

ICF Credentialing and Accreditation Newsletter

Distinctions Matter

We know that earning the distinction as an ICF Credentialed Coach member matters to you. This quarterly newsletter, dedicated to credentialing topics, intends to keep you informed and current with steps taken to enhance our services and sustain quality. We do this because the ICF is an organization dedicated to leading the global advancement of professional coaching.

The ICF website provides the most current and up-to-date overview of the work conducted and underway for the credentialing program. You will find an ICF Credential Program Enhancements Overview and supporting documents. Be sure to bookmark this page and visit regularly as it is updated as change is approved and implemented: <http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/cpac/>.

Each quarter, progress highlights will be shared through this newsletter. This is the second of such communications. In this update, you will find information and suggested actions about the following credentialing topics:

- What enhancements are planned for the current credentialing program?;
- Time to renew your credential?;
- When will my application be reviewed?;
- Membership eligibility requirement policy—what does this mean for ICF Credential holders?;
- When is Mentor Coaching necessary?;
- What is important to understand about the ICF Credential Reinstatement Policy?; and
- How do I apply for an ICF Credential?

What enhancements are planned for the current credentialing program?

The ICF commitment to credentialing includes a focus on continuous improvement to ensure that every candidate experiences a process that is valid, fair, objective and reliable. Members provide feedback and input as candidates and as volunteer leaders involved in the credentialing process. Enhancements are designed and implemented to ensure that the ICF fulfills the purpose of the credentialing program.

Enhancements in discussion over the past couple of years fall into two major categories:

1. Improvement of application and assessment processes for credential candidates at each level.
2. Change to credential eligibility requirements to reflect growth and development of the profession.

As professional coaches, you know better than most that change requires a thoughtful approach. We must balance the overall success of the current program with the need to ensure that the future quality, consistency, and value of the program. Often this means progressing with change more slowly than we might desire in order to ensure that everyone participating in the program has a fair and reliable experience.

Making changes to the eligibility requirements for those seeking an ICF Credential is a sensitive issue that requires a thoughtful approach to ensure that those who are participating in training, acquiring client-coaching experience, and taking part in mentoring activities are given clear and timely notice as to any changes that may impact their eligibility to apply for an ICF Credential.

Preliminary discussions have taken place regarding possible changes to eligibility requirements such as training hours and client-coaching experience. The board has made no decisions to change the current requirements.

Our commitment to all candidates who seek an ICF credential is that when any change in eligibility requirements is adopted, the new requirements will apply as of that date. Any individual in the process of coach training and/or acquiring client coaching experience will be treated according to the rules existing prior to the change.

We reported in the last quarterly newsletter that the global ICF Board voted to extend the current eligibility requirements for each of the three credential levels *until at least December 31, 2012*. This decision recognizes two important points that members expressed.

1. The current system is valuable to you personally and professionally.
2. The requirements are consistent with the choices available for education and training around the globe.

Improving the application and assessment processes has been the primary focus for the ICF Credentialing team in 2011 and here is what has happened since our last update:

Redesigned assessor training and scoring tools – Subject matter experts gathered in August to consider changes to the training provided for ICF Volunteer Assessors. The individuals involved are highly experienced in conducting coaching assessments for coach education and training organizations as well as being part of the ICF Volunteer Assessor teams. Some of the ideas developed were also shared with Volunteer Assessors who attended the annual conference in Las Vegas. **The ideas being developed include an improved, easier to apply scoring tool for assessors to use, clearer narrative feedback guidelines, and a more effective design for the content and delivery of assessor training.** This work is expected to continue for the next few months. Pilot testing of the new approach and tools and the creation of a global training plan of assessors will roll out in 2013. *We thank the volunteer assessors who have contributed thousands of hours observing, scoring, and providing feedback to applicants for generating the many ideas for improving training. Your efforts are driving the next generation of excellence in coach competency assessment.*

Recording protocols – After a review of the research conducted in the past 18 months, the global ICF Board adopted a policy to replace the “live” exam conducted for Portfolio Application candidates with recorded coaching sessions. In order to refine procedures and candidate instructions **and** to ensure ease of use and clarity, the ICF is currently conducting testing and anticipates initiating new procedures early

in 2012. *Protocols, instructions, and forms for applicant submitted recordings will be announced in the first quarter of 2012. The ICF will begin requiring applicants to submit recordings when they apply for the ACC, PCC, or MCC credential via the portfolio application method. One recording will be required for ACC applicants, and two recordings will be required for PCC and MCC applicants.* While the requirements for recordings are not finalized, **we anticipate two specific elements in the new protocol: recordings will be limited to 30 minutes and must be a recording of a coaching session between an applicant and a client subject to a written agreement with the applicant coach.** This policy change will generate two important benefits for applicants: the assessment process will move quicker and the consistency of assessment across assessors will be more straightforward to manage.

New written exam – Another effort underway and nearing completion is the publication of new versions of the ICF written exam used for PCC and MCC portfolio applicants. *The new exams will be multiple choice type tests that are delivered via the Internet to those applying for the PCC and MCC credentials via the portfolio application method.* It is expected that beta testing of this new written exam will begin in the first quarter of 2012. This is a very important enhancement for fairness and objectivity while providing more timely access to participate and have the examination scored.

Time to renew your credential?

Does your ICF Credential expire this year? If it does, dedicate time this week to gather what you need to submit your renewal application in time: *all renewal applications must be postmarked by December 31.*

ICF Credentials are valid for a three-year period following the coach's original certification or latest renewal. If your credential was awarded in 2008, you must renew your credential this year. Below you will find a checklist that may be helpful when gathering what you need to renew.

Renewing your credential is a vital step in preserving credibility of your coaching practice. By maintaining your ICF Credential, your clients can rest assured knowing that 1) you have received professional training from a program specifically designed to teach coaching skills in alignment with the ICF Core Competencies and Code of Ethics; 2) you have demonstrated a proficient understanding and use of the coaching competencies as outlined by the ICF; and 3) you are accountable to the ethics and standards set forth by the ICF.

Renewal requirement checklist:

- Submit renewal application with appropriate documentation.
- Documented participation in a **minimum of 40 hours** of Continuing Coach Education (CCE) over the three-year period since initial certification or last renewal.
- A **minimum of 24 CCE hours** must directly relate to the ICF Core Competencies.
- The **remaining 16 CCE hours** must relate to either the ICF Core Competencies or to i) the personal development of the coach, ii) the development of the coach's practice or iii) skills or tools that are directly applicable to coaching.

- In addition, **ACC renewal candidates** must also submit proof of an additional **10 hours** of Mentor Coaching above those hours required for their initial certification. Please see the renewal application for more details.

More information is available at Coachfederation.org, here:

<http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/renew/>.

Download the 2011 ICF Renewal Application here:

<http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/2011-Renewal-application.doc>.

When will my application be reviewed?

Wondering how long it will take for your ICF Credential application to be reviewed? All Credential applications are reviewed within two weeks of being received at ICF Headquarters.

- **ACTP (ICF Accredited Coach Training Program) applications** are awarded ICF Credentials as they are approved.
- **Portfolio applications** are placed in a queue for an exam upon approval. At the present time, **ACC exams** are delivered between one to three months from the time the application is approved; **PCC and MCC exams** are delivered between three and ten months from the time the application is approved.

Why the delay? There are numerous variables in the portfolio exam process including the availability of volunteer assessors; availability of applicants; and language preference. The time is reflective of ICF Headquarters completing a robust and thorough assessment to ensure the success of the applicant.

Membership eligibility requirement policy—what does this mean for ICF Credential holders?

Earlier this year, the ICF announced that beginning April 1, 2013 all ICF members will be required to have completed at least 60 hours of coach specific training* to be a member (or maintain membership) with the ICF.

This policy change marks a tremendous step forward as a means of protecting both our members and consumers of coaching. It will preserve the integrity of our organization by establishing a clear and verifiable standard of coach specific training.

ICF Credential holders need not be concerned: those who hold a valid ICF Credential (ACC, PCC, or MCC) will automatically fulfill the membership eligibility requirements (and will retain ICF Credentialed Member status).

In addition to the ICF Credentialed Member (<http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/ICF-Credentialed-Member-web-version.pdf>) category, other ICF Membership categories to be offered beginning April 1, 2012 include:

- **ICF Coach Member:** <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/ICF-Coach-Member-web-version2.pdf>
- **ICF Provisional Member:** <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/Provisional-Member-web-version2.pdf>

****Definition of Training that is accepted as coach specific training:
(These are aligned with the requirements for the [ACC Portfolio Application credential path.](#))***

- Training from an Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP) or a program that has received the ICF Approved Coach Specific Training Hours (ACSTH) designation.
- Training from a Continuing Coach Education (CCE) Provider, subject to these limitations:
 - All hours approved in Core Competencies will be accepted.
 - A maximum of 12 hours outside of the Core Competencies will be accepted.
- Training that is specifically marketed as teaching coaching skills, that teaches 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.

***Requirement for 60 hours:
At least 48 of the hours must be:***

- Direct interaction with a trainer (voice-to-voice or in-person training; not cyber courses, mail-in courses, or self-study).
- **From a program other than ICF conference, SIG, Virtual Education, or chapter events.**
- Teaching the ICF Core Competencies (all Core Competencies must be covered).

The remaining hours may be self-study, from an ICF event, teaching coaching-related topics, or a combination. However, all hours must be part of a program with the purpose of training coaches.

Please note: ICF membership runs from April 1 through March 31 each year and must be renewed annually. An ICF Credential is valid for three years from the original certification or latest renewal.

Additional resources:

The most up-to-date information around the new membership eligibility requirement is posted to [Coachfederation.org/mer](http://www.coachfederation.org/mer) (<http://www.coachfederation.org/mer/>).

A compilation of the most frequently asked questions surrounding this policy have been gathered into a single document—access it here: <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/M-E-R--FAQ-Nov0311.doc>.

When is Mentor Coaching necessary?

If you are planning to apply for a credential via the portfolio application process, you must provide documentation showing completion of 10 hours of mentor coaching with a qualified mentor coach. This documentation is also necessary as part of the ACC Credential renewal process.

The value of good mentor coaching is widely perceived as both useful and logical—please refer to the additional resources below for more information regarding ICF's Mentor Coaching policies and recommendations.

Additional resources:

View the comparison of the *former process* and the *approved process* in this document (<http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/MentorCoaching-English.pdf>).

Additional information on this policy change may be found here:

<http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/cpac/> and here:

<http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/MentorCoaching-English.pdf>.

The Association of Coach Training Organizations (ACTO) offers these documents to assist with Mentor Coaching: Mentor Coaching – Duties and Competencies

(<http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/Mentor-Coaching.-Duties-and-Competencies.pdf>); Recommended Practices to be an Excellent Mentor Coach

(<http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/Recommended-Practices-to-be-an-Excellent-Mentor-Coach.pdf>); and Choosing a Mentor Coach

(<http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/Choosing-a-Mentor-Coach.pdf>).

What is important to understand about the ICF Credential Reinstatement Policy?

Prior to January 2011, the ICF had no set policy regarding a grace period for reinstating a credential once the credential renewal deadline passed. In the past, requests for extensions were reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The volume of global credential holders continues to grow at a rapid rate and a proportionate number of requests to reinstate a lapsed credential necessitates a policy that is fair to all ICF Credential holders and may be efficiently followed by all involved ICF staff.

Renewing your credential is a way for you to continue to demonstrate your dedication to continued growth as a professional coach. This policy encourages and assists all ICF Credential holders in maintaining their valuable credentials.

If you are an ICF Credential holder, please carefully review the below global ICF Board-approved policy regarding ICF Credential reinstatements:

- **Regular Renewal:** Credential renewal using regular criteria for on-time renewal application
- **Grace Period:** During first 60 days after a coach's credential expiration date, the credential may be renewed with no penalty. An application must be received within 60 days after the expiration date—no exceptions.
- **Lapsed Credential:** From day 61 to day 365 after the credential expiration date (application must be received within 365 days after the expiration date—no exceptions), in addition to the renewal application, the credential holder must submit a **CCEU Acquisition Contract Plan** for accruing 40 CCEUs for the regular renewal phase as well as a pro-rated one-third (14 CCEUs) of the next 40 CCEUs required for renewal. Credential holder must provide quarterly evidence that demonstrates the progress proposed in the CCEU Acquisition Contract Plan. Any deviation from the CCEU Acquisition Contract Plan will result in immediate forwarding of the application to the "Expired" category.
- **Expired Credential:** Credential has either been expired for more than one year past expiration date or CCEU Acquisition Contract Plan has not been honored. In either case, applicant must re-apply for a new credential under the current criteria required for the appropriate credential level sought. The policy was made effective as of January 2011.

How do I apply for an ICF Credential?

So you've decided it's time to apply for an ICF Credential; congratulations! This section of the newsletters provides you with access to a few tools that will facilitate and clarify each step of the process for earning a credential mark. Watch videos on credentialing on ICF's YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/icfheadquarters>.

- Take a look at the ICF-created presentation Road to Credentialing. Accessible from the member only Assets and Tools section of Coachfederation.org, this document outlines the entire credential process: <http://www.coachfederation.org/icf-members/assets-and-tools/>.
- This chart outlines the requirements for each level of credential: <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/CredentialingRequirementsChart2011.pdf>.
- More specific requirement information is listed on these pages: ACC (<http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/become-credentialed/acc/>), PCC (<http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/become-credentialed/pcc/>) and MCC (<http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/become-credentialed/mcc/>).
- Don't have quite enough coach specific training hours? You can search ICF approved coach training programs in the Training Program Search Service at Coachfederation.org: <http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/program-search/>.
- Did you know that... ICF has approved many coach training programs around the world: ACSTH: 106; ACTP: 82

- You're ready to apply! Access the online credential application: <http://www.coachfederation.org/getcredentialed/>. Look for more information on the benefits of the new streamlined online application in the September Coaching World (<http://www.coachfederation.org/coachingworld/>).
- Questions? Please ask at icfcredentialing@coachfederation.org.

Additional Information:

ICF Credentials by the numbers

- ICF Credential holders: 8,245 (See those who were awarded an ICF Credential in August-September 2011: <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/ICF-Credentials-Awarded-August-September-2011.pdf>)
 - ACC: 5,110
 - PCC: 2,504
 - MCC: 631
- Countries represented by credential holders: 83

Statistics are as of November 28, 2011.

Ready to apply? Understand the application better by first watching this instructional video: <http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/videos/>.

Renewing your credential this year? Your renewal application must be postmarked by December 31, 2011. Download the application here: <http://www.coachfederation.org/includes/media/docs/2011-Renewal-application.doc>.

Definition of the month: CCEU (Continuing Coach Education Unit)

A CCEU is 60 minutes of direct educational contact with an instructor. Self-study shall not count toward the awarding of CCEUs, nor will non-educational time such as lunch breaks. CCEUs shall not be rounded up nor down. Learn more: <http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/renew/>.

Need to fulfill 60 hours of coach specific training for the new membership eligibility requirements? You can search ICF approved programs at Coachfederation.org in the Training Program Search Service: <http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/program-search/>. [You are not required to use an ICF approved program; you may pursue any other coach specific training that meets the ICF standards.]

Stay up-to-date on the ICF Credential at Coachfederation.org
(<http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/cpac/>).