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## Complete 8 Accredited Health Education Courses

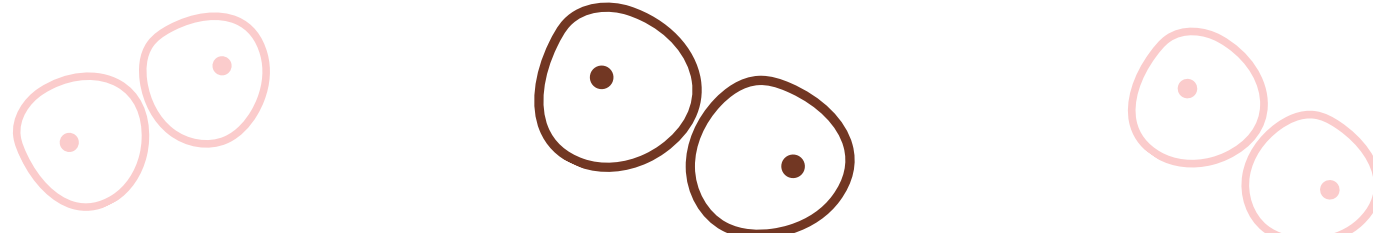
**Courses may be completed at any time prior to taking the IBCLC exam.**

- You do NOT need to complete these 8 courses if you are any of the following Recognized Health Professionals (licensed healthcare provider):
  - Dentist
  - Dietician
  - Midwife
  - Nurse
  - Occupational Therapist
  - Pharmacist
  - Physical Therapist or Physiotherapist
  - Physician or Medical Doctor
  - Speech Pathologist or Therapist
- Each course must be a minimum of one academic credit session (e.g. semester, trimester, quarter, etc.) in length and provided by an accredited institution of higher learning. Transcripts must be provided if your application is audited. Online courses are accepted.

### The 8 courses are:

1. Biology
2. Human Anatomy
3. Human Physiology
4. Infant and Child Growth and Development
5. Introduction to Clinical Research
6. Nutrition
7. Psychology or Counseling Skills or Communication Skills
8. Sociology or Cultural Sensitivity or Cultural Anthropology

Please note: A Human Biology course will meet the requirements of Biology, Human Anatomy and Human Physiology.





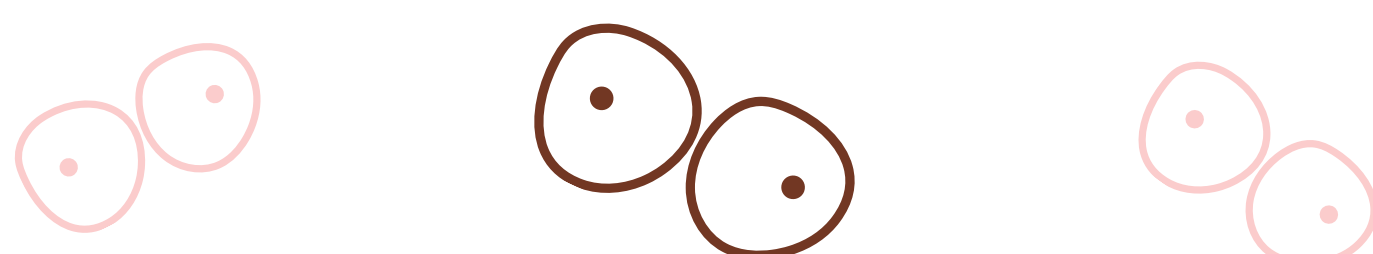
2

## Complete 6 Supplemental Health Education courses

Courses may be completed at any time prior to taking the IBCLC exam.

- You may have already taken these courses if you are one of the following Recognized Health Professionals (licensed healthcare providers):
  - Dentist
  - Dietician
  - Midwife
  - Nurse
  - Occupational Therapist
  - Pharmacist
  - Physical Therapist or Physiotherapist
  - Physician or Medical Doctor
  - Speech Pathologist or Therapist
- Courses may be completed at an institution of higher learning or may be a continuing education course. These courses may be offered online or via a community college. A transcript or contact hours certificate must be provided if you are audited.

**The 6 courses are:**

1. Basic Life Support
  2. Medical Documentation
  3. Medical Terminology
  4. Occupational Safety and Security for Health Professionals
  5. Professional Ethics for Health Professionals
  6. Universal Safety Precautions and Infection Control
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3

## Complete 95 Hours of Lactation Education

Lactation hours must be completed within five years of applying to take the IBCLC exam.

- Lactation specific classes will enhance your knowledge of providing breastfeeding support to a family and help prepare you for the IBCLC exam. The IBCLC exam covers 14 areas of knowledge. Your lactation education should be broad enough to prepare you to answer questions across the field of lactation.
- The hours do not have to be approved contact hours or CERPS (contact hours approved by IBCLC that are necessary to re-certify), however, **they must be breastfeeding related**, and a certificate of attendance must be obtained. This is vital if your application to sit for the IBCLC exam is audited by IBCLC, the certifying organization.
- Hours may be in-person presentations, online education, distance learning and/or independent study modules.
- Five of the 95 hours must be a communication course. These five hours cannot count as an accredited Health Education Course. The communication course does NOT have to be lactation specific.

There are numerous options for obtaining comprehensive lactation education, including:

- **A basic lactation course**, usually 40-50 hours in length designed to provide information on all aspects of lactation. Some of the basic courses may offer a certification upon completion of an exam. For example: Lactation Education Resources offers a Certified Breastfeeding Specialist (CBS) credential upon successfully passing the exam at the conclusion of their course.
- **Individual lactation classes or presentations** focused on a special lactation topic. These are commonly offered via conferences or online presentations.
- **A lactation review course** designed to prepare a candidate to take the IBCLC exam.

Where can you complete these hours?

- Breastfeeding conferences offered by local hospitals, state or local health departments, breastfeeding organizations, and community colleges.
- Organizations that specifically provide lactation education, including:  
GOLD (<https://www.goldlactation.com/>), ILCA (<https://ilca.org/>), USLCA (<https://uslca.org/>),  
LER (<https://www.lactationtraining.com/>), LEC (<https://lactationeducation.com/>),  
Health E-Learning (<https://www.health-e-learning.com/>),  
Healthy Children Project (<https://centerforbreastfeeding.org/>)



4

## Complete 1 of 3 Pathways to Obtain Clinical Hours in Lactation

Your clinical hours must be completed within 5 years of applying to sit for the IBCLC exam.

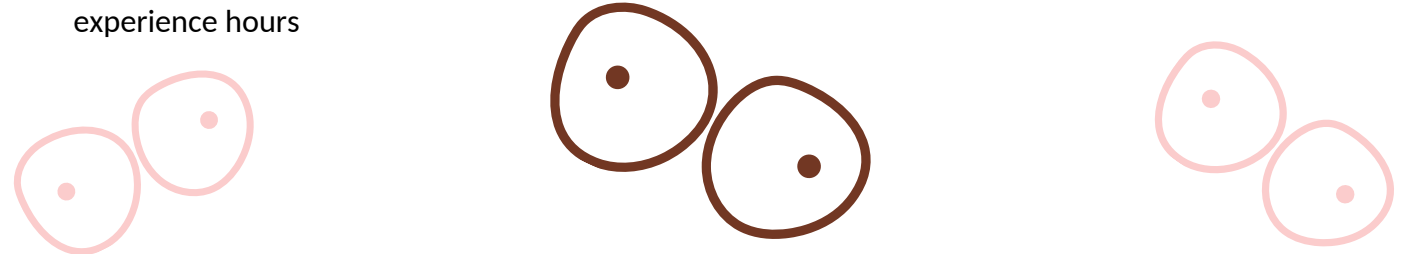
### Pathway One

- You must practice as a **Recognized Health Professional** (licensed healthcare provider) OR a paid or volunteer counselor in a health care facility OR provide breastfeeding support via a **Recognized Breastfeeding Support Counselor Organization**.
- You must complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of lactation specific clinical practice in an appropriate supervised setting, which may include a hospital, birth center, community clinic, lactation care clinic/practice, primary care practitioner's practice/office.
  - **Recognized Health Care Professionals** include dentists, dietitians, midwives, nurses, occupation therapists, pharmacists, physical therapists or physiotherapists, physicians or medical doctors, and speech pathologists or therapists
  - **Recognized Breastfeeding Support Counselor Organizations** must be approved by IBCLC and must provide a structured training program for their counselors which includes comprehensive education in breastfeeding and lactation management, have a code of ethics or professional conduct, provide structured supervision for their counselors, with an appropriate level of training, and provide a continuing education program for their counselors.
- The 1,000 clinical hours **do not need to be directly supervised**.

### Pathway Two

- You must complete an accredited Lactation Academic Program that includes a minimum of 300 hours of directly supervised lactation specific clinical practice.
- Some examples of accredited programs are: Union Institute & University (B.A /M.S) or UC San Diego Extension (Certificate)

### Pathway Three

- You must complete a mentorship with an IBCLC that includes a minimum of 500 directly supervised lactation specific clinical practice **under the direct supervision of an IBCLC(s)**.
  - You must have your mentorship plan verified prior to earning your clinical hours. There is an application fee to approve the mentorship plan.
  - Observation or shadowing of lactation practitioners **does not count** as lactation specific clinical experience hours
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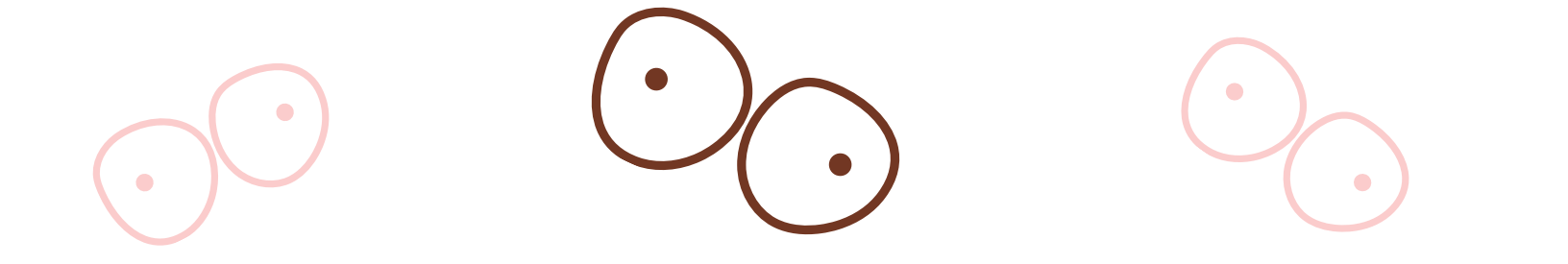


5

## Pass the IBCLC Exam.

- **The certifying organization for IBCLCs** is the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners. IBLCE awards an IBCLC certification after a candidate completes their health education courses, lactation education and clinical hours, applies to take the IBCLC exam, and successfully completes the exam.
- View the complete IBCLC candidate guide here:  
[https://iblce.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/07/2022\\_July-25\\_Candidate-Information-Guide\\_2022-2023\\_FINAL.pdf](https://iblce.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/07/2022_July-25_Candidate-Information-Guide_2022-2023_FINAL.pdf)
- **IBLCE offers an international exam twice a year**, in March/April and September. The deadline to apply for an exam is five to six months before the exam date. The exam consists of 175 multiple choice questions. *Please check the IBCLC web site (above) for current application deadlines and exam dates.*
- **All health education and lactation hours and clinical hours must be completed before applying to take the exam.** You do not have to submit proof of completion with your application unless you are audited.
- **Practice exams are available to purchase** from several organizations, including Healthy E-Learning (<https://www.health-e-learning.com/courses/lactation-exam>), and Lactation Education Resources (<https://www.lerqbank.com/>) . The exams are released a month or two before the exam dates.
- **You will be assigned a date to take the exam** and the exam is administered in a national testing center. Special testing locations may be available upon request for certain circumstances.
- **Test results** are announced 10-12 weeks after you take the exam.

**For additional information**, please schedule a **mentorIBCLC** zoom meeting and chat with an IBCLC mentor. For a zoom invitation, please contact us at [info@nebreastfeeding.org](mailto:info@nebreastfeeding.org)





## What is the Approximate Cost to Become an IBCLC?

- **A ballpark figure is approximately \$6,200.** These fees were estimated in 2022. There are several variables impacting the cost. If you choose to complete clinical pathway 2 and obtain a bachelor's degree in human lactation, the cost of \$6,200 would be absorbed in your college tuition for your degree. The cost of the degree would be substantially higher than \$6,200, but you will also have a bachelor's degree upon graduation. **Please note that the fees listed below are subject to change.**
- There are some **scholarships** available for the exam fee for women of color through the following organizations: USLCA (<https://uslca.org/scholarship-programs-and-opportunities-for-lactation-care-providers/>), Willow (<https://onewillow.com/blog/how-willow-aims-to-close-the-representation-gap-in-the-ibclc-community/>), and LER (<https://www.lactationtraining.com/risingtide>).

### 1). Eight Accredited Health Education Courses

- These courses are available through an accredited institution of higher learning, such as SCC (Lincoln) or MCC (Omaha): estimate \$3,000.
- Previously completed college level courses that fit the description of the required courses may be submitted to meet this requirement if you are able to access a transcript for the course.

### 2). Six Supplemental Health Education Courses

- These courses are available through an accredited institution of higher learning or online: estimate \$300

### 3). 95 Hours of Lactation Education

- Some of these hours may be obtained at no cost, others may range in price from \$10 – \$25 an hour: estimate \$2,000.

### 4). Clinical Hours

- Cost varies tremendously depending upon which clinical pathway is chosen.
- Pathway 2 (completion of an accredited Lactation Academic Program) is the most expensive; these programs are often affiliated with private colleges and may cost in excess of \$60,000.
- Pathways 1 and 2 vary based upon whether the hours are completed as a volunteer, or as a paid employee for an organization. In addition, childcare costs may apply for some candidates.
- *Note: No cost estimate is included for this portion of the IBCLC requirements.*

### 5). Exam Fee

- Practice Exam: estimate \$130.
- Exam Fee: estimate \$670.