

ICF Credentialing Handbook for Associate Certified Coach (ACC) Candidates*



*This Credentialing Handbook is intended for those pursuing the ICF **Associate Certified Coach (ACC)** Credential. Please refer to other ICF guides for those interested in other ICF Credential offerings.

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Introduction

Welcome

Deciding to pursue an ICF Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential is an important professional milestone in a coach's career. By embarking on this journey, you are demonstrating your commitment to meeting the highest standards for professional and ethical practice in coaching.

Anyone can call themselves a coach, but ICF Credentialed coaches are professionals who have met stringent education and experience requirements and have demonstrated through independent assessment their knowledge and ability to apply the coaching competencies that set the standard for the profession. Additionally, ICF Credential holders adhere to strict ethical guidelines as part of ICF's mission to protect and serve coaching consumers.

As part of this community, ACC Credentialed coaches are part of a self-regulating group of trained, experienced coaches who provide accountability to clients and the coaching profession as a whole.

We applaud your decision to pursue the ICF ACC Credential and look forward to supporting you along your Credentialing journey!

How to Use the ICF Credentialing Handbook for ACC Candidates

This handbook contains helpful information for those applying for the ICF Associate Certified Coach (ACC) Credential. Applicants should use this resource as a source of guidance and direction in navigating the ICF Credentialing process.

All applicants for the ICF ACC Credential should read this guide before beginning the application. Applicants for the ICF ACC Credential must adhere to all policies, procedures, and deadlines outlined in this guide. ICF Credentialing policies and procedures are designed to protect exam content, maintain integrity of the Credentialing process, and ensure exam fairness and validity for all candidates and credential-holders.

Much of the information included in this guide is also available on the ICF website at: <https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards>

Changes to the ICF Credentialing program

ICF Credentials and Standards reserves the right to change the standards, policies, procedures, application, fees and/or eligibility requirements for the ICF Credentialing process at any time. Any changes will be posted to the ICF website and through direct email communications in compliance with the ICF Privacy Policy. This guide

will be updated periodically to reflect changes. Please check the ICF website to be sure you are using the most recent version of the guide.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The ICF endorses the principles of equal opportunity. Eligibility criteria for ICF Credentials are applied equally to all individuals regardless of age, race, religion, gender, national origin, veteran status, or disability as defined by and in compliance with the laws of the United States of America.

The International Coaching Federation (ICF)

The International Coach Federation (ICF) was established in 1995 as a nonprofit organization for coaches to support each other and grow the profession and evolved to become the leading global organization dedicated to advancing the coaching profession by setting high standards, providing independent certification, and building a worldwide network of trained coaching professionals. In 2020 the ICF changed the name of the organization from the International Coach Federation to the International Coaching Federation. This new name is an acknowledgement of the growth and influence of ICF across all aspects of coaching.

Achieving the ICF vision takes place through the work of six unique family organizations. Each organization has a dedicated board that oversees the strategic direction of its affairs, funds and property.

ICF Credentials and Standards (CS)

ICF Credentials and Standards oversees and manages the credentialing of individual coach practitioners.

ICF CS is governed by the CS Board of Directors, an independent, autonomous governing body. The CS Board of Directors is solely responsible for the essential decisions related to the development, administration, and maintenance of the credentialing program.

About the ICF Credentialing Program

For 25 years, ICF has offered the only globally recognized, independent credentialing program for coach practitioners as part of its mission to advancing the coaching profession. From the 34 coaches who received the first-ever ICF Credentials in 1998 to the more than 45,000 in 143 countries and territories worldwide who hold an ICF Credential today, our purpose has remained the same: to recognize the Associate Competence of coach practitioners, to promote ongoing professional development of credentialed coaches, and to provide an important assurance of quality to coaching consumers.

In the fast-growing and largely unregulated marketplace of coaching, being able to distinguish oneself as a qualified coach is critical. As the largest global Associate Certification program for coaching, ICF Credentials are unique in their recognition worldwide as the global gold standard in coaching. This offers ICF Credential holders with a valuable, transferrable, and independent credential that can be used to demonstrate their knowledge, skill and competence as a coach practitioner across geographic borders, employers and industries.

The ICF Credentialing program is designed to ensure all credential holders have demonstrated their competence through fair, valid measures. From conducting routine coaching job analysis studies to developing credentialing exams, ICF Credentials and Standards follows global standards for certification practice. This includes rigorous requirements for psychometric test development, maintenance and quality management practices, all designed to ensure a fair, reliable, and impartial credentialing process for candidates.

As part of this commitment, ICF Credentials and Standards includes experienced coach practitioners as Subject Matter Experts at every stage of the process, including the development, review and pilot testing of exam questions. These Subject Matter Expert volunteers represent a diverse range of coach practitioners across geographic areas of the world, coaching disciplines and experience levels.

The ICF offers three credentials—the Associate Certified Coach (ACC), the Professional Certified Coach (PCC), and the Master Certified Coach (MCC). Each Credential level is based on the ICF Core Competencies, originally published in 1998 and revised in 2019. The ICF Core Competencies reflect the outcome of a rigorous global research initiative informed by more than 1,300 coach practitioners worldwide and provide the framework and standards for coaching practice.

This Credentialing Handbook is intended for those pursuing the ICF ACC Credential. Please refer to other ICF guides for those interested in other ICF Credential offerings.

Purpose of the ICF Credentials

All ICF Credentials are designed with a twofold purpose.

First, ICF credentials protect and serve consumers by requiring coaches to undertake rigorous preparation and training to learn the qualities of effective coaching, the body of knowledge that serves as the foundation for coaching practice, and the high standards of ethical and professional established by ICF.

Second, an ICF credential measures, recognizes, and certifies individual coaches for

their achievements in meeting the high standards of professional practice, including the ICF Core Competencies.

Applying for the ACC Credential

To be eligible for the ACC Credential, applicants must meet specific requirements for education and experience, and must complete at least 10 hours of mentor coaching with an eligible Mentor Coach. Applicants are required to document completion of each requirement as part of the ACC application process. Depending on the application pathway, an applicant may also be required to submit two performance evaluation recordings and accompanying transcripts as part of the application.

Once each requirement is reviewed and the applicant is approved to complete the ICF Credentialing Exam, a notification is sent via email with instructions on how to schedule an exam appointment.

The ICF Credentialing exam is computer-based and is delivered in partnership with Pearson VUE through its global network of Pearson VUE testing centers and through Pearson's OnVUE remote proctoring service.

Upon completion of the ICF Credentialing Exam, preliminary test results are provided to candidates. Official Credentialing results are provided to candidates within one week. Those who pass the exam are awarded the ACC Credential and are permitted to display the corresponding logo and marks after their name in accordance with ICF Credentials and Standards policies. ICF Credential holders also receive a digital certificate and digital badge in recognition of their professional accomplishment.

While earning the ACC Credential is an important professional milestone, maintaining it is equally important. ACC Credential holders are required to renew their credential every three years by earning 40 Continuing Coach Education credits through professional development courses and activities.

General Qualifications and Requirements for ACC Applicants

Applicants for ICF Credentials must meet all of the following minimum qualifications and requirements:

- Not currently under or subject to investigation, sanctions, or remedial action by ICF for a violation of the ICF Code of Ethics
- Completion of at least 60 hours of coach-specific education*

More information about the educational requirements is available at on the [ACC Credential](#) page.

- Completion of at least 100 client coaching experience hours following the start of coach-specific education including
 - at least 75 paid coaching hours
 - at least 25 hours of client coaching experience within the 18 months prior to submitting the ACC application
 - with at least 8 clients*

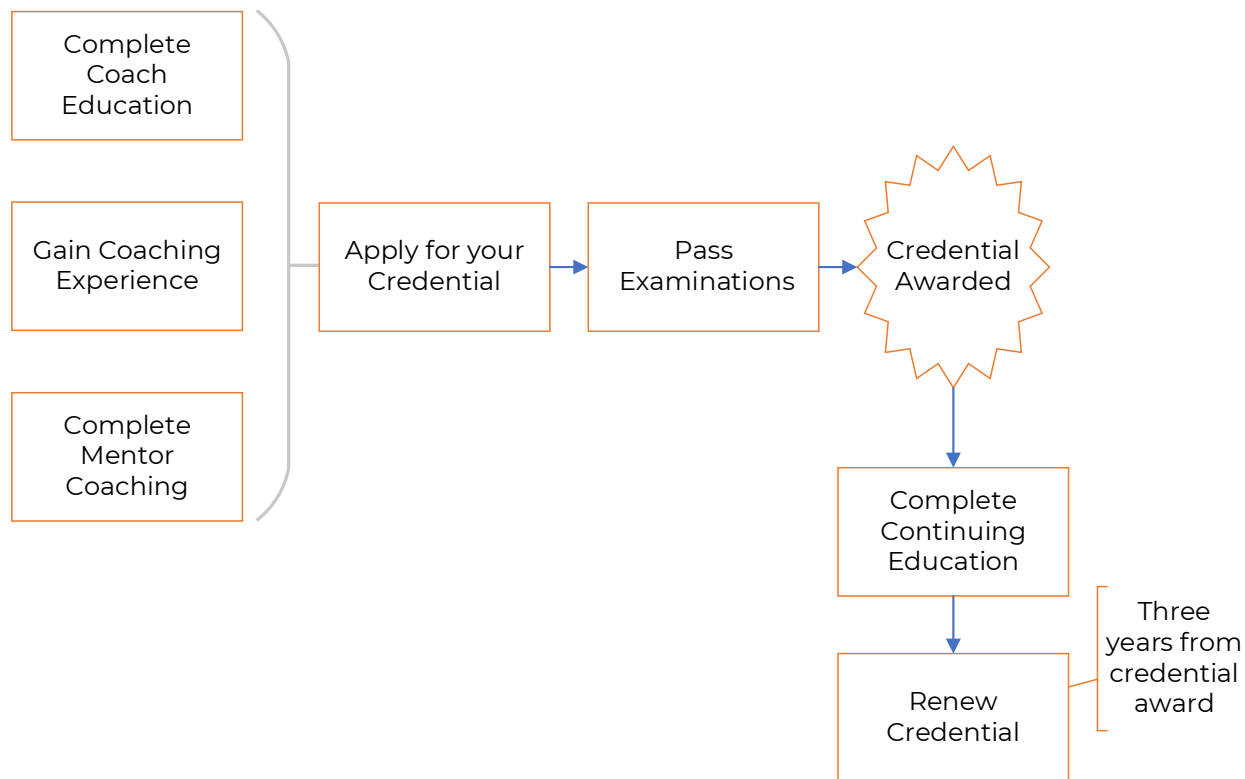
More information about the experience requirements is available on the [Credential Experience Requirements](#) page.

- Completion of 10 hours of mentor coaching over a three-month period or longer with an eligible Mentor Coach, including at least three (3) hours of individual mentor coaching with a mentor coach*
More information about the Mentor Coaching requirement is available on the [ICF Mentor Coaching](#) page.
- Passage of ICF examinations*
 - One (1) Performance Evaluation Recordings and Transcripts
 - ICF Credentialing Exam
- Payment of required fees*

**Refer to the specific requirements listed below to be included in your application based on the application path that is most appropriate for you.*

Note that eligibility requirements or award of a credential does not require membership in any association or organization, including ICF.

Steps in the Credentialing Process



ACC Application Paths

There are three application paths for those seeking to be awarded the Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential. All paths contain the same requirements and lead to the same Credential. However, the most appropriate path for an individual applicant is determined by the source of the coach specific education completed. Review the requirements below when determining which path best fits your coach education.

ACC— Level 1 / Level 2 / ACTP Path

This path supports applicants pursuing the ACC Credential who have completed an entire ICF-accredited Level 1 or Level 2 program or Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP). Application requirements for this path include:

Coach-specific education- Completion of an entire ICF Level 1, Level 2 or ICF Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP).

Client-coaching experience- A minimum of 100 hours (at least 75 paid) of coaching experience with at least 8 clients following the start of coach-specific training*. At least 25 of these hours must occur within the 18 months prior to submitting the application for the credential.

* ICF defines the start of coach-specific education as any course with at least 30 hours of which at least 24 hours are in ICF Core Competencies instruction. Eligible courses can be ICF-accredited or non-ICF-accredited.

Written Exam- Completion of the ICF Credentialing Exam with a passing score.

ACC—ACSTH Path

This path supports ACC applicants who have completed at least 60 hours of coaching education through Approved Coach Specific Training Hours (ACSTH) accredited courses and/or a portion of an ACTP program. Requirements for this path include:

Coach-specific education- At least 60 hours of coach-specific education through one or more ICF-accredited ACSTH program(s) (ACSTH), or a portion of an ICF ACTP.

Client-coaching experience- A minimum of 100 hours (at least 75 paid) of coaching experience with at least 8 clients following the start of coach-specific training*. At least 25 of these hours must occur within the 18 months prior to submitting the application for the credential.

* ICF defines the start of coach-specific education as any course with at least 30 hours of which at least 24 hours are in ICF Core Competencies instruction. Eligible courses can be ICF-accredited or non-ICF-accredited.

Mentor Coaching- Completion of at least 10 hours of mentor coaching over a period of three months or longer with an eligible Mentor Coach. A minimum of three (3) hours of the Mentor Coaching must be delivered one-to-one with the Mentor Coach. The remaining hours may be completed one-to-one or in groups of 10 or fewer participants.

Performance Evaluation- One audio recordings and written transcripts of coaching sessions to be uploaded with the ACC application. To earn the ACC Credential, the applicants must achieve a passing score on the Performance Evaluation.

Written Exam- Completion of the ICF Credentialing Exam with a passing score.

ACC—Portfolio Path

Coach-specific education- At least 60 hours of coach-specific education. Education hours may include ICF-accredited, Continuing Coach Education (CCE), and/or non-ICF accredited courses. Non-ICF accredited programs must be submitted with robust documentation, demonstrating a comprehensive coach education aligned with the ICF Definition of Coaching, Code of Ethics, and Core Competencies.

Client-coaching experience- A minimum of 100 hours (at least 75 paid) of coaching experience with at least 8 clients following the start of coach-specific training*. At least 25 of these hours must occur within the 18 months prior to submitting the application for the credential.

* ICF defines the start of coach-specific education as any course with at least 30 hours of which at least 24 hours are in ICF Core Competencies instruction. Eligible courses can be ICF-accredited or non-ICF-accredited.

Mentor Coaching- Completion of at least 10 hours of mentor coaching over a period of three months or longer with an eligible Mentor Coach. A minimum of three (3) hours of the Mentor Coaching must be delivered one-to-one with the Mentor Coach. The remaining hours may be completed one-to-one or in groups of 10 or fewer participants.

Performance Evaluation- One audio recordings and written transcripts of coaching sessions to be uploaded with the ACC application. To earn the ACC Credential, the applicants must achieve a passing score on the Performance Evaluation.

Written Exam- Completion of the ICF Credentialing Exam with a passing score.

ACC Application Fees

The ICF Credentials and Standards Board is responsible for setting fees for candidate applications, exams, re-certification, and appeals. The Board reserves the right to modify fees, as needed, to maintain the financial security of the program. It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that fees do not unduly prevent candidates from applying for or obtaining certification.

ICF Member Pricing*

Application Path	Application Review and Exams	Performance Evaluation Re-take <i>(if required)</i>	ICF Credentialing Exam Re-take <i>(if required)</i>	Re-certification <i>(every three years)</i>
ACC Level 1 / Level 2 / ACTP	\$175 USD	n/a	\$105 USD	\$175 USD
ACC ACSTH	\$375 USD	\$150 USD per recording	\$105 USD	\$175 USD
ACC Portfolio	\$475 USD	\$150 USD per recording	\$105 USD	\$175 USD

ICF Non-Member Pricing

Application Path	Application Review and Exams	Performance Evaluation Re-take <i>(if required)</i>	ICF Credentialing Exam Re-take <i>(if required)</i>	Re-certification <i>(every three years)</i>
ACC Level 1 / Level 2 / ACTP	\$325 USD	n/a	\$105 USD	\$275 USD
ACC ACSTH	\$525 USD	\$150 USD per recording	\$105 USD	\$275 USD
ACC Portfolio	\$625 USD	\$150 USD per recording	\$75 USD	\$275 USD

*Note that members of the ICF Professional Coaches organization receive a discount on their credential application fees. However, eligibility requirements for ICF credentials do not require membership in any association or organization, including ICF. To receive member pricing, an applicant must be an active member of ICF Professional Coaches or ICF Coaching in Organizations at the time of application submission.

Timelines for Credentialing Decisions

Once an application has been submitted, ICF staff will review the information provided in the application to verify an applicant’s eligibility for ACC and authorize the candidate to schedule and complete the ICF Credentialing Exam. Reviews of an applicant’s coaching education, experience, mentor coaching, performance evaluation and exam results are comprehensive and are performed in the order that completed applications are received.

The following are estimated timelines for the review of ACC applications, Performance Evaluation of recorded coaching sessions (if required):

- ACC Level 1 / Level 2 / ACTP applications- 4 weeks
- ACC ACSTH applications- 14 weeks
- ACC Portfolio applications- 14 weeks
- ACC Credential renewal- 6 weeks

Completing the Online Application

Applicants for ICF Credentials must apply using the ACC application forms available on the ICF website. The online application is designed to guide applicants through each step in the application process, keep personal information secure, and allow applicants to monitor the status of their application following submission.

To begin the credential application process, follow these steps:

1. Go to the ICF website at <https://coachingfederation.org/>
2. From the menu at the top of the ICF homepage click on Credentials and Standards
3. Select Apply Now at the far right of the menu bar

Clicking on the Apply Now link will take you to a brief survey designed to identify the credential levels and application path for which you are eligible based on your coach-specific education and experience.

To start your application, click on the option that is best for you. You may be asked to log in to your ICF Member account (for current members) or create a new account. ICF Members should use their member login to receive a discount on their credential application. Non-members will be asked to create a new account (creating a new account does not require you to purchase an ICF membership).

Once logged in to your account you will be directed to the credential application dashboard. Prior to starting your application, please review the sample application for the path you are using to apply. Sample applications with helpful notes can be accessed on the ICF website at: <https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/credentials-paths/ACC-credential>

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the sample applications prior to starting the application process.

You are not required to complete the application requirements in any specific order, but you will need to complete all requirements to be able to submit your application. ICF staff will not begin the review of your application or schedule exams until all parts of your application have been completed and submitted.

As part of the application process, applicants are required to attest that all information provided in the online application is complete and accurate. Applicants who provide false, misleading, or inaccurate information in their application are subject to denial and/or revocation of an ICF Credential and may be prohibited from reapplying for up to five (5) years.

ICF CS staff will review all applications and will directly contact applicants to provide any missing or incomplete information in the application. All applications are subject to audit and verification. If selected for audit, an application cannot be approved until the audit is satisfactorily concluded.

The ICF ACC Performance Evaluation

Those applying through the ACC ACSTH and ACC Portfolio paths must pass the ICF ACC Performance Evaluation. *(ACC Level 1/Level 2/ACTP path applicants complete the performance evaluation process as a part of their Level 1, Level 2 or ACTP educational program.)*

Performance Evaluation Format and Requirements

As part of ACC ACSTH and ACC Portfolio Credential application paths, applicants are required to submit one recordings and transcripts of coaching sessions for review by trained ICF Assessors.

Recording Requirements

- The recording must be of a complete coaching session (not edited) lasting between 20 and 60 minutes. Coaching will not be scored beyond the 60-minute mark.
- The recording must be from an actual coaching session between the applicant and a paid or pro bono client (not part of a coaching education program). The client for the session may not be a coach unless they are a regular client. A regular client is an individual who has come to you for coaching and for no other reason.
- The recording must be an audio only file (no video/pictures). The following file types are acceptable: MP3, WMA, MP4 or M4A (audio) format. Other formats will not be accepted.
- The audio file must be in one part. Multiple files for one coaching session will not be reviewed.
- The audio file must be 95 megabytes (MB) or less. Use a lower bit rate to decrease file size, if needed.
- Applicants must upload the actual audio file to the application. Providing a URL to download or stream audio recordings will not be accepted.
- File name must use only letters and numbers. Please be sure there are no special characters in the file name (? / | \ ! @ # = \$ % +) in order to avoid issues when uploading the files.

Transcript Requirements

- The transcript must be a word-for-word (verbatim) record of the coaching session(s), submitted in the language in which the session is held. NOTE: If ICF does not offer a performance evaluation in your language, you will need to submit a transcript in the language spoken AND an English transcript.
- The transcript must indicate who is speaking—the coach or the client—at any time in the conversation.
- List the coach’s statements and the client’s statements on separate lines of the transcript.
- The transcript must include timestamps at every change in speaker (coach and client).
- Transcripts must be submitted as a Word document (e.g., .doc, .docx). No other file formats will be accepted.
- When naming file(s), applicants must ensure that only letters and numbers are used in file names. Please be sure there are no special characters in the document name (ie. ? / | \ ! @ # = \$ % +) in order to avoid issues when uploading the files.

Assessment of the Performance Evaluation

Trained ICF Assessors conduct a comprehensive review of the recorded coaching session with a transcript(s) that were submitted with the application. During the review, the assessor listens to the recordings and collect evidence of the applicant's use of the ICF Core Competencies using the ACC Minimum Skills Requirements as their assessment criteria. Assessors submit their markings to ICF Credentials and Standards, where final results (“Pass” or “Below Passing Standard”) are determined.

Passing the Performance Evaluation requires that the assessors find that the candidate demonstrated effective use of the ICF Core Competencies at the ACC level and that align with the ICF Code of Ethics in the coaching recording provided.

NOTE: The longest part of the application review process is typically for the performance evaluation section. Candidates may monitor the status of their application from the application’s dashboard. Once a recording has been assigned to an assessor, candidates will receive a notice via email. Please allow 4 – 6 weeks for the assessment to be completed, the results received and processed.

Candidates will receive an email notifying them when results have been received from the assessor. The email will also include directions on how to access feedback on the performance evaluation from the assessor.

Candidates who pass the Performance Evaluation will be sent a message with instructions for scheduling completion of the ICF Credentialing Exam.

Candidates who are below the passing standard for the Performance Evaluation will receive a message with instructions regarding the re-take process.

The ICF Credentialing Exam

Following the staff review and verification that all qualifications have been met (e.g., education, experience, Mentor Coaching), applicants are authorized to complete the ICF Credentialing Exam as a final step in the Credentialing process.

About the ICF Credentialing Exam

The ICF Credentialing Exam content covers four broad domains: Foundation, Co-Creating the Relationship, Communicating Effectively, and Cultivating Learning and Growth. Exam questions cover the four domains accordingly as outlined below.

Domain: Foundation

- 13% - Competency: Demonstrates Ethical Practice
- 12% - Competency: Embodies a Coaching Mindset

Domain: Co-Creating the Relationship

- 12% - Competency: Establishes and Maintains Agreements
- 13% - Competency: Cultivates Trust and Safety
- 13% - Competency: Maintains Presence

Domain: Communicating Effectively

- 12% - Competency: Listens Actively
- 13% - Competency: Evokes Awareness

Domain: Cultivating Learning and Growth

- 12% Facilitates Client Growth

Exam Format and Delivery

The ICF Credentialing Exam is a three-hour exam, administered by ICF's exam delivery partner Pearson VUE. The exam is delivered by computer in a testing center or through Pearson's OnVUE remote proctored testing service. The total exam time is organized into the following sections.

Section 1: Candidate Non-Disclosure Agreement (untimed)

Section 2: Introduction & Instructions (3 minutes)

Section 3: Exam Items (177 minutes)

The ICF Credentialing Exam contains 81 situational judgement items. Each exam item contains a realistic scenario describing a coaching situation, followed by four

response options. For each scenario, candidates are asked to select the best response and the worst response among the options provided for that scenario.

There is only one correct best response and one correct worst response for each coaching scenario. Although more than one response may represent a reasonable response to the scenario presented, candidates will receive credit only for selecting the best possible response or the worst possible response.

Candidates have the opportunity to “flag” items. Flagging items allows candidates to revisit those items again before exiting the exam as long as the total exam time has not elapsed. Candidates are also able to review any unanswered items before exiting the exam.

Candidate Non-Disclosure Agreement

Before beginning the exam, all candidates will be required to complete the following Candidate Non-Disclosure Agreement. Candidates must agree to the statement before they will be allowed to access the exam items.

CANDIDATE NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

All test content is the property of the ICF and may not be copied or shared in any form without the express written permission of the ICF. This test is to be completed by the candidate without assistance from any other person.

By clicking on “YES, I AGREE”, candidates are consenting to be bound by the terms and conditions of this agreement and state that they have read this agreement carefully and understand and accept the obligations which it imposes without reservation.

Exam Scoring

The passing score and all exam results on the ICF Credentialing Exam are reported as scaled scores. The range of possible scores is 200 to 600, with a passing score of 460.

Sample Exam Questions

ICF Credentials and Standards provides [sample questions](#) for the ICF Credentialing Exam to support candidates in preparing for the exam. These questions are designed to help candidates become familiar with the format of the exam questions and how they will be presented on the exam. Performance on sample questions is not indicative of performance on the ICF Credentialing Exam.

Scheduling an Exam Appointment

Once an applicant’s PCC application has been reviewed and approved, ICF Credentials and Standards will notify the applicant via email that they have been approved as a candidate to complete the ICF Credentialing Exam and provide detailed instructions for scheduling an exam appointment with Pearson VUE, ICF’s

testing partner. Upon receipt of this notification, applicants have 60 days to schedule and complete the exam.

Applicants may choose to complete the exam at one of [Pearson VUE's 5,600 test centers](#) worldwide, or through Pearson OnVUE, a live, remote proctored testing service that allows candidates to test from the convenience of their home or office while being monitored by an online proctor.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to [review guidance](#) Pearson VUE to support them in selecting the best test delivery option for them.

To select the test delivery format (in-person at a Pearson VUE testing center or online through Pearson's OnVUE remote proctoring service) and schedule an appointment to complete the exam, approved candidates must follow the steps listed below:

1. Use the following link to access your ICF account: <https://apps.coachingfederation.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?WebCode=MyInformation>

You may be prompted to sign in to your ICF Profile.

2. Once signed in, scroll down to locate "My Applications" found at the bottom of your ICF Profile page.

3. Click on the "Exam Info" link listed by your ICF {credential process} application.

Upon click on the "Exam Info" link, you will automatically be signed into the Pearson VUE platform to access the Exam information, where you will first select the delivery method to take the exam and then schedule a time for the exam.

Option 1 – Schedule appointment to take the exam remotely with Pearson's OnVUE system:

- a) Select the OnVUE option to "take my exam from home or work" during registration.
- b) Use the scheduling calendar to select your preferred date and time for your exam appointment.

For more information about registering to take the exam via the Pearson OnVUE remote proctoring service, please review the [remote proctoring guide](#).

Option 2 - Schedule an appointment to take the exam in-person at a Pearson VUE testing center:

- a) Select "At a test center" during registration.
- b) Enter your address to search for and select a Pearson VUE Test Center near

you. Once selected, click "Next."

- c) Schedule your exam appointment by selecting a day and time using the scheduling calendar.
- d) Confirm your scheduled exam appointment.

Additional information on testing at a Pearson VUE test center, including a video on the testing experience and candidate FAQs, is available [on the Pearson VUE website](#).

4. Once an exam appointment is scheduled, candidates will receive an email from Pearson VUE confirming their exam appointment date and time, a confirmation number, and registration ID number. This email will also include important information and instructions to prepare for the exam appointment, including acceptable forms of ID needed for the exam check-in process, when to arrive or login for their exam, and exam rules during testing. **Candidates must carefully read this information prior to the exam appointment.**

For more information and instruction on how to schedule/reschedule an appointment, please see the Pearson VUE Test Registration guides:

- [Mobile Guide](#)
- [Desktop Guide](#)

Prepare for an Exam Appointment

To provide a fair and consistent testing experience for all ICF Credential candidates, ICF Credentialing exams are administered in secure testing centers or remotely through Pearson OnVUE, a remote proctored test delivery service, in alignment with global standards for certification exam delivery.

Resources are available to help prepare for the exam process and for what to expect on exam day for candidates completing the exam at a Pearson VUE testing center or through Pearson VUE's OnVUE remote proctoring system are available.

- [What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: Pearson Testing Centers \(video\)](#)
- [What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: OnVUE Online Proctoring \(video\)](#)
- [Guide: Traveling the Online Testing Route – An all-inclusive guide to taking your exam online \(PDF\)](#)

Exam Identification Requirements

Upon arrival at the exam appointment, all candidates are required to provide proof of identify with two forms of original, valid identification. The primary identification should be an unexpired, original government-issued photo ID with signature. The secondary identification should include the name and signature or the name and

photo of the candidate. The first and last name used to register for the exam must match exactly the first and last name on the ID that is presented on test day.

The following are acceptable forms of government-issued identification:

- Valid driver's license
- Valid military ID
- Valid passport
- Valid national identification card
- The following represent acceptable forms of secondary identification:
 - Valid employee ID
 - Valid student identification card
 - Valid credit card with signature
 - Valid bank (ATM) card

All IDs should be issued by the country in which the candidate is testing. Alternatively, an International Travel Passport from the candidate's country of citizenship, along with a secondary ID may be used. To review Pearson VUE's full Identification Policy, please visit <http://www.pearsonvue.com/policies/IS.pdf>.

What to Expect at the Exam Appointment

On the day of the examination, candidates are asked to arrive **30 minutes before the scheduled appointment**.

For candidates completing the exam at a Pearson VUE test center, arriving 30 minutes early allows the candidate to sign in, present required identification, take a required check-in photo, and safely store any personal items in a locker before the designated start time of the exam.

For candidates completing the exam via Pearson's OnVUE system, arriving 30 minutes early allows the candidate to complete a final system check, shutdown all other applications running on the candidate's computer, take a required check-in photo, present required identification, and photograph their testing environment.

Prohibited Items When Testing

Candidates are not allowed to bring any restricted items to the testing area. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Food / snacks / candy
- Beverages
- Coats
- Calculators
- Papers / books
- Cell phones or other smart devices
- Eyeglass cases
- Tape recorders
- Wallets
- Purse
- Jewelry other than wedding and engagements rings
- Coats or sweaters
- Any other personal items

Candidates taking an exam at a Pearson VUE testing center will be provided access to a locker where they may safely store any personal items during the exam. Candidates completing an exam via Pearson's OnVUE system will be required to show that no prohibited materials are accessible within their testing space.

Candidates requiring personal items in the testing room due to a medical condition, such as food, beverages, medication, or a monitoring device must receive approval from ICF prior to scheduling the exam appointment. Please review the Exam Accommodations policy for additional information on requesting and obtaining an Exam Accommodation approval.

ICF Credentialing candidates have worked very hard to meet the requirements for and prepare for the ACC Credentialing process, and ICF Credentials and Standards is committed to support each candidate to be successful. Unfortunately, some candidates completing tests at testing centers or through OnVUE may not have the same level of integrity. Therefore, a number of security measures designed to protect you and the exam content. The following sections describe what to expect on exam day, including security measures that are standard procedures for candidates completing an exam at a Pearson VUE testing center or through OnVUE remote proctored testing.

What to Expect at a Pearson VUE Testing Center

On the day of the exam, candidates are asked to arrive at the designated Pearson VUE testing center at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment. Candidates who arrive late for an exam appointment will not be permitted to test and will forfeit exam fees.

Upon arrival, candidates will be asked to sign in at the testing center and provide two forms of identification. Candidates may also be asked to provide their exam confirmation.

The test center administrator will provide candidates with a locker and key and request that any personal items are stored in the locker during the exam.

Before entering the testing room, candidates will be asked to empty and turn out their pockets, roll up their sleeves and remove eyeglasses for inspection. This is a requirement for all candidates testing at the test center and is designed to ensure the security of all exams being administered at the test center.

Upon completion of the exam, candidates may raise their hand to let the proctor know they are finished. Candidates will receive preliminary score reports prior to leaving the test center.

What to Expect During a Remote Testing Appointment

On the day of the exam, it is important for remote testing candidates to find a quiet, private space with a strong, reliable internet connection to complete the exam. During the examination, no other individuals may pass through the candidate's testing space once the exam has begun.

Candidates should log in to the Pearson VUE platform 30 minutes prior to the exam appointment and click the "Begin Exam" button to start the check-in process. Candidates will be asked to run a final system check and shut down all other applications that may be running on the computer.

- On Microsoft Windows, press **Ctrl+Alt+Del** to access the Task Manager and shut down running applications
- On a Mac, press **Command+Option+Esc** to access Force Quit

Once all applications have been shut down, candidates will be able to run the OnVUE program manually either from the screen or the download folder.

Prior to beginning the exam, candidates will be asked to take a photo of themselves, their ID, and the testing space. The testing space must be clear and free of any

materials. Candidates may have a beverage during the examination. A mobile phone can be used to take the required photos, however once the exam has begun, any mobile phones must be placed out of reach. Mobile phones should be placed on “silent” during the examination.

As a final step in the check-in process, candidates will be asked to agree to terms and conditions and verify the exam for which they are registered.

Once the exam has started, candidate must adhere to the following testing requirements. Failure to do so may result in the cancellation of the exam and forfeiture of the candidate’s exam fees.

- Candidates must remain within the designated testing space and in view of the webcam. Candidates may not cover or move the webcam at any time during the exam.
- Candidates may not communicate with anyone other than the exam proctor once the exam has begun. No one may enter or pass through the testing space during the exam.
- Candidates may not read the exam questions aloud, speak, cover their mouth or hide their face during the exam.
- Candidates may adjust the text size of the exam questions at any time by selecting CTRL+ to zoom in and CTRL- to zoom out. Any other special accommodations, however, must be requested and approved by ICF Credentials and Standards prior to the exam appointment.

Rescheduling Policy

To reschedule an exam appointment, candidates must contact Pearson VUE or access their online Pearson VUE account at least 48 hours prior to the exam appointment. Failure to reschedule in time or failure to appear for an exam appointment will result in the forfeiture of exam fees, and candidates will be required to pay an exam retake fee of \$105 USD to reschedule their exam.

Cancellation Policy

To cancel an exam appointment, candidates must contact Pearson VUE or access their online Pearson VUE account at least 48 hours prior to the exam appointment. Failure to cancel in time or failure to appear for an appointment will result in the forfeiture of exam fees, and candidates will be required to pay an exam retake fee of \$105 USD to reschedule their exam.

Exam “No-Shows”

Exam “no shows” are candidates who fail to cancel or reschedule their exam appointment at least 48 hours prior to their exam time, who do not appear for the exam on the scheduled appointment date, or arrive at the testing center or for their

remote-proctored testing session more than 15 minutes after their appointment time. No show candidates forfeit all exam fees and are required to pay an exam retake fee of \$105 USD to reschedule their exam.

Languages Available

The ICF Credentialing Exam will be available in English beginning August 1, 2022. Language aids in the following languages will become available on a rolling basis in the weeks thereafter:

- Arabic
- Chinese (Simplified)
- French
- Italian
- Japanese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Swedish
- Turkish

To support candidates completing the ICF Credentialing Exam in English as a secondary language, candidates will receive an automatic time extension of 60 minutes if exam language aids are not offered in their primary language AND the candidate resides in a non-English speaking country.

Requests for Bilingual Translation Dictionary

Candidates whose primary language is not English and for which an ICF Credentialing Exam language aid is not available may request to use a hardcopy bilingual translation dictionary to support them in taking the exam. Web-based translation dictionaries, software and smart device applications are not permitted.

The candidate must provide a bilingual translation dictionary that consists only of translations (no definitions may be included) and that is free of any markings or handwritten notes. For exam security purposes, the dictionary provided will be subject to visual inspection by a Pearson VUE proctor during the candidate's exam appointment at a testing center or via remote proctor service. Candidates approved to use a bilingual translation dictionary will also be eligible for extended exam time, not to exceed one hour. This service is provided at no additional charge to the candidate.

To request the use of a bilingual translation dictionary, candidates should complete the [ICF Exam Language Support Request form](#) and submit it to support@coachingfederation.org (including "ICF Exam Language Support Request Form" in the subject line) prior to scheduling an exam appointment. ICF is not able

to add a language support service to an existing exam appointment.

Requests for Translation Support

Candidates may also submit an ICF Exam Language Support Request form to request the Pearson Translation Support Service to complete the ICF Credentialing Exam. This service, provided by Pearson VUE, allows a candidate to complete the exam with translation assistance from a Pearson-approved translator. Candidates requesting this service will be charged a fee by Pearson VUE of \$1,500 USD to support the translator's services and related expenses.

Candidates are not able to provide their own translator for assistance in completing an exam.

To request the use of a translator, candidates should complete the [ICF Exam Language Support Request form](#) and submit it to support@coachingfederation.org (including "ICF Exam Language Support Request Form" in the subject line) prior to scheduling an exam appointment. ICF is not able to add a language support service to an existing exam appointment.

Reasonable Exam Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities

ICF Credentials and Standards is committed to ensuring its exams are accessible for all qualified candidates. Individuals with a documented disability, handicap or other condition that impairs their ability to take an ICF exam may request a reasonable accommodation, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Candidates may also be approved for exam accommodations for documented, qualifying medical or physical conditions that may be temporary, such as injury, impairment following surgery, or pregnancy.

The purpose of exam accommodations is to provide candidates with full access to the exam, not to ensure completion of the exam or improve candidate performance.

Exam accommodations are individualized and are considered and approved on a case-by-case basis and depend on the nature of the disability or medical condition and the documentation provided. To be considered a qualifying disability, the limitations of the impairment must significantly restrict the individual's major life activities as compared to the abilities of the average person. Non-specific diagnoses such as an individual learning style, learning difference, computer phobias, and test difficulty or test anxiety by themselves do not constitute a disability. Accommodations must be requested at the time of application submission. Candidates who require arrangements to take the exam must submit the ICF Credentialing Exam Accommodations Request Form, along with the required supporting documentation, with their ICF Credential application.

All requests for exam accommodations are strictly confidential. Only information pertaining to the candidate's approved accommodation will be shared with testing delivery partners for the purpose of preparing for the candidate's exam appointment.

Common exam accommodations included extended time for testing (1.5 time or double time), unscheduled breaks, access to auxiliary items (food, medication, medical devices), or provision of a reader and/or scribe. Approved accommodations for candidates with disabilities or qualifying medical conditions are provided at no cost to the candidate.

Certain exam accommodations may only be available in a Pearson VUE testing center.

Requesting an Exam Accommodation

Accommodations must be requested prior to scheduling an exam appointment. To request an exam accommodation, candidates must submit the [ICF Exam Accommodations Request Form](#), along with any required supporting documentation. Candidates may request more than one accommodation, however supporting documentation is required for each requested accommodation.

Upon submission, ICF Credentials and Standards will review the requested accommodations and required supplementary documentation and will notify the candidate of ICF Credentials and Standards' decision regarding the requested accommodation(s), including specific accommodations approved (e.g., additional exam time, use of a reader, etc.).

Notification of an accommodation request decision must be received before a candidate schedules an exam appointment. ICF Credentials and Standards is not able to add accommodations to an existing exam appointment.

ICF Credentials and Standards and its testing partner, Pearson VUE, will make reasonable efforts to provide the requested accommodations to candidates who demonstrate a documented disability, provided the accommodations do not alter or jeopardize exam integrity and security. Accommodations cannot be made to the actual content of the exam.

Supporting Documentation for Exam Accommodation Requests

Supporting documentation provided by a qualified, professional evaluator (i.e., physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) verifying the candidate's disability or qualifying medical condition must be submitted with the [ICF Exam Accommodations Request Form](#).

A qualified professional is an individual with the credentials, training and expertise to diagnose the reported disability or qualifying medical condition. This typically includes extensive graduate-level training, such as a doctorate in psychology, clinical psychology, or medicine. The health care professional providing supporting documentation may not be an individual in a personal, familial, supervisory or other close relationship with the candidate requesting the accommodation.

Supporting documentation from a professional evaluator must meet the following guidelines:

- Must be provided on the qualified professional's letterhead.
- Must include the name, title and Associate Credentials of the qualified professional.
- Must include the address, telephone number and email address of the professional.
- Must include the date of assessment upon which the verification is based.
- Must identify the medical, psychological, educational or cognitive functional tests that were conducted with the candidate, the results of those tests, and an interpretation of the results.
- Must describe the disability or medical condition of the candidate.
- Must describe the functional limitations of the candidate due to the disability or medical condition and the specific impact on the candidate's daily life activities.
- Must identify specific accommodations that are recommended and describe how each will reduce the impact of the identified limitations for the candidate.

***NOTE:** Candidates with a prior exam accommodation approval may submit documentation of the prior approval to meet the supporting documentation requirement. No additional documentation from a qualified evaluator is required.*

Testing Arrangements for Nursing Mothers

ICF Credentials and Standards supports candidates who require a special arrangement to breastfeed, express, or pump breast milk during their exam. Candidates requiring the Nursing Mothers accommodation must complete the [ICF Exam Accommodations Request Form](#), however no supporting documentation is required.

For more information about special arrangements for nursing mothers at Pearson VUE testing centers worldwide, please visit the [Pearson VUE Test Accommodations webpage](#).

Legal Restrictions

As U.S.-based organizations, ICF Credentials and Standards and Pearson VUE are subject to and must comply with international trade sanctions laws and regulations imposed by the U.S. government (Office of Foreign Assets Control). These sanctions regulations prohibit ICF Credentials and Standards from providing certain products and services—including exam administration—to individuals or organizations in designated countries subject to comprehensive U.S. sanctions, or to individuals identified on the U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons.

As such, ICF Credentials and Standards is prohibited by law to administer its Credentialing exams in the following countries and regions subject to comprehensive U.S. sanctions, which currently includes: Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Sudan, Syria, and the Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Additionally, Pearson VUE has suspended delivery of all testing services throughout Belarus, including in-person exam at test centers and online testing via OnVUE. Remote test delivery is also unavailable in China due to limited internet and connectivity issues.

***NOTE:** The list of countries may change based on OFAC requirements.*

Renewing Your Credential

Renewal Requirements and Application

The Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential expires end of month three years from the date of issue and may be renewed by meeting all of the following renewal requirements:

Renewal applications must be submitted using the online applications available on the ICF website. The online application is designed to guide individuals through each step in the renewal process, keep information secure, and provide applicants a way of seeing the status of their renewal application.

Credential holders can access the renewal application by logging into their online profile and clicking “Edit Profile” and viewing their credential renewal application under “My Credentials.”

Renewal of the ACC Credential requires completion of at least 40 hours of Continuing Coach Education in the three years since the initial award of the credential or since the last credential renewal.

At least 24 hours of the 40 hours must be in Core Competencies. At least three (3) of the hours in Core Competencies must be in coaching ethics and ten (10) of the hours

must be in Mentor Coaching. (Coaches can obtain coaching ethics hours by completing ICF's free online course.) The remaining hours can be in Resource Development.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the sample renewal application prior to starting the application process. The sample application is available at <https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/renew-credential>

Timelines for Credential Renewal

To maintain an ACC Credential in good standing, ACC Credential-holders must submit the Credential Renewal application and required documentation of Continuing Coach Education units by the Credential expiration date. ICF Credentials and Standards provides all Credential holders with a 60-day grace period following the credential expiration date, allowing the Credential-holder to maintain their Credential status while their renewal application is under review.

Failure to submit a Credential Renewal application and required documentation of CCEs will result in a lapse of the ACC Credential following the 60-day grace period. Once lapsed, the Credential is no longer active, and the coach must discontinue the use of the ACC logos and marks.

A coach can renew a lapsed ACC Credential for up to one year following the Credential expiration date by submitting a Credential Renewal application and an additional 1.2 CCE units for each month the Credential is lapsed. Detailed guidance on renewing a lapsed Credential is available on the [ICF Renew Credential](#) page.

Once a full year has passed from the ACC expiration date, the Credential is considered fully expired and cannot be renewed. To reinstate an expired Credential, a coach must submit a new Credential application.

Key Resources for ACC Candidates

The ICF Definition of Coaching

ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. The process of coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity, and leadership.

Having a clear understanding of the ICF definition of coaching and how it guides the work of Professional Coaches is critical for individuals who are pursuing an ICF Credential. It serves as a guide in differentiating coaching from other modalities and professions.

The ICF Core Competencies

The [ICF Core Competencies](#) were developed to support a greater understanding of the skills and approaches used within today's coaching profession as defined by ICF. These competencies and the ICF definition of coaching form the foundation for coaching practice and are used as the basis for all assessments used in the ICF credentialing process.

In 2019, following a rigorous, 24-month coaching practice analysis, the ICF published an updated version of the ICF Coaching Core Competency Model. This competency model is based on evidence collected from more than 1,300 coaches across the world, including both ICF Members and non-members, and representing a diverse range of coaching disciplines, training backgrounds, coaching styles, and experience levels. This large-scale research initiative validated that much of the existing ICF Core Competency Model, developed nearly 25 years ago, remains critically important to the practice of coaching today.

Some new elements and themes that emerged from the data were integrated into the updated model. These include a paramount emphasis on ethical behavior and confidentiality, the importance of a coaching mindset and ongoing reflective practice, the critical distinctions between various levels of coaching agreements, the criticality of partnership between coach and client, and the importance of cultural, systemic, and contextual awareness. These foundational components, combined with emerging themes, reflect the key elements of coaching practice today and will serve as stronger, more comprehensive coaching standards for the future.

Please visit <https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/core-competencies> for more information about the ICF Core Competencies.

The ICF Code of Ethics

The ICF Code of Ethics describes the ICF core values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of behavior for all ICF Professionals. Candidates for ICF Credentials must have a clear understanding of coaching ethics and how they are applied in any coaching related interactions.

Please visit <https://coachingfederation.org/ethics> for more information about the ICF Code of Ethics.

The ACC Minimum Skills Requirements

The [ACC Minimum Skills Requirements](#) document provides information about what assessors evaluate in relation to each ICF Core Competency. It offers the minimum level of skill necessary to successfully demonstrate an ACC level of competency, and also helps candidates understand what non-coaching behaviors

might prevent successful completion of the ACC performance evaluation. This document can help each individual coach answer the following queries:

1. What does it mean to be an ACC coach?
2. What do ICF assessors listen for when they are evaluating an ACC coach?
3. As I progress on my coaching journey, what are my strengths and what are the skill set areas that I need to grow to pass the ACC performance evaluation?

Please visit <https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/performance-evaluations/minimum-skills-requirements> for more information about the ACC Minimum Required Skills.

Credentials and Standards policies and procedures

All policies and procedures have been adopted by the ICF Credentials and Standards Board for the operation of the ICF Credentialing Program. The policies listed below are included as a reference. For assistance or questions please contact the ICF Credentialing staff team at support@coachingfederation.org

Scope of the ICF Credentials

ICF Credentials are intended for individuals who provide coaching services to their clients in alignment with the ICF Definition of Coaching, Core Competencies, and Code of Ethics. The purpose of all ICF Credentials is to assure that those holding the credential have the skills, knowledge, and Associate Capability needed to serve their clients.

Rationale for eligibility requirements

Eligibility requirements for ICF Credentials are derived from a variety of sources, including job analysis, Subject Matter Expert (SME) input, exam results, market research, and demographic data.

Information gained from SMEs, supported by data from the ICF Coaching Job Analysis (2019) showed that knowledge of coaching ethics is a critical element of coaching practice.

Input from SMEs and analysis of assessment and performance exam results has shown that hours of training specific to the ICF Core Competencies, Definition of Coaching, and Code of Ethics is necessary to ensure that coaches have the knowledge and skills required to work with their clients effectively.

Input from SMEs suggests that hours of experience working with clients is critical in the development of coaching skills and that skills diminish when coaches are not

actively working with clients.

Market research and input from SMEs support the use of knowledge and performance exams as a way for a candidate to objectively demonstrate their knowledge of coaching and skills as a coach.

Membership not required

Candidates are not required to be members of the ICF Professional Coaches organization or any other organization. Candidates who are members of the ICF Professional Coaches organization shall not be granted an advantage or be subject to additional requirements when applying for or holding an ICF Credential.

Prohibition of Grandfathering

No candidate may be awarded an ICF ACC Credential unless they have met all eligibility and assessment criteria currently in place, as adopted by the Credentials and Standards Board, and in effect at the time of the candidate's application.

Reciprocity

The ICF does not accept as equivalent credentials/certifications awarded by other organizations or entities. No candidate may be awarded an ICF Credential unless they have met all eligibility and assessment criteria currently in place, as adopted by the CS Board, and in effect at the time of the candidate's application.

Appeals

An appeal is defined as a formal request for reconsideration of an adverse decision made by the ICF regarding an individual's eligibility, examination score, or award of a credential.

Appeal submission

An appeal must be made in writing to the Vice President (VP) within 30 days of receiving the adverse determination. The written appeal must include the reason for the appeal, including relevant supporting materials, the appellant's e-mail address, postal address, and a phone number at which the appellant can be reached. Appeals may only be submitted by the individual who received the adverse determination. Appeals may be submitted via e-mail or postal mail addressed to the VP. Within 15 days, appellants shall receive a confirmation that their appeal has been received and the date that their appeal will be considered by the Appeals Committee.

Appeal review

All appeals shall be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the

Credentials and Standards Appeals Committee or within 45 days, whichever comes first.

The function of the appeals committee in a given case is to:

- Acknowledge to the appellant the receipt of the appeal request
- Assure that those reviewing the appeal request are impartial and that no conflict of interest is apparent or perceived that would impact their ability to serve as a member of the Appeals Committee in the given case
- Give due consideration to the information presented in the appeal request
- Gather and consider additional information as needed
- Make a determination as to the disposition of the appeal
- Within 15 days of making a determination, notify the results of the appeal hearing to the appellant and to the VP.

Second level appeal

The appellant has 30 days from receipt of the Appeals Committee's determination to file a written appeal with the Credentials and Standards Board. The written appeal must include the stated appeal, date on which the decision was rendered, the reason for the appeal, including relevant supporting materials, and the appellant's contact information. Second-level appeals may only be submitted by the individual who received the appeal determination.

Second level appeal review and determination

A second level appeal shall be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Credentials and Standards Board. Members of the Board shall recuse themselves from the appeal consideration if there is any reason for which impartiality might reasonably be questioned, or there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

The Board shall only review whether the determination of the Appeals Committee was inappropriate because of 1) material errors of fact or 2) failure of the Appeals Committee to conform to the published criteria, policies, or procedures. Only facts leading up to and including the time of the Appeals Committee determination shall be considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. The Credentials and Standards Board determination shall be final. The Chair of the Credentials and Standards Board, or their designee, shall notify the appellant of the decision within 14 days of the determination.

There shall be no discriminatory action against the appellant.

Verification of credential status

The ICF website will, upon inquiry by anyone, provide information to verify whether a

specific person is currently credentialed or not. If the person is credentialed, the website information will report any reduction in the scope of the credential holder's status. The names of ICF credential holders and their credential status are not considered confidential and will be published by the ICF.

Information relating to an individual's credential application status, whether an individual has taken the exam and score information is confidential and will not be released.

Use of Credential Mark/Logo/Badge

The credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark may only be used by individuals who hold the credential, who remain in good standing with ICF, and who strictly adhere to and maintain published standards and requirements. No credential-holder may use, sell, license, transfer or otherwise authorize any third party to use the credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark without the prior written authorization from the ICF.

Acceptable usage

The credential name, designation, acronym, mark, badge, or logo shall be used only in connection with the credential held by the individual and shall not be used in conjunction with any other coaches or coach programs. The designation and logos must be used in such a way that they indicate approval of only the individual credential-holder and not an organization or business as a whole. For example, on a website, the designation and logo may be used only where the approved credential-holder is described, not where the Organization as a whole is described.

The credential name, logos, badges, or marks may not be revised, altered, or amended in any manner by the credential-holder or any third party. This prohibition against alternation or misuse includes, but is not limited to, cropping of the name, logo, badge, or mark; bleeding off a page; screening behind text; and tilting or skewing of the marks/logos in any way. In every case, the names, acronyms, designations, marks, badges, and logos must be printed in full strength, with no screens or "watermark" effects. Logos, badges, and marks shall at all times be used intact, with no alteration, substitution, isolation, or highlighting of any particular feature.

The credential designation shall at all times be displayed against a neutral background only so that it does not conflict graphically or interfere with readability or recognition of the designation, logo, badge, or mark. Nor shall the name, acronym, designation, logo, badge, or mark be displayed on patterned backgrounds incorporating dots, wavy lines, or other designs, etc.

The credential name, acronym, designation, logo, badge, and mark incorporate

specific coded colors within the Pantone Matching System. The ICF selected and designated color scheme is mandatory and shall not be altered or substituted in any way. No other colors may be used, substituted, or incorporated into the logo, badge, or mark.

Use of the credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark is exclusively limited to professional use on materials promoting the approved credential-holder, including:

- Promotional and marketing literature, brochures, pamphlets, business cards or folders
- Advertisements of any type or nature
- Websites
- Print, digital, or photographic media

Use in connection with any other form of publication or documentation shall be permitted only upon written authorization and approval by the ICF.

Any ICF Credential-holder which loses or has its ICF status suspended for any reason, including, but not limited to, failure to adhere to these usage standards or the applicable ICF Credential-holder requirements, shall immediately discontinue any and all use of the credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark, and shall not renew use of the same until its status has been restored in full.

Violations of usage

Any unauthorized or unapproved use or alteration of the credential name, acronym, designation, logo, badge, or mark shall result in termination and loss of the Credential-holder's ICF certification.

Appendix A: Terms and Definitions

The following terms and definitions are used throughout the ICF Credentialing process. Reviewing these terms before you begin your credential application will be helpful as you prepare to apply:

ACTP- Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP)- a coach-specific training program delivered by a provider accredited by ICF Coach Training. ACTP training must include 125 hours of instruction, observed coaching sessions with feedback provided by skilled observers, 10 hours of mentor coaching, and a performance assessment process that requires students to demonstrate coaching at the ACC level.

Accommodation- written requests for modifications to the assessment (testing) process to address personal situations that may hinder the ability of a candidate to follow standard assessment procedures. Those requesting accommodations must provide documentation from an appropriate licensed professional and submit it at the time of their accommodation request. Requests for accommodations are reviewed by staff and granted as allowed by ICF policies.

Accreditation- is the process by which an educational program is evaluated against defined standards by a third party. When in compliance with these standards, it is awarded recognition. ICF Accreditations are awarded to organizations or programs within an organization, not to individual persons. (See Credentialing)

Active client- any client to whom the coach is providing coaching services to at the time of applying for a credential.

Appeal- a formal request for reconsideration of an adverse decision made by the ICF regarding an individual's eligibility, examination score, or award of a credential.

Application fees- fees charged to the applicant for the staff review of their ACC application and any required testing/assessment processes.

Applicant- an individual who has completed a credential application, submitted required documents and information and paid required fees.

Approved coach-specific training hours (ACSTH)- clock hours of training that have been specifically developed and marketed as teaching coaching skills or teaches how to apply technical skills in a coach-like manner and teaches coaching skills in accordance with the ICF Core Competencies and the ICF Definition of Coaching. (125 hours of coach-specific training are required as one of the qualifications for the ACC Credential.)

Assessor- Individuals who have completed extensive training in the review of recorded coaching sessions. As a part of the ICF Credential application, some applicants are required to pass a performance evaluation. The performance evaluation requires applicants to submit recordings and transcripts of coaching sessions. Assessors listen to these recordings and document evidence of the applicant's use of the ICF Core Competencies. Assessor findings are used in determining whether a coach has met established standards for the performance evaluation.

Associate Certified Coach (ACC)- the coaching credential awarded by ICF to those that have completed 60 hours of coach-specific training, 10 hours of mentor coaching, 100 hours of client-coaching experience, and have passed a performance evaluation and written exam.

Attestation- a personal declaration or promise that the information provided is true and accurate, something exists, or is the case.

Audit- a process used by ICF to verify the accuracy of information submitted in an application. The ICF will conduct periodic audits of randomly selected applicants to verify the accuracy of applicant client-coaching experience and coach-specific education.

Badge- a digital indicator of the award of an ICF Credential. Badges are digital representations of credential logos that can be displayed, accessed, and verified online. Badges include metadata about the qualifications for the credential, when it was awarded, and when it expires. Credential badges are issued at no charge to ICF Credential-holders.

Candidate- a credential applicant whose application has been reviewed by ICF staff, has met all qualifications and is eligible to take required examinations.

Client- an individual or group of individuals who receive the services of a coach.

Client Coaching Hours- a client coaching hour is 60 minutes of actual coaching with a client who has hired the applicant as a coach and not in any other capacity. Client coaching sessions of less than 60 minutes will count as partial client coaching hours (for example, 30 minutes of client coaching will count as 0.5 client coaching hours). Coaching must be done in person or by telephone, or other technology that allows for real-time interaction between the coach and client.

Client coaching experience- applicants are required to complete and document a set number of hours of client coaching experience that have occurred since the start of their coach training. Applicants must complete an attestation of their experience as a part of the application process.

Client coaching log- A confidential record kept by the coach that documents the name, contact information, date range of coaching sessions, and the number of paid and pro bono coaching hours for each client served. The client coaching log is not submitted as a part of the application process but may be later be used by the coach as a part of the audit process to verify client coaching experience.

Coach (or Coach practitioner)- someone who provides an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. The coach's role is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the client already has.

Coaching- the ICF defines coaching as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.”

Coaching engagement- A group of coaching sessions that often have an overarching purpose or goal.

Coaching session- An individual session or meeting between a coach and client.

Coaching sponsor – The organization or individual paying for the client's coaching.

Coach specific education- courses or programs that teach coaching skills and/or how to apply technical skills in a coach-like manner and encompasses theories and core coaching competencies designed to prepare an individual to practice as a Associate Coach

Code of Ethics- the ICF Code of Ethics describes the ICF core values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of behavior for all ICF Professionals. (follow this [link](#) to review the ICF Code of Ethics)

Continuing Coach Education (CCE)- supplemental and advanced education beyond the requirements for initial training as a coach. CCE is intended for those wishing to acquire new learning and is a requirement for those who are renewing their ICF Credential.

Core Competencies- the research-based set of core and critical skills adopted by ICF that Professional Coaches use in their service to clients. (follow this [link](#) to review the ICF Core Competencies)

Credentialing- is a term used to describe processes, policies and practices used in the award of certifications. ICF Credentials provide assurance and recognize that individuals have met predetermined, standardized criteria. The certification process

involves determination of eligibility, an assessment of demonstration of competence, and requirements for regular recertification.

Credential holder- an individual who has been awarded one of the three ICF certifications (ACC, ACC, or MCC).

Credentialing application path- there are different application forms and processes that applicants must use when applying for an ICF Credential. The path is determined by the type of training the applicant has completed. Those who have graduated from an Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP) may use the ACTP application path. Those who completed training from an Approved Coach Specific Training Program (ACSTH) or a combination of ACTP and ACSTH training may use the ACSTH application path. Those who received training from training providers not designated as ACTP or ACSTH are required to apply using the Portfolio path.

Credentials and Standards Family Organization (CS)- the independent governance body that oversees and manages the credentialing process for individual coach practitioners.

Disqualifiers- During the Performance Evaluation process, candidate recordings may be disqualified if Assessors find evidence that the coach exhibits a breach of ethics as defined by the ICF Code of Ethics, or the coach more than occasionally steps into a role other than coach, as defined by the ICF, such as consultant, teacher, mentor, or counselor.

External coach- a Associate Coach practitioner, who is either self-employed or partners with other Professional Coaches, to form a coaching business.

Group coaching- coaching sessions where the coach is providing coaching to a group of participants. To qualify as group coaching, participants must set the agenda, and the session must be interactive (synchronous interaction between the coach and participants). Groups must be limited to no more than 15 participants.

Group mentoring- sessions that take place with one or more qualified mentor coaches providing mentoring to a group of no more than 10 participants. A maximum of seven hours of group mentoring may be used to meet credentialing requirements. (see Mentor Coaching)

Internal coach- a Associate Coach practitioner, who is employed within an organization and has specific coaching responsibilities identified in his or her job description.

Logo- A copyrighted image issued to those who have been awarded the ICF ACC credential. The credential holder may use the logo in print or electronic form in

accordance with policies established by the ICF. The logo remains the property of the ICF. Credential holders are required to follow all policies regarding acceptable use of the logo.

Manager/leader using coaching skills– a manager or leader who works with his or her subordinates within the organization to create awareness and support behavior change. This is accomplished using coaching knowledge, approaches and skills.

Mark- A copyrighted set of letters (ACC) for those who hold the ICF Associate Certified Coach credential. The mark may be used by the credential holder in print or electronic form in accordance with policies established by the ICF. The ACC mark remains the property of the ICF.

Master Certified Coach (MCC)- the coaching credential awarded by ICF to those that have completed 200 hours of coach-specific training, 10 hours of mentor coaching, 2,500 hours of client-coaching experience, and have passed performance evaluations and written exam.

Member- an individual who holds current membership in ICF Professional Coaches or ICF Coaching in Organizations. Membership is encouraged but not a requirement for those seeking or holding an ICF credential.

Mentor Coach- One or more individuals who provide professional assistance to a developing coach. Mentor Coaches for those seeking the ACC credential must hold the ACC or MCC Credential. They should be experienced in listening, evaluating, and providing feedback that assists the developing coach in their use of the ICF Core Competencies.

Mentor coaching- A learning and growth process for the developing coach. During this process, an experienced mentor coach provides professional assistance in helping the developing coach learn and demonstrate the levels of coaching competency demanded by the desired credential level. Furthermore, Mentor Coaching requires that the mentoring activities be focused on developing coaching skills rather than on practice building, life balance, or other topics unrelated to the development of an applicant's coaching skill.

Minimum Skills Requirements- Information about what assessors evaluate in relation to each ICF Core Competency. It offers the minimum level of skill necessary to successfully demonstrate an ACC level of competency, and also helps candidates understand what non-coaching behaviors might prevent successful completion of the ACC performance evaluation.

Non-member- an individual who does not hold a current membership in the ICF member organization. Non-members may hold an ICF credential without being a

member of the ICF.

Online application- web-based form/s available for those who wish to be considered for an ICF credential. The online application is the only application method- paper, email, or other forms are not accepted.

Paid hours- Hours of coaching for which the coach receives payment from the client (payment may be in any amount, or barter of goods or services, including coaching in exchange for coaching)

Peer Coaching- peer coaching is the exchange of coaching between two individuals. Peer coaching can be claimed as paid coaching experience.

Performance Evaluation- ACC ACSTH and Portfolio processes include a performance evaluation where ICF Assessors will review two recorded coaching sessions with transcripts. Candidates are required to pass this performance evaluation at the ACC level to be awarded the ACC credential.

Portfolio education- coach-specific education delivered by providers that are not accredited by the ICF as Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, ACTP or ASCTH. When using portfolio courses or programs to meet education requirements, applicants must provide robust documentation showing that the education they completed includes the ICF definition of coaching, Code of Ethics, and Core competencies and was organized in a scope and sequence that provided for development and growth as a coach.

Pro Bono hours- coaching services provided by the coach at no cost to the client. (A limited number of pro bono hours may count towards meeting client-coaching experience requirements for Credentialing.)

Professional Certified Coach (PCC)- the coaching credential awarded by ICF to those that have completed 125 hours of coach-specific training, 10 hours of mentor coaching, 500 hours of client-coaching experience, and have passed performance evaluations and written exam.

Recorded coaching session- a 20 to 60-minute audio recording of an actual coaching session between the applicant (coach) and a client. Recorded coaching sessions are required for the ACSTH and Portfolio application paths. Recordings must be submitted with a verbatim written transcript of the session. Recorded coaching sessions are reviewed by trained ICF Assessors and are used to establish proficiency levels in using the ICF Core Competencies in an actual coaching session.

Renewal- the process of updating the expiration date of a credential. Credentials

remain active for three years from the date of issue and may be renewed by completing continuing education and mentoring, submitting a renewal application, and paying the credential renewal application fee.

Resource Development- a type of Continuing Coach Education (CCE) that may be used to partially meet the requirements for credential renewal. Resource Development CCEs are training outside of ICF Core Competencies that contribute to your personal or professional development as a coach.

Retake- an opportunity extended to those candidates who failed the performance evaluation or written exam, allowing them to retake their exams. Credentialing staff will notify candidates regarding retake options and associated fees.

Sponsor- an individual or organization that pays some or all costs for coaching services provided to an individual or group of clients.

Supervision- a collaborative learning practice to continually build the capacity of the coach through reflective dialogue for the benefit of both coaches and clients.

Third-Party Coaching- coaching in which the coach receives payment from an organization specifically for coaching the client. Payment may be in any amount or barter of goods or services. Third-party coaching hours may be counted as client-coaching experience.

Transcript- a verbatim, written word-for-word record of the recorded coaching session(s) submitted.

Appendix B: Links to useful information

[Client Coaching Experience page](#)

[Ethical Standards and the Code of Ethics](#)

[International Coaching Federation \(ICF\) home page](#)

[ICF Credentials & Standards page](#)

[ICF Core Competencies](#)

[ICF Credentialing Exam page](#)

[Mentor Coaching page](#)

[Non-ICF Accredited Education Requirements page](#)

[Performance Evaluation page](#)

[ACC Information page](#)

[ACC Minimum Skills Requirements](#)

[ACC ACTP path- Sample Application](#)

[ACC ACSTH path- Sample Application](#)

[ACC Portfolio path- Sample Application](#)

[ACC Renewal – Sample Application](#)

[What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: Pearson Testing Centers \(video\)](#)

[What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: OnVUE Online Proctoring \(video\)](#)

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