



Criteria for the Recognition of a Clinical Instructor

The Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee (LEAARC) establishes, maintains and promotes appropriate criteria for evaluating and approving courses that contribute in part to the preparation of individuals to enter the Lactation Consultant profession. These criteria are to for the development, evaluation, and self-analysis of clinical internship clinical instructors in lactation.

LEAARC grants Recognition to clinical instructors that meet or exceed these minimum criteria through a formal, non-governmental, peer-review process of voluntary self-evaluation. LEAARC Approval honors a diversity of educational opportunities in institutions or with individual lactation consultants. A published list of approved Clinical Internship sites is available for interns, employers, educational institutions and agencies, and the public.

Description of the Profession

The lactation consultant is an allied health care professional who possesses the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to provide quality assistance to breastfeeding families. Lactation consultants work within the professional code of ethics, clinical competencies, scope of practice, and standards of practice. They integrate established knowledge and evidence when providing care for breastfeeding families, work within the legal framework of their respective geopolitical regions or settings and maintain knowledge and skills through regular continuing education.

Lactation consultants educate families, health professionals and the community about breastfeeding and human lactation. They facilitate the development of policies that protect, promote and support breastfeeding, and act as advocates for breastfeeding as the child-feeding norm. They provide holistic, evidence-based support and care for breastfeeding families from preconception to weaning. Using principles of adult education, they facilitate learning for clients, health care providers and others in the community.

Lactation consultants perform comprehensive maternal, child and feeding assessments related to lactation. They develop and implement an individualized feeding plan in consultation with parents using evidence-based information. They integrate cultural, psychosocial and nutritional aspects of breastfeeding. They support and encourage families to meet their breastfeeding goals, using effective therapeutic

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communication skills when interacting with clients and other health care providers. They use the principles of family-centered care while maintaining a collaborative, supportive relationship with clients.

Lactation consultants maintain accurate records and reports, where appropriate. They preserve client confidence by respecting the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of clients. They act with reasonable diligence by assisting families with decisions regarding the feeding of children by providing information that is evidence-based and free of conflict of interest.

Lactation consultants provide follow-up services as required and make necessary referrals to other health care providers and community support resources when necessary. They deliver coordinated services to families, and work collaboratively and interdependently with other members of the health care team.

Note: Appendices referred to in these Criteria are in the Resource Guide, *Establishing and Maintaining a Lactation Clinical Internship Program*.

I. Internship Provider

- A. A clinical instructor must have been precepting interns for a minimum of one year and graduated at least one intern.
- B. The clinical instructor must offer a minimum of 100 clinical instruction hours.
- C. The clinical instructor should comply with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.
- D. The clinical instructor must meet the provisions of these Criteria, as appropriate to their geographical location.
- E. The clinical instructor provider may be an individual or a small organization.
- F. The clinical instructor would ideally have training specific to mentoring lactation interns. **See examples in Appendix B.**

II. Clinical instructor Goals and Outcomes

- A. The potential Intern must satisfy any prerequisites to admission. **See examples in Appendix C.**
- B. There must be a written statement of the mission of the clinical instructor.

III. Resources

- A. Clinical instructor resources must be sufficient to ensure the achievement of the clinical instructor's goals and outcomes. Resources must include at least one Clinical Instructor. The clinical Instructor may also fulfill other duties. All clinical instructors should have access to record keeping, computer and office resources and instructional reference materials. **See Appendix F.**
- B. The clinical instructor must:
 - 1. Be a certified lactation consultant. Ideally the instructor would have had experience mentoring others in any setting.
 - 2. Have interpersonal skills to guide the growth of the intern.
 - 3. Have the requisite knowledge and skills to provide clinical instruction.
 - 4. Assure that continuous, competent, and appropriate guidance for interns is provided.
 - 5. Provide instruction, evaluate interns and report progress as indicated.
- C. The clinical curriculum must ensure the achievement of clinical instructor mission.
- D. The intern uses the check list for LEAARC competencies to track competencies achieved. **See Appendix G.**

IV. Intern Assessment

- A. The clinical instructor must have a method to assess intern progress toward achievement of the competencies stated in the curriculum. **See examples of evaluation documents in Appendix I.**
- B. Records of intern assessments must be maintained in sufficient detail to document learning achievements.
- C. The clinical instructor must periodically assess effectiveness in achieving the stated mission. **See examples of course assessment forms in Appendix J.**

V. Fair Practices

- A. Publications and Disclosure

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- B. Announcements, catalogs, publications, and advertising must accurately reflect the clinical instructor offered including admission policies, criteria for completion of the internship, tuition and fees, policies for withdrawal and refunds.

VIII. Annual Reporting

- A. The clinical instructor must submit an Annual Report to LEAARC by March 1 beginning with the first full calendar year following Initial Approval. **See example in Appendix H.**
- B. The clinical instructor must report any substantive change(s) to LEAARC in a timely fashion. These may include:
 - 1. Legal status of the clinical instructor's practice
 - 2. Significant departure in curriculum content or delivery