

CIRCULAR NO. (1) OF 2023 (DHP)

From	Department of Healthcare Professions / Ministry of Public Health
To	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All licensed Healthcare Practitioners in the State of Qatar (Government/ Private)• All licensed Healthcare Facilities/ focal points in the state of Qatar
Subject	Adding new scope of practice “Lactation Consultant” and its registration/licensing standards within the Allied Healthcare Practitioner list
Date	4 Jan. 2023

“Greetings from the Department of Healthcare Professions”

The Department of Healthcare Professions pursuit (DHP) to cope with the best regional and international practices in the field of registration/ licensing and, in accordance with benchmark study and collaboration with the experts, the field of women's and child's health as the most important pillars for the establishment of comprehensive healthcare and based on the Permanent Licensing Committee decision dated 26/12/2022, The Lactation Consultant scope has been added to the list of Allied Healthcare Practitioners approved by the Department, specifying the scope and registration/licensing requirements.

Please check the attachments for all information regarding the registration/ licensing requirements and the scope of practice.

Attachments:

- Lactation consultant scope of practice and its Registration / Licensing requirements

For further information, Kindly contact:

- Registration team/Department of Healthcare Profession - dhpreistration@moph.gov.qa

Thank you for your cooperation-Department of Healthcare Professions

Criteria for National Registration Requirements – Lactation Consultant

Criteria	Lactation Consultant
Definition	<p>Lactation Consultants are individuals who hold a valid license issued under a national authority or a board that authorizes them to practice their profession and use the title Lactation Consultant.</p> <p>A Lactation Consultant is a professional member of the healthcare team who demonstrates specialized knowledge and clinical expertise in breastfeeding and human lactation and holds the International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) certificate.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria are based on minimum requirements of academic degree, years of clinical experience, and board certification in the field of specialization.</p>
Practice Settings	A Lactation Consultant may provide services in both public and private settings, including Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Healthcare setting,
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bachelor's degree in health-related profession, i.e., Nursing or Midwifery. <p style="text-align: center;">And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Valid International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®) certificate.
Scope of Practice	<p>The Lactation Consultant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides in-person consultations, telephone consultations, or online breastfeeding and lactation care that supports breastfeeding families, including lactation assistance to pregnant and breastfeeding clients and lactation education to families and/or professionals. ● Provides comprehensive and skilled care and evidence-based information for breastfeeding and human lactation, from preconception to weaning, for breastfeeding families. ● Integrates knowledge and evidence from the disciplines defined in the IBLCE Detailed Content Outline when providing care for breastfeeding families. ● Protects, promotes, and supports breastfeeding as the child-feeding norm. ● Reviews and approves internal quality control and external quality assurance programs in lactation consultation.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintains knowledge and skills through regular continuing education. ● Designs and collaborates the operation of breast-feeding infant programs. ● Participates in research, education, and administration. ● Practices within the ethical and legal parameters of the profession and within the Scope as defined by the International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®).
Licensure	Lactation Consultants must apply for registration to Department of Healthcare Professions (DHP) and must be eligible to be licensed in the State of Qatar.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overseas candidates: Minimum one year experience in breastfeeding consultancy. ● For Qatari Nationals, Qatar Universities graduates, offspring of Qatari women or offspring of residents, please refer to the DHP Circular No.15/2022.
Competency validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passing the DHP licensing examination (if applicable), unless exempted, please refer to Circular No.24/2020, and the qualifying examination policy at the following link: https://dhp.moph.gov.qa/en/Documents/Qualifying%20Examination%20Policy.pdf ● Verification of the educational qualifications and relevant graduate clinical experience.
Other Requirements for Evaluation & Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refer to the DHP requirements for Registration/Evaluation at this link: https://dhp.moph.gov.qa/en/Pages/HowToRegisterToPracticeInQatar.aspx
Requirements for License renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refer to the DHP requirements for License Renewal at this link: https://dhp.moph.gov.qa/en/Pages/HowToRegisterToPracticeInQatar.aspx
<p>Note: For applicants with break from practice, please refer to the DHP Break from Practice at this link: https://dhp.moph.gov.qa/en/Documents/Policy%20on%20Break%20from%20Practice.pdf</p>	

Lactation Consultants - Scope of Practice

INTRODUCTION

The Scope of Practice for Lactation Consultants uses a competency framework built on the following five domains:

- 1. Professional and Ethical Practice**
- 2. Clinical Practice**
- 3. Leadership and Management**
- 4. Continuous Education**
- 5. Research and Development**

Each domain is described through competency requirements and performance criteria that define the standards of practice expected of the Lactation Consultants. This document is to be used as a foundation for all Lactation Consultant roles, professional development, and performance appraisal.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to define the scope of practice for licensed Lactation Consultants in Qatar and to:

- Describe the services offered by qualified Lactation Consultants.
- Define the professional accountability, required competencies, and scope of ethical and legal practice of the Lactation Consultants in relation to patients, families, other members of the multidisciplinary team, community and society.
- Serve as a reference for license regulating authorities and governing professional healthcare.

DEFINITION OF LACTATION CONSULTATION

Lactation Consultation is the provision of comprehensive skilled care and evidence-based information for breastfeeding and human lactation from preconception to weaning, for breastfeeding families, based on specialized knowledge and clinical expertise in breastfeeding and human lactation, by professionals who have been certified by the International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

DEFINITION OF LACTATION CONSULTANT

A Lactation Consultant is a professional member of the healthcare team who works within the framework defined by the IBLC Code of Professional Conduct and the Clinical Competencies for IBCLC Practice to provide expert breastfeeding and lactation care for breastfeeding families and facilitates the development of policies which protect,



promote and support breastfeeding, working within the laws and regulations in their country, jurisdiction and workplace.

PROFESSIONAL ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

The clinical practice of a Lactation Consultant encompasses acknowledging parental and child health and mental status in the context of breastfeeding, performing comprehensive maternal, child and feeding assessments related to breastfeeding and human lactation, developing and implementing an individualized feeding plan in consultation with the client and providing evidence-based information regarding use of medications (over-the-counter and prescription), alcohol, tobacco, and herbs or supplements during breastfeeding and human lactation, and their potential impact on milk production and child safety. A Lactation Consultant provides in-person consultations, telephone consultations, or online breastfeeding and lactation care and may provide services in both public and private settings, including Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Healthcare setting, or within a community as an independent practitioner or employee. The practice also includes providing evidence-based information regarding complementary and alternative therapies during lactation and their impact on milk production and effect on the child, integrating cultural, psychosocial, and nutritional aspects of breastfeeding and human lactation and providing support and encouragement to successfully meet breastfeeding goals. The Lactation Consultant practitioner should ensure use of effective counseling skills and principles of adult education when interacting with clients, health care team members and others in the community, and work by the principles of family-centered care while maintaining a collaborative and supportive relationship with clients.

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

1. DOMAIN ONE: PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

This domain defines the professional accountability and scope of ethical and legal practice of the Lactation Consultant in relation to patients, families, members of the healthcare team, community, and society.

1.1 Competency Standard: Accountability

Practitioners accept accountability for their own actions and decision-making and for its related outcomes.

Performance Criteria:

- 1.1.1 Demonstrates accountability for their own professional judgments, actions, outcomes of care and continued competence in accordance with Qatari laws and regulations and the Scope of Practice.
- 1.1.2 Records all relevant information, truthfully and fully, concerning care provided and, where appropriate, retaining records for the time specified by the local jurisdiction.



- 1.1.3 Reports, when necessary, truthfully, and fully to the client's primary health care provider, to the health care system, and/or to the appropriate social services.
- 1.1.4 Works within the limits of own competence and the boundaries of the Scope of Practice.
- 1.1.5 Seeks appropriate guidance when encountering situations beyond the limits of own competence and the Scope of Practice.
- 1.1.6 Acknowledges and respects the accountability and responsibilities of other healthcare professionals and personnel.
- 1.1.7 Takes accountability for delegation of aspects of care delivery.
- 1.1.8 Participates in activities to optimize patient access to the full range of services required for effective healthcare.
- 1.1.9 Assumes accountability for improving the quality and effectiveness of healthcare services provided.

1.2 **Competency Standard: Ethical Practice**

Lactation Consultants work within the framework defined by the Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs, the Scope of Practice for IBCLCs, and the Clinical Competencies for the Practice of IBCLCs and integrates knowledge and evidence from the disciplines defined in the Detailed Content Outline when providing care for breastfeeding families.

Performance Criteria:

- 1.2.1 Engages in ethical decision-making with respect to own professional responsibilities or where ethical issues affect healthcare delivery or clinical decision-making.
- 1.2.2 Preserves patient confidence by respecting their privacy, dignity, and confidentiality.
- 1.2.3 Acts as patient advocate protecting the patient's and their families' rights in accordance with Qatari law, WHO code and policy, and conditions of employment.
- 1.2.4 Upholds the highest standards of ethical conduct as outlined in United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Article 12).
- 1.2.5 Maintains confidentiality and makes every reasonable effort to ensure the security of written, verbal, and electronic patient information.
- 1.2.6 Respects the patient's right to be fully informed establishing a context for self-determination, assent, and informed consent.
- 1.2.7 Acts sensitively and fairly giving due consideration to diversity, including cultural and religious beliefs, race, age, gender, physical and mental state, and other relevant factors.
- 1.2.8 Liaises and collaborates with other healthcare professionals and personnel to ensure that ethical practice is maintained.



- 1.2.9 Questions, when appropriate, healthcare practice where the safety of patients or healthcare professionals is at risk and where the quality-of-care warrants improvement.
- 1.2.10 Acts where the safety of care is compromised and where necessary reports observed activity that may be risking patient safety.
- 1.2.11 Demonstrates professional integrity in matters where a conflict of interest could be construed.

1.3 Competency Standard: Legal Implications

Lactation Consultants always act in accordance with relevant legislative, regulatory and policy guidelines.

Performance Criteria:

- 1.3.1 Practices in accordance with agreed policies and procedures.
- 1.3.2 Practices in accordance with relevant laws and regulations that govern breastfeeding and childcare and within the legal framework of the respective geopolitical regions or settings such as in the matter of breastfeeding in public.
- 1.3.3 Maintains valid registration and licensure to practice in Qatar.
- 1.3.4 Recognizes and acts upon breaches of laws and regulations relating to the professional role.
- 1.3.5 Reports to IBLCE if they have been found guilty of any offense under the criminal code of their country or jurisdiction in which they work.
- 1.3.6 Reports to IBLCE if they have been sanctioned by another profession.

2 DOMAIN TWO: CLINICAL PRACTICE

This domain encompasses the key principles of the Lactation Consultant's role in providing evidence-based education about breastfeeding and human lactation to families, health professionals, educators and the community through various means including counseling, teaching, client information fact sheets, curriculum development, and multimedia campaigns.

2.1 Competency Standard: Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding.

Participates in the development of policies at local, regional, national and global levels which protect, promote and support breastfeeding or breast milk/human milk for feeding children in all situations including emergencies.

Performance Criteria:

- 2.1.1 Provides information that is evidence-based and free of conflict of interest.
- 2.1.2 Provides competent services for clients and performs a comprehensive maternal and child feeding assessment.
- 2.1.3 Promotes skin-to-skin contact and assesses oral anatomy, neurological responses, and reflexes of the infant.
- 2.1.4 Provides education about child feeding behaviors; signs of readiness to feed and expected feeding patterns.



- 2.1.5 Ensures the breastfeeding parent and infant are in comfortable positions for breastfeeding and assists as appropriate.
- 2.1.6 Identifies effective latch/attachment and assesses for effective milk transfer and milk intake.
- 2.1.7 Assesses the child's stooling and voiding.
- 2.1.8 Provides education for the client and their family regarding the use of pacifiers/dummies, including the possible risks to lactation.
- 2.1.9 Provides appropriate education for the client and their family regarding the importance of exclusive breastfeeding to their health and the risk of using breastmilk substitutes.
- 2.1.10 Provides information and strategies to prevent and resolve engorgement, blocked ducts and mastitis.
- 2.1.11 Provides information and demonstrates to the client how to express breastmilk by hand and strategies to prevent and resolve painful/damaged nipples.
- 2.1.12 Provides information regarding preparation and use of breastmilk substitutes according to World Health Organization Guidelines for Safe Preparation, Storage and Handling of Powdered Infant Formula.
- 2.1.13 Provides education on the safe handling, storage and use of human milk.
- 2.1.14 Calculates an infant's caloric/Kilojoule and volume requirements.
- 2.1.15 Assesses milk production and provides information regarding increasing or decreasing milk volume as needed.
- 2.1.16 Assesses the child's growth using World Health Organization Child Growth Standards.
- 2.1.17 Provides information regarding weaning at any stage of breastfeeding, including breast care.
- 2.1.18 Provides follow-up services as required.
- 2.1.19 Provides information on how family planning and fertility methods, including Lactation Amenorrhea Method (LAM), impact lactation and breastfeeding.
- 2.1.20 Assists the client and their family to recognize peripartum mood disorders, access community resources, and manage breastfeeding.
- 2.1.21 Evaluates potential or existing challenges and factors that may impact meeting a client's breastfeeding goals.
- 2.1.22 Facilitates breastfeeding for the medically vulnerable and physically compromised clients.
- 2.1.23 Assesses and provides strategies to initiate and continue breastfeeding when challenging situations exist/occur.
- 2.1.24 Assists clients with strategies and techniques to continue breastfeeding during an infant separation (e.g. returning to work or school, illness, hospitalization)
- 2.1.25 Provides information and strategies to minimize the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- 2.1.26 Disseminates information and strategies to minimize the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- 2.1.27 Assists the client in strategies for breastfeeding in public.
- 2.1.28 Provides information, support and encouragement to enable clients to successfully meet breastfeeding goals.
- 2.1.29 Provides information regarding introduction of complementary foods.



2.2 Competency Standard: Professional Conduct Principles

Adheres to a standard of reasonable care set by the Code of Professional Conduct principles as below.

Performance Criteria:

- 2.2.1 Provides services that protect, promote and support breastfeeding.
- 2.2.2 Acts with due diligence.
- 2.2.3 Preserves the confidentiality of clients.
- 2.2.4 Reports accurately and completely to other members of the healthcare team.
- 2.2.5 Exercises independent judgment and avoids conflicts of interest.
- 2.2.6 Maintains personal integrity.
- 2.2.7 Upholds the professional standards expected of an IBCLC.
- 2.2.8 Complies with the IBLCE Disciplinary Procedures, IBCLCs are personally accountable for acting consistently with the CPC to safeguard the interests of clients and justify public trust.

2.3 Competency Standard: Communication and Teamwork.

Consistently communicates relevant, accurate and comprehensive information in verbal, written and electronic forms in a timely manner to ensure the delivery of safe, competent, and ethical care.

Performance Criteria:

- 2.3.1 Demonstrates cultural competence across patient groups.
- 2.3.2 Obtains the client's permission to provide care on breastfeeding and utilizes appropriate counseling skills and techniques.
- 2.3.3 Uses the principles of family-centered care while maintaining a collaborative, supportive relationship with clients.
- 2.3.4 Makes referrals to other health care providers and community support resources when necessary.
- 2.3.5 Works collaboratively and interdependently with other members of the health care team to deliver coordinated services to families.
- 2.3.6 Works with others to affect change and produce positive outcomes through the sharing of knowledge and to ensure that other members of the health care team remain fully informed.

3 DOMAIN THREE: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Exhibits leadership qualities required to protect the health, welfare, and safety of the public by providing the internationally recognized measure of knowledge in lactation and breastfeeding care.



3.1 Competency Standard: Leadership

Exhibits leadership qualities and practices safely, efficiently, and ethically.

Performance Criteria:

- 3.1.1 Applies clinical reasoning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills to the organization, provision, management, and evaluation of diagnostic tests.
- 3.1.2 Manages self to ensure effective workload prioritization and time management.
- 3.1.3 Provides feedback, offers suggestions for change, and deals effectively with the impact of change on own practice, the team and/or on the organization.
- 3.1.4 Protects mothers and children by adherence to the principles and aim of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly's resolutions.
- 3.1.5 Advocates for, and contributes to, the creation and maintenance of a positive working environment and teamwork.
- 3.1.6 Advocates for breastfeeding in all settings and promote breastfeeding as the child-feeding norm.
- 3.1.7 Supports practices which promote breastfeeding and discourage practices which interfere with breastfeeding by the following criteria:
 - 3.1.7.1 Promotes the principles of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and subsequent resolutions, and the World Health Organization Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.
 - 3.1.7.2 Exercises care in choosing a method of feeding when supplementation is necessary.
 - 3.1.7.3 Ascertains the client's goals for breastfeeding/child-feeding and uses strategies to maintain breastfeeding to meet the client's goal.

3.2 Competency Standard: Quality Improvement and Safety

Ensures organizational quality and safety standards as per guidelines and participates in continuous quality improvement.

Performance Criteria:

- 3.2.1 Practices in accordance with approved quality standards and guidelines reflecting recognized evidence based best practice.
- 3.2.2 Seeks evidence from a wide range of credible sources to maintain, extend and evaluate the quality of diagnostic services.
- 3.2.3 Maintains documentation of all client contacts, assessments, feeding plans, recommendations, and evaluations of care.
- 3.2.4 Obtains a client's consent, before initiating a consultation, to share clinical information with other members of the client's healthcare team as required.



- 3.2.5 Operates within the limits of the scope of practice.
- 3.2.6 Discloses any actual or apparent conflict of interest, including a financial interest in relevant goods or services, or in organizations which provide relevant goods or services.
- 3.2.7 Ensures that commercial considerations do not influence professional judgment.
- 3.2.8 Withdraws voluntarily from professional practice if the IBCLC has a physical or mental disability that could be detrimental to clients.
- 3.2.9 Uses the acronyms “IBCLC” and “RLC” or the titles “International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant” and “Registered Lactation Consultant” only when certification is current and in the manner in which IBLCE authorizes their use.

3.3 Competency Standard: Use of Techniques and Devices and safe practice

Provides evidence-based information to the client regarding the use of techniques, appliances, and devices.

Performance Criteria:

- 3.3.1 Evaluates, critiques, and demonstrates the use of techniques and devices which support breastfeeding.
- 3.3.2 Monitors for devices that may be marketed without evidence to support their usefulness and may be harmful to breastfeeding.
- 3.3.3 Critiques and evaluates the use of techniques, appliances and devices which support or may be harmful to initiation and/or continuation of breastfeeding.

4 DOMAIN FOUR: CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

This domain defines the responsibilities of the Lactation Consultant to encourage education of others as well as personal development and growth.

4.1 Competency Standard: Education and Facilitation

Demonstrates commitment to the development of other members in the healthcare team, as well as patients, families, community, and society.

Performance Criteria:

- 4.1.1 Shares and disseminates professional knowledge and research findings with others.
- 4.1.2 Acts as a resource person for patients and healthcare professionals.
- 4.1.3 Contributes to the formal and informal education to enable development, implementation, and evaluation of appropriate, acceptable, and achievable breastfeeding plans.
- 4.1.4 Contributes to the development of students and colleagues facilitating and where appropriate coordinating learning opportunities.



- 4.1.5 Takes opportunities to learn together with other healthcare professionals in order to contribute to healthcare improvement.

4.2 Competency Standard: Lifelong Learning

Assumes responsibility for own professional development through lifelong learning to ensure continued competence and performance improvement.

Performance Criteria:

- 4.2.1 Accepts personal professional responsibility for maintaining the required evidence in support of relicensing requirements for the International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®).
- 4.2.2 Undertakes regular self-assessment and reviews own practice through reflection, peer review, competency assessment, critical examination, and evaluation.
- 4.2.3 Instigates planned updating knowledge and skills for safe, person-centered, evidence-based practice.
- 4.2.4 Actively engages in ongoing professional development and performance improvement of self and others.

4.3 Competency Standard: Promotion of Health and Patient Education

Takes part in health promotion and patient education.

Performance Criteria:

- 4.3.1 Applies knowledge of resources available for health promotion and health education.
- 4.3.2 Selects appropriate teaching aids.
- 4.3.3 Provides education about breastfeeding at different ages of the child.
- 4.3.4 Provides culturally competent education and information that also reflects level of comprehension.
- 4.3.5 Evaluates clients' understanding of all information and education provided.

5 DOMAIN FIVE: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This domain articulates the requirement for the Lactation Consultants to incorporate best available evidence to provide quality health care and contribute to the creation and/or implementation of knowledge through active participation.

5.1 Competency Standard: Evidence-Based Practice

Provides evidence-based information to assist the client to make decisions regarding infant feeding.

Performance Criteria:

- 5.1.1 Provides evidence-based education about breastfeeding and human lactation to families, health professionals, educators, and the community. This can be through various means including counseling, teaching, client information fact sheets, curriculum development, and multimedia campaigns.
- 5.1.2 Critiques, evaluates, and incorporates research findings into practice.
- 5.1.3 Facilitates the development of policies which protect, promote and support breastfeeding.
- 5.1.4 Participates in the formulation of evidence-based practice based on best available credible research and/or national and international professional consensus and guidance and audit.

5.2 Competency Standard: Using Data and Information Systems

Uses data systems to enhance the quality and delivery of patient care.

Performance Criteria:

- 5.2.1 Acquires the information technology skills needed to inform and provide optimum healthcare care and document outcomes accurately.
- 5.2.2 Disseminates personal or third-party research, practice development and audit findings with colleagues and peers.
- 5.2.3 Promotes dissemination, use, monitoring and review of professional standards and best practice guidelines.
- 5.2.4 Understands how to use technology and data to assist in problem identification and identification of deficiencies that can be remediated to enable improvements in patient care.
- 5.2.5 Analyzes data accurately and comprehensively leading to appropriate interpretation of findings and development of implementation plans.