

Here are some frequently asked questions about the eligibility and application procedure for the 2021 Advanced Doula Designation. The questions are not exhaustive and the answers to most questions will be very individual to each applicant and dependent upon whether the doula meets the other criteria and to what extent. Additional questions can be directed to Diana Zacharin CD/BDT(DONA) at CertificationDirector@DONA.org.

Q: Why did DONA International begin offering this advanced doula credential in 2015?

A: DONA International has long been aware that we have many certified doulas who have contributed greatly to the doula profession and in the maternal-child field. After considerable deliberation, DONA International leadership felt the time was right to acknowledge and appreciate those accomplishments and provide a mechanism for the general public and their peers to recognize these doulas and honor the many significant contributions that set them apart as leaders in the field.

Q: How will this new credential benefit me?

A: The advanced doula credential is the highest certification honor bestowed to doulas in our organization. The AdvPCD(DONA) and AdvCD(DONA) credentials indicate to other professionals, colleagues and clients that a doula has shown commitment to the field of doula work, furthered her/his career path through continued education and made significant contributions in the maternal-child field.

Q: Who reviews the applications?

A: An Advanced Doula Designation Committee has been established to review and approve all applications received by the stated deadline for the calendar year. The 2021 Committee is comprised of doulas who have previously been awarded the Advanced Doula Designation.

Q: I am uncertain if I qualify. Is there someone I can contact to inquire about my qualifications before I pay the non-refundable application fee?

A: You are encouraged to thoughtfully and objectively consider each individual criterion outlined on the [document](#) to evaluate whether or not you meet it. You might consider asking a trusted mentor or colleague to objectively evaluate your eligibility. You may also contact Diana Zacharin CD/BDT(DONA) at CertificationDirector@DONA.org. She will address your questions, but will not be able to specifically advise whether you meet all the criteria or take responsibility for evaluating eligibility. Decisions will only be made by the Advanced Doula Designation Committee during the review process.

Eligibility is based on the combination and quality of contributions made and qualifications earned during a doula's tenure as a DONA certified doula, and not before.

LINK TO: [ADVANCED DOULA ELIGIBILITY_2021](#)

Q: Why does each eligibility criterion matter to DONA International and for this designation?

A: The Advanced Doula Designation Committee carefully considered the eligibility criteria for this credential, which was approved by the Board of Directors.

- Longevity as a DONA certified doula demonstrates a level of commitment to the profession and presumes a minimum amount of experience.

- Earning additional credentials in a related field establishes that the doula has an interest in expanding her/his knowledge and skill set.
- While writing is not a skill set required to be a doula, being published sets apart those exemplary doulas who have exhibited the ability to inform and share knowledge about the profession.
- While teaching is also not a skill set required to be a doula, presenting an educational session at an industry conference and creating original curriculum demonstrates the doula's ability to educate others about issues relevant to being a doula or an expectant parent.
- Contributing to the advancement of the doula profession and contributing to the maternal-child field in a significant way establishes the doula as a leader in the industry.

Q: What are some examples of meeting the criteria?

A: The following examples are **not** an exhaustive list, but only a representation:

- **About being published:**
- In order for published work to qualify, there must be a submission/rejection process through the publishing organization.
- It is acceptable to have published an article in recognized peer-reviewed childbirth, doula and breastfeeding or other related industry books, magazines or journals or in professional blogs of respected organizations. Examples include but are not limited to: *International Doula*, *The DONA Doula Chronicles*, *Journal of Perinatal Education*, *Science & Sensibility*, etc.
- Contributions to a book or other publication that has not yet been published do not meet the criteria for the current year's application.
- Your business blog and/or blogs run by other doulas/colleagues will not qualify.
- Being quoted in a book or other publication does not constitute being published.
- Newspaper and online interviews as well as book/DVD reviews do not qualify.
- Academic papers *may or may not* meet the criterion, dependent upon the level and content. An essay written as a class assignment will not qualify. A thesis for a degree or a research summary would be considered to have met that criterion.
- **About being a conference presenter:**
- In order for a presentation to qualify, there must be a call for papers/submission-rejection process
- Organizations must be reputable and respected within our fields. Examples include but are not limited to DONA, Lamaze, and ILCA.
- Presenting at a local event will only qualify if the conference was sponsored by an established organization and had an official call for papers. Presenting at a baby fair or event for expectant families to learn about local services will not meet this criterion.
- Being asked to speak at an event or meeting will not meet this criterion.
- **Regarding volunteering as having made a major contribution to the maternal-child field:**
- Volunteering/serving/chairing for several years on a local/national committee related to birth, breastfeeding, parenting, health related, government sponsored will qualify.
- Examples include but are not limited to DONA, LLL, March of Dimes, Mother and Child Coalition, ICAN.
- Other volunteer work includes lobbying for third-party reimbursement, birthing rights within one's own state or country, establishing programs for refugees...
- Volunteering for a number of years to teach childbirth classes and/or provide doula support *at a health department or through another established program* meets this criterion.

- Volunteer work that is not through an established program will not meet this criterion.
- Establishing and/or running a local organization will qualify if the doula established a code of ethics/bylaws and received a 501c3 status.
- Presenting to a group of providers with the intent of gaining referrals will not qualify, but presenting to a hospital board to start a doula program or lift a doula ban *may* qualify.

Q: Can I apply for both a birth and postpartum doula advanced credential?

A: If you believe you qualify for both a birth and postpartum doula advanced designation, then you may submit a separate application for each designation.

Link to: [Advanced Doula Application](#)

Q: What if my application isn't accepted this year? Can I apply again?

A: If your application isn't accepted this year, you will have the opportunity reevaluate your eligibility and take steps to meet whatever criteria may require additional substantiation. DONA International encourages our certified doulas to continue developing in their field and looks forward to acknowledging their accomplishments.

Q: Why is there a fee to apply for this credential?

A: The application fee covers the cost of administrative staff support, including receiving and processing applications, updating the database and technology revisions to add form fields to the online member center, among other standard operating costs.

Q: How can I pay the non-refundable \$100 application fee?

A: The non-refundable application fee for processing your application can be paid in the [online member center](#) under "DONA Boutique (Certifications and Brochures)" followed by clicking on either "Birth Doula Certification" or "Postpartum Doula Certification" and choosing "DONA Advanced Birth (or Postpartum) Doula Designation Application Fee." If you do not see the fee available for you to process email certification@dona.org.

Q: Must my application be "received" online by August 31, 2021? Is there a grace period offered if I can't get my application in on time?

A: Applications must be submitted electronically to certification@dona.org and received no later than 11:59 p.m. CST on August 31, 2021. Applications are only accepted, and designations awarded, for a limited time each year.

Q: May I submit an application after August 31, 2021?

A: Applications for the 2021 Advanced Doula Designation must be between August 1, 2021 and August 31, 2021. If you are unable to submit your application by the August 31, 2021 deadline, you will have another opportunity to apply during International Doula Month in 2022. DONA International will neither accept, nor keep on file, any applications received after the application deadline.

Q: If I have more questions, who should I contact?

A: For the 2021 application period, you are welcome to email your questions to Diana Zacharin CD/BDT(DONA) at CertificationDirector@DONA.org.