

# Practice Transition Accreditation Program



## CASE STUDY: King Fahad Specialist Hospital in Dammam

### BACKGROUND

King Fahad Specialist Hospital in Dammam (KFSHD), part of the Eastern Health Cluster (EHC) in Saudi Arabia, operates as a tertiary care hospital providing services in Medical/Neuroscience, Surgical/Multi-Organ Transplant, Oncology/Palliative, and Critical Care/Emergency. With 1,287 nursing staff and over 12,968 annual admissions, KFSHD serves a large patient population through both physical and virtual ambulatory visits. The hospital pursued structured ANCC PTAP accreditation for its nurse residency program to ensure high standards of education, patient safety, and professional development aligned with international best practices.

### CHALLENGES

#### Recruitment of Qualified Candidates

As a tertiary care hospital, KFSHD requires nurses with advanced clinical competencies and strong critical thinking skills. Recruiting new graduates who meet these rigorous standards proved difficult, especially given the competitive healthcare labor market.

#### Transitioning New Nurses into Practice

Ensuring smooth onboarding was a major hurdle. Challenges included:

- Preceptor Consistency: Assigning the same preceptor throughout the program was difficult due to scheduling conflicts.
- Schedule Alignment: Coordinating clinical rotations with classroom sessions to maintain continuity and optimal learning.
- Competency Gaps: New graduates often lacked confidence and readiness for high-acuity environments, requiring additional support.

#### Retention and Engagement

Retaining nurses after program completion was critical. High stress levels, workload demands, and adaptation to complex clinical settings risked early attrition.

#### Stakeholder Coordination

Aligning expectations among leadership, educators, and preceptors required continuous communication and engagement to avoid gaps in program delivery.

## SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

- **Program Design:** Developed a residency program aligned with ANCC PTAP standards and Saudi Commission for Health Specialties requirements. Included six core modules focusing on patient-centered care, teamwork, evidence-based practice, safety, and informatics.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Conducted orientations and monthly meetings with leadership, educators, and preceptors to ensure alignment and continuous feedback.
- **Educational Strategies:** Implemented simulation-based learning, mentorship, case-based discussions, reflective practice, and blended learning approaches.
- **Wellness Initiatives:** Introduced a Well-Being Policy, monthly clinics, and access to confidential counseling through the Labayh platform.
- **Preceptor Training:** Provided structured guidance, competency frameworks, assessment tools, and remediation strategies to ensure effective mentorship.

## RESULTS AND OUTCOMES



### Retention Success

- The program achieved strong retention rates, with most graduates continuing employment post-completion, indicating effective transition support.



### Competency Achievement

- Graduates demonstrated measurable improvement in clinical and non-clinical skills through standardized **assessments, simulation exercises, and competency validation tools.**



### Stakeholder Evaluation Scores

- Aggregate mean scores from stakeholder evaluations averaged 3.48 out of 4.0 across three cohorts (Sept 2023–Apr 2025)
- These scores reflect high satisfaction with graduates' readiness, professionalism, and clinical performance.



### Improved Patient Safety and Critical Thinking

- Performance evaluations indicated enhanced decision-making and adherence to safety protocols, contributing to better patient outcomes.



### Positive Learner Feedback

- Satisfaction surveys revealed strong appreciation for mentorship, simulation-based learning, and wellness initiatives, which improved confidence and reduced stress.

## CONCLUSIONS

The residency program successfully addressed recruitment and transition challenges by implementing structured support systems, evidence-based educational strategies, and wellness initiatives. Continuous stakeholder engagement and rigorous evaluation ensured program sustainability and alignment with international standards.

### TAKEAWAYS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

1. **Accreditation as a Growth Opportunity:**  
Treat accreditation as a tool for quality enhancement, not just compliance.
2. **Leadership Commitment:**  
Engage executive leadership and stakeholders early for program success.
3. **Structured Support:**  
Develop clear frameworks for competency assessment, preceptor training, and learner well-being.
4. **Continuous Evaluation:**  
Maintain documentation and feedback loops to drive ongoing improvement.
5. **Culture of Collaboration:**  
Foster an environment that values feedback, adaptability, and professional development.

ANCC Practice Transition Accreditation Program® (PTAP). recognizes programs that offer high-quality nurse residency and fellowship programs that transition nurses into practice with confidence and competence.

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