



Accreditation and Certification for Coaches

>> What is Accreditation

Why Do We Care ?

When we first began training coaches in 2001, we were in no hurry to become an accredited school. We already provided coaches with certification from our school, and in any case at that time coaching was a relatively new phenomenon. Most clients were busy trying to get their heads around what coaching actually was, let alone whether their coach was certified.

But this has all changed. Over the last 7 years the coaching industry has grown at an incredible rate. At one point coaching was the second fastest growing profession in the world (next to IT).

More and more people are hiring coaches to work with them on an ever-expanding range of issues.

You can now find a coach for almost anything – there are Career Coaches, Academic Coaches, Spiritual Coaches, Executive Coaches, Financial Coaches, Parenting Coaches...
...actually, the list is never ending.

This growth, combined with an increasing public awareness of coaching, has resulted in higher demands for accredited training and certified coaches. Clients want to know when they employ a coach that they are not just employing someone calling themselves a coach, but that they are in fact employing someone who has been through a rigorous training and accreditation process.

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This white paper looks at the role of accreditation and certification within professional industries and outlines the issues for coaches and clients.

“ There is a lot of poor information out there about coaching certification – it does not need to be that complicated ”

About International Coach Academy

ICA is a global coach training school. We have been training coaches since 2001 and currently have over 2500 students and graduates from over 90 countries.

Our “Certified Professional Coach Program” is accredited with the International Coach Federation.



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What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is a process that gives public recognition to training institutions that meet certain standards. It is as close as you can get to a guarantee that an institution will provide the quality of education it claims to offer.

Accreditation assures the student that the institution operates on a sound financial basis, has an approved program of study, qualified trainers, adequate facilities and equipment, effective recruitment and admission policies, and advertises its courses truthfully.

Accredited programs or courses are those that have met certain standards. Although it differs from country to country these standards are usually set by the industry body in cooperation with the appropriate training authority.

Training providers must then demonstrate how they meet these standards.

The requirements and standards also differ from country to country but they generally all include:

1. Core competencies (i.e. the skills or knowledge deemed to be necessary to be competent in the profession)
2. A discussion of pedagogy (i.e. the philosophy and method of teaching adults and learning that underpins the program)
3. Adequate policies and procedures
4. Qualified and experienced trainers

Why is it important?

There is a range of views on the merits of accreditation. Some say it is essential, some believe it is a waste of time and money.

At ICA we believe that firstly any discussion about accreditation has to be industry specific.

In other words, we think it is difficult to support blanket statements about accreditation due to the unique nature of programs and professions.

So in the context of the growing profession called coaching, ICA supports accreditation for the following reasons:

1. It fosters excellence.
2. It encourages improvement through continuous self-evaluation and planning



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3. It assures the educational community, students, the general public and other interested agencies or organizations, that an institution:
 - ❖ has clearly defined and appropriate objectives;
 - ❖ maintains conditions under which their achievement can be reasonably expected;
 - ❖ appears in fact to be accomplishing them; and can be expected to continue to do so.

Yes, but does it actually matter? Do I need it to be a qualified coach?

Yes, accreditation matters. You are about to spend a significant amount of time, effort, and perhaps money to further your education and consequently your career as a coach.

Accreditation will give you some guarantee that your money will not be wasted.

You are also most likely wanting to build a coaching practice in which case being able to state that you attended an accredited course is a plus for attracting potential clients.

You may also be interested in changing or advancing your career in which case you will want to complete the requirements necessary to become a certified coach (ACC, PCC or MCC) with the International Coach Federation. Attending an accredited school means you can bypass the lengthy requirements of the portfolio track and apply directly for certification.



Summary

Finally, we believe that accredited courses are a critical element in the growth and development of any profession, and perhaps more so with coaching. For whatever reason there are two things holding the profession back at the moment.

One is the fact that some people are claiming the title "coach" with no qualifications. The second is the cynicism, that is sometimes directed towards the industry by the media.

We see accreditation as vital in building the credibility not only of coach training schools but of the profession itself.