



Summary of comments regarding the ICF Credentialing proposal as of November 17, 2009

On September 9, 2009, the ICF Board of Directors presented a proposal to the entire ICF membership and other stakeholders that outlined enhancements to the existing credentialing program, and invited comments and questions.

Thank you for participating in the process and sharing your thoughts. In reading the individual responses one thing is clear—the respondents share a commitment to the ICF Credentialing program. The comments provide insight into members' and other stakeholders' thinking, not only as they relate to the proposal, but to the broader issues of ICF Credentialing overall. The comments will enrich and inform future discussions. This document presents a summary of all the varied comments received.

We ask that you review the summary to make sure that your specific areas of interest, concern and questions are captured. We also invite you to share additional comments, clarifications and questions by:

- Participating in the ICF Credentialing Forum on December 4 in Orlando
- Participating in one or more of four scheduled teleconferences on:
 - **Wednesday, December 9:** 3 p.m. (New York), 9 p.m. (Paris); *Thursday, December 10:* 4 a.m. (Hong Kong);
 - **Thursday, December 10:** 9 a.m. (New York), 3 p.m. (Paris), 10 p.m. (Hong Kong);
 - **Tuesday, December 15:** 4 p.m. (New York), 10 p.m. (Paris); *Wednesday, December 16:* 5 a.m. (Hong Kong); and
 - **Thursday, December 17:** 3 p.m. (New York), 9 p.m. (Paris); *Wednesday, December 16:* 4 a.m. (Hong Kong).
- Posting your comments on the ICF Blog (www.coachfederation.org/blog), now through December January 8, 2010.
- Sending your comments to the Board via e-mail to (summaryfeedback@coachfederation.org), now through December January 8, 2010.

The Board will review each of the individual comments in their preparation for deliberations about the program. They will also strive to find answers to the questions posed and to provide clarity on the issues raised in communication moving forward.

Immediate Next Steps

- **ICF Credentialing Forum – December 4, Orlando, Florida**
(Information is available on the conference Web site: www.coachfederation.org/conference.)
- **ICF Credentialing Teleconferences for Feedback on the Summary – DATES**
(Additional information is available on the ICF Event Calendar.)
- **ICF Blog and E-mail Comment Period Open** – Now through January 8, 2010
(www.coachfederation.org/blog / summaryfeedback@coachfederation.org)
- **ICF Board of Directors Meeting** – January 21-24, 2010
- **ICF Board of Directors Meeting Summary**—January 26, 2010

It is the intent of the Board to continue to inform and engage members, credential holders and other interested parties moving forward. We will release a summary of the Board meeting in January with more information.

A document which includes 1,491 lines of comments regarding the enhanced credentialing proposals that have been collected through November 17, 2009 is available by clicking [here](#). These comments were compiled from: 266 submissions to the ICF e-mail address isocomments@coachfederation.org, 24 entries to the ICF blog, notes taken during approximately 20 teleforum calls, a petition to the Board signed by stakeholders and a position letter submitted by ACTO. Additionally, outside sources such as LinkedIn and Coaching Commons were also reviewed to collect any comments that were not reflected in the information that came directly through ICF sources. The entire document is available on the ICF Web site, [click here](#).

Because responses were provided in an open/unstructured format it was not possible to accurately apply statistical evaluations regarding the number/percentage of comments. Evaluation of the comments was also complicated by the fact that in many cases the comments dealt with multiple topics in one submission. However, in reviewing the comments several general themes emerged and these were used to sort the comments into broad categories as defined below:

1. Concerns, issues, questions, and misunderstandings relating to ISO:

Comments in this category generally relate to the ICF's use of ISO with the credentialing process. Sub-themes within this category include:

- Support or oppose the use of ISO 17024.
- ISO represents quality international standards.
- Do not see the relevance of ISO in regards to coaching.
- Question the reasoning behind and process used in selecting ISO and the benefits of ISO alignment.
- Are there risks to pursuing ISO alignment?
- What are the costs of moving to ISO alignment (to the organization and/or the individual)?
- What is the ongoing process for ISO alignment (for the organization and/or the individual)?
- Please provide examples of similar (size, focus, scope) professional organizations that have taken this route – what has been their experience? How has an ISO standard designation translated into greater credentialed-member earnings, compared to prior?
- Wish to separate the two processes—enhance the credential then apply for ISO.
- Perceive ISO standards as manufacturing/industrial standards.
- Refer to ISO 9000 in their comments.

2. Single credential concerns, issues, questions:

Comments in this category generally focus on whether the ICF should have one credential or continue offering multiple levels of credentials as exists with the current ACC, PCC and MCC schema. Sub-themes within this category include:

- Multiple credentials promote growth and offer a career path.
- Multiple credentials show distinction between different levels of competency.
- Change to single credential disregards past and is too big a change.
- There is a difference between ACC, PCC and MCC coaching.

- Does one global credential encourage ongoing growth and learning for coaches? What is expected for making a global certification local? Does one size indeed fit all countries in terms of the use and scope of coaching? Are coaches globally ready to change to a single credential?
- Single credential does not allow a potential client to understand to any degree the amount of actual, hands-on experience a coach has, which our current credentialing arrangement does have.
- Moving to perhaps one credential would help with the general marketing of "coach" and "coaching." It would also help those marketed to in the marketplace better understand what is being marketed to them.
- Single credential simplifies the process and the market.
- Single credential brings coaching in line with other professions.
- Other professions support multiple levels of credential.
- What happens to current credential holders? Define "fully supported." Does this include maintaining the current level of public relations activity that defines, explains, and promotes ACC/PCC/MCC credentials to the public?
- Transitioning away from the current 3 levels of credentialing will cause confusion among the public, media, hiring organizations and corporations, and individual coach-consumers and jeopardizes the unique nature of the ICF Credentialing program.
- Suggestions for a "compromise" or enhancement to one credentialing system that also takes into account levels of expertise/experience.
- Single credential unfair to those that have earned current credentials.
- Change to single credential creates an economic burden and diversion of resources for all credential holders.

3. MCC concerns, issues, questions-and the need to recognize expertise:

Comments in this category generally relate to the future of the MCC credential. Sub-themes within this category include:

- Differentiates the marketplace.
- Raises the standards of coaching and creates a career path.
- Demonstrates mastery.
- Look at specialty segments in credentialing.
- Adds value/recognition for credential holder.
- Loss of MCC would be unfair to those that worked hard to attain.

4. PCC concerns, issues, questions:

Comments in this category generally relate to the future of the PCC credential. Sub-themes within this category include:

- PCC is valuable and represents professional coaching.
- Consider granting the PCC credential to those coaches who have earned a certification from a university base program and had a defined number of client coaching experiences.

5. ACC concerns, issues, questions

Comments in this category generally relate to the future of the ACC credential. Sub-themes within this category include:

- ACC is valuable and provides incentive to improve coaching.
- ACC creates an entry point for those wishing to be credentialed.
- ACCs benefit from being able to market themselves as ACCs, showing that they have a commitment to coaching and adhere to the Code of Ethics.
- Low number of hours of experience is a benefit for internal coaches.
- Lack of a career path from ACC to PCC to MCC is less attractive.
- Potential for a registry?
- Other organizations will fill the void and offer entry level credentials.
- Elimination of ACC would make it difficult for internal coaches to become credentialed and they may turn to other organizations for recognition.

6. Transition concerns:

Comments in this category generally focus on the impact of transition from the current system to any new system. Sub-themes within this category include:

- Why would I want and/or how would I get the new credential?
- How would my current education and experience be factored in to the new process?
- The pros and cons of grandfathering.
- Has the Board decided to go the ISO route with a written and oral exam combined with education and hours of experience?
- Whatever change is adopted has to continue to provide recognition to those existing standards in some way.
- Will other credentials be recognized in the transition to this new credentialing process?
- Unfair to make me retest, retrain, show new experience.
- Exactly what is the cost of this transition effort? What does the cost/benefit analysis look like to the organization, to the members?
- Expensive to go through a new process.
- What will be the renewal process under the new certification relating to CCEUs and hours of experience?
- Should I continue my pursuit of one of the current credentials?
- What happens if you make credentialing changes while my application is pending?
- Reassured by the Board's commitment to making the pathway to credentialing "easy and simple" for current PCCs and MCCs.
- How have other organizations handled a transition to new credentialing system?
- Administrative impact—processing applications, etc.
- Should not change the rules or apply new standards retroactively.

7. Schema specifics:

Comments in this category dealt with questions, concerns, and suggestions regarding the specific requirements of the proposed schema. Sub-themes within this category include:

- More details needed regarding timelines for training, mentoring, experience.
- Questions and comments regarding training hour changes.
- Questions and comments regarding experience requirements.
- Questions and comments regarding continuing education requirements.

- Requirements too high or too low.
- Suggestions and comments from coaches located outside North America, part-time coaches, internal coaches and other specialized groups.
- Consider different tracks of credentialing.

8. Exam concerns

Comments in this category focused on the examination process and assessment. Sub-themes within this category include:

- Training of assessors.
- Quality and consistency of assessment.
- Factors relating to oral versus written exams.
- Factors to consider relating to an applicant's ability to take an exam, such as language skills or disabilities.
- Examination processes including live versus recorded.
- Content of the exams.
- Capacity to conduct exams.

9. Training program concerns, issues, questions

Comments in this category centered on the training of coaches. Sub-themes within this category include:

- Consistency and quality of training program and trainers.
- Issues relating to ACTPs versus Portfolio.

10. & 11. Other

Comments in these categories cover a wide range of issues relating to credentialing that may fit into multiple categories and if so, were noted/reflected under those categories. Other comments in these categories covered a wide range of topics that may or may not be in the scope of this discussion.