

The ICF Coach Knowledge Assessment (written exam)

In July 2013, [ICF announced](#) that, effective April 1, 2014, all applicants must take the ICF Coach Knowledge Assessment (CKA), a multiple-choice, Web-based exam that applicants can take on their home or work computers. The CKA is not required for credential renewals.

ICF has assembled an FAQ document to help ICF Credential applicants understand what to expect from the exam process. This document can be downloaded at <http://www.coachfederation.org/files/FileDownloads/WrittenExamFAQ.pdf>.

The Rationale: *Just over five years ago, the ICF conducted an extensive study to gain an understanding of the knowledge and skills important in the practice of coaching. The results of the study showed that coaches rely heavily on the ICF definition of coaching, Core Competencies and Code of Ethics in their professional practice. With this in mind, we concluded that ICF Credential-holders should be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of this body of knowledge. A broad team of ICF coaches serving as subject-matter experts contributed to the creation of the ICF Coach Knowledge Assessment, a tool that can be used to measure this understanding. We believe that requiring passage of this exam will help ensure that ICF Credential-holders understand the foundational knowledge that we believe is so important for the development of high-quality professional coaches.*

The Content: The Coach Knowledge Assessment content covers five broad domains: setting the foundation, co-creating the relationship, communicating effectively, facilitating learning and results, and coaching foundations and knowledge base. All questions are based on the ICF definition of coaching, Core Competencies and Code of Ethics. Questions' difficulty levels vary, with some intended to assess awareness of a concept or skill while others may present a scenario that requires deeper understanding.

The Format: The current version of the CKA contains 155 multiple-choice test items. Each test item contains a short statement or question with four possible responses. For each question there is only one response that the ICF has established as being correct.

Sample questions: The following five questions are representative samples of the types of questions that may be on the test. Correct responses are presented in bold text.

Domain: Setting the foundation

Sample question: The client is a high-energy manager with a generally positive outlook. Just before coming to the coaching session, the client was told that their responsibilities are about to drastically change and will no longer be doing the work they are passionate about. The client has come to the session in a particularly negative mood, and has expressed the desire to address this situation during today's session. What is the BEST way for the coach to proceed?

- a- Ask the client about all of the potential positive outcomes from this situation.
- b- Remind the client that the agenda for this session was set at the end of the last session.
- c- Explore the outcomes for the session and ensure that the client and coach are both clear on them.**
- d- Point out to the client how extremely important it is to be passionate about the work we do.

Domain: Co-Creating the Relationship

Sample question: A client is explaining a situation to a coach, who senses that there is more that the client is not sharing. How should the coach approach the situation?

- a- Interrupt the client and ask for greater disclosure.
- b- Give the client the "bottom-line" read on the situation.
- c- Ask the client's permission to probe a little deeper.**
- d- Give the client feedback on the importance of honesty in coaching.

Domain: Communicating Effectively

Sample question: When dealing with a client who brings many issues to the table, it is best for the coach to pick the option

- a- where the coach has the most expertise.
- b- of asking what the client would like to start with.**
- c- that looks most likely to be handled in the time available.
- d- that the coach thinks can do the most good for the client.

Domain: Facilitating Learning and Results

Sample question: An appropriate role for a coach in goal setting, planning, and prioritizing with a client is

- a- critiquing and embellishing a client's goals.
- b- letting the client self-determine the need for goals.
- c- taking charge of the process to ensure it is completed accurately.
- d- facilitating a process around the client's goal setting, planning, and prioritizing.**

Domain: Coaching Foundations and Knowledge Base

Sample question: Every coaching conversation should include

- a- an action plan.
- b- an agenda identified by the client.**
- c- review of fieldwork.
- d- a summary by the coach of the client's progress.