

# GUIDE TO BECOMING AN IBCLC

Guide prepared by Jennifer Welch, IBCLC 2022

## ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION

IBLCE (International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners): <https://iblce.org/>

## PROCESS OF CERTIFICATION

DETAILED GUIDE:

<https://iblce.org/step-1-prepare-for-ibclc-certification/>

PROCESS SUMMARY :

Which IBLCE Pathway is Right for Me? <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Which-IBLCE-Pathway-is-Right-for-Me.pdf>

Three Pathways to become and IBCLC:

### Pathway 1

- Volunteer for an accredited breastfeeding peer support organization (eg. Nourrisource or La Leche League Canada) or a recognized healthcare professional that provides lactation care as part of regular duties.
- 1000 documented clinical practice hours (non-supervised) within the 5 years preceding the exam
- Only time spent practicing lactation care may be counted. Observation hours cannot be counted.
- Before January 1 2022: In person – 12 months = 500h, phone support – 12 month = 250h
- After January 1 2022: Hours are counted using an hour per hour basis. You are responsible for documenting your hours. For example, if you spend 30 minutes on the phone with a parent, you document 30 minutes in your journal.
- Minimum 95 hours LEAARC accredited lactation specific training including 5 hours of communication skills training, within the 5 years preceding the exam.  
[https://www.leaarc.org/docs/NewApproved\\_Courses.pdf](https://www.leaarc.org/docs/NewApproved_Courses.pdf)
- 14 health science courses (either as part of your degree program or on a separate basis) covering the subject matter specified by IBLCE <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/health-sciences-education-guide.pdf>

### Option 2

- Comprehensive academic and internship lactation accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) or equivalent accreditation body.

The program must include:

- Minimum 95 hours accredited lactation specific training including 5 hours of communication skills training, within the 5 years preceding the exam.

- 14 health science courses (either as part of your degree program or on a separate basis) covering the subject matter specified by IBLCE <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/health-sciences-education-guide.pdf>
- Minimum 300 internship hours directly supervised by an IBCLC
- Only time spent practicing lactation care may be counted. Observation hours cannot be counted.

\*There are currently no programs available in Canada that meet pathway 2 requirements.

### Pathway 3

- Formal internship with an IBCLC: 500 clinical practice hours directly supervised by an IBCLC within the 5 years preceding the exam. (Only time spent practicing lactation care may be counted. Observation hours cannot be counted.)
- Minimum 95 hours LEAARC accredited lactation specific training including 5 hours of communication skills training, within the 5 years preceding the exam. [https://www.leaarc.org/docs/NewApproved\\_Courses.pdf](https://www.leaarc.org/docs/NewApproved_Courses.pdf)
- 14 health science courses (either as part of your degree program or on a separate basis) covering the subject matter specified by IBLCE <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/health-sciences-education-guide.pdf>

\*You must submit your application and plan to IBCLC before beginning your internship.

### INITIAL EXAM AND RECERTIFICATION

- The exam is held two times per year, generally in April and September.
- The exam tests your knowledge based on the detailed content outline and clinical competencies for IBCLC and ensures you can apply this knowledge in accordance with the Scope of Practice and Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs.
  - 2023 Detailed Content Outline: [https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2023\\_IBCLC\\_DCO\\_ENGLISH\\_Final.pdf](https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2023_IBCLC_DCO_ENGLISH_Final.pdf)
  - 2018 Clinical Competencies: <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/clinical-competencies-2018.pdf>
  - 2015 Code of Professional Conduct: <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Code-of-professional-conduct.pdf>
  - 2018 Scope of Practice: <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/scope-of-practice-2018.pdf>

\*Please consult the IBLCE website for the most recent versions of these documents.

<https://iblce.org/resources/professional-standards/>

- Exam fees may vary from year to year, but they are generally around \$700USD
- The exam may be conducted in an exam center with a proctor (There is usually a site in Montreal) or online, depending on pandemic protocols. Consult the IBCLC website for current information.
- To maintain your certification as an IBCLC, you must recertify every 5 years through continuing education credits (CERPs) and a self-assessment process. Recertification fees are generally about \$500USD

- To apply for the exam, you must register using IBLCE's on-line accreditation system <https://iblce.org/iblc-es-online-systems/>
- Candidate Information Guide: [https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022\\_March\\_25\\_Candidate-Information-Guide\\_FINAL.pdf](https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022_March_25_Candidate-Information-Guide_FINAL.pdf)
- FAQ : <https://iblce.org/faqs-for-initial-candidates/>

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

#### Lactation Education:

- Must be accredited by LEAARC (Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee) <https://www.leaarc.org/>
- List of approved 95h programs that meet IBLCE's requirements (Avril 2022) : [https://www.leaarc.org/docs/NewApproved\\_Courses.pdf](https://www.leaarc.org/docs/NewApproved_Courses.pdf)
- There are currently no Pathway 2 programs available in Canada.

#### Health Science Courses:

- Guide: <https://iblce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/health-sciences-education-guide.pdf>
- Candidates must achieve a passing grade in each of the following courses. The course must be offered by an accredited institution of higher learning.
  - Sociology
  - Cultural Awareness, or Cultural Anthropology Biology
  - Human Anatomy
  - Human Physiology
  - Infant and Child Growth and Development
  - Introduction to Clinical Research
  - Nutrition
  - Psychology or Counselling Skills or Communication Skills
  - Sociology or Cultural Sensitivity or Cultural Anthropology
- Candidates must obtain a certificate of completion from an accredited institution of higher learning for the following subjects:
  - Basic Life Support
  - Medical Documentation
  - Medical Terminology
  - Occupational Safety and Security for Health Professionals
  - Professional Ethics for Health Professionals
  - Universal Safety Precautions and Infection Control

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Important reference texts:

Core Curriculum for Interdisciplinary Lactation Care:

<https://www.jblearning.com/catalog/productdetails/9781284111163>

Breastfeeding Atlas:

<https://www.breastfeedingatlas.com/>

Facebook groups:

Want to be an IBCLC?

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/740576072630200>

Want to be an IBCLC? Marketplace (courses, books)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/817669894937244>

IBCLC 2022 Exam Prep & Study <https://www.facebook.com/groups/824086781293701>

## **NOTICE**

This guide is a summary of the process to become an IBCLC. It is accurate to the best of my knowledge, however I strongly encourage you to consult the IBCLC website directly for the most current and accurate information.

Website: <https://iblce.org/>

Email: [iblce@iblce.org](mailto:iblce@iblce.org) (vous pouvez les écrire en français et ils vont vous répondre en français.)

Certification Coordinators : <https://iblce.org/about-iblce/questions-support/#Americas&Israel>

Canadian Coordinator: [canada@iblce.org](mailto:canada@iblce.org)