

AC Coaching Competency Framework

Revised June 2012

Coaching competencies for All Coaches

1. Meeting ethical, legal and professional guidelines
2. Establishing the coaching agreement and outcomes
3. Establishing a trust-based relationship with the client
4. Managing self and maintaining coaching presence
5. Communicating effectively
6. Raising awareness and insight
7. Designing strategies and actions
8. Maintaining forward momentum and evaluation
9. Undertaking continuous coach development

Additional competencies for Executive Coaches

10. Working within the organisational context
11. Understanding leadership issues
12. Working in partnership with the organisation

Coaching Competencies and Indicators For All Coaches

1. Meeting ethical, legal and professional guidelines

Indicators of competence:

- Follows the AC's professional standards and codes of conduct, including the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches & Mentors
- Acts ethically and with the highest integrity
- Promotes the coaching profession in a positive light to all stakeholders
- Complies with the prevailing laws of the country in which the coaching takes place and/or client organisation is operating, whichever is the most applicable and stringent
- Clearly communicates how coaching is different from other helping professions
- Is aware of professional boundaries and refers on to another professional as appropriate

2. Establishing the coaching agreement and outcomes

Indicators of competence:

- Clearly explains the coaching process and own coaching approach, models and techniques
- Helps the client establish coaching goals and outcomes and agrees an approach to working with the client that will achieve them
- Agrees a formal coaching agreement with client and all stakeholders, including clear and measurable outcomes, plus confidentiality, logistics of coaching sessions (duration, frequency, location), purpose, contingencies, monitoring and reporting on progress, and commercial arrangements
- Establishes clear roles, responsibilities and boundaries between the different stakeholders, including coach and client



3. Establishing a trust-based relationship with the client

Indicators of competence:

- Treats people equally and fairly, with respect and dignity
- Is optimistic for and encourages self-belief in the client
- Establishes a high level of rapport to build an open dialogue with the client
- Accepts the client 'as is' and believes in the client's potential and capability
- Acts openly and honestly, including tackling difficult conversations with the client, using self and personal reactions to offer client feedback, avoiding colluding with the client on issues that block progress
- Maintains agreed levels of confidentiality

4. Managing self and maintaining coaching presence

Indicators of competence:

- Pays close attention to the client, staying fully present and engaged
- Remains focused on the agreed client agenda and outcomes
- Acts flexibly whilst staying aligned to own coaching approach
- Stays aligned to personal values whilst respecting the values of the client
- Works to ensure interventions get the best outcome for the client

5. Communicating effectively

Indicators of competence:

- Demonstrates effective listening and clarifying skills and differentiates between what is said and what's left unsaid
- Uses straightforward, easy-to-understand language that moves the client towards the agreed outcomes
- Adapts communication style to reflect the client's needs and outcomes
- Provides relevant information and feedback to serve the client's learning and goals
- Communicates clearly, confidently and credibly with the client



6. Raising awareness and insight

Indicators of competence:

- Asks questions to challenge client's assumptions, elicit new insights, raise self-awareness and gain learning
- Helps broaden a client's perception of an issue and challenges to stimulate new possibilities
- Supports the client to generate options to achieve agreed outcomes
- Provides observational feedback where relevant, leaving client free to choose to act upon it or not
- Uses 'self' as a resource for the development of the client's self-awareness and learning by offering 'here and now' feedback

7. Designing strategies and actions

Indicators of competence:

- Supports the client to build strategies to meet their outcomes
- Inspires the client to identify and implement self-directed learning opportunities
- Leaves accountability with the client while following through on own actions and commitments
- Encourages the client to seek support from others to help achieve the client outcomes
- Provides support while the client tries out new ways of working/behaviours

8. Maintaining forward momentum and evaluation

Indicators of competence:

- Maintains an outcome-focused approach
- Asks powerful questions that move the client forwards towards the agreed outcome
- Checks and acknowledges client progress and achievements
- Explores what is working, what is getting in the way and challenges lack of progress
- Discourages dependency on the coach and develops the client's ability to self-coach
- Checks the client's motivation to apply learning from the coaching
- Measures effectiveness of coaching



9. Undertaking continuous coach development

Indicators of competence:

- Regularly requests client feedback
- Actively reflects on coaching practice and outcomes
- Acts on own critical reflections and client feedback to improve coaching practice
- Participates in regular coaching supervision to reflect on, and improve, practice
- Participates in continuous professional development (CPD) activities

Additional Competencies and Indicators For Executive Coaches

10. Working within the organisational context

Indicators of competence:

- Understands the organisational context in which the client operates (e.g. is aware of the long term vision, mission, values, strategic objectives, market/competitive pressures, etc.)
- Understands the client's role, position and authority within the organisational system
- Is aware of key stakeholders (internal and external) within the organisational system
- Aligns coaching goals to support organisational aims and objectives
- Understands the relationship between the coach, client and internal sponsor(s) of coaching
- Is aware of and works with, the organisation's values, policies and practices, including human resource and people policies and practices
- Takes a systemic approach to coaching the client, encompassing the complexities of multiple stakeholders, different perspectives and conflicting priorities



11. Understanding leadership issues

Indicators of competence:

- Recognises the challenges faced by leaders working in organisations
- Identifies ways of, and opportunities for, developing leadership behaviours and attributes through coaching
- Demonstrates knowledge and experience of working with organisational leaders
- Uses language appropriate for, and recognised by, the client and organisation
- Constructively challenges the leader to raise his/her standards in areas key to the organisation
- Understands the leader's sphere of influence

12. Working in partnership with the organisation

Indicators of competence:

- Develops relevant networks and strategic partnerships in the organisation
- Designs an effective coaching contract, commercial agreement and working alliance with the client, line manager and coaching sponsor(s) within organisational parameters and policies for coaching
- Actively involves key stakeholders in the set-up, monitoring and evaluation of the coaching, whilst maintaining agreed levels of confidentiality
- Communicates the progress of the coaching with key stakeholders openly and honestly, whilst maintaining agreed levels of confidentiality
- Identifies ways of adding value to the client at the individual, team and organisational level

