RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Rationale:
The members of the Research Committee serve at the discretion of the ILCA Board of Directors (BOD) and undertake projects related to research in the fields of breastfeeding and human lactation at the direction of the BOD.

Goal:
To facilitate excellence in research and evidence based practice in the field of breastfeeding and human lactation.

Objectives:
Support breastfeeding, lactation, and infant feeding research through small funding grants for approved projects.

- Promote research by increasing an understanding of the research process and the critical use of research findings.
- Promote research based care of breastfeeding mothers and their infants through the dissemination and utilization of research findings.

Board Liaison:
ILCA Director of Research and Special Projects

- Responsibilities:
  1. Communicating between the BOD and the Research Committee Chair
  2. Assisting the Research Chair in preparing reports to the BOD
  3. Being present at all meetings of the Research Committee, whenever possible
  4. Providing information about ILCA policies and procedures

Structure:
- The ILCA Research Committee is comprised of one chairperson and members, all of whom must be members of ILCA in good standing throughout their terms in office. A committee appointment is for a three-year term. Members are limited to serving two consecutive terms. The Board of Directors of ILCA maintains the option to request resignation if circumstances warrant such action.
- Six members (minimum) including the Chair and the JHL Editorial Board member.
- It is recommended that there be a place on the committee for at least one member of the JHL Editorial Board, to serve in ex officio capacity (contributing and voting as a full member, but not able to assume the Chair's position).

Chair:
The chairperson holds office for a two-year term. The chair is appointed by the outgoing chair and approved by the members of the committee. This may be done by electronic vote. The timing of the appointment is approximately 3 months ahead of the annual meeting to allow for mentoring/orientation of the new chair by the outgoing chair. The Chair's election is ratified by the ILCA Board. Eligibility for the office of chairperson will be membership on the ILCA Research Committee for at least one year previous to the appointment year.
Duties of the chair:
1. Delegate and coordinate all the business of the committee. Coordinate development of committee goals, objectives, action plans.
2. Liaise with all committee members via ILCA Discussion Board, e-mail and/or telephone. Communicate with all committee members at least quarterly via group email.
3. Plan and conduct the annual committee meeting.
4. Facilitate special projects to meet the committee goals.
5. Plan and supervise conference activities, which highlight and enhance understanding of the research process.
6. Prepare and submit committee reports to the Board via the Director of Research and Special Projects.
7. Prepare annual budget with the Director of Research and Special Projects.
8. Maintain committee membership through annual letters of commitment to the Research Committee and solicitation of new committee members when needed.
9. Solicit or write research related announcements, features, or articles for the *Journal of Human Lactation (JHL)* and *E-Globe* which relate to the research process, grant applications, and the ILCA research fund.
10. Oversee review of grant applications and funding process in accordance with published deadlines.
11. Notify recipients of research grant awards.
12. Oversee the monitoring and follow-up of active ILCA research grants.
14. Solicit and develop a list of individuals who have varied areas of expertise and are willing to review research proposals or provide consultation to grant applicants as needed.
15. Develop and/or maintain an updated list of grant submissions and presentations and publications resulting from ILCA funding.
16. Maintain confidentiality of all ILCA Board of Directors’ and committee communications.
17. Obtain approval from two Directors in addition to the author for any letter or other document sent or released in ILCA’s name or on ILCA letterhead.
18. Prepare a committee report in advance of each scheduled ILCA board meeting and submit electronically to the BOD liaison.

Membership Criteria:
A. Minimum Qualifications – Voting Members
1. Must be member of ILCA in good standing.
2. Preferably be an IBCLC.
3. Possess teamwork skills.
4. Members will have professional and/or academic experience such as conducting research projects, reviewing research proposals, and/or supervising theses. Preference is given to persons who have completed a PhD or equivalent training.
5. In selecting committee members the research committee will endeavor to include members that represent 1) diversity in research knowledge and expertise, 2) various academic or professional disciplines, and 3) different geographic locations.

B. Term of office: 3 years. Members may serve a second consecutive term at the invitation of the chairperson. Members maintain the right to resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the research committee chairperson a minimum of thirty days prior to date of resignation.

C. Duties
1. Participate in the grant review process by providing written comments and recommendations regarding funding to committee chairperson.
2. Participate in the abstract selection process for ILCA conferences by reviewing abstracts and providing written recommendations to the committee chairperson.
3. Participate in the development of committee goals and objectives.
4. Participate in special projects, as appropriate, to meet committee goals.
5. Participate in delegated responsibilities such as monitoring and follow-up of specific research projects, preparation of items for publication in the *JHL* and *E-Globe*, and consultation on writing a grant proposal as requested by applicants.
6. Submit conference expenses to the Director of Conference as directed.
7. Plan conference activities that highlight and enhance understanding of the research process.
8. Attend the annual committee meeting if possible.
9. Are not eligible for a grant award during the time they serve on the ILCA Research Committee.
10. Maintain confidentiality of all ILCA Board of Directors’ and committee communications.
11. Participate in committee communication via ILCA discussion board, email &/or telephone

Conflict of Interest
DISCLOSURE. All committee members must agree with the following statement:
“I hereby certify that I personally subscribe without reservation to the Statement of Purpose of ILCA as found in its By-laws. I will disclose, in writing and before my appointment or election, any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises when I am in a position to influence a decision at ILCA that will result in personal or professional gain for me or a family member. Any undisclosed conflict found after I assume my position may result in a request for resignation. Further, I subscribe without reservation to the Fundamental Principles of ILCA as found in its By-laws. I will not accept any funding from entities that are not in compliance with the WHO *Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* and its subsequent WHA resolutions, nor will I use my official ILCA capacity to endorse any literature or product.”

VOTING AND RECUSAL. A committee member having a conflict of interest regarding a matter which comes under discussion shall recuse her/himself from any discussion and voting on the matter in question. A conflict of interest arises when the committee member is in a position to influence a decision at ILCA that will result in personal or professional gain for the committee member or a family member. Any recusals will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

REVIEW OF CONFERENCE PROPOSALS. A committee member who submitted a proposal for the research concurrent paper or poster sessions at the ILCA conference shall recuse her/himself from reviewing and commenting on the submitted abstract.

Time Frame:
- Submit a committee report one month in advance of each scheduled meeting of the ILCA Board of Directors.
- Call for poster and paper abstracts for the ILCA annual conference is late summer and notification of acceptance is by mid December as guided by the Conference Program Committee.
- ILCA grant applications are due April 1. Notification of award is made in July.

Annual Committee Meeting

- A meeting of the entire research committee is held annually at a time agreed upon by the committee. This meeting may be held in conjunction with the annual ILCA Conference, or through a teleconference or other suitable arrangement to maximize inclusion of all committee members.

- All committee members are encouraged to attend the annual conference and if unable to do so, to be available for a conference call during that time.

- The meeting is chaired by the committee chairperson. Agenda items should include but are not limited to the following:
  1. Budget planning for following year.
  2. Review of status of active ILCA grants and evaluation of previous funding decisions.
  3. Review of current funding guidelines and funding priorities.
  4. Modifications of committee procedures such as grant review and abstract selection process.
  5. Evaluation of goals and objectives from the previous year and the extent to which these were met.
6. Formulation and/or approval of goals and objectives for the next year, including specific plans to meet these goals and objectives.
7. Review and discussion of the research committee's ongoing contribution to ILCA and the needs of its membership.
8. Plan content of research announcements and features in *JHL* or *E-Globe* for the subsequent year.
9. Ongoing planning of a research component to be included in the ILCA annual conference.

**GRANT REVIEW PROCESS**

**A. Solicitation of Grant Applications**

1. Grant application submission deadlines occur once each year, the proposal must be received by the chairperson no later than the date posted on the ILCA website. ILCA members are notified of these deadlines through an announcement placed in *JHL* and *E-Globe* several months prior to the deadline.

2. Prospective investigators are instructed to access the ILCA website or contact the ILCA headquarters or the ILCA research committee chairperson to obtain an application packet. This includes:
   (a) Cover letter
   (b) ILCA Research Grant Application Instructions and Guidelines / attached approved by ILCA BOD Sept. 2009
   (c) Application for ILCA Research Funds
   (d) Outline for Preparation of ILCA Research Grant Proposal
   (e) Budget for ILCA Research Grant Proposal
   (f) ILCA Research Consent Information
   (g) Outline for Curriculum Vitae

   Applicants who intend to recruit subjects from ILCA membership will be sent the *Access to ILCA Membership for Research* document.

3. Applications submitted to the research committee chairperson are checked for completeness. Incomplete applications are returned to the applicant. Complete applications received on or before the application deadline are considered for funding.

4. The original application is filed by the committee chairperson and copies of all applications with a Grant Evaluation Form attached are mailed and/or e-mailed to each research committee member and posted on the discussion board. Depending on the nature of the research application, the chairperson may recommend that a research application be reviewed by additional reviewers who have expertise specific to the research topic or method.

**B. Grant Review**

1. All grant applications will be reviewed initially by the entire research committee.

2. Exceptions to full committee review include:
   (a) A committee member feels unqualified to review a particular grant application.
   (b) A committee member has been involved as a consultant or as a faculty mentor in the proposal, or has had a working relationship with an applicant.
   (c) Members who have potential conflicts of interest shall notify the chair of the nature of the conflict and recuse his/her-self from the review.
   (d) Outside expertise may be solicited by the chairperson as needed.
3. Review deadlines are established by the committee. Usually four weeks are allowed for the review. Funding decisions will not be announced for eight weeks after the application deadline.

4. The review of the grant includes the following: a critique of the scientific merit and soundness of the research; the potential significance of the research to breastfeeding, lactation, and/or infant feeding; an evaluation of the investigator and available support systems to conduct the research; an assessment of the appropriateness of the budget; and a judgment of the likelihood of completion and success. For projects recruiting ILCA members as subjects, compliance with the Access to ILCA Membership for Research document must also be evident. Each reviewer is asked to complete a numerical scoring sheet and provide an overall recommendation regarding funding.

5. All Grant Review Forms with numerical scoring and written comments, questions, and/or recommendations are returned to the chairperson for compilation. Funding decisions based on this input will be made by the chairperson and forwarded to committee members for confirmation. If a consensus cannot be reached, committee members may be asked to contact each other directly to discuss differences of opinion. Final decisions are made by the chairperson when agreement among members is not reached before the published award date.

6. Decisions regarding funding of specific budgetary items will be based on reviewer input and committee philosophy regarding funding inclusions/exclusions. This should be reviewed annually by the committee. The following general funding guidelines are used:
   (a) Amount of funding each year is recommended by the committee and approved by the ILCA Board of Directors.
   (b) No indirect or overhead expenses, i.e., administration costs to educational institutions or healthcare agencies, will be funded.
   (c) Principal investigator or co-investigator salaries will be funded at no more than 40% of the total grant award.
   (d) Funds for purchase of capital equipment may be considered on an individual basis. Capital equipment ($500) must be addressed in the budget justification.
   (e) No funds are allowed for travel to presentation sites or related expenses or for publication expenses.

C. Funding Decisions and Award Notification

1. Three funding decisions are possible following the grant review process:
   (a) Funding denied. Applicant is provided with a summary of committee comments and suggestions. If appropriate, the applicant is encouraged to make changes and resubmit the proposal for future consideration. Resubmitted proposals are subject to the grant review process, therefore, funding is not guaranteed.
   (b) Funding approved, pending modifications in the study and/or clarification by the investigator. The applicant is provided with a summary of committee questions or suggestions. When modifications to the proposal meet the committee’s recommendations, the applicant is notified that funds are available and instructed how to obtain them.
   (c) Funding approved, full or partial. The applicant is notified that funds are available and instructed how to obtain them.

2. All applicants receive a letter from the chairperson at the close of the review period notifying them of the status of their grant application.

3. Applicants are not eligible for more than one funded ILCA grant at a time. Past recipients of completed ILCA grants may submit an application for a new project three years after the funded project is
completed. An investigator who has ILCA grant money withdrawn is not eligible for any additional funding.

D. Fund Disbursement

1. All research funds are released from the Research Fund by the ILCA Office or the ILCA Treasurer. This should generally occur within 6 months of the award.

2. Before funds are released, awardees must provide documentation of Institutional Review Board (IRB) (ethical) approval, and must sign and return a Research Grant Acceptance form, through which the investigator agrees to ILCA funding provisions. The investigator shall:
   (a) Return any excess funds.
   (b) Submit progress reports every six months until the project is completed.
   (c) Send a copy of the final paper to the research committee.
   (d) Attempt to publish and present findings.
   (e) Acknowledge the assistance of ILCA for providing support in all research presentations and publications.
   (f) Permit the announcement of the award in ILCA publications
   (g) Submit an abstract of the final report (maximum of 150 words) for publication in JHL.
   (h) Encouraged to submit a manuscript to JHL with the understanding that it will be subjected to the JHL review process.
   (i) Agree to a completion date (generally 18 months from project start) and submit the final report within 90 days of completion.
   (j) Notify the research committee chairperson of any presentations or publications related to the project that received ILCA funds.

E. Grant Monitoring and Follow-up

1. At the time of award notification, each principal investigator is informed of the process for submitting project progress reports to the committee member in charge of grant follow-up. A schedule of due dates for progress reporting every three months and at project completion is provided on the signed acceptance agreement form.

2. The responsibility for monitoring the progress of active research projects is delegated to a committee member. Reports are submitted to the grants follow-up member via the committee chairperson. The individual committee member then reports to the committee chairperson on the progress of studies under his/her supervision. If an investigator fails to meet two report deadlines a certified letter will be sent. If the investigator does not respond within 30 days, funding will be revoked and the investigator must reimburse expended funds.

3. Investigators will commit to a completion date (usually 18 months following activation). Failure to comply with the completion date will result in revoking of grant funds. Completion dates may be extended with prior approval of the committee.

4. A summary of the status of all active ILCA grants is included in each report to the Board. Additionally, presentations and publications resulting from ILCA funding and grant submissions will be recorded in an ongoing document.

ABSTRACT SELECTION PROCESS AND RESEARCH POSTER COMPETITION

ILCA Research Committee will select research abstracts for research poster presentations, research oral presentations and project poster presentations at ILCA Conferences.
A. Abstract Solicitation

1. Abstracts for poster presentations and oral research presentations will be solicited through a Call for Abstracts in JHL, the E-Globe, the Research page on the ILCA website, and other professional journals and newsletters. Deadlines for abstract submissions are determined by the Conference Program Committee.
2. All abstracts are submitted and reviewed through the ILCA online abstract submission site.

B. Abstract Review

1. Research committee members rate abstracts according to quality. The number of oral presentations is determined in conjunction with the Conference Program Committee (CPC) chairperson. A designated committee member synthesizes reviews and distributes to the committee member for discussion and decision related oral and poster presentation.
2. The research committee chair notifies the Conference Program Committee (CPC) chairperson of the selections for oral and poster presentations and notification of presenters and those not selected is done by the CPC and ILCA staff.
3. Abstracts of those who actually presented their posters/oral presentations at the conference will be published -- the research abstracts in JHL and the program/project abstracts in the E-Globe. Authors who are selected to present at the conference must register for the conference, and cover all expenses to attend the conference.

C. Research Poster Competition

The Research Committee chairperson organizes the research poster competition, provides forms for judging the posters and the certificate of award for the chosen recipient. Research committee members attending the conference judge the research posters and decide who will receive the award. Research committee members who have authored or co-authored a research or project poster which is being presented shall recuse him/herself from judging that category of posters (research or project).

D. Special or Time-limited Research Awards

From time to time the Research Committee receives small monetary awards to encourage or enhance research projects. The committee will award the monies using criteria provided by the donor or committee-developed criteria that are consistent with the donor’s intent.