

Coach and Executive Coach Accreditation Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why is accreditation important?

The coaching industry has now matured to the extent that buyers of coaching services, both individuals and organizations, require ways to compare and differentiate between coaches. They wish to know that a coach is likely to be effective, is supported by a Professional Membership Body and that the service provided will be fit for purpose - before investing. Accreditation demonstrates that coaches have benchmarked themselves against high professional standards, and provides reassurance to buyers of coaching regarding the level of experience and capability of coaches.

An evidence based accreditation process requires a coach to take considerable time and care to meet the criteria, demonstrating a commitment to client care and professional development. Although accreditation cannot eliminate bad practice completely, in conjunction with an effective Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors it does encourage standards of excellence.

2. Should accreditation be mandatory for coaches?

Accreditation by itself can never eliminate bad practice completely, but it does minimise the chances of it occurring, especially when used in conjunction with an effective Global Code of Ethics for Coaches & Mentors. From a professional perspective, accreditation also provides the public and any purchasers of coaching services with a means to identify competent coaches who are committed to client care. The AC itself offers accreditation to AC Members who have membership in one of the following capacities:

- AC Full Member - MAC
- AC Coaching and Training Organizations - OMAC (as primary contact and named representative)
- AC Voluntary and Community Member - VCMAC (as primary contact and named representative)
- AC Corporate Member - CMAC (as primary contact and named representative)

3. I already have a coaching qualification - why do I need accreditation too?

The market for coaching is becoming more demanding and buyers want to be confident about the quality of coaches they employ. If tendering for work accreditation is becoming one of the key eligibility criteria buyers require to be evidenced. Whereas a qualification indicates that at a point in time you had a certain level of competence, accreditation additionally illustrates that:

- You are applying that competence in practice.
- You have a successful track record with clients.
- You work professionally through:
 - adhering to the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches & Mentors
 - undertaking continued professional development
 - participating in regular and consistent supervision with a qualified supervisor
 - engaging in regular reflective practice

4. I have been coaching for years -why do I need to become accredited as a Coach?

The majority of our Organizational Members tell us that this is an increasingly important factor in their choice when hiring an external coach and an increasing number of professional coaches are becoming accredited. However, it is your choice as to whether you pursue accreditation.

5. Is the AC Coach Accreditation Scheme any different from those offered by other coaching bodies?

All of the professional coaching bodies are committed to maintaining standards and striving for excellence in coaching. The key distinguishing features of the AC Scheme include:

- It is designed to be inclusive of coaches from different backgrounds, training and experience rather than prescribing a route to accreditation. The Scheme focuses on accrediting fitness to practice rather than being overtly academic or theoretical.
- It allows coaches to benchmark themselves against high professional standards, and to provide reassurance to buyers of coaching regarding the level of experience and capability of coaches.
- The Scheme offers a four-tiered approach, so you can apply for accreditation at the level of experience and capability you have currently, and you can then follow a developmental path of progression through progressive levels of accreditation, moving from novice through to highly experienced coach.
- The Scheme offers a choice of two accreditation types, whichever is the most relevant to you - Coach Accreditation and Executive Coach Accreditation. The



latter accreditation type is designed to allow those who coach primarily in organisational settings to be accredited for that specialism. Both types of accreditation are equal in terms of standards.

6. Why are there different levels of accreditation?

We introduced a levelled approach because, as the coaching market has become increasingly fragmented, buyers of coaching have told us that they are looking for coaches at different levels of experience and competence. They have also reported that as more coaches appear on the market these buyers are finding it difficult to differentiate and choose between them. Accreditation can help both the coach and a buyer with this.

At the same time, people are making a deliberate career choice to become a coach, many full-time. As such, a levelled approach to accreditation provides a clear career path for both aspiring coaches and highly experienced coaches. It therefore offers a level of professional recognition and status that reflects varying levels of experience as a coach.

7. How will I know which level to apply for?

Please look at the AC Coach Accreditation Overview and then read the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide, then decide which level would be the best fit. You need to meet the coaching experience eligibility for each level before you can consider applying at that level. You also need to consider how closely you can meet the other eligibility criteria plus the increasing level of skill and capability as a coach required for progressively higher levels.

8. I meet all other criteria but don't have sufficient hours of coach training. Can I still become accredited?

The AC is an inclusive professional coaching body. If you are an experienced coach the AC encourages you to still consider applying. Please refer to the specific information provided on this in the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide. The AC will ask you to show how your coaching and coaching-related qualifications and experience have supported you to develop the coaching competencies defined by the AC.

9. How do I know which scheme I will be accredited under?

You choose whether to apply for accreditation under the Executive or generic Coach Schemes. Both schemes are equal in status, standard and rigour. You will need to meet the eligibility criteria for each scheme. For the Executive Scheme, this includes at least 75% of your coaching experience (logged hours) being undertaken in an organizational context.

10. I do a lot of coaching in organisations but rarely coach senior executives. Does that exclude me from Executive Coach Accreditation?

You do not need to only be coaching executives to qualify for Executive Coach Accreditation – coaching leaders at lower levels is just as valid. However, the majority (75 %+) of your coaching needs to be within organisational and work settings. More information is available in the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide.

11. What kind of work with individuals may I count towards my coaching experience?

In terms of one-to-one work, you are expected to count only those hours that you spend coaching an individual. Coaching supervision, mentoring, consulting, giving feedback on psychological assessments or meeting with a direct report are not valid for inclusion in coaching experience.

12. I coach groups and teams as well as individuals. May I include the time I spend doing this in my coaching hours?

Logged coaching hours can include individual, group and team coaching. For more information on what comprises group and team coaching for purposes of accreditation please read the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide.

13. How do I put together a log of my coaching hours when I have been coaching for so long?

Keeping an on-going log of your experience of coaching is a good discipline to get into, and will be helpful for your accreditation renewal. Meanwhile we recommend using your old records including invoices for compiling your coaching record to date.

14. In what format should I send in my application?

Applications should be submitted online only. There is more information on how to do this in the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide and the AC's website.

15. I understand there have been changes to the requirements for accreditation. Why is that?

Since the launch of the AC Coach Accreditation Scheme we have consulted with applicants and assessors to find out where things could be improved. As a result we have made changes designed to streamline the application process and reduce the workload where possible. The implementation of the new IT platform in July 2017 has resulted in further streamlining the processes.

16. I have started to put together my application and now discovered that some of the requirements have changed. Do I have to change what I have done?

No. When you submit your application form it will be assessed according to the date code on the form. If you have completed some sections of the application from one set of guidelines, and others from another, make that clear when you submit your application.

17. How will my application be assessed?

Your application is assessed by a panel of trained assessors, who are themselves AC Accredited Coaches. Applications are assessed against the AC Competencies. Assessors will also look for congruency across an application.

Following assessment, applicants receive written feedback including strengths and development areas, as well as a decision.

18. Are the outcomes of assessment simply Pass or Fail?

No. As well as pass or fail, you can be referred at the level you applied for, and invited to resubmit some elements to further evidence your competence; or pass at a lower level. The accreditation process is designed to be developmental, so you will receive feedback including strengths and development areas, as well as a decision.

19. Is my accreditation application confidential?

Yes. An application is only seen by those involved in its assessment. All are handled with strict confidentiality. Assessors do not retain applications after assessment. One copy of an application is kept on file by the Accreditation Office for 5 years from accreditation. It's important that you keep your own copy of your application as reference for any renewal or upgrade accreditation applications you might submit at a future date.



20. What level of AC membership do I need to apply for coach accreditation?

You must be a member at the appropriate level before you submit your accreditation application. Please refer to the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide for further information.

21. What type of coaching supervision should I have to be eligible to apply for accreditation?

The AC requires you to be in regular professional coaching supervision. Full details are available in the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide.

22. Does the AC offer coaching supervision?

The AC publishes names and details of Coaching Supervisors on its website.

23. What qualifications does my coaching supervisor need?

These are all detailed in the AC Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide.

24. How long will my accreditation be valid for?

Accreditation is valid for five years from your achievement of accredited status. During that time to maintain your accreditation you need to maintain continued AC membership and undertake on-going supervision and CPD.

25. What if I stop coaching and decide to cancel my AC membership any time after gaining accredited status?

If your membership is not maintained and renewed annually, then your accredited status will no longer be valid. You would then need to re-apply if you wished to be accredited by the AC at a later stage.

26. What are the fees for accreditation?

Current fee information may be found on the AC website. Fees are reviewed on the 1st April each year.

27. What support does the AC provide to help me become accredited?

As well as providing full guidance documentation in the AC Applicant Guide, the AC also runs regular AC Coach Accreditation Support Calls in which you can raise questions with AC Accreditation experts and network with other accreditation applicants. Details can be found on the website. If you cannot find the information you need elsewhere, you may raise questions with the Accreditation Office at accreditationoffice@associationforcoaching.com.

28. Why is accreditation only valid for five years?

As the purpose of accreditation is to confirm that a coach has an active coaching practice and is continuing to develop skills, gain experience and develop him or herself, accreditation is time-limited.

29. Can I 'top-up' my existing coach accreditation to the next, higher level once I believe I meet the qualifying criteria?

Yes, there is an AC Coach Accreditation Upgrade Scheme in place. It will involve you resubmitting elements of your previous accreditation application so make sure that you keep a copy of this and maintain your coaching experience and CPD logs. For more information contact accreditationoffice@associationforcoaching.com.

