

DONA Birth Training FAQ's

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

Find DONA International-approved workshops through our online locators: Find a DONA International birth doula workshop, Find a DONA International postpartum doula workshop, Birth Doula Trainer Workshops and Postpartum Doula Trainer Workshops.

2. Do I have to be a member of DONA International to order my Certification Packet?

No, but DONA International members get a discounted rate when purchasing their packets and you must be a member at the time you submit your packet for review. After you are a certified doula your contact information will be on our web site if you desire.

3. I noticed that some training workshops are listed as “intro.” To be certified as a Birth Doula, am I required to attend an intro workshop or will my main doula training workshop suffice?

A DONA International-approved introductory workshop is similar to a childbirth education series and is different than a DONA International-approved doula training workshop. It is not a requirement to attend an intro workshop, but you could use it in place of the childbirth education series requirement.

4. How many hours of training in a DONA International-approved course do I need for certification?

To be certified as a Birth Doula, you will need a minimum of 16 hours in a DONA International-approved training workshop.

5. How many hours do I need for the childbirth education series?

You need a childbirth education series of a minimum of 12 hours.

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6. For the requirement of attendance at a childbirth education series, do classes offered by hospitals to prepare couples for birth qualify?

They will meet the requirement unless you are observing as an expectant parent and if the series is no less than 12 hours of class instruction. A letter or certificate from the instructor must accompany your application for DONA International certification. The following information should be included: dates, location, and number of classes in the series, a basic course outline, instructor's name, instructor's telephone number and educational background.

7. I have attended a 45-hour childbirth education training class. I would like to know if this class is sufficient for the Childbirth Education Class component of the requirements to become a doula.

The 45-hour class you attended would meet the DONA International requirement for Certification in Childbirth Education if you can provide a copy of your certification certificate and an outline of the coursework.

8. Do I have to be a member of DONA International to order my Certification Packet?

No, but you must be a member when you submit your certification materials for review. After you are a certified doula your contact information will be on our web site if you desire.

9. How do I order a certification packet?

Visit the DONA International Boutique.

10. I am having trouble attending births to complete the certification. What can I do?

Many doulas find that attending those first few births can be difficult. You may want to try to contact crisis pregnancy centres, teen pregnancy centres or women's shelters to see if someone would welcome your presence at their birth. Contacting the volunteer department at area hospitals may also yield good results. Getting your name out there can be hard at first, but the results are well worth the effort.

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

When you receive your packet from DONA International, a date will be stamped inside. You have two years from that date to complete the certification process. If your packet expires, you may purchase a one-time, six-month extension for \$10. After the six-month extension, if you do not complete the process, you will have to purchase another certification packet. You may order your packet either before or after attending a DONA International-approved workshop. In any case, you must complete your certification requirements within four years of attending a DONA International-approved workshop.

12. How much do DONA International-approved doula trainings cost?

Workshops vary in cost, depending on the trainer and expenses involved in hosting a workshop. Fees also vary in what they include (tuition, books, etc.).

13. I am ready to go to my first birth and I don't have another doula to go with me. I am nervous about attending the birth by myself. What should I do?

If you cannot find another doula to mentor you, remember the most important quality in a doula is a warm heart. More than anything, a warm smile, encouraging word and a soft touch are what you need to take with you to the birth. You are there to provide emotional support, not medical assistance. Your skills and knowledge will continue to grow with every birth.

14. Some of the births I attended were under 15 hours, but I did work with these clients during prenatal visits and during postpartum. Do those count toward the 15 required hours?

DONA International's requirement is that you provide labor support for a total of at least 15 hours between three births. You do not have to attend each one for 15 hours. Prenatal and postpartum contacts and visits do not count for certification. The labor support hours begin at the onset of active labor and include the birth and the immediate postpartum period.

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15. One of the births I attended was a cesarean section. Can this birth still count for certification purposes?

Yes, as long as the birth meets all the other requirements. One of your births may be a cesarean.

16. I did not get a release signature from one of my clients. Can I still use this birth?

To accept a birth for certification purposes, we must have a signature from the mother releasing the information.

17. What are you looking for in the essays for certification?

Birth essays must include the following components: a brief description of the labor, a description of your role as doula at this birth, the mother's reaction to labor and birth and what the doula learned. When writing about the value and purpose of doula support, you are encouraged to review the DONA International position paper.

18. At every birth, I leave evaluations for the doctors/midwives and nurses to fill out, but I never get them back. What can I do?

Many doulas have had luck asking the medical care providers to fill out the form at the birth. A statement such as, "I know the last thing you need is more paperwork, but if you could take a minute to evaluate my services, it would be very helpful" can work well.

19. May I use the same doctor or midwife more than once for my evaluations?

Yes.

20. How do I verify my DONA International membership status?

When you submit your application for certification, you must be a current member. You can verify your membership by checking the mailing label of the latest issue of International Doula. The expiration date of your membership appears in the upper right corner of the label. You do not have to call to verify your membership if you know it is current.

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21. Where should I send my completed certification packet and application fee?

Send your completed certification packet and fee to:

DONA International

P.O. Box 3948

Parker, CO 80134

If you send it via a carrier other than the U.S. Postal Service, you will need to send it to the street address:

DONA International

1582 South Parker Road, Suite 201

Denver, CO 80231

***Do not send your completed packet with a signature required upon receipt. You may include a self-addressed stamped postcard if you wish us to acknowledge receipt. Also, do not put materials in a binder for mailing.**

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