

# Coach Training and Qualifications.

Addressing various questions.

By

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This paper is intended to convey my personal perspective on the developing situation regarding coach training, qualifications, accreditation and credentialing in order to attempt to answer some of the various questions posed recently in this regard.

This paper is in no way intended to be a complete or exhaustive study of all coach training organisations, courses or accreditation bodies, nor does it set out to assert that any organisation, course or body is better or worse than any other. It is purely an honest representation of my experience of training with various organisations and the reasoning behind the choices I made regarding my career direction as a professional coach.

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## Qualifications

Currently there is no regulation of the coaching industry, so anyone can decide at any moment to set up their stall as a coach and start selling coaching services to both private individuals and organisations.

Similarly anyone can offer coach training courses.

There are coaches and training organisations who say that, as with any other profession, people wanting to offer professional coaching services should be properly trained and accredited.

There are practicing coaches who have had no formal coach training and claim that there is no need to have such training, as all that is required is happy clients and that training as a coach will not necessarily result in the newly trained coach building a successful business.

Personally I disagree with the first part but agree with the second.

I believe that even people with a natural ability will benefit from proper training regarding what it is they do on a professional basis and that this is, without question, in the benefit of the client in order they have some security regarding their choice of practitioner.

Regarding the second part, there is no question in my mind that a person with no coaching ability whatsoever but who is a competent salesperson with an extensive network will quickly build a much more lucrative practice than a highly qualified coach who has little sales ability and doesn't like to market and network.

## Training and Regulatory Organisations

Training coaches has become a very lucrative business and there are many training organisations offering certified courses.

Many of the courses offered by these training organisations are certified only by the training organisation themselves, hence have little or no transferable value.

Trying to put a framework around the profession are the International Coach Federation (ICF) <http://www.coachfederation.org/> and other organisations such as the European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC) <http://www.emccouncil.org/> and the Association for Coaching (AC) <http://www.associationforcoaching.com/>

These are membership organisations that have put together ethical guidelines and set themselves up as regulatory bodies.

ICF is the longest standing and mainly American based, though now has chapters all over the world.

Although mainly American, they are the biggest gorilla on the block, though EMCC and AC, as well as The European Coach Institute (ECI) <http://www.europecoachinginstitute.org/> are trying to gain share in Europe.

ICF don't offer coach training, instead they accredit certain coach training courses offered by a number of training organisations.

Details of the different accreditations can be found at <http://www.coachfederation.org/training/index.asp> and the accredited organisations at <http://www.coach-federation.org/training/programs.asp>

So what does this mean in practice?

As coaching becomes more sought after and people become more aware, ICF credentialling is becoming more important for some purchasers, though there are others who couldn't care less.

In order to become an ICF credentialed coach you have to have accrued a certain number of hours on accredited coach specific training courses and have accrued varying amounts of paid client contact hours, depending on the credential.

Details can be found at <http://www.coachfederation.org/credentialing/en/practice.htm>

I believe that, as the profession develops and demand and client education grows, the quality of the training received and any qualifications/credentials will become more and more important as a differentiator to people making the purchase, especially in the executive coaching arena, and the sketchy weekend courses are not going to cut the mustard.

So, in my view, if a person is serious about being a professional coach and believes in the benefit to themselves and their clients of being properly trained, then I believe they should invest their hard earned cash in a course that is the best course they can get their hands on, both in terms of practical and theoretical content, so they are best placed to offer a quality service to their clients.

The rest depends on where the person wants to go after initial training.

If the person wants to go on to further training, say an MA, then the initial course should be accredited by a wider education body, so that it can count as currency towards the further qualification and they don't have to start again from scratch.

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CATS Points Explained. Source:

[http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/healthcom/diabetes/courses/cats\\_points/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/healthcom/diabetes/courses/cats_points/)

You will see frequent references to 'CATS' points at the end of the course descriptions. For example, the description of the certificate in Diabetes Care (cidc) refers to 30 CATS points at Level 2.

CATS stands for Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme. This is a national scheme which has been established to allow different types of academic courses to be compared and valued and even transferred and traded. CATS points are like a currency that allows us to say how much different courses are worth. For example, most primary degrees in the UK require students to have 360 CATS points and students will have had to take courses or modules that add up to this. The individual courses or modules of the degree would typically be worth 20 CATS or 40 CATS.

What about the level? The cidc is worth 30 CATS at Level 2. The level gives an indication of the difficulty of the course. Level 1 typically equates to the first year of a traditional three year primary degree. Levels 2 and 3 equate to year 2 and 3 of a primary degree course. Level 0 indicates the level below the first year of a university course. Level M indicates a postgraduate level course - a degree at the level of a Masters degree.

Details regarding OCN credits can be found at <http://www.nocn.org.uk/members/credit-framework.html>

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## Training Courses.

I can only give you my personal perspective based on the training I have done and subsequent decisions I have made as I have not had experience of many, let alone all, the UK training providers.

My NLP and NLP Coach training was done with ITS in London <http://www.itsnlp.com/> . Their NLP coach training <http://www.itsnlp.com/training/coach1.htm> is accredited by ICF though you have to be an NLP Master Practitioner to get on it.

This course is very practical and experiential and builds on the NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner courses of a similar nature and I found the courses and the organisation excellent as it suited my learning style.

In my opinion, NLP & coaching are a very powerful mix.

My MA in Coaching and Mentoring Practice was with Oxford Brookes  
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/coachmentor>

This was an excellent course that really broadened and deepened my understanding of coaching in the organisational context as well as challenging and developing my awareness and thinking. It was a much more academic course and, whilst it had a practical component, I wouldn't have been comfortable if this was the only practical experience I had.

I recently qualified with and became a member of the UK College of Life Coaching (UKCLC) [www.ukclc.net](http://www.ukclc.net) and am a corporate coaching consultant with their sister organisation, the College of Executive Coaching (CoEC) [www.coec.co.uk](http://www.coec.co.uk)

The reason I went this route was that, after attending the UKCLC local coaching exchange in Manchester for some months, I was so impressed by the people I met, the ethos of the organisation and their professional approach to ethics, training and ongoing CPD and supervision, I wanted to be part of the organisation.

The UK College of Life Coaching (UKCLC) [www.ukclc.net](http://www.ukclc.net) run a number of courses  
<http://www.ukclc.net/courses/overview.asp?s=12>

These are open to people with no prior coach training, though there is a process to ensure suitability of the prospective student.

The Diploma in Coaching Practice has a strong NLP 'feel', is 'credit rated' by the Open College Network, has received excellent reviews and affords the graduate full membership of the college as an accredited coach. It also counts towards the MA in Coaching and Mentoring run in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton Business School. Details of the MA can be found at  
<http://www.ukclc.net/courses/master.asp?s=12>

## **Business Development**

The absence of attention to business development as part of coach training has been raised frequently, as many coaches intending to set up in business find themselves graduating from a course well prepared to coach but ill prepared to attract clients, hence they struggle to make ends meet and a good number return to employment disillusioned.

As with all businesses, the success or otherwise of a coaching business depends primarily on the business abilities of the coach and business owner. I am uncertain regarding how many, if any, coach training organisations now seriously address this as part of their coach training course, but a number are now offering separate marketing and business building courses at an additional cost.

Full members of UKCLC have the opportunity to join their sister organisation, The College of Executive Coaching (CoEC) [www.coec.co.uk](http://www.coec.co.uk) who are focussed on coaching in organisations and who offer the possibility to win and deliver business under the strong CoEC brand.

This is still business development that the coach has to do, not work being handed on a plate, but I have found it very beneficial to be able to offer a wider range of interventions and programmes than I had developed personally and having a real organisation behind you makes you a more serious proposition in the eyes of the prospective buyer.

## **Isolation and CPD**

Many coaches report feeling isolated due to much of their work being done over the telephone from their home office and they miss the regular contact with people in the workplace.

Additional to this there are the issues of ongoing professional development (CPD) and supervision.

To address the isolation, there are a number of 'coaching circles' established by the coaches themselves and these also go some way to addressing CPD, depending on the nature of the group and the issues raised.

This said, as far as I am aware, there is no organisation that addresses all these issues as completely as does the UKCLC.

There is plenty of ongoing support after graduation with regional coaching exchanges <http://www.coaching-exchange.com/>, national exchange days and teleconferences to support associate and full members in their continual professional development. So plenty of coaches to meet with, either physically or virtually, and avoid the feeling of isolation. If there isn't an exchange near to you, then you can start one and this forms one of the career opportunities within college <http://www.ukclc.net/collegeinformation/careerpath.asp?s=0>.

In order to maintain membership of the UKCLC, members must commit to and demonstrate their ongoing CPD ensuring maintenance of standards, professionalism and growth.

## **Supervision**

Regarding supervision, there are senior coaches offering supervision to other coaches with some grouping together to form organisations such as the Coaching Supervision Academy (CSA)

<http://www.coachingsupervisionacademy.com/services.phtml>

The UKCLC offers supervision to their graduate coaches and are in the process of creating a coach supervisor training course. I believe in the future, if it isn't implemented already, that supervision will be a requirement of continued membership.

## **Statement of interest.**

I am a member of the UKCLC and a Corporate Coaching Consultant with CoEC. I joined and am working with these organisations after having undertaken extensive coach training with other organisations specifically because I was so impressed with the ethos of the organisation and the people involved as well as the support they offer me as a coach.

Should anyone join the UKCLC as a result of reading this or speaking with me and I get credited with the referral, then I will get a small financial reward. However, I wish to be clear that this is not my motivation in writing this paper nor is it the driver behind my representations of my experiences.

The UK College of Life Coaching run a 'Connect With A Coach' programme where people looking to train as coaches can learn more about the college and have any questions answered. Details can be found at

<http://www.ukclc.net/events/connect.asp?s=45>

If you would like to speak with me directly please feel free to mail me off line.

Very best regards.

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