



**Improved Definition of ICF Mentor Coaching—Board approved in January 2011—Implementation plan being developed**  
*By Pat Marum, PCC, and Janet M. Harvey, MCC*

ICF members are generally aware that all coaches applying for any level ICF credential via the portfolio application process, must provide documentation showing completion of 10 hours of mentor coaching with a qualified mentor coach. The same sort of documentation is also part of the renewal process for the ACC credential.

The efficacy of good mentor coaching for the development of coach competency is widely perceived as both useful and logical. Requests received from all over the globe in the last several years to better define who may function as a mentor coach are being answered by a improved ICF Mentor Coach policy which the ICF Board of Directors approved in January of this year. This improved definition is an important contribution toward fulfillment of the 3-fold purpose of the ICF credential system, which is to:

Protect and serve consumers of coaching services

- Protect = ethical conduct, recourse
- Serve = set, match, and meet service expectations

Measure and certify competence of individuals

- Measure = knowledge, skills demonstration, ethical practice
- Certify = issue evidence and validation of competency at diverse levels

Inspire pursuit of continuous development

- Inspire = promote value, encourage growth path, compel commitment

ICF has been aware that there have been two points of confusion about mentor coaching in the current definition, one concerning what is meant by mentor coaching itself, and the other having to do with geography. Historically, ICF defined mentor coaching as coaching on coaching competency development of the applicant-coach as opposed to coaching for personal development or coaching for business development, although those aspects may happen very incidentally in the coaching for competency development. This has not changed, however greater clarity about the best practices, duties and personal traits of a Mentor Coach are provided in the improved policy.

The other point of confusion regarding definition arises because of the geographic location where an applicant-coach lives. Currently, if you live in the US or Canada, your mentor coach must hold an ICF PCC or MCC Credential, depending on the level of credential you are seeking. If, on the other hand, you live outside the US or Canada, your Mentor Coach *could* hold an ICF Credential, or could just be actively involved in an ICF Chapter, or actively involved in another coaching association that holds similar definitions of coaching to the ICF. This exception was intended to support coaches in locations where coaching was in the early stages of development, and therefore where there was an insufficient number of more advanced, experienced coaches available for mentor coaching.

While the ICF Board recognizes that a deep look at the concept of mentor coaching is optimally appropriate in the long run, they had requested that the Credential and Program Accreditation Committee (CPAC) improve the current position. The request was forwarded to one of CPAC's workgroups instituted last year

to support large topic discussions which are taking place on all things credentialing and program accreditation. This particular workgroup is the one charged with handling shorter turnaround items and issues. In late 2010, the workgroup submitted a draft operational definition of mentor coaching qualifications which was modified by and approved by CPAC, and then forwarded to the ICF Board for their January meeting. The Board also modified the recommendation slightly, approved it, and sent it back to CPAC for an implementation plan.

That implementation plan is now being formulated. Incidentally, the Board is committed to providing sufficient implementation time in order to make a smooth transition from any current policy to any Board-approved policy improvement or change. In the interest of giving a preview of the changes that will be coming, a comparison of the current process and of the approved operational definition appear below.

**Table Comparing Pre-2011 Operational Definition of Mentoring with January 2011 Board Approved Policy**

Comparison	Current	New
<b><i>Definition of Mentor Coaching</i></b>		
	Coaching on an applicant on their coaching skills rather than coaching on practice building, life balance, or other topics unrelated to the development of an applicant's coaching skills.	No change to existing definition
<b><i>'qualified Mentor Coach'</i></b>		
For ACC or PCC portfolio applicant, OR ACC renewal applicants, <u>AND</u> you reside in the US or Canada	Mentor Coach holds an ICF PCC or MCC Credential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor Coach is ICF credentialed at the same level or higher than the credential the applicant is seeking. (Exceptions will be considered at the sole discretion of the ICF.</li> <li>• Mentor Coach is not to be under any sanctions from the ICF Independent Review Board for violations of ethical conduct.</li> </ul>
For ACC or PCC portfolio applicant, OR ACC renewal applicants, <u>AND</u> you reside outside the US or Canada	Mentor Coach either holds an ICF Credential, or is actively involved in an ICF Chapter, or is actively involved in another coaching association that holds similar definitions of coaching as the ICF	Same as above
For MCC portfolio applicant <u>AND</u> you reside in the US or Canada	Mentor Coach holds an ICF MCC Credential	Same as above

For MCC portfolio applicant <u>AND</u> you reside outside the US or Canada	Mentor Coach either holds an ICF Credential, or is actively involved in an ICF Chapter, or is actively involved in another coaching association that holds similar definitions of coaching as the ICF	Same as above
<b><i>New additions to policy</i></b>		
For Mentors and Mentees: Best practices of mentors are included in the new policy, including personal traits to look for in a mentor coach, and duties expected from a Mentor Coach	None in current policy	Included in new policy
For Mentees: Information is included concerning Value received by Mentees and Recommended Practices for Mentees	None in current policy	Included in new policy
For Mentors: Information is included on intrinsic value received by Mentor Coaches.	None in current policy	Included in new policy
<b><i>Other current policy options</i></b>		
Group Mentor Coaching eligibility	Group coaching counts toward the mentoring requirement of 10 hours within the framework described. No more than 70 percent of the required mentoring hours (that is seven hours) can come from group coaching. Additionally, the group being mentored may not consist of more than 10 participants.	No change to existing policy

A more complete look at a broad scope position for ICF around Mentor Coaching including further possible criteria, training options and evaluation of competency, etc., will one day be addressed by a workgroup of its own. In the meantime, this improvement will be implemented soon.

Stay tuned for more information including implementation date, transition issues and other details as they become available.