

Which Pathway is Right for Me?

Determining if Pathway 1 or Pathway 2 is Appropriate

This document will answer many questions you may have on becoming a Lactation Consultant through UC San Diego Extension. You will find information on the following topics:

How to Become a Lactation Consultant

What are the Eligibility Requirements – Who can take the IBLCE Test?

Pathway 1 and UC San Diego Extension: Who is Eligible to Apply to the Program?

Pathway 2 and UC San Diego Extension: Who is Eligible to Apply to the Program?

Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 Applications

How to Become a Lactation Consultant

The path to becoming a lactation consultant and realizing your dream to work as a professional with moms, babies, and families may seem confusing. Following are the pathways as determined by the International Board of Certified Lactation Consultant Examiners for certification via exam. To take the IBLCE exam, which is given twice a year in October and April, you will need three things: **College, Class & Clinical**.

College: An RN, RD, other health profession meets this requirement. If you are not already in the healthcare industry, you need 8 college courses and 6 CEU courses ([online at UC San Diego Extension](#)). If you do not have the college portion it is recommended you go to nursing school first.

Class: All candidates need a minimum 90 hour class in breastfeeding, preferably from an approved program – such as UC San Diego Extension, which has two formats:

- **Hybrid:** offered once per year in Fall quarter. This course meets the 90+ hours and the clinical requirements and includes education online and clinical in person.
- **Online:** offered every quarter. Pathway 1 students only. Course is education only.

Clinical: Depending on your pathway, your clinical requirement will vary:

- **Pathway 1:** student already has 1000 hours within the last 5 years working with BF dyads. No more clinical is required.
- **Pathway 2:** student will need 300 supervised clinical hours. These hours will be part of the UC San Diego Extension LC program. UC San Diego Extension gives the clinical preceptor direction and you the student will spend a minimum 300 hours with them. There is homework that is submitted online and weekly virtual class meetings via webinar (hybrid version).

What are the Eligibility Requirements – Who can take the IBLCE Test?

There are 3 pathways to be eligible to take the IBLCE exam. These are described on the IBLCE.org website. UC San Diego supports pathway 1 academically and pathway 2 as an LEAARC approved program. UCSD students will be required to have completed the following education prior to start of the UC San Diego LC Program. You must be approved to enroll in the program.

Pathway 1 and UC San Diego Extension: Who is Eligible to Apply to the Program?

Candidate *must have completed step 1, 2 of the following* before the start of UC San Diego Lactation Consultant Program:

1. General Education Requirement:

A Licensed, registered or recognized health professional

When you apply for our program and the exam you will be required to identify your health profession and you may be required to submit a copy of your license, registration, diploma or transcript. Health professionals who typically apply for IBCLC certification include: physicians, nurses, midwives, dietitians, occupational, physical and speech therapists, physician assistants, dentists, pharmacists and chiropractors. If your profession is not on this list, please [click here](#) for more information about whether or not your professional training will satisfy the General Education requirements.

When applying for the course, candidates must demonstrate completion of these courses by submitting documentation of completion from accredited colleges or universities.

2. Clinical Hours Requirement:

Currently working in a paid or volunteer job in which you provide care to breastfeeding families or if you have worked in this type of job during the past 5 years AND can **document minimum of 1000 hours working directly with moms and babies and breastfeeding**. Documentation must be verifiable by a supervisor. For more information about how to calculate the clinical practice hours required by Pathway 1, please review the [Pathway 1 Hours Calculation form](#) (PDF) and the [directions to fill out the form](#) (PDF).

Pathway 2 and UC San Diego Extension: Who is Eligible to Apply to the Program?

Candidate *must have completed step 1 and 2 of the following* before the start of UC San Diego Extension Lactation Consultant Program:

1. General Education Requirement:

Have completed following requirements in an academic/college setting:

When applying for the course, candidates must demonstrate completion of these courses by submitting documentation of completion from accredited colleges or universities.

Each course must be at least one academic term in length and candidates must have received a passing grade in each course.

The 8 college subjects:

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

The 6 continuing education subjects:

(All courses are offered at [UC San Diego Extension](#)) When applying for course, candidates must submit documentation of completion of continuing education in the following 6 topics.

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

*UC San Diego Extension offers courses that meet these requirements

2. Other UC San Diego Extension pre-requisites for admission to program:

Completion of a minimum 45 hour lactation education training program, preferably the UC San Diego Extension program, within the last 5 years