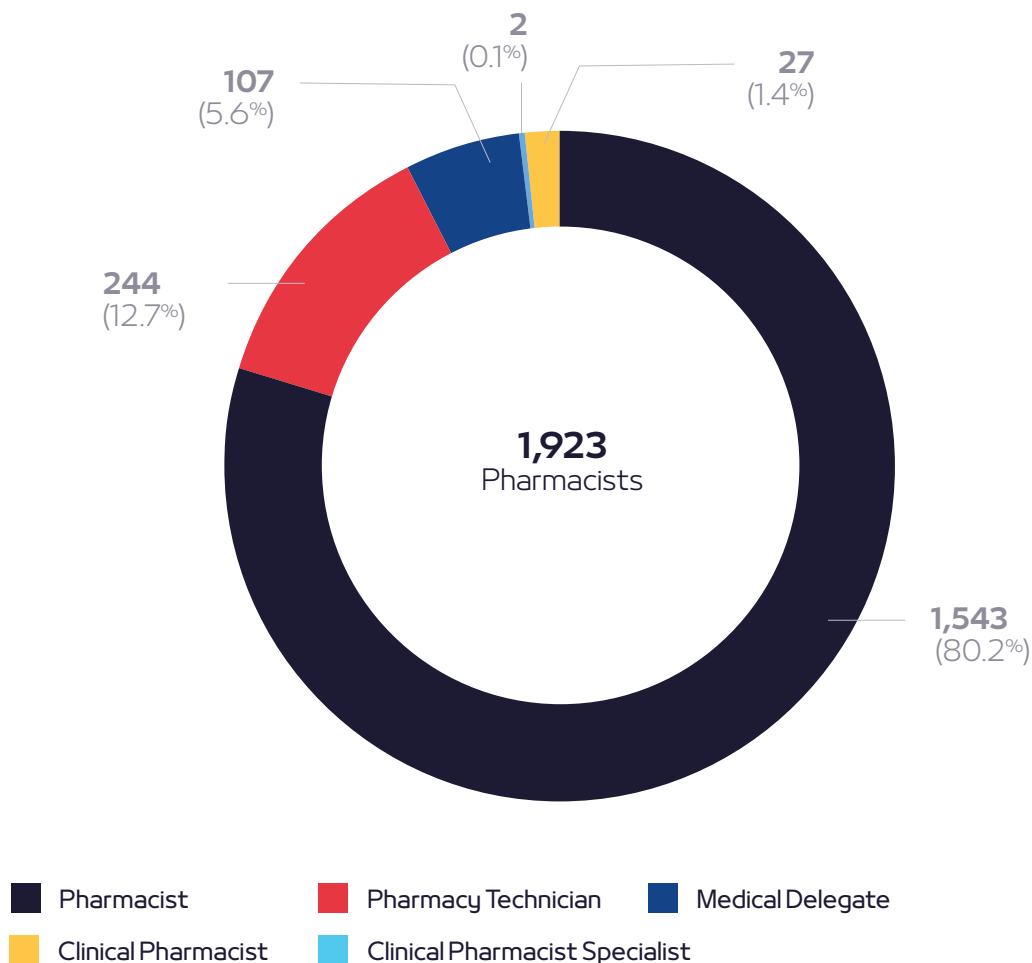
² National Health Regulatory Authority Open Data, (December 2023)

Pharmacists

The field of pharmacy in Bahrain has a lower Bahrainization rate (approx. 33%) than the sector average and presents an opportunity for Bahraini nationals to enter the field. Similarly, medical delegates is a potential job role that currently has a Bahrainization rate of less than 6%, with only 7 licensed Bahraini medical delegates out of 107.

Pharmacists, with at least two years of clinical experience, are well-positioned to transition into the role of medical delegate, a lucrative career path that blends healthcare knowledge with sales acumen. Medical delegates primarily promote and sell medical products to healthcare personnel. Their responsibilities include building and maintaining relationships with healthcare providers, effectively communicating product information, and implementing sales strategies to increase product uptake. This role is ideal for individuals with salesmanship qualities and a pharmaceutical background.

Figure 7: Pharmacists breakdown (by job role category)²



² National Health Regulatory Authority Open Data, (December 2023)

Key Roles Shaping the Healthcare Sector

The healthcare sector in Bahrain is diverse and encompasses a variety of specializations and sub-specializations, each dedicated to delivering high-quality healthcare. Sector Working Group insights coupled with the analysis of labor market data

reveals a number of jobs in high demand by the sector and may serve as a tool for guiding Bahraini medical professionals towards opportunities for potential employment.

Note: The job roles listed above are not ranked by level of demand within the sector.

Job	Job overview
Medical Coder	Medical coders assign standardized codes to diagnoses, procedures, and treatments in patient medical records. Their aim is to ensure accurate medical records to prevent potential cases of fraud, and simplify the billing and reimbursement process for medical facilities and individuals. Due to the analytical nature of their role, medical coders are expected to be well-versed in medical terminology, anatomy, and various coding systems.
Medical Delegates	Medical delegates usually have strong communication abilities to facilitate relationship building with healthcare professionals. The job role involves promoting and selling medical products, meaning delegates are expected to maintain accurate, up-to-date knowledge about the products they are promoting.
Midwives	Midwives assist expectant mothers through prenatal care, labor and delivery, and support during the postpartum journey. They utilize their expertise to advise women on pregnancy, childbirth, and the intricacies of the fourth trimester. Due to the intimate role a midwife plays in a woman's birthing experience, it is essential that these individuals have strong communication skills, the ability to empathize, in addition to the formal midwifery degree.
Nurses	Nurses provide care and support to patients through their aid to other medical professionals. They are responsible for assessing, monitoring, and evaluating the physical and emotional well-being of patients. Nurses are often empathetic as they deal with patients in a more intimate nature than other medical personnel. Nurses can specialize and focus on providing expert care within a specific medical field, for example oncology, neurology, or cardiac care.
Optometrists	Optometrists specialize in eye and vision care typically in private clinics or retail settings. They examine patients to diagnose vision problems, eye diseases, and other abnormalities. Optometrists also prescribe and fit eyeglasses or contact lenses, provide vision therapy, and offer guidance on eye health and hygiene.
Pharmacists	Pharmacists dispense and manage medications prescribed to each patient. Their role is to ensure patients are aptly educated on prescriptions, side-effects, and offer suggestions for over the counter solutions. Pharmacists are usually empathetic and excellent communicators as they interact with patients' and their loved ones on a daily basis. Pharmacists are essential to the healthcare sector as they provide the aftercare necessary to ensure individuals adhere to their prescriptions to optimize their overall health.
Specialized Dental Practitioners	Specialized dental practitioners are dentists that focus on specific areas of oral health. For example, an orthodontist specializes in the alignment of teeth and jaws. Whereas, a periodontist concentrates on preventing, diagnosing, and treating gum diseases. Dentistry plays a vital role in the maintenance of an individual's overall health and well-being. Specialization, therefore, provides further care to individuals through the management and resolution of medical and aesthetic issues related to oral health.
Specialized Physician	General practitioners can become specialized physicians through further education and training. Specialized physicians play a variety of roles within the healthcare sector, for example an anaesthesiologist provides anesthesia and pain management to patients during procedures and surgeries. Another example of a specialized physician is an allergist. Allergists or immunologists focus on preventing and treating allergic diseases, such as asthma, in turn contributing to the overall well-being of an individual's quality of life.



Career Spotlight

Career Spotlight:

SPECIALIZED PHYSICIANS

Role Overview

A specialist in the medical field, also known as a specialized physician, is a general practitioner who undergoes additional education and training beyond a medical degree to excel in a specific area of medicine. These specialized physicians concentrate on particular fields such as cardiology, orthopaedics, or neurology. By specializing, they can develop expertise to offer advanced diagnosis, specialized care and customized treatment plans for patients. This focused approach enables them to delve deeper into complex medical issues and deliver tailored treatments and procedures.

Career Pathway and Progression

In Bahrain's healthcare sector, there are different ways to become a specialist. It can involve completing a residency program to specialize in a specific field. Another route to specialization requires the completion of a clinical master's program, followed by professional work experience under a consultant within the chosen specialty. Physicians that specialize through a Clinical Master's program are able to advance to the role of a consultant after the completion of a clinical Ph.D. program (please refer to the Career Pathway Maps for further details).



Career Spotlight:

MEDICAL DELEGATE

Role Overview

Medical delegates are healthcare professionals that represent pharmaceutical companies, or medical associations at various events. Medical delegates build relationships with other medical personnel to promote and sell products. Medical delegates are required to have extensive knowledge of various medical products to be able to organize and deliver educational sessions to medical personnel, such as doctors and pharmacists. The educational sessions facilitate discussions to promote the exchange of knowledge and foster collaborations between pharmaceutical organizations and medical personnel.

Career Pathway and Progression

Medical delegates are required to complete a relevant bachelor's degree, and gain experience within the pharmaceutical industry. The nature of the job requires communicating with a variety of people meaning strong communication skills are often a key capability sought after within medical delegates. Medical delegates are capable of progressing within the same career path, or attaining further education to specialize in therapeutic areas or managerial roles. Medical delegates are expected to contribute to their professional development by continually learning about advancements within the medical field.



Career Spotlight:

NURSES

Role Overview

Nurses are an essential component of the healthcare system through the provision of patient care. They are required to collaborate with other medical professionals to assess, monitor, and evaluate patients, in an effort to optimize patient care. Nurses often have excellent interpersonal skills to facilitate their role as intermediaries between physicians and patients. Nurses possess qualities like patience and compassion as the role demands composure and empathy when dealing with patients. Nurses contribute extensively to the ability to improve patient outcomes through their delivery of holistic care.

Career Pathway and Progression

To become a nurse, individuals need to complete a nursing education program and pass a licensure examination. There are different academic pathways to becoming a nurse, including diploma programs, associate degree in nursing (ADN), and bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN). After completing the required education, aspiring nurses must obtain licensure, typically by taking an exam with the accredited body, in this case the NHRA.

Upon becoming licensed, nurses can pursue entry-level positions in various healthcare settings, gaining practical experience. Continuing education, specialization, and advanced degrees are available for career advancement and to explore specialized roles in nursing or in managerial roles within the nursing profession.



CAREER SPOTLIGHT: MEDICAL CODER

Role Overview

Medical coders are professionals within the healthcare sector responsible for analyzing medical records and assigning standardized codes to ensure all billing and reimbursements are accurate. Medical coders serve to simplify the bureaucratic process for medical facilities and individuals, while also preventing unnecessary or fraudulent charges. Medical coders also help maintain medical records for statistical and research purposes. Medical coders need knowledge of medical terminology, anatomy, physiology, and disease processes to effectively navigate the versatile job requirements.

Career Pathway and Progression

To pursue a career in medical coding, individuals need a high school diploma or equivalent. Formal education or training in medical coding, such as the Certified Professional Coder (CDC) certificate, equip individuals with the level of medical terminology and anatomy knowledge needed to effectively perform daily tasks. Practical experience gained through internships or entry-level positions are beneficial to individuals looking to become Medical Coders. As an individual progresses within the field of medical coding, they are capable of transitioning into leadership roles or specializing in areas like outpatient or inpatient coding.



Preparing A Future-Ready Healthcare Workforce

In a highly regulated industry like healthcare, career progression is relatively structured and driven by professional academic qualifications, experience and tenure. In collaboration with the Sector Working Group and NHRA, Career Pathway Maps were developed for each of the job families identified in the healthcare sector. Career Pathway Maps are an instrumental resource in illustrating the various career trajectories available within the industry, both vertically and laterally. They provide a clear framework for the qualifications and experience required at different stages and roles, giving direction to individuals wishing to progress or pivot in the sector. This approach empowers healthcare professionals to make informed career decisions and proactively plan their professional development. By utilizing career pathway maps, Bahrain's healthcare workforce can better align their personal career goals with the sector's evolving needs, ensuring a robust, skilled, and adaptable talent pool.

Proficiency of core skills equip individuals with tools needed to execute their job role and contribute to the success of the healthcare sector. Core skills - also known as generic or soft skills - are basic skills required to interact effectively with individuals in both life and work. Technical skills are the abilities, knowledge, or expertise required to perform specific, job-related tasks. In the healthcare sector, technical skills are usually developed through structured academic/training programs and refined through on-the-job experience.





Core Skills Framework

Tamkeen has developed and pioneered a Core Skills Framework as part of the country's wider skills taxonomy. The framework has been developed and aligned against a comprehensive list of international benchmarks and best practices, whilst reflecting the specific needs and aspirations of Bahrain as a progressive country.

Core skills underpin, promote and provide the foundation of the skills required to carry out specific job roles and functions. They are usually gained through life and work experience or through structured learning and training programs. Core skills are essential for any job or profession and provide a strong basis for lifelong learning and for building the technical skills required to support specific job roles.

The Core Skills Framework is structured around three key pillars: Social Intelligence, Self Management, and Analytical Skills, each playing a vital role in shaping a proficient and adaptive workforce. Under each of the key pillars, four core skills are defined forming a complete framework of twelve core skills.

Core Skills Framework



SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

The ability to be self-aware, inclusive, communicative and form relationships with others with empathy, compassion and assertiveness

Building Inclusivity

The ability to create an environment and manage relationships across diverse groups in a range of different contexts by seeking to establish common ground regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, ability, education, or socio-economic status.

Communication

The ability to listen effectively and understand, articulate thoughts and ideas effectively, exchange information, employ negotiation skills and use oral, written and non-verbal skills across a range of different environments.

Empathy

The ability to demonstrate emotional intelligence by demonstrating awareness of the feelings and emotions of others and being able to act accordingly within that context.

Collaboration and Teamwork

The ability to work collectively and effectively with one or more people in order to achieve a common goal, bringing together a range of experience and skills based on exchanging ideas, sharing experience and developing creative solutions.



SELF MANAGEMENT

The ability to manage behaviors, thoughts and emotions in a conscious and productive way

Adaptability

The ability to easily adapt to new situations and changing circumstances in life and work and change actions as required.

Initiative

The ability to think independently, identify opportunities, think innovatively and take action when necessary and without direction.

Planning and Organizing

The ability to plan and organize tasks in order to fulfill requirements within a given time.

Literacy

The ability to understand and have the confidence and skills to work with language to identify, interpret, create and communicate effectively in written and oral formats.



ANALYTICAL SKILLS

The ability to collect, organize, visualize and assimilate data using a range of tools and skills

Digital Literacy

The ability to find, evaluate, analyze, use, share and create content using digital devices, use software applications and troubleshoot common problems.

Critical Thinking

The ability to analyze, interpret, evaluate, infer, explain, synthesize and self-reflect in the context of making reasoned judgements based on a logical sequence of independent thought.

Problem Solving

The ability to identify and assess issues and problems and make use of available resources to evaluate and generate potential solutions in personal, social and work contexts.

Numeracy

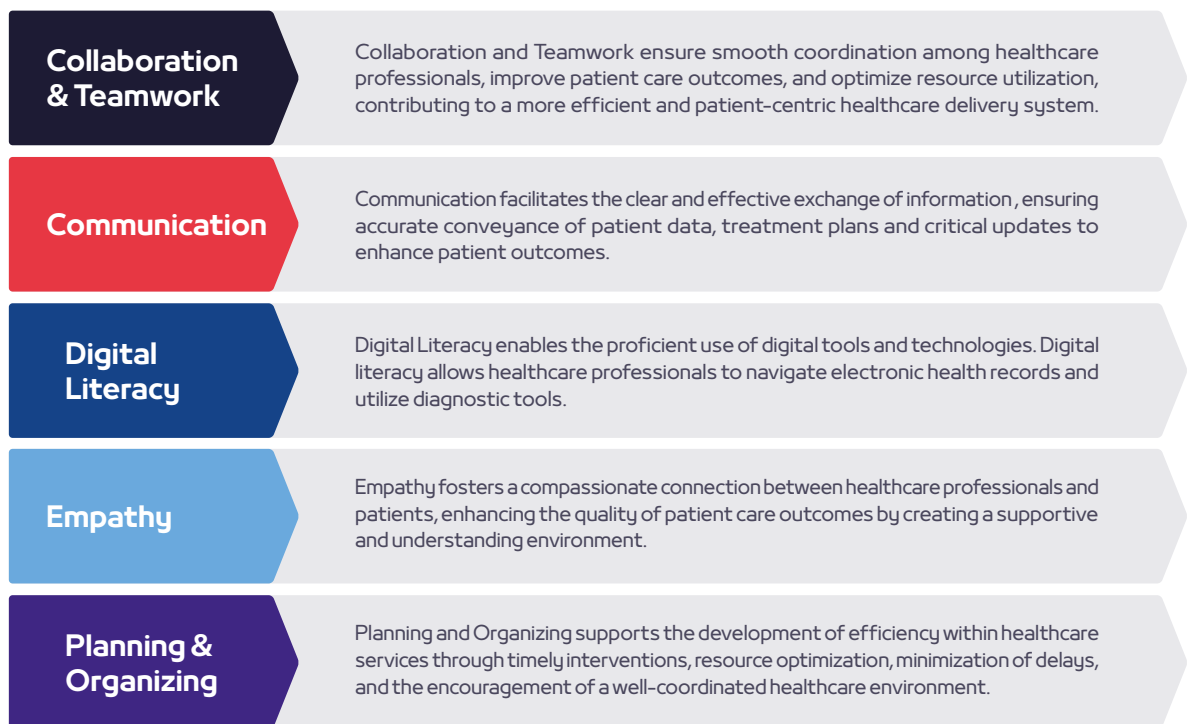
The ability to understand and have the confidence and skills to work with numbers using numerical skills to process, interpret and communicate information to help understand, predict and solve problems.

Key Skills for a Dynamic Workforce

Identifying and bridging skill gaps is critical to the progression of Bahrain's healthcare sector. In a sector where professionals are required to continually improve their technical knowledge and expertise through Continuous Medical Education (CME) programs and workshops, enhancing the core skills of the workforce serves to heighten the delivery of high-quality patient care.

Core Skills to Enable your Success in the Sector

Core skills provide a foundation for continuous learning and development, playing a crucial role in achieving success in a dynamic workplace. The Sector Working Groups have highlighted five overarching core skills that are required across most job roles in the healthcare sector.



Spotlight: Communication

Effective communication is a key core skill in the healthcare sector and a prerequisite to delivering patient-centered care. Communication ensures a comprehensive understanding of diagnoses and treatment plans among patients and promotes active participation in health-related decision making.

Moreover, advanced communication skills are instrumental in addressing staff concerns promptly and aligning healthcare team members with organizational goals and policies. It facilitates a seamless exchange of information, streamlining both upward communication to address staff issues, and downward communication to unify the team.

Training Programs and Initiatives

Understanding the potential career trajectories, through the use of career pathway maps, helps individuals plan and prepare for their future in the sector. Tamkeen have developed employment and career development programs that can be leveraged by the healthcare sector to promote overall workforce development. These programs range from financial support to the enhancement of core skills.

For healthcare professionals looking to specialize and progress in their career, The Labour Fund (Tamkeen) has developed financial support programs in partnership with the banking sector. The program supports individuals in their pursuit of further academic studies, such as master's degrees to become specialists and consultants within their field of study. For employers, Tamkeen provides programs such as the Leadership Employment Program, to incentivize employers to promote skilled Bahraini individuals into mid-level and executive roles through the subsidization of Bahraini salaries for up to two years.

Tamkeen's contribution to the growth and development of professionals extends past financial support as highlighted by the array of programs offered to all Bahrainis within the workforce. These comprehensive programs are invaluable and are designed to elevate or build competencies of Bahraini individuals and contribute to the overall development of the workforce in alignment with industry demands.



Tamkeen: Employment Programs

<p>National Employment Program</p>	<p>Provides employers with wage subsidy support when hiring Bahraini talent with less than two years of registered work experience based on the Social Insurance Organisation (SIO) or those registered with the Ministry of Labour (MOL). Professionals in the medical field, must be a licensed doctor or dentist employed in a private hospital or clinic with a wage of at least BHD 800.</p>
<p>On The Job Training</p>	<p>Bahraini jobseekers and recent graduates can take advantage of on-the-job training opportunities offered by Tamkeen to enhance their existing skill set and acquire new practical skills. Individuals can extensively benefit from the program while receiving monthly stipends from Tamkeen.</p>

Tamkeen: Career Development

<p>Wage Increment Program</p>	<p>The program provides support for wage increments to both existing and new employees within an enterprise with the goal of promoting Bahrainization and encouraging higher salaries for locals. Tamkeen offers wage support for a period of up to two years as a part of this initiative.</p>
<p>Professional Certification Program</p>	<p>Through this program, Bahraini individuals are empowered to enhance their skills and improve their competitiveness in the evolving healthcare sector. They are given the opportunity to obtain accredited professional certifications at a subsidized rate. Tamkeen offers comprehensive support for the training program expenses, which includes covering exam fees, membership fees, and study materials.</p>
<p>Leadership Employment Program</p>	<p>The Leadership and Employment Program serves to propel Bahrainis into leadership roles through the provision of wage support to employers that are interested in hiring locals for mid-level and executive positions. Employers, within the private sector, have the opportunity to receive subsidies for up to 50% of Bahraini employees' salaries, provided they fall within the prescribed limit, for a duration of two years.</p>
<p>Train and Place</p>	<p>Bahraini job seekers are able to receive professional training, allowing them to enter the job market with a strong professional background.</p>
<p>Enterprise Training Program</p>	<p>Tamkeen provides support to employers in the healthcare sector by partially or wholly covering training costs, enabling them to enhance the skills and development of their workforce. This support aims to improve their competencies, capabilities, and ensure their global competitiveness in the industry.</p>
<p>Global-Ready Talent</p>	<p>The program supports overseas placement and work opportunities for Bahrainis to help them gain valuable work experience, and enhance their skills. Tamkeen may offer part of an employee's monthly wage during the placement period, as well as part of the travel costs. This initiative helps Bahrainis accelerate their career development through exposure to an international work environment.</p>
<p>Aspire</p>	<p>Aspire aims to support national talent currently employed in jobs that do not match their academic qualifications by providing training programs to support career progression and promotion. This initiative can also be coupled with the Wage Increment Program, thus benefitting employers and employees.</p>

Key Takeaways

▶ **Effective communication is instrumental in the provision of high quality patient-care.**

High-quality patient care fundamentally requires advanced training in communication between medical professionals and patients. Training should target the improvement of internal communication between medical professional and management as well as the integration of emotional intelligence when dealing with patients. Effective communication enhances operations within healthcare facilities and improves the overall quality of service delivered to patients.

▶ **Consider specializing to further increase attractiveness in the job market.**

Healthcare professionals can bolster their existing skillset through specialization. GPs and general dentists should consider specializing in niche fields such as orthodontics to address the demand in the sector. This allows individuals to provide more comprehensive and targeted care and provides an opportunity for individuals to stay relevant and attractive in a highly competitive job market.

▶ **Embrace a mindset of continuous learning and development.**

Individuals can go above and beyond the NHRA-required CME hours through attaining qualifications and academic degrees. This ensures that individuals are equipped with the right skills and specializations to tackle the everchanging world of work in healthcare. Employers should actively engage and invest in developing core skills among their workforce with the aim of delivering high-quality healthcare to patients.

▶ **Explore career paths in high demand.**

Explore in-demand opportunities such as nursing (general and specialized) and roles like medical delegates, which offer unique and lucrative career opportunities at the intersection of healthcare and other sectors. The sector skills report offers insights into which job roles are highly sought out by employers, highlighting opportunities for job seekers that demonstrate strong passion, commitment and technical capabilities. Career pathway maps have been developed for all NHRA-regulated job roles in the sector and serve as a useful tool for shaping your educational and professional journey.

▶ **Adapt to the sector's technological advancements**

The rapid evolution of technology within healthcare requires employers stay on top of the latest developments. This includes investing in areas like AI for diagnostics and patient management and telemedicine platforms to expand patient access. Once these tools are fully integrated, adequate training must be provided to relevant employees to be able to fully utilize the technology and provide the highest quality of service and patient care.

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Core skills	The combination of essential skills required to be fully prepared for life and work in a global economy
Digitalization	The use of digital technologies, digitized information and data to change business operations and introduce efficiencies and opportunities
Emerging Jobs	A job/occupation that currently has small numbers but is expected to grow in the future
Job	A paid position of employment held by an individual
Job Family	A group of jobs/positions that involve work in the same functional occupation and share related core knowledge and background requirements. The job family structure is based on function rather than organizational structure.
Job Role	A specific set of responsibilities and duties assigned to an employee within an organization
Sector skills report	A concise report which outlines an overview of an industry sector by identifying trends, presenting macro-economic data, outlining current and future job roles and associated skills gaps and making recommendations for the future
Skills framework	Provides information such as key sector information, occupations and job roles, and the required existing and emerging skills to fulfil roles within that sector
Skills gap	The difference between the identified skills (core and technical) that an employer expects their employees to have and the actual skills that employees possess
Skills mismatch	An overarching term which can be used to describe various instances of imbalance in skills e.g. skill shortage which is where the demand for a particular type of skills exceeds the supply of the workforce with these skills; skill surplus which is where the supply of the workforce with a particular type of skills exceeds demand in the job market; over-skilling occurs where the workforce has more skills than required to perform a job adequately; under-skilling occurs where the workforce has less skills than required to perform a job adequately
Stakeholder engagement	The process by which an organization involves others who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the impact and implementation of its decisions
Technical skills	The specialized knowledge and expertise required to perform specific tasks and use specific tools and programs associated with a particular job role