



## 2012 IBLCE Exam Eligibility Requirements for First-Time Candidates

The following chart shows a comparison of the 3 exam eligibility pathways that will be effective for the 2012 exam. Carefully read the definitions that follow this chart. A full understanding of these defined terms is necessary in order to make an informed decision about which pathway to follow.

**Please Note:** Candidates must complete **all** the requirements for their pathway **prior** to applying for the exam. Questions about these new requirements may be sent to [office@iblce-europe.org](mailto:office@iblce-europe.org)

	<b>Pathway 1</b>	<b>Pathway 2</b>	<b>Pathway 3</b>
<b>General Description of Pathway</b>	Have supervised experience <sup>1</sup> as a paid or volunteer health professional <sup>2</sup> that works in maternal-child health <u>OR</u> as a paid or volunteer breastfeeding support counselor as defined by IBLCE <sup>3</sup>	Graduate from an academic program in human lactation and breastfeeding that is at least one year in length, is offered by an accredited university or college, and has recertified IBCLCs as the director and primary faculty members	Complete a mentored lactation education plan that has been approved by IBLCE prior to the start of the clinical practice component and is under the direct supervision <sup>4</sup> of one or more recertified IBCLCs
<b>Education in Human Lactation and Breastfeeding<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Required 90 hours</b> Based on the IBLCE Exam Blueprint and completed within the 5 years immediately prior to exam application	<b>Required 90 hours</b> Based on the IBLCE Exam Blueprint and included in the academic program. Application for the exam must be submitted within 5 years of graduation	<b>Required 90 hours</b> Based on the IBLCE Exam Blueprint and completed within the 5 years immediately prior to exam application
<b>Lactation Specific Clinical Experience<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Required 1000 hours</b> Obtained through paid or volunteer employment within a supervised setting and accumulated within the 5 years immediately prior to exam application	<b>Required 300 hours</b> Directly supervised <sup>4</sup> by currently certified IBCLCs who are supervised by the program director, is a condition of program graduation and the exam application must be submitted within 5 years of graduation	<b>Required 500 hours</b> Directly supervised <sup>4</sup> by the recertified IBCLCs who are the plan mentors and the exam application must be submitted within 5 years of completing the plan
<b>General Education<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Required Equivalent of 1 Semester of Higher Education in 8 Subjects Plus Continuing Education in 6 Additional Subjects</b> May be completed prior to or concurrent with the other requirements		

## Definitions of IBLCE Exam Eligibility Terms

<sup>1</sup>Pathway 1 requires that the candidate be appropriately supervised in a paid or volunteer capacity. Two types of employment are identified by IBLCE as meeting the Pathway 1 supervision requirements—employment as a health professional who works in maternal-child health or employment as a breastfeeding support counselor. Health professionals must obtain their clinical experience as part of their employment responsibilities and the person to whom they report must work in the same location or their scope of practice must permit independent, non-supervised practice. Breastfeeding support counselors and the person to whom they report must work in the same location; off-site or telephone supervision is not satisfactory. In the case of volunteer mother-to-mother support group leaders such as La Leche League leaders and Australian Breastfeeding Association counselors, IBLCE awards 500 hours credit for each year of active service as a group leader.

<sup>2</sup>A health professional must meet the national definition for their health care profession and provide evidence of having completed a degree and/or met the regulations and standards for practice in a recognized health profession in that country. (e.g., In the USA or Canada, health professionals must demonstrate appropriate licensure or registration.)

<sup>3</sup>For breastfeeding support counselors to be recognized by IBLCE, the individual must be associated with an organization that requires its counselors to: (1) complete a structured training program that includes comprehensive education in breastfeeding management; (2) work within a supervision structure that is appropriate to their training; (3) adhere to defined ethical standards for conduct; and (4) remain up to date by participating in continuing education. (e.g., In the USA or Canada, La Leche League leaders and WIC breastfeeding peer counselors are examples of counselors who meet this definition.)

<sup>4</sup> Direct supervision is defined as a gradual process that begins with observation; progresses to clinical practice experience under direct observation until the skill is mastered; and culminates in independent practice with the mentor or supervisor physically nearby to assist and offer advice and support. Furthermore, direct supervision requires that the supervisor be an IBCLC who has recertified at least once.

<sup>5</sup> Education in human lactation and breastfeeding is defined as education in the disciplines and chronological periods specified by the IBLCE Exam Blueprint. The 90 hours of education are contact hours not college/university credit hours. Candidates who are following pathways 1 and 3 should enroll in a course or program that provides a comprehensive, integrated education in these subjects. Typically such programs would meet over a period of time that might be as long as two to three weeks. Education that is approved by the Approval and Accreditation Review Committee (AARC) on Education in Human Lactation and Breastfeeding meets the education requirements of first-time IBLCE exam candidates.

<sup>6</sup>Lactation specific clinical experience is defined as providing maternal/child care that supports breastfeeding families, including lactation assistance to pregnant and breastfeeding women and lactation education to families and/or professionals. The IBLCE exam tests the application of knowledge related to the skill sets published in the [Clinical Competencies for IBCLC Practice](#). Candidates should have a broad range of experience in providing lactation and breastfeeding care that spans the spectrum from pre-conception through weaning.

<sup>7</sup> All first-time candidates must demonstrate completion of education in 14 subjects that are typical of the education required of health professionals. IBLCE has identified eight subjects in which all first-time candidates must have completed the equivalent of one semester of higher education. In addition, all first-time candidates must have completed continuing education in 6 topics that health professionals

typically will have studied as part of their professional training and/or are required for ongoing maintenance of their professional credentials.

Higher education refers to education acquired after completion of compulsory education. It is typically provided at academies, universities, colleges, vocational schools, institutes of technology, trade schools and career colleges that award academic degrees or professional certifications. For example, compulsory education in the USA means graduation from high school or having a general education diploma.

IBLCE has identified eight courses (the equivalent of one semester of higher education) that all first-time candidates must have completed. These 8 higher education courses are:

- Biology
- Human Anatomy
- Human Physiology
- Infant and Child Growth and Development
- Nutrition
- Psychology or Counseling or Communication Skills
- Introduction to Research
- Sociology or Cultural Sensitivity or Cultural Anthropology

In addition, all first-time candidates must have completed continuing education in 6 subjects that health professionals typically will have studied as part of their professional training and/or are required for ongoing maintenance of their professional credentials. These 6 additional continuing education subjects are:

- Basic life support (e.g. CPR)
- Medical documentation
- Medical terminology
- Occupational safety, including security, for health professionals
- Professional ethics for health professionals (e.g. Code of Ethics)
- Universal safety precautions and infection control

To demonstrate completion of these general education requirements, candidates who are recognized health professionals will need to provide evidence of their professional status, e.g. a copy of their license or registration and/or a copy of their diploma or transcript. Candidates who are not health professionals will need to provide documentation which demonstrates successful completion of education in the 8 identified higher education subjects and the 6 continuing education subjects, e.g. a copy of their college or university transcript and copies of certificates of completion.

These general education requirements may be completed prior to or concurrent with the other exam eligibility requirements. *Note: Completion of coursework in these 14 subjects and the 90 hours of required education in human lactation and breastfeeding will be roughly equivalent to three years of higher education.*

The rationale for requiring all exam candidates to complete education in these subjects is to ensure, as much as possible, that prospective IBCLCs have the ability to apply learning to complex problems and challenges and that they have the education necessary to function as valued, respected members of the maternal-child health care team. Requiring all exam candidates to complete higher education in these subjects is the most reliable way of achieving these goals.