
POSTPARTUM DOULA CERTIFICATION: FAQs

1. **How would I know the workshop I am taking is DONA International approved?**

Find DONA International approved workshops through our online locators at dona.org website under the Become a Doula tab. This way you can be sure that the trainer is DONA approved.

2. **How do I register the Certification Packet I received at my training workshop?**

Visit the DONA International Boutique. You will need to create a user account, if you have not already. It is free to create a user account. Once you've logged in, you'll find the workshop registration in your user profile under the "My Actions" header. To register your workshop, enter the name of your trainer and the workshop date of completion.

3. **Do I have to be a member of DONA International to receive my Certification Packet?**

No, but DONA International members get discounts and access to DONA Connect, the ID Magazine, etc. You must be a member at the time of submitting your packet for review and remain a member through the duration of your three-year certification cycle.

4. **I took my workshop before August 15, 2023 and do not yet have a Certification Packet. How can I get one?**

Register your workshop as above in Question 3. After you have completed that step, the 2023 packet will populate in the Boutique for your purchase. Select the packet and complete the \$0 purchase. Wait 30-45 minutes for the packet to be sent to you via email.

5. **I took my workshop before August 15, 2023 and already have a Certification Packet. Can I get a refund and upgrade to the new packet?**

There are no refunds and no fees to upgrade. If you choose to upgrade, you will be beholden to the application process as outlined in the new packet, but can submit any client/course forms that have already been completed before your upgrade. There is no requirement to upgrade if you prefer to stay with the packet and application process you already have.

6. **I have been working as a postpartum doula for years. Can I get credit for that experience and shorten the certification process?**

No, all client support experiences submitted, but have occurred after the completion of your workshop. The postpartum doula certification process is the same for everyone in order to ensure that all those with the credentials PCD(DONA) share a common knowledge base, code of ethics and standards of practice.

7. **I was trained by a trainer who is now DONA International approved. Can I now be grandparented in as a postpartum doula? Do I still have to attend a DONA International approved training workshop?**

In order to achieve standardization of training and give meaning to certification, we do not grandparent in doulas on the basis of previous training. However, some DONA International approved postpartum doula trainers offer scholarships or reduced fees for people they have trained in the past. Trainers set and collect their own workshop fees. Contact your trainer and ask about their policy.

8. I am certified by another organization as a postpartum doula. What do I have to do to be certified by DONA International?

You do not need to be a DONA certified doula to be a member of DONA International. However, to use the credentials and title of DONA Certified Doula, you must complete the DONA International Postpartum Doula certification process. The postpartum doula certification process is the same for everyone in order to ensure that all those with the credentials PCD(DONA) share a common knowledge base, code of ethics and standards of practice.

9. How will I know if the DONA approved workshop I attended included the required lactation support education?

Inclusion of the lactation support education requirement is usually noted in the course advertisement. If it is included, it will either be noted on your certificate of completion or you will be issued a separate certificate for this component.

10. For the requirement of attendance at a lactation course, do the classes offered by hospitals to prepare people to lactate and feed their babies qualify?

No, the lactation course must be either taught in conjunction with your doula training workshop, a 3-hr or more course specifically for perinatal professionals, or the approved DONA International course at elevate.dona.org.

11. I am already a certified/licensed/accredited lactation professional/peer counselor. Do I still need to take the lactation support class?

No. Submit a copy of your credentialing documents with your application.

12. How long does a candidate have to complete the certification requirements?

You must complete your certification requirements within three years of completing your DONA International approved postpartum doula training workshop.

13. How much do the DONA International approved postpartum doula training workshops cost?

Workshops vary in cost, depending on the trainer and the expenses involved in hosting a training. Trainers set their own fees. Some fees include tuition, books, meals, etc. Contact your trainer to ask what is included.

14. In the population I work with, feeding human milk is uncommon. Do I still need two out of three certifying experiences to be with people who are lactating?

Yes. It is an important part of your education. When you do work with people who are lactating, you will be better able to support and educate them if you have had some experience.

15. I did not get a release signature from one of my clients. Can I still use this postpartum support experience for certification?

To accept a postpartum support experience, we must have a signature releasing the information.

16. How do I verify my DONA International membership?

When you submit your application for certification, you must be a current member. You can check it on the Member Login on the DONA Website. You do not have to call the home office to verify your membership if you know it is current.

17. How do I pay the application fee and where should I send my completed certification packet?

Pay the Application Fee online in the DONA Boutique at dona.org or send a check or International Money Order payable to DONA International in U.S. funds for the correct amount. The mailing address is listed on the website.

After paying for the Application Fee online through the DONA Boutique the receipt will include a link and instructions to submit your certification packet through the online submission process.

18. After I send in my completed certification packet, when will I hear from DONA International?

When your application is assigned to a reviewer, they will inform you from their own personal email address. Check your email and reply promptly if a reply is requested. Depending on our queue, it can take a few weeks to assign a reviewer.

19. Is there anything I can do while I wait to hear about my application?

It is recommended that you still treat every postpartum support experience you have after you submit your application as a certification experience: have your client sign a Client Confidentiality Release Form, take notes, request evaluations from the mother and her partner/other adult, and write the essay. That way you will have documentation for another family, in case that is needed.

20. Is there anything I can do to speed up the process?

When completing the record sheets, make sure that you have thoroughly answered all the questions and that your reviewer is able to get a good sense of your thought process while working with your client and that you understand the role, responsibilities, and standards of practice as a postpartum doula. Before sending your application, make sure that all your paperwork is complete and in the order requested. Disordered and incomplete applications slow down the review process.

Also, respond to your reviewer as soon as you hear from them. They may request additional materials.

21. I want to be both a birth doula and a postpartum doula. Should I become a birth doula first?

It is not required. However, this is a decision that you need to make based on your own situation. You might choose one first because of the availability or location of training, or because one is more marketable than the other in your region. Another option would be to work on them at the same time. Some of the readings overlap, and if you are hired for postpartum, you might find it easier to be invited to attend the birth, and vice-versa.

22. Do I have to certify as both kinds of doulas?

DONA International does not require that doulas become certified in both areas. You can become a birth doula, a postpartum doula, or both. This is a decision that you need to make based on your own situation and interests.