Understanding CERPS & IBCLC Re-certification

❖ What are CERPs?

CERPs are the Continuing Education Recognition Points that IBLCE (International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners) recognises for learning undertaken by IBCLCs (International Board Certified Lactation Consultants) are required to undertake to maintain and renew their IBCLC credential.

They measure the professional development and continuing education that the individual IBCLC has undertaken to ensure that their practice is current and guided by the latest evidence. There are three categories of CERP and IBLCE recognises that 1 hour of education = 1 CERP

❖ Types of CERPs

L-CERPs	**Lactation specific** – education directly related to breastfeeding and lactation care.
E-CERPs	**Ethics** – education focused on legal and ethical topics relevant to lactation practice including the WHO/UNICEF 'International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes' and professional conduct related.
R-CERPs	**Related disciplines** – education in health sciences that support lactation care and the work of an IBCLC.

CERPs can be either **self-certified CERPs** where an IBCLC has undertaken lactation relevant education, not previously been awarded CERPs by IBLCE but they wish to count it towards their recertification. The education requires substantiating evidence to be provided for it to be included. Be aware that if audited and providing the evidence, does not guarantee IBLCE granting the CERPs. More information can be found in the IBLCE's CERPs guidance and you may be interested to see LCGB's 'Self Certification by CERPs' guide.

Or **CERPs previously awarded** by IBLCE, this is when the provider has successfully applied (paid) for and been awarded a specific type and number of CERPs for the education offered. The CERPs are allocated a code and are valid for a specific period. IBCLCs should only collect unexpired CERPs, but once expired the IBCLC could consider self CERPing the education.

❖ IBLCEs CERPs Requirements When Re-certifying by CERPs

To remain on the IBCLC Register, IBCLCs are required to undertake a minimum amount of continuing education (CE) when re-certifying every 5 years, either by resitting the IBCLC exam or collecting CERPs. **Currently a total of at least 75 CERPs are to be collected within the previous five years prior to applying to re-certify.** However, IBLCEs policies are subject to change, always review the current CERPs guidance.

The required 75 CERPs must include …	
50	L-CERPs or more, IBLCE will approve 2 L-CERPs/full year (maximum of 10 L-CERPs/5yr period) to those that are volunteer trustees or active board members of the board of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or non-profit organisation that actively promotes and/or supports breastfeeding.
5	E-CERPs or more, which must have a minimum of 2 hours on the WHO Code
3	R-CERPs or more, to include the Basic Life Support (BLS) certificated education which = 3 CERPs
17	Or more CERPs, from any of the three groups : L, E, and/or R-CERPs

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❖ Collecting & Counting CERPs

There is not specific start date for collecting CERPS the IBCLC can start a) immediately after receiving the exam results, b) immediately after the IBCLC Registry certification date renews.

The collection of CERPS is guided by 1) the individual IBCLC's 'Personal Professional Development Plan' (PPDP). 2) the learning can be linked to categories outlined in the IBLCE Detailed Content Outline (DCO).

When collecting the CERPs required by the PPDP, CERPS collected prior to receiving the PPDP that meet the requirements can be counted. Consider collecting 5 CERPs in each category of the DCO as up to 20 (30%) of the 75 required CERPs can be determined by the individual's PPDP.

Sections of the DCO	
i	Development & Nutrition (infant and maternal)
ii	Physiology & Endocrinology (physiology of lactation, endocrinology
iii	Pathology (infant and maternal)
iv	Pharmacology & Toxicology
v	Psychology, Sociology & Anthropology
vi	Techniques
vii	Clinical Skills (equipment and technology, education and communication)

❖ Document Your CERPs

The individual IBCLC is responsible for collecting and documenting their CERPs. It is important to maintain organised documentation that is easily accessible. Be aware of 1) what you need to collect and 2) know what you have collected.

There is no required format to record CERPs and a number of organisations like GOLD, i-Lactation and LER offer a free online documentation service. Even if using one of these keep you own record in case their systems crashes.

Apply for re-certification as soon as you can and applications whether by exam or CERPs are made online through the IBCLC's personal account on the IBCLC Commission's site. Complete the application and make the payment (US $), if the recertification has been accepted the IBCLC's recertification year on the Register instantly advances 5 years. After applying and making the payment a number of IBCLC's will be called for audit. The Register date does not advance and the IBCLC receives an email giving 10 working days to submit all the requested evidence to substantiate the CERPs collected.

Be aware that the greater the number of IBCLCs that there are the more will be audited and rumours say, the closer to September 30th that more applications are audited.

❖ Stay Current With IBLCE's Recertification Requirements

For current information check the IBLCE's re-certification information and their 'Individual CERPs Guide' requirements are known to change. If re-certifying by exam the exam must be undertaken during the Spring or Autumn of the year that the current certification expires on December 31st. If re-certifying by CERPs the application period often opens in March and all applications must be made prior to September 30th

Lactation Consultants of Great Britain
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Re-certification Tips

1. Education

Basic Life Support (BLS):
When re-certifying by CERPs, these education hours = 3 R-CERPs

- Can be either Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and/or Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP).
- Conducted in-person and/or virtually and at a basic level is sufficient.
- Must be issued with a certificate, as required if called for audit
- To be within the previous 5 years of the date when re-certifying.

NB. The British Heart Foundation offers an excellent free, 15min online RevivR certified training that has passed audit and could be completed every year.

The WHO Code:
When *re-certifying by CERPs, these two hours form part of the required 5 E-CERPs*
All re-certifying IBCLCs must complete two hours of WHO Code, focused education.

2. Lactation Consulting Practice Hours

A minimum of 250 clinical practice hours must be accrued over the years preceding re-certification since and since the previous certification. These hours can be undertaken in any of the following area/s depending on role - education, administration, research, clinical practice, or advocacy. These hours can be paid or voluntary and IBLCE offer a Lactation Specific Clinical Practice Calculator to assist in calculating the hours and can be submitted if audited.

3. The Continuing Education Self-Assessment

The IBCLC receive and email from IBLCE about 12-18 months into their certification period, inviting them to undertake their online CE Self-Assessment. A free, 70 question, multiple-choice assessment that can only be taken once in the five year period.
The results of the assessment create the IBCLC's PPDP to guide their onward learning, so it is recommended to take it as soon as invited.
NB. The link to the assessment is a **one-time link** and the assessment must be **undertaken in one session** in an up to 2 hour period.

4. Following Re-certification

The Register certification date advances five years and the recertification cycle starts again.
The IBCLC will be emailed the details to download the Certification and email logo.
If purchasing a hard copy certificate and card these arrive after 6-8 weeks.

5. Failing to Re-certify

- If the IBCLC does nothing – the will no longer be an IBCLC when the current certification expires on December 31st
- If the IBCLC fails to get their re=certification in before the September 30th deadline, as above unless they can negotiate a re-certification plan with IBLCE
- If the IBCLC is called for audit and fails the audit. Will be given a timeframe to come up with the additional requirements. If these are not me their certification becomes in-active once it expires on December 31st. and IBLCE have re-activation requirements that would need to be met.
- If the IBCLC has decided to retire when their certification expires. IBLCE now offer an IBCLC Retired status for those that no longer intend to practice.

LCGB is sharing this information purely as a guide always check the IBCLC Commission website

Correct when updated – Oct 2026