

Feasibility for a New Lactation Program

This is a sample of a checklist used to demonstrate need for a new academic program. LEAARC has inserted information related to the feasibility of a lactation program which you may use in your feasibility study.

A. Program Objectives

Postsecondary institutions are instrumental in improving maternal and infant health by providing opportunities for health care professionals to learn how to support families. The lactation consultant allied health profession emerged in 1985 to provide expert care to breastfeeding families and help them make informed choices about the best way to feed their babies. Lactation consultants work with mothers and healthcare staff as members of the healthcare team and support families from pregnancy through weaning.

There are more than 26,000 lactation consultants worldwide with the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®) credential. Half of all IBCLCs are in the U.S. and a majority enter the profession with an associate degree or greater. IBCLCs are employed in hospitals, public health, physician offices and private practice. Their backgrounds are mostly in health care—primarily nurses, dietitians, physicians, and midwives.

The Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee (LEAARC) became a member of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in 2009 with a mission to encourage the establishment and accreditation of lactation programs in academic institutions throughout the country. Education of lactation consultants has been primarily through clinician educators, with some programs offered through universities. Requirements to become certified include the equivalent of 2 semesters of college courses in addition to 2 semesters of lactation education and clinical experience. One of the three pathways to [IBCLC certification](#) is graduation from an academic program. Community colleges, nursing and proprietary schools, and universities are all prime settings for establishing both an advanced certificate in lactation for health professionals and a degree program.

B. Existing Programs

1. List any other colleges within the system that offer this program or a related program. Specify the award(s) currently offered and include course levels. *(complete based on local system)*

C. Occupational Need

1. Is the number of employment opportunities growing? Yes No

A collective call from the health care community for babies to be breastfed increases the need for professional support of families. Researchers and health advocates, noting skyrocketing obesity rates and other health risks, call for protecting infants through breastfeeding. A global Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative established by [WHO](#) and [UNICEF](#) advocates for practices that

protect, promote and support breastfeeding. The Joint Commission’s [Perinatal Care Core Measures](#) monitor breastfeeding outcomes in healthcare facilities. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) promotes breastfeeding in their efforts to improve maternity care practices. The U.S. Surgeon General’s [Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding](#) includes ensuring access to International Board Certified Lactation Consultants. The [2012 Affordable Care Act](#) requires most insurance plans to cover lactation support and the cost of purchasing or renting breast pumps. The DHHS Office on Women’s Health [Business Case for Breastfeeding](#) educates employers about the value of supporting breastfeeding employees in the workplace. These all increase the need for employing lactation consultants.

2. Will the need for trained personnel be sustained over the next five years? Yes__ No__

Supporting evidence (*survey local employers*)

- a. Number of positions estimated to be created over the next five years_____
- b. Salary for this occupational title:

Employment settings		Hours worked		Wage level	
Hospital	68%	1 FTE	32%	\$21-\$30 hour	23%
WIC or public health	15%	.5-.9 FTE	57%	\$31-\$40 hour	48%
Private practice	15%	.1-.4 FTE	11%	\$41-\$50 hour	20%
Physician office	7%				

Data from May 16, 2011 survey by the United States Lactation Consultant Association (816 respondents)

D. Assessment of Employer Support (*survey local employers*)

- 1. How many employers will show preference to hiring completers of this program? ____
- 2. How many employers will provide incentives to employees for completing this training
 - a. By providing higher pay? _____
 - b. By providing opportunity for promotion? _____
 - c. By providing tuition or other financial support?_____

(From USLCA survey: “Does your employer pay you to attend these conferences?” 40% Yes 60% No)

E. Assessment of Training Capacity

- 1. Geographic implications for program location

- a. Indicate the number of employers that would be served by the development of this program *(identify on a map with a legend)*.
- b. List any institution(s) within a fifty mile radius currently offering a program for the same occupational title. *(survey local institutions – in most cases there will be none)*
 - 1) Report information regarding completers and placement rates by institution.
 - 2) Report if any of the institutions have deactivated a similar program.

2. Suitability of campus resources to support this program

- a. Does the college currently have the following resources to begin this program?

Equipment	Yes__ No__
Facilities	Yes__ No__
*Faculty	Yes__ No__
Instructional resources	Yes__ No__
First-year budget	Yes__ No__

*An IBCLC must teach the lactation content. If “No” to this or other of the above areas, describe the resource commitment needed.

Attachment: Proposed Curriculum (see Sample Programs below)

Prepared by:

Signature_____ Date_____

Title_____

Sample Certificate Program

	Lecture Hours	Clinical Hours	Contact Hours	Credit Hours
SEMESTER I				
Communication and counseling	4	0	64	4
Fundamentals of breastfeeding	3	4	112	4
Assessment and documentation	3	4	112	4
Public health and policy	2	0	32	2
Semester I credit hours	12	8	320	14
SEMESTER II				
Problem solving and evidence-based practice	3	15	288	5
Breastfeeding challenges	3	15	288	5
Leadership and teaching	2	0	32	2
Transition to practice	2	0	32	2
Semester II credit hours	10	30	640	14
TOTAL HOURS	352	608	960	28

Sample Associate Degree Program

	Prerequisites to Program Admission	Lecture Hours	Lab Hours	External Hours	Contact Hours	Credit Hours
Gen Ed	Introduction to Biology	3	0	0	48	3
	Composition I	3	0	0	48	3
	Statistics	3	0	0	48	3
Gen Ed	Wellness and Health Promotion	2	0	0	32	2
Gen Ed	Intro to Psych	3	0	0	48	3
	Total Prerequisite Credit Hours	14	0	0	224	14
SEMESTER I						
Gen Ed	Human Anatomy & Physiology I	3	0	0	48	3
Gen Ed	Child Development	3	0	0	48	3
Gen Ed	Nutrition	3	0	0	48	3
Lactation	Introduction to Breastfeeding and Lactation Concepts	4	3	0	112	5
	Total Semester I Credit Hours	13	3	0	256	14
SEMESTER II						
Gen Ed	Human Anatomy & Physiology II	3	0	0	48	3
Gen Ed	Sociology	3	0	0	48	3
Gen Ed	Intro to Health Care	3	0	0	48	3
Lactation	Fundamentals of Breastfeeding	4	3	0	112	5
	Total Semester II Credit Hours	13	3	0	256	14
SEMESTER III						
Lactation	Breastfeeding and Lactation I	5	0	0	80	5
Lactation	Public Health Concepts in Lactation	4	0	0	64	4
Lactation	Practicum I (Field Experience)	0	0	20	320	3
	Total Semester III Credit Hours	9	0	20	464	12
SEMESTER IV						
Lactation	Practicum II (Field Experience)	0	0	20	320	2
Gen Ed	Research I	2	2	0	64	3
Lactation	Transition to Practice	3	0	0	48	3
	Total Semester IV Credit Hours	5	2	20	432	8
TOTAL PROGRAM HOURS						62

*Lecture Hours and Clinical Hours are based on 16 hours per credit. (LEAARC – 2013)