

Associate Certified Coach (ACC) Candidate Guide



Credentials
& Standards

[coachingfederation.org](https://www.coachingfederation.org)

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Contents

Welcome and Introduction	6
Introduction	6
How to Use the ICF ACC Candidate Guide	6
Purpose of the ICF Credentials	6
Value of the ICF Credentials	7
The Associate Certified Coach (ACC)	7
Statement of Non-Discrimination	7
Eligibility for the ACC	8
General Qualifications and Requirements for ACC Applicants	8
ACC Application Paths	9
ACC— Level 1 / Level 2 Path	9
ACC—Portfolio Path	9
Application Option Table	10
Completing the Application	11
Completing the Online Application	11
Application Audit	11
ICF Credential Refund Policy	12
Application Fees	13
ICF Member Pricing*	13
ICF Non-Member Pricing	13
The ICF ACC Performance Evaluation	14
Performance Evaluation Format and Requirements	14
Assessment of the Performance Evaluation	15
The ACC Exam	16

About the ACC Exam	16
Exam Format and Delivery	17
Candidate Non-Disclosure Agreement	17
Exam Scoring	18
Sample Exam Questions	18
Exam Scheduling	19
Scheduling an Exam Appointment	19
Pearson Online Exam Platform	19
Rescheduling Policy	20
Cancellation Policy	20
Exam No-Shows	21
Exam No Shows for Remote Testing	21
Legal Restrictions	21
Prepare for an Exam Appointment	22
Systems Test	22
What to Expect at a Pearson VUE Testing Center	23
Exam Identification Requirements	23
Prohibited Items When Testing	24
What to Expect During a Remote Testing Appointment	26
Prior to The Exam	26
On The Day of The Exam	26
Exam Identification Requirements	26
ONVUE Testing Security	28
Clothing and Accessories	29
Testing Space and Prohibited Items	29
OnVUE Candidate Technical Requirements	30

Languages	32
Exam Language Support	32
Requests for Bilingual Translation Dictionary	32
Requests for Translation Support	33
Exam Accommodations	34
Reasonable Exam Accommodations for Candidates With Disabilities	34
Requesting an Exam Accommodation	35
Supporting Documentation for Exam Accommodation Requests	36
After the Examination	38
Exam Scoring	38
Recognition	38
Use of Designation	38
Retake Policy	38
Release of Info / Privacy Policy	39
Maintaining Your Credential	40
Renewal Requirements and Application	40
Timelines for Credential Renewal	40
Continuing Coach Education	41
Appeals	42
Purpose of the Appeals Process	42
Appeal Submissions	42
Reasons for Appeals	42
Review of Appeal Requests	44
Appeals Process Timelines	45
Documentation and Reporting	45
Other Policy Information for ACC Candidates	46

The ICF Definition of Coaching	46
The ICF Core Competencies	46
The ICF Code of Ethics	46
The ACC Minimum Skills Requirements	46
ICF Credentials and Standards Policies and Procedures	47
Scope of the ICF Credentials	47
Secure Storage of Confidential Information	47
Rationale for Eligibility Requirements	47
ICF Membership Not Required	48
Prohibition of Grandfathering.....	48
Reciprocity	48
Verification of Credential Status	48
Use of Credential Mark/Logo/Badge	48
Changes to the ICF Credentialing Program	50
Appendix A: Links to Useful Information	51
Appendix B: ICF Code of Ethics (2025)	52

Welcome and Introduction

Introduction

We applaud your decision to pursue the ICF Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential and look forward to supporting you along the way! By embarking on this journey, you are demonstrating your commitment to meeting the highest standards for professional and ethical practice in coaching.

How to Use the ICF ACC Candidate Guide

The ACC Candidate Guide is intended for those pursuing the ICF ACC credential. Please refer to other ICF Candidate Guides if interested in other ICF credential offerings.

This Candidate Guide contains information about:

- Eligibility requirements
- How to submit the application
- The performance evaluation process
- The exam processes
- What to expect at the testing center or online testing
- What to expect after the exam

All applicants for the ACC should read this guide before beginning their application. Applicants should use this resource as a source of guidance and direction in navigating the certification process.

ACC applicants must adhere to all policies, procedures, and deadlines outlined in this guide. ICF Credentials and Standards policies and procedures are designed to protect exam content, maintain integrity and impartiality of the certification process, manage conflicts of interest, and ensure exam fairness, objectivity, and validity for all candidates and credential-holders.

Much of the information included in this guide is also available on the [ICF website](#).

Purpose of the ICF Credentials

All ICF credentials are designed with a twofold purpose:

1. ICF credentials protect and serve consumers by requiring coaches to undertake rigorous preparation and education to learn the qualities of effective coaching, which serve as the foundation for coaching practice and the high standards of ethical and professional practice established by ICF.
2. ICF credentials measure, recognize, and certify individual coaches for their achievements in meeting the high standards of professional practice, including the ICF Core Competencies.

Value of the ICF Credentials

Anyone can call themselves a coach. But ICF certified coaches are professionals who have met stringent education and experience requirements and have demonstrated a thorough understanding of the coaching competencies that set the standard in the profession. Additionally, they adhere to strict ethical guidelines as part of ICF's mission to protect and serve coaching consumers.

Associate Certified Coach (ACC) holders are educated, with at least 60+ hours of qualified education; have 100+ hours of coaching experience; completed at least 10 hours of mentor coaching; and have demonstrated knowledge and proficient application of the ICF Core Competencies, Code of Ethics, and definition of coaching. ACC holders show a commitment to high ethical standards and have demonstrated through rigorous assessment competence in using a variety of behaviors and skills in their work with clients.

The Associate Certified Coach (ACC)

General Definition of Coaching

ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

Associate Certified Coach Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the Associate Certified Coach, coaches must have at least 60 hours of coaching education, and 100 hours of client-coaching experience.

Associate Certified Coach (ACC)

For coaches looking to evidence their foundational coaching skills, knowledge, and competence.

ACC coaches demonstrate fundamental knowledge of the ICF Core Competencies of coaching, the ICF Code of Ethics and the definition of coaching. The ACC is designed to include coaches early in their coaching career and professionals who understand the value of integrating a coaching approach into their practice.

The ACC demonstrates that the earner has the knowledge, skills and understanding of core coaching principles that serve as the foundation for coaching practice. ACC coaches are required to demonstrate their continued professional development to maintain their ACC status.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The ICF endorses the principles of equal opportunity. Eligibility criteria for ICF credentials are applied equally to all individuals regardless of age, race, religion, gender, national origin, veteran status, or disability as defined by and in compliance with the laws of the United States of America.

Eligibility for the ACC

General Qualifications and Requirements for ACC Applicants

Applicants for ICF credentials must meet all the following minimum qualifications and requirements:

- Completion of at least 60 hours of coach-specific education. *
More information about the educational requirements is available on the [Education Requirements page](#).
- Completion of at least 100 client coaching experience hours following the start of coach-specific education**, with:
 - At least 75 paid coaching hours.
 - At least 25 hours of client coaching experience within the 18 months prior to submitting the ACC application.
 - At least 8 clients.

More information about the experience requirements is available on the [Credential Experience Requirements page](#).

- Completion of 10 hours of mentor coaching over a three-month period or longer with an eligible mentor coach, including at least three (3) hours of individual mentor coaching with a mentor coach. *Applicants should verify a mentor coach's credential status and eligibility using the [ICF Verify a Coach](#) directory.*

More information about the mentor coaching requirement is available on the [ICF Mentor Coaching page](#).

- Successful completion of one (1) Performance Evaluation.
- Pass the ACC Exam.
- Payment of required fees (see Application Fees Table).
- Not currently under or subject to investigation, sanctions, or remedial action by ICF for a violation of the ICF Code of Ethics.

* At the ACC level, 60 hours of coach-specific education are required. This education may be earned through one or more ICF-accredited or non-accredited programs. Your credential application path is determined by the type of education you received.

**For this purpose, ICF defines the start of coach-specific education or training as any ICF-accredited program with at least 30 hours, any CCE program with at least 30 hours (at least 80% of which are in Core Competencies), or a non-accredited program with at least 30 hours (at least 80% of which are in Core Competencies). Please note that all non-accredited programs are subject to review by ICF as part of the credential application process on the ACC Portfolio path.

Please refer to the specific requirements listed in the ACC Application Options section below to review your application requirements, based on the application path that is most appropriate.

ACC Application Paths

There are two application paths for those seeking the ACC. Both paths contain the same requirements and lead to the same credential. However, the most appropriate path for an individual applicant is determined by the source of the coach-specific education completed. Review the requirements below when determining which path best fits your coaching education.

ACC— Level 1 / Level 2 Path

This path supports ACC applicants who have fully completed and graduated from a Level 1, Level 2 or ACTP program.

Level 1, Level 2 and Accredited Coach Training Programs (ACTP) have built into their program the education hours, mentor coaching and performance evaluation required to earn an ICF ACC Credential. If you have completed any of these education program types, you will submit your program certificate and coaching experience hours in your credential application. Once the application review process is complete, you will then take the ACC Exam.

ACC—Portfolio Path

The ACC - Portfolio path supports ACC applicants who have completed 60+ hours of coaching education, which may include any combination of ICF accredited and non-accredited courses or programs.

ACC - Portfolio applicants are required to submit robust documentation for any non-ICF accredited coaching education, such as program curriculum, to demonstrate alignment with ICF standards and must affirm the following in their application:

- The totality of education covers all ICF Core Competencies.
- At least 48 hours of education focused on Core Competency content.
- At least 30 hours of education were completed synchronously (in real time) with the instructor.

ACC - Portfolio applicants will also submit their mentor coaching and recorded coaching session for the performance evaluation with the application, along with the program certificate(s) and coaching experience hours. Once the application review process is complete, you will then take the ACC Exam.

Application Option Table

	Level 1 / Level 2 Path	Portfolio Path
Coach Specific Education	Completion of a Level 1, Level 2 or ACTP program, including final assessment.	60+ hours of coach-specific education. Education may include ICF accredited, CCE, and/or non-ICF accredited courses.
Client Coaching Experience	100+ hours with 8 or more clients, of which 75 hours are paid. At least 25 of these hours (paid or unpaid) must occur within 18 months of submitting your credential application.	
Mentor Coaching	Completed in Level 1, Level 2, ACTP program.	10 hours with a PCC or MCC credentialed coach or an ACC who has renewed, over 3 months or longer, 3 hours must be one-on-one.
Performance Evaluation	Completed in Level 1, Level 2, ACTP program.	Submit 1 recorded coaching session with transcript.
Written Exam	Completion of the ACC Exam with a passing score.	

Completing the Application

Completing the Online Application

Applicants must apply using the ACC application forms available on the ICF website. The online application is designed to guide you through each step in the application process, keep personal information secure, and allow you to monitor the status of your application following submission.

You are strongly encouraged to review the [sample applications](#) prior to starting the application process.

To begin the credential application process, follow these steps:

- Go to the ICF website at <https://coachingfederation.org>.
- From the menu at the top of the ICF homepage, hover over “Credentialing” for a dropdown navigation menu.

Select the [Apply for Credential](#) button from the menu.

Selecting the Apply for Credential button will take you to a page where you may access a brief survey designed to identify the credential levels and application path for which you are eligible based on your coach-specific education and experience.

To start your application, click on the option that is best for you. You may be asked to log in to your ICF account or create a new account. ICF members should use their member login to receive a discount on their credential application. Non-members will be asked to create a new account (creating a new account does not require you to purchase an ICF membership).

Once logged in to your account, you will be directed to the application dashboard. Prior to starting your application, please review the sample application for the path you are using to apply. Sample applications with helpful notes can be accessed through the [ICF Resource Library](#).

You are not required to complete the application requirements in any specific order, but you will need to complete all requirements to submit your application. ICF staff will not begin the review of your application or schedule exams until all parts of your application have been completed and submitted.

As part of the application process, you are required to attest that all information provided in the online application is complete and accurate. If you provide false, misleading, or inaccurate information in your application, you are subject to denial and/or revocation of an ICF credential and may be prohibited from reapplying for up to five (5) years.

Application Audit

ICF staff will review all applications and will directly contact you to provide any missing or incomplete information in the application. All applications are subject to audit and verification. If selected for audit, an application cannot be approved until the audit is satisfactorily concluded.

Coaches selected for audit will be required to access the contact information for their clients or, for confidential internal or third-party coaching, an individual within the organization who is authorized to verify their coaching hours. Coaches should obtain and document clients' consent to store their information, have a policy on how that information will be protected and maintained, and have a system in place for tracking relevant data. However, applicants selected for audit will not submit client logs directly to ICF.

ICF Credential Refund Policy

Application fees are nonrefundable once an application is submitted. In the event of a medical or personal emergency, ICF will consider a refund minus a \$50 administrative fee within 15 business days of the date of submission. Requests must include supporting documentation regarding the nature of the medical or personal emergency and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

ICF retains sole and reasonable discretion in the granting of a refund under the Credential Refund Policy and may require the applicant to provide additional documentation to support their request.

Application Fees

ICF Member Pricing*

Application Path	Application Review and Exams	Performance Evaluation Retake (if required)	ACC Exam Retake (if required)	Re-certification (every three years)
ACC Level 1 / Level 2 Path	\$175 USD	n/a	\$105 USD	\$175 USD
ACC Portfolio Path	\$475 USD	\$150 USD per recording	\$105 USD	\$175 USD

ICF Non-Member Pricing

Application Path	Application Review and Exams	Performance Evaluation Retake (if required)	ACC Exam Retake (if required)	Re-certification (every three years)
ACC Level 1 / Level 2 Path	\$325 USD	n/a	\$105 USD	\$275 USD
ACC Portfolio Path	\$625 USD	\$150 USD per recording	\$105 USD	\$275 USD

*Note that members of ICF Professional Coaches and ICF Coaching in Organizations receive a discount on their credential application fees. However, applicants are **NOT** required to be members of any association or organization, including ICF, to be eligible for application. To receive member pricing, an applicant must be an active member of ICF Professional Coaches or ICF Coaching in Organizations at the time of application submission.

The ICF Performance Evaluation

Those applying through the ACC Portfolio application path must pass the ICF ACC Performance Evaluation. (ACC Level 1 / Level 2 path applicants complete the performance evaluation process as a part of their Level 1, Level 2 or ACTP educational program.)

Performance Evaluation Format and Requirements

- ACC Portfolio applicants are required to submit one recording with transcript(s) of a coaching session for review by trained ICF assessors. The session must be from a genuine coaching session conducted in real-time with a regular client. The use of coaching scripts of any kind for performance evaluation is strictly prohibited and may result in the denial of an ICF credential or other disciplinary action.

Recording Requirements

- The recordings must be of a complete coaching session (not edited) lasting between 20 and 60 minutes. Coaching will not be scored beyond the 60-minute mark.
- The recordings must be from an actual coaching session between the applicant and a paid or pro bono client (not part of a coaching education program). The client for the session may not be a coach unless they are a regular client. A regular client is an individual who has come to the applicant for coaching and for no other reason.
- The recording must be an audio only file (no video/pictures). The following file types are acceptable: MP3, WMA, MP4, or M4A (audio) format. Other formats will not be accepted.
- The audio file must be in one part. Multiple files for one coaching session will not be reviewed.
- The audio file must be 95 megabytes (MB) or less. Use a lower bit rate to decrease file size, if needed.
- Applicants must upload the actual audio file to the application. Providing a URL to download or stream audio recordings will not be accepted.
- File names must use only letters and numbers. When uploading the files, do not include special characters in the file name (? / | \ ! @ # = \$ % +).

Transcript Requirements

- The transcript must be a word-for-word (verbatim) record of the coaching session(s), submitted in the language in which the session is held. NOTE: If ICF does not offer a performance evaluation in your language, you will need to submit a transcript in the language spoken AND an English translation of the transcript. Available languages for assessment are found on the [Performance Evaluation](#) page.
- Transcripts must not include any images or notes.
- The transcript must indicate who is speaking — the coach or the client — at any time in the conversation.
- List the coach's statements and the client's statements on separate lines of the transcript.

- The transcript must include timestamps at every change in speaker (coach and client).
- Transcripts must be submitted as a Word document (e.g., .doc, .docx). No other file formats will be accepted.
- When naming file(s), applicants must ensure that only letters and numbers are used in file names. When uploading the file, do not include special characters in the file name (i.e., ? / | \ ! @ # = \$ % +).

Assessment of the Performance Evaluation

Trained ICF assessors conduct comprehensive review of the recorded coaching session with transcript(s) submitted with the application. During the review, assessors listen to the recording and collect evidence of the applicant's use of the ICF Core Competencies using skills and behaviors outlined in the [ACC Minimum Skills Requirements](#) and submit their markings to ICF Credentials and Standards, where results ("Pass" or "Below Passing Standard") are determined.

Passing the Performance Evaluation requires that the assessor finds that the candidate demonstrated effective use of the ICF Core Competencies at the ACC level and in alignment with the ICF Code of Ethics in the coaching recording provided.

NOTE: The longest part of the application review process is the performance evaluation section. Candidates may monitor the status of their application from the application's dashboard. Once a recording has been assigned to an assessor, candidates will receive a notice via email. Please allow 4 – 6 weeks for the assessment to be completed, the results to be received and processed.

Candidates will receive an email notifying them when results have been received from the assessor. The email will also include directions on how to access feedback on the performance evaluation from the assessors.

Candidates who pass the Performance Evaluation will be sent a message with instructions for scheduling completion of the ACC Exam.

Candidates who are below the passing standard for the Performance Evaluation will receive a message with instructions regarding the re-take process.

The ACC Exam

Following the staff review and verification that all qualifications have been met (e.g., education, experience, mentor coaching, performance evaluation), applicants are authorized to complete the [ACC Exam](#) as a final step in the credentialing process.

About the ACC Exam

ACC Exam content covers three broad domains: Coaching Ethics; Definition and Boundaries of Coaching; and Coaching Competencies, Strategies, and Techniques. Exam questions cover the three domains accordingly as outlined below.

Domain: Coaching Ethics – 30%

- Knowledge of professional ethics codes.
- Knowledge of what constitutes a conflict of interest.
- Knowledge of relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies and procedures around confidentiality (e.g., what factors would necessitate breaking confidentiality).

Domain: Definition and Boundaries of Coaching – 30%

- Knowledge of the definition of coaching.
- Knowledge of the coaching process and how it differs from other related professions (therapy, counseling, mentoring and consulting).
- Knowledge of when, and how to make appropriate referrals for mental health professionals.
- Knowledge of signs of mental health conditions that may block progress in coaching.

Domain: Coaching Competencies, Strategies, and Techniques – 40%

- Knowledge of how to contract with clients (e.g., key elements of a coaching agreement).
- Knowledge of ICF Core Competencies*.
- Knowledge of goal setting and motivation.
- Knowledge of a variety of coaching techniques, tools, and resources.

** Please note: The current ACC Exam reflects the 2019 ICF Core Competencies. Please review the 2019 ICF Core Competencies when preparing for the ACC Exam.*

Exam Format and Delivery

Computer-Based Testing Delivery

The ACC Exam is computer based. Testing takes place at testing centers selected and confirmed by the testing vendor (Pearson VUE) or through Pearson's OnVUE remote proctored testing service.

Exam Format

The ACC Exam is delivered in two sections with an optional scheduled break midway through the exam. Exams are scheduled for 90 minutes.

The ACC Exam is structured as follows:

- I. Exam Instructions: 2 minutes
- II. Section 1 (30 items): 39 minutes
- III. Scheduled Break: 10 minutes
- IV. Section 2 (30 items): 39 minutes

The ICF ACC Exam contains 60 knowledge-based items. For each knowledge-based item, four possible response options are provided. There is one correct response for each item.

Ten items on the exam are unscored field-test items that do not affect a candidate's score. These questions are used solely to gather data on a question's effectiveness as part of the item development process. Field-test items are randomly mixed with scored items on the ACC Exam.

Candidates can "flag" items. Flagging items allows candidates to revisit those items again before exiting the exam section if the section time has not elapsed. Candidates can also review unanswered items before exiting a section of the exam.

Candidate Non-Disclosure Agreement

Before beginning the exam, all candidates will be required to complete the following Candidate Non-Disclosure Agreement. Candidates must agree to the statement before they will be allowed to access the exam items.

ICF Candidate Non-Disclosure Agreement and Statement of Understanding

The International Coaching Federation is committed to providing a secure, fair testing experience for candidates. Conduct that jeopardizes the security of test content or is disruptive to the testing environment is strictly prohibited and may result in termination of the exam, dismissal from the testing center, invalidation of the exam results or other penalties.

To protect the integrity of the exam and to ensure validity in testing results, candidates must adhere to the following rules for testing.

- All test content is the property of the ICF and is confidential. Examination questions or content may not be copied, shared, or disclosed in any form. Candidates must keep all exam content confidential, both during and following the exam.
- The test is to be completed by the candidate without assistance from others. Giving or receiving information about exam content, failing to follow testing rules during the exam, creating a disturbance for other testing candidates, or attempting to take the exam for someone else is strictly prohibited.

By clicking on “YES, I AGREE” you are consenting to be bound by the terms and conditions of this agreement and state that you have read this agreement carefully and you understand and accept the obligations which it imposes without reservation.

- YES, I AGREE
- NO, I DO NOT AGREE

Exam Scoring

The passing score and all exam results on the ACC Exam are reported as scaled scores. The range of possible scores is 200 to 600, with a passing score of 460.

Candidates receive preliminary results following their exam delivery and can access their score report through their Pearson VUE profile.

Individual score reports indicate the overall result of the exam administration (“pass” or “fail”), based on the passing standard set for the exam. Each candidate also receives their scaled score.

Candidates who are not successful in passing the exam receive feedback on their relative performance across each exam domain, designed to guide additional study and preparation before retaking the exam, along with instructions for interpreting the results.

Sample Exam Questions

ICF Credentials and Standards provides [sample questions](#) for the ACC Exam to support candidates in preparing for the exam. These questions are designed to help candidates become familiar with the format of the exam questions and how they will be presented on the exam. Performance on sample questions is not indicative of performance on the ACC Exam.

Exam Scheduling

Scheduling an Exam Appointment

Once an applicant's ACC application has been reviewed and approved, ICF Credentials and Standards will notify the applicant via email that they have been approved as a candidate to complete the ACC Exam and provide detailed instructions for scheduling an exam appointment with Pearson VUE, ICF's testing partner. Upon receipt of this notification, applicants have 60 days to schedule and complete the exam.

Applicants may choose to complete the exam at one of [Pearson VUE's 5,000 test centers \(find a center near you\)](#) worldwide, or through [Pearson OnVUE](#), a live, remote proctored testing service that allows candidates to test from the convenience of their home or office while being monitored by an online proctor.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to review the [online testing decision tree](#) from Pearson VUE to support them in selecting the best test delivery option for them.

Pearson Online Exam Platform

To select the test delivery format and schedule an exam appointment, follow the steps listed below:

1. Access your [ICF profile](#).
2. Once in your profile, scroll down to locate My Applications found towards the bottom of your ICF profile page.
3. Click on the Exam Info link listed by your ICF ACC application.

Upon clicking the Exam Info link, you will automatically be signed into the Pearson VUE platform to access the exam information, where you will first select the delivery method to take the exam and then schedule a time for the exam.

To Select OnVUE Remote Proctoring Service – Schedule appointment to take the exam remotely with Pearson's OnVUE system:

- a) Select the OnVUE option to "take my exam from home or work" during registration.
- b) Use the scheduling calendar to select your preferred date and time for your exam appointment.

NOTE: Remote proctors will communicate with candidates in English only. For more information about the requirements for testing via the Pearson OnVUE remote proctoring service, please review the [Pearson OnVUE Testing guide](#).

To Select Pearson VUE Testing Center - Schedule an appointment to take the exam in person at a Pearson VUE testing center:

- a) Select At a test center during registration.
- b) Enter your address to search for and select a Pearson VUE Test Center near you. Once selected, click “Next.”
- c) Schedule your exam appointment by selecting a day and time using the scheduling calendar.
- d) Confirm your scheduled exam appointment.

Additional information on testing at a Pearson VUE test center, including a video on the testing experience and candidate FAQs, is available on the [Pearson VUE website](#).

Once an exam appointment is scheduled, candidates will receive an email from Pearson VUE confirming their exam appointment date and time, a confirmation number, and registration ID number. This email will also include important information and instructions to prepare for the exam appointment, including acceptable forms of ID needed for the exam check-in process, when to arrive or login for their exam, and exam rules during testing. **Candidates must carefully read this information prior to the exam appointment.**

For more information and instruction on how to schedule/reschedule an appointment, please see the Pearson VUE Test Registration guides:

- [Mobile Guide](#)
- [Desktop Guide](#)

Rescheduling Policy

To reschedule an exam appointment, candidates must contact Pearson VUE or access their online Pearson VUE account* at least 48 hours prior to the exam appointment. Failure to reschedule in time or failure to appear for an exam appointment will result in the forfeiture of exam fees, and candidates will be required to pay an exam retake fee of \$105 USD to reschedule their exam.

***See Pearson Online Exam Platform section above for instructions on how to access your online Pearson account.**

Cancellation Policy

To cancel an exam appointment, candidates must contact Pearson VUE or access their online Pearson VUE account* at least 48 hours prior to the exam appointment. Failure to cancel in time or failure to appear for an appointment will result in the forfeiture of exam fees, and candidates will be required to pay an exam retake fee of \$105 USD to reschedule their exam.

***See Pearson Online Exam Platform section above for instructions on how to access your online Pearson account.**

Exam No-Shows

Exam no-shows are candidates who fail to cancel or reschedule their exam appointment at least 48 hours prior to their exam time, who do not appear for the exam on the scheduled appointment date, or who arrive at the testing center for their remote-proctored testing session more than 15 minutes after their appointment time. No-show candidates forfeit all exam fees and are required to pay an exam retake fee of \$105 USD to reschedule their exam.

Exam No Shows for Remote Testing

Candidates who are unable to connect to their remote-proctored exam appointment due to technical difficulties are considered no-shows. For these remote-proctored candidates, the no show status will be canceled for the first two attempts to test. Within two business days of a no show OnVUE exam appointment, the candidate will receive an email notification that their previous exam appointment has been cancelled. Upon receiving this notification, the candidate's exam authorization will be restored, and the candidate may schedule a new appointment to complete the exam through remote proctored testing or through a Pearson VUE testing center. Candidates whose authorization has expired since their last appointment will be required to contact ICF to request a new authorization.

If a candidate has a third no show attempt through remote-proctored testing, the No Show status will not be canceled, and the candidate will be subject to the ICF Retake Fee of \$105 USD to reschedule their exam.

Legal Restrictions

As U.S.-based organizations, ICF Credentials and Standards and Pearson VUE are subject to, and must comply with, international trade sanctions laws and regulations imposed by the U.S. government (Office of Foreign Assets Control).

These sanctions regulations prohibit ICF Credentials and Standards from providing certain products and services — including exam administration — to individuals or organizations in designated countries subject to comprehensive U.S. sanctions, or to individuals identified on the U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons.

As such, ICF Credentials and Standards is currently prohibited by law to administer the ACC Exam in the following countries and regions subject to comprehensive

U.S. sanctions: Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Sudan, Syria, and the Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Additionally, Pearson VUE has suspended delivery of all testing services throughout Belarus, including in-person exam at test centers and online testing via OnVUE. Remote test delivery is also

unavailable in China due to limited internet and connectivity issues. **NOTE:** *The list of countries may change based on OFAC requirements.*

Prepare for an Exam Appointment

To provide a fair and consistent testing experience for all ICF credential candidates, the ACC Exam is administered in secure testing centers or remotely through Pearson OnVUE, a remote proctored test delivery service, in alignment with global standards for certification exam delivery.

Resources are available to help prepare for the exam process and for what to expect on exam day for candidates completing the exam at a Pearson VUE testing center or through Pearson VUE's OnVUE remote proctoring system are available.

- [What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: Pearson Testing Centers \(video\).](#)
- [What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: OnVUE Online Proctoring \(video\).](#)
- [Guide: Traveling the Online Testing Route - An all-inclusive guide to taking your exam online \(PDF\).](#)

Systems Test

For Remote Testing Only — Candidates are required to complete a systems test on the device you plan to use to take the exam **prior** to the exam appointment. The system test offers a dry run of the software used during the exam-day experience, to help ensure candidates have technology that will work on exam day. Candidates who have not completed the system test before their appointment will be required to complete it before connecting with a greeter. Any candidate who fails the system test at that time can contact customer service for next steps.

[Access the system test](#)

What to Expect at a Pearson VUE Testing Center

On the day of the exam, candidates are asked to arrive at the designated Pearson VUE testing center at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment.

Candidates who arrive late for an exam appointment will not be permitted to test and will forfeit exam fees.

For candidates completing the exam at a Pearson VUE test center, arriving 30 minutes early allows the candidate to sign in, present required identification, take a required check-in photo, and safely store any personal items in a locker before the designated start time of the exam.

Upon arrival, candidates will be asked to sign in at the testing center and provide one form of identification. Candidates may also be asked to provide their exam confirmation. The test center administrator will provide candidates with a locker and key and request that any personal items are stored in the locker during the exam.

Before entering the testing room, candidates will be asked to empty and turn out their pockets, roll up their sleeves and remove eyeglasses for inspection. This is a requirement for all candidates testing at the test center and is designed to ensure the security of all exams being administered at the test center.

A palm vein scan may be taken when you leave, and again when you re-enter the testing room. If this is requested, you must comply with the request.

Candidates may adjust the text size of the exam questions at any time by selecting CTRL+ to zoom in and CTRL- to zoom out. Any other special accommodation, however, must be requested and approved by ICF Credentials and Standards prior to the exam appointment.

To leave the testing room during the scheduled break, or to take an unscheduled break during the exam, candidates should raise their hand and wait for the proctor to escort them out of the testing room. Candidates will be asked to complete security checks when returning to the testing room.

Upon completion of the exam, candidates may raise their hand to let the proctor know they are finished. Candidates will receive preliminary score reports prior to leaving the test center.

Exam Identification Requirements

Upon arrival at the exam appointment, all candidates must provide proof of identification with one form of original, valid identification. The primary identification should be an unexpired, original government-issued photo ID with a signature. The first and last name used to register for the exam must match exactly the first and last name on the ID that is presented on test day.

The following are acceptable forms of government-issued identification:

- Valid driver's license.
- Valid military ID.
- Valid passport.
- Valid national identification card.

Candidates may wish to bring a secondary form of identification to the exam appointment, in case there is an issue or concern with the primary identification.

All IDs should be issued by the country in which the candidate is testing. Alternatively, an International Travel Passport from the candidate's country of citizenship, along with a secondary ID may be used. International Travel Passports from a U.S.-sanctioned country are not accepted forms of identification. Please review [Pearson VUE's full Identification Policy](#).

Prohibited Items When Testing

Candidates are not allowed to bring any restricted items to the testing area. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Food, snacks, or candy.
- Beverages.
- Coats.
- Calculators.
- Papers or books.
- Cell phones or other smart devices.
- Eyeglass cases.
- Tape recorders.
- Wallets.
- Purse.
- Jewelry other than wedding and engagements rings.
- Coats or sweaters.
- Any other personal items.

Candidates taking an exam at a Pearson VUE testing center will be provided access to a locker where they may safely store any personal items during the exam.

Candidates requiring personal items in the testing room due to a medical condition, such as food, beverages, medication, or a monitoring device, must receive approval from ICF prior to scheduling the exam appointment. Please review the Exam Accommodations section in this guide for additional information on requesting and obtaining an Exam Accommodation approval.

What to Expect During a Remote Testing Appointment

Prior to The Exam

Candidates taking the exam online are required to complete a systems test on the device which you will use to take the exam **prior** to the exam appointment. Candidates who have not completed the system test before their appointment will be required to complete it before connecting with a greeter. Any candidate who fails the system test at that time can contact customer service for next steps.

[Access the system test](#)

On The Day of The Exam

On the day of the exam, it is important for remote testing candidates to find a quiet, private space with a strong, reliable internet connection to complete the exam. No other individuals may pass through the candidate's testing space once the exam has begun.

One display screen is allowed when you take an exam. You must remove or disconnect all others. If you use a laptop with a second display screen, close your laptop so that only one screen is active. Use a hardwired connection to your router and disconnect from any VPNs. Where Wi-Fi is your only option, sit as close to your router as possible. Remind others not to download large files or stream video, because it can cause connection issues that prevent you from testing. If you use a laptop, plug it in to a power source. You will not be able to leave the webcam view to plug your laptop in when you start your exam.

Candidates should log in to the Pearson VUE platform 30 minutes prior to the exam appointment and click the Begin Exam button to start the check-in process. Candidates will be asked to run a final system check and shut down all other applications that may be running on the computer.

On Microsoft Windows, press **Ctrl+Alt+Del** to access the Task Manager and shut down running applications.

On a Mac, press **Command+Option+Esc** to access Force Quit.

Once all applications have been shut down, candidates will be able to run the OnVUE program manually either from the screen or the download folder.

Please note that OnVUE proctors will communicate with candidates in English only.

Exam Identification Requirements

Prior to beginning the exam, candidates will be asked to take a photo of themselves, their ID, and the testing space. **The testing space must be clear and free of any materials.**

Make sure that the only items on your desk and at arm's reach are:

- The computer you will take your exam on.
- Items that have been pre-approved by your exam sponsor.

Remove all other items from your desk and at arm's reach, such as:

- Books and notes.
- Paper and pens.
- Food and smoking products.
- All other electronics. Disconnect them if you cannot remove them.
- Clear all note boards and whiteboards in your room.
- Let others know that you must remain alone, quiet, and free from distraction.
- Make sure no one else can see what is on your screen, even at a distance.

Candidates must provide one form of original, valid identification (ID) that meets the requirements outlined on this page. The primary identification should be an unexpired, original government-issued photo ID with signature.

- All IDs must be valid, government-issued originals (i.e., not a photocopy).
- ID must include the test-taker's name and a recent, recognizable photo.
- The first and last name on the ID must match the first and last name used to register for the exam.

The following are acceptable forms of government-issued identification:

- Valid driver's license.
- Valid passport.
- Valid national identification card.

The following are unacceptable forms of identification:

- Restricted IDs, such as U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Common Access Card (CAC), or certain secure access IDs.
- Government-issued identification from countries where OnVUE is restricted, including Belarus, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Sudan, Syria, and the Sevastopol/Crimea regions of Ukraine.

Candidates may wish to have available a secondary form of identification, in case there is an issue or concern with the primary ID.

All IDs should be issued by the country in which the candidate is testing. Alternatively, an International Travel Passport from the candidate's country of citizenship, along with a secondary ID may be used. International Travel Passports from a U.S.-sanctioned country are not accepted forms of identification. Please review [Pearson VUE's full Identification Policy](#).

A mobile phone can be used to take the required photos, however once the exam has begun, any mobile phones must be placed out of reach. Mobile phones should be placed on "silent" during the exam.

As a final step in the check-in process, candidates will be asked to agree to terms and conditions and verify the exam for which they are registered.

ONVUE Testing Security

Once the exam has started, the candidate must adhere to the following testing requirements. Failure to do so may result in the cancellation of the exam and forfeiture of the candidate's exam fees.

- **Candidates must remain within the designated testing space and in view of the webcam at all times during the exam, with the exception of the scheduled break. Candidates may not cover or move the webcam at any time during the exam.**
- Candidates may not communicate with anyone other than the exam proctor once the exam has begun. No one may enter or pass through the testing space during the exam.
- Candidates may not read the exam questions aloud, speak, cover their mouth, or hide their face during the exam.
- Candidates may adjust the text size of the exam questions at any time by selecting **CTRL+** to zoom in and **CTRL-** to zoom out. Any other special accommodation, however, must be requested and approved by ICF Credentials and Standards prior to the exam appointment.

Clothing and Accessories

You must be fully clothed throughout your exam. You may not wear the following during your exam: coats or jackets, or barrettes or hair clips larger than ¼ inch (½ centimeter) wide. While taking your exam, you may wear head scarves, hair wraps, billed caps (e.g., baseball caps), brimmed hats (e.g., fedoras), and religious apparel. Generally, all head coverings and hat types are allowed as long as your eyes remain visible to the proctor throughout the exam.

Testing Space and Prohibited Items

Choose and prepare your testing space. The place where you'll take your exam is one of your most crucial decisions. First and foremost, you must take your exam in an enclosed, private space that allows you to maintain a strong and stable internet connection.

An ideal testing space will allow you to close all doors to avoid interruptions, since no one else — including children, roommates, colleagues, etc. — may enter or pass through your testing space once you've started your exam.

We do not recommend testing in the following environments:

- Public places like libraries or coffee shops, where other people could easily enter your space and where you would use a shared Wi-Fi connection.
- Hotels, where Wi-Fi connections may be insufficient and don't allow for basic troubleshooting.
- Corporate offices, where firewalls, VPNs, or other security measures may block video streaming.

Within your testing space, your computer screen must be positioned to face you directly, and your background environment cannot jeopardize the integrity of the exam content. For example, your testing space must not allow anyone else to view your screen, so avoid testing near windows or glass partitions. Important: If your testing space allows any other people into the camera's view, you risk exam revocation.

Candidates completing an exam via Pearson's OnVUE system will be required to show that no prohibited materials are accessible within their testing space.

The following items are not allowed in your testing space:

- Mobile phones*, hand-held computers/personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other electronic devices, pagers, and watches.
- Books or notes (unless specifically authorized by your exam program).
- Writing instruments, paper, notepads.
- Wallets or purses/handbags.
- Eyeglass cases.
- Firearms or other weapons.
- Headphones/headsets.

Candidates may have a beverage during the exam. Eating, chewing gum, smoking, or using other tobacco products is prohibited during the exam.

*Candidates may use a cell/mobile phone while checking in for an exam and/or in case of a technical issue. Any other use, including but not limited to taking a call and having a conversation with anyone other than a Pearson VUE proctor, texting, accessing apps, etc., may result in your exam being revoked/terminated.

OnVUE Candidate Technical Requirements

Pearson strongly recommends using equipment that meets or exceeds the following recommended specifications. The minimum requirements will change periodically based on the needs of our exam sponsors.

Please Note: *An internet connection disruption can suspend the test session, resulting in a failed exam. By registering for a remote proctored exam, candidates assume all risk associated with their internet connectivity.*

Operating System

Windows 11 & 10 (64-bit) – (excluding 'S Mode') macOS 10.15 and above – (excluding beta versions)

Note: *macOS, starting with Mojave, now requires permission from the user to allow any hardware access to an application, which includes OnVUE (proctorapp). Candidates should be prompted to allow this application.*

Note: *Windows Operating Systems must pass Genuine Windows Validation. Windows 8/8.1, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP are not supported for exam delivery. Linux/Unix and Chrome based Operating Systems are not supported.*

Firewall

Corporate firewalls (including VPNs) or proxies often cause this delivery method to fail. We recommend testing on a personal computer. Work computers generally have more restrictions that may prevent successful delivery. Please take your exam in a setting without a corporate firewall.

RAM

Minimum – OS specified Minimum RAM. Recommended – 4 GB RAM or more.

Display

If using an external monitor, you must close your laptop and use an external keyboard, mouse, and webcam. Multiple monitors are forbidden. Touch screens are strictly forbidden.

Supported Internet Browsers

The newest versions of Microsoft Edge, Safari, Chrome, and Firefox, for web registrations or downloading the secure browser.

Internet Connection

For optimal performance, a reliable and stable connection speed of 6 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up is required. We recommend testing on a wired network as opposed to a wireless network. If testing from home, ask others within the household to avoid internet use during your exam session.

Webcam

The webcam may be internal or external. The webcam must be forward-facing and at eye level to ensure your head and shoulders are visible within the webcam. The webcam must remain in front of you and cannot be placed at an angle.

Webcam must have a minimum resolution of 640×480 @ 10 fps.

Note: Mobile phones are strictly prohibited as a webcam for exam delivery.

Note: Mac OS users may need to allow OnVUE within their System Preferences: Security & Privacy: Privacy settings for camera.

Sound & Microphone

Verify the audio and microphone are not muted.

Note: Mac OS users may need to allow OnVUE within their System Preferences: Security & Privacy: Privacy settings for microphone.

Browser Settings

Internet cookies must be enabled.

Device

All tablets are strictly prohibited, unless they have a physical keyboard and meet the operating system requirements mentioned earlier.

Power

Make sure you are connected to a power source before starting your exam to avoid draining your battery during the exam.

Mobile Phone

You may have the option to use your mobile phone to complete the check-in process. The mobile must meet the following requirements:

- Android (7+, Chrome) or IOS (12+, Safari) operating systems.
- A functioning camera with a stable internet connection (mobile phone is only used for completing admission steps, and must not be used during the exam).

Once you have completed the check-in steps, please place your mobile phone out of your arms reach where it is not accessible to you during the exam. As a reminder, phones are a prohibited item and should not be within your reach or visible to you while sitting in front of your computer.

Languages

Language Aids

The ACC Exam is available in English. In addition, language aids are offered in select languages. An exam with language aids features both the original exam item (English) as well as the same item in the language of translation.

Candidates completing the ACC Exam with language aids will see the exam instructions and all navigation buttons of the exam are in the language of translation. Each item is presented in the language of translation, along with a Translation button that allows the candidate to view the same item and response options in the original English version. Candidates completing the ACC Exam with a language aid will automatically receive 30 minutes of additional exam time. The 30-minute extension is designed to allow sufficient time for candidates to view the translated items in the exam.

Refer to the list of available [ACC Exam language aids](#).

Exam Language Support

Candidates completing the ACC Exam in English as a secondary language will receive an automatic time extension of 30 minutes if exam language aids are not offered in their primary language AND the candidate resides in a non-English speaking country.

Requests for Bilingual Translation Dictionary

Candidates whose primary language is not English and for which an ACC Exam language aid is not available may request to use a hard-copy bilingual translation dictionary to support them in taking the exam. Web-based translation dictionaries, software, and smart device applications are not permitted.

The candidate must provide a bilingual translation dictionary that consists only of translations (no definitions may be included) and that is free of any markings or handwritten notes. For exam security purposes, the dictionary provided will be subject to visual inspection by a Pearson VUE proctor during the candidate's exam appointment at a testing center or via remote proctor service. Candidates approved to use a bilingual translation dictionary will also be eligible for extended exam time, not to exceed one hour. This service is provided at no additional charge to the candidate.

To request the use of a bilingual translation dictionary, candidates should complete the [ICF Exam Language Support Request form](#) and submit it to support@coachingfederation.org (including "ICF Exam Language Support Request Form" in the subject line) prior to scheduling an exam appointment. ICF is not able to add a language support service to an existing exam appointment.

Requests for Translation Support

Candidates may also submit an ICF Exam Language Support Request form to request the Pearson Translation Support Service to complete the ACC Exam. This service, provided by Pearson VUE, allows a candidate to complete the exam with translation assistance from a Pearson-approved translator. Candidates requesting this service will be charged a fee by Pearson VUE of up to \$1,500 USD to support the translator's services and related expenses.

To request the use of a translator, candidates should complete the [ICF Exam Language Support Request form](#) and submit it to support@coachingfederation.org (including "ICF Exam Language Support Request Form" in the subject line) prior to scheduling an exam appointment. ICF is not able to add a language support service to an existing exam appointment.

Exam Accommodations

Reasonable Exam Accommodations for Candidates With Disabilities

The mission of ICF Credentials and Standards is to provide credentialing and certification services that recognize the professional competence of qualified coaches to promote the delivery of safe, ethical, and quality coaching services to the public. As part of this mission, we are committed to ensuring ICF exams are accessible for all qualified candidates. At the same time, ICF is committed to ensuring that the security, integrity and validity of its exams are not compromised.

A disability is defined as any impairment that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation. The purpose of exam accommodations is to remove barriers so that the individual with a disability may participate equally.

Individuals with a documented disability or other qualifying condition that impairs their ability to access an ICF exam may request reasonable accommodation.

Candidates may also be approved for exam accommodations for documented, qualifying medical or physical conditions that may be temporary, such as injury, impairment following surgery, or pregnancy.

Exam accommodations are adaptations that help ensure an exam measures what it is intended to assess. The purpose of exam accommodations is to provide candidates with full access to the exam, not to ensure completion of the exam or improve candidate performance. Accommodations cannot be made to the actual content of the exam.

Exam accommodations are individualized, considered and approved on a case-by-case basis, and dependent on the nature of the disability or medical condition and the documentation provided. To be considered a qualifying disability, the limitations of the impairment must significantly restrict the individual's major life activities as compared to the abilities of the average person. Non-specific diagnoses such as an individual learning style, learning difference, computer phobias, and test difficulty or test anxiety by themselves do not constitute a disability.

ICF does not require a diagnosis. It does, however, require evidence that a candidate's disability has a significant impact on their ability to access the exam.

Items listed on the [Pearson VUE Approved Comfort Aids](#) list are pre-approved for exam candidates and do not require submission of the ICF Exam Accommodations Request Form. These items are allowed during testing, however Pearson VUE test center staff or online proctors will ask to visually inspect approved comfort aid items on exam day.

All other testing accommodations should be requested at the time of application submission. During the application process, you'll have the option to indicate whether you intend to request exam accommodations. Candidates who indicate a need for special arrangements to take the exam will receive detailed instructions on how to submit the [ICF Exam Accommodations Request Form](#), along with the required supporting documentation.

All requests for exam accommodations are strictly confidential. ICF and an independent exam accommodations expert will review exam accommodation requests and supporting documentation. Only information pertaining to the candidate's approved accommodation will be shared with testing delivery partners for the purpose of preparing for the candidate's exam appointment.

Common exam accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Extended time for testing (1 hour, 1.5 time or double time).
- Frequent or unscheduled breaks.
- Access to auxiliary items (food, medication, medical devices).
- Adjustable workstation (available at testing centers only).
- Sit/stand workstation (available at testing centers only).
- Zoom text.
- Separate testing room (available at testing centers only).
- Provision of a reader and/or scribe.
- Special arrangements for nursing mothers.

Approved accommodations for candidates with disabilities or qualifying medical conditions are provided at no cost to the candidate.

Certain exam accommodations may only be available in a Pearson VUE testing center. Accommodation requests may require up to 30 days to process, although many requests will be processed within 10 days.

Requesting an Exam Accommodation

As a part of the ACC online application, individuals will indicate if they need to request accommodations. Once the application is submitted, the applicant will receive an email with information and directions to upload the required documentation.

Next, you'll complete the exam accommodations request form and submit the necessary documentation. While a diagnosis is not required, you must provide evidence of your disability and how it affects your access to the exam. This could include examples from daily life activities like work or school where accommodations are already in place.

Upon submission, ICF Credentials and Standards and an independent exam accommodations expert will review the requested accommodation and required supplementary documentation. ICF Credentials and Standards will notify the candidate of the decision regarding the requested accommodation(s), including specific accommodations approved (e.g., additional exam time, use of a reader, etc.) and information for next steps.

Confirmation of an accommodation request decision must be received before a candidate schedules their exam appointment. **ICF Credentials and Standards is not able to add accommodations to an existing exam appointment.**

If an exam accommodation request is not approved in full, candidates may appeal the decision one time per year. Appeals must include the specific reason for the appeal and additional documentation beyond what was included in the original exam accommodation request.

ICF Credentials and Standards and its testing partner, Pearson VUE, will make reasonable efforts to provide the requested accommodations to candidates who demonstrate a documented disability, provided the accommodations do not alter or jeopardize exam integrity and security. If the need for an accommodation arises after the submission of the application, the applicant should contact examaccommodations@coachingfederation.org and request the ICF exam accommodations form.

Supporting Documentation for Exam Accommodation Requests

To help us understand and address your specific needs, we require documentation that demonstrates how your condition impacts your ability to access the exam.

A formal diagnosis is not required, however we do need evidence that shows how your disability or condition significantly affects your ability to access the exam under standard conditions. Providing documentation helps us ensure that the accommodations we approve are appropriate.

Instead of emphasizing your diagnosis or symptoms, the documentation should clearly address:

- Your current functional limitations in daily activities or major life activities (beyond just test-taking).
- How these limitations interact with specific barriers in the testing environment.
- The types of accommodations that have effectively improved access and reduced these barriers in other settings.

We don't require extensive medical or psychological reports, but if you choose to submit such materials, they must meet our guidelines.

While not required, a personal statement from you can provide valuable insight. You might explain how your disability affects your functioning in major life activities or activities of daily living (work, home, school, etc.), and how you expect these limitations might impact your ability to take an ICF exam under standard conditions.

Depending on your needs, you can choose from two streamlined documentation processes. Both processes include avenues for providing documentation that can usually be obtained at no cost to you.

Short Request Process: For Minimal Accommodation Needs

If your accommodation needs are more minimal, the Short Request Process might be right for you. Simply provide documentation from professionals who know you well or organizations familiar with your needs.

Using this process, you can request:

- Up to an extra 45 minutes of testing time.
- Use of diabetes testing and management supplies.
- Other accommodations that do not involve timing modification, a separate testing room, or the use of electronic devices or software.

Standard Request Process: For More Extensive Accommodation Needs

For complex or specialized accommodation requests, the Standard Request Process asks you to provide additional documentation so that we fully understand your access needs.

Through this process, you can request any combination of the following:

- More than 45 minutes of testing time.
- A separate testing room.
- Other unique accommodations, such as additional timing modifications, adaptive devices, or assistive technology.

For more information about the Short and Standard Request Processes and required documentation for each, please review the [ICF Exam Accommodations Documentation Guide](#).

After the Examination

Exam Scoring

The passing score and all exam results on the ACC Exam are reported as scaled scores. The range of possible scores is 200 to 600, with a passing score of 460. Candidates receive preliminary results immediately after the exam is completed; confirmation of the results is sent within seven business days.

Candidates receive preliminary results following their exam delivery and can access their score report through their Pearson VUE profile.

Individual score reports indicate the overall result of the exam administration (“pass” or “fail”), based on the passing standard set for the exam. Each candidate also receives their scaled score.

Candidates who are not successful in passing the exam receive feedback on their relative performance across each exam domain, designed to guide additional study and preparation before retaking the exam, along with instructions for interpreting the results.

Recognition

A directory of all active ICF ACC credential-holders is available online at [Verify a Coach](#). ACC credential-holders are listed upon award of their ACC. Any candidate who does not wish to be included in the ICF Verify a Coach directory should contact ICF Credentials and Standards at support@coachingfederation.org.

Use of Designation

After passing the exam and earning the Associate Certificate Coach credential, candidates may use the ACC designation as a professional credential after their names, on resumes, curriculum vitae, employment and other professional records, and on websites and social media platforms. Only current and valid ICF ACC credential-holders may use the ACC logo on materials for or promoting the credential-holder. The ACC credential may not be used by individuals who do not renew their credential after the credential expiration date.

Retake Policy

Candidates who do not achieve a passing score for the ACC Exam may retake the exam. Each exam retake is subject to the ICF exam retake fee of \$105 USD.

Candidates must wait 14 days following their first attempt to retake the exam. For any subsequent attempts, candidates must wait 30 days to retake the exam following their most recent attempt.

Candidates may take an ICF exam up to six times within a 12-month (365 day) period following the date of their first attempt.

Candidates who do not achieve a passing score within the first 12-month period are eligible to retake the exam up to six times during each subsequent 12-month (365 day) period that begins on the anniversary of the candidate's initial exam attempt.

Release of Info / Privacy Policy

ICF Credentials and Standards treats candidate exam results as confidential. Exam results are provided directly to candidates and will not be disclosed to anyone other than the candidate without written permission from the candidate, unless required by law enforcement.

Maintaining Your Credential

Renewal Requirements and Application

The Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential expires on the last day of the month three years from the month of issue. To maintain a credential, ACC holders must meet the following renewal requirements:

- Renewal applications must be submitted using the online application available on the ICF website. The online application is designed to guide individuals through each step in the renewal process, keep information secure, and provide applicants a way to monitor the status of their renewal application.
- Credential-holders can access the renewal application by logging into their online profile, clicking Access Profile, and viewing their credential renewal application under “My Credentials” at the bottom of the page,
- Renewal of the ACC credential requires completion of at least 40 hours of Continuing Coaching Education (CCE) credits in the three years after the initial award of the credential or since the last credential renewal.
- At least 24 hours of the 40 hours must be in the ICF Core Competencies. The required 24 hours in Core Competencies must include:
 - At least three (3) of the hours in Core Competencies must be in coaching ethics. (Coaches can obtain coaching ethics hours by completing [ICF’s free online course](#).)
 - At least 10 hours of Mentor Coaching with an eligible Mentor Coach over a three (3) month period of time or longer, including a minimum of three (3) hours one-to-one with an eligible Mentor Coach.
- The remaining 16 hours to reach the total of 40 CCEs may be in Core Competencies or Resource Development education.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the [sample renewal application](#) prior to starting the renewal application process.

Timelines for Credential Renewal

To maintain an ACC in good standing, ACC holders must submit the renewal application and required CCE activities by the expiration date. ICF Credentials and Standards provides all ACC credential-holders with a 60-day grace period following the credential expiration date, allowing the ACC-holder to maintain their status while their renewal application is under review.

Failure to submit a renewal application and required documentation of CCE credits will result in a lapse of ACC status following the 60-day grace period. Once lapsed, the ACC credential is no longer active, and the coach must discontinue the use of ACC logos and marks.

A coach can renew a lapsed ACC credential for up to one year following the expiration date by submitting a renewal application and paying a \$100 USD late fee in addition to the standard credential renewal application fee.

Once a full year has passed from the ACC expiration date, it is considered fully expired and cannot be renewed. To reinstate an expired ACC credential, a coach must submit a new ACC application.

Continuing Coach Education

Continuing Coach Education credits may be earned through a variety of learning modalities, all designed to expose the coach to new content in order to benefit their overall knowledge base and coaching clients. It focuses on the development of the coach's competence with a wide range of opportunities for the support and growth of a coach's skill set.

Core Competencies CCEs can be gained through learning opportunities that offer real-time interactive settings, such as education programs, learning courses and other activities that correlate to the ICF Core Competencies and have been approved by ICF for Core Competencies CCEs.

Resource Development is any learning that falls outside of the ICF Core Competencies, but still contributes to a coach's professional development (e.g., personal development, coaching tools or personality and productivity assessments, business building, etc.).

Visit the [Professional Development page](#) of the website for accepted sources of CCEs and how to report them in the renewal application.

Appeals

Purpose of the Appeals Process

The ICF Credentials and Standards appeals process provides a way for credential applicants, candidates, and credential-holders to formally request reconsideration of an adverse decision made by the organization regarding the individual's eligibility to earn or hold an ICF credential. Typically, appeals would result from an individual being deemed ineligible for a credential or credential renewal, disputes regarding policies and procedures, or where ICF may not have followed documented policies.

Appeal Submissions

Appeal requests are submitted by credential applicants, candidates, or credential-holders using the [Credential Appeal Submission Form](#) within 30 calendar days of receiving an adverse determination. Appeals may only be submitted by the individual who received the adverse determination. Appeals will not be accepted via email or postal mail. Appellants should review all sections of the form, determine the reason(s) for their appeal request, and complete the most relevant section(s) of the form. Appellants must provide evidence supporting the reason for the appeal and the nature of request, including all reasons why the action or decision should be changed.

By submitting the appeal form, the appellant is authorizing ICF Credentials and Standards to conduct an investigation, gather information, and make a determination regarding the appeal request.

Reasons for Appeals

There are six categories of appeals included on the appeal form. An appeal based on:

1. Eligibility requirements.
2. Performance Evaluation procedures*.
3. Exam results**.
4. Exam procedures**.
5. Credential renewal requirements.
6. Reasons not included in other form sections.

*Disputes regarding Performance Evaluation results or feedback will not be considered in the appeals process. In these cases, credential candidates should not file an appeal but may request the following options:

Request a Rescore of the Recording(s)

Within six months of receiving a results letter, candidates may contact ICF Credentials and Standards staff to request that the recording(s) submitted with their application be rescored. Candidates must pay a fee of \$150 USD per recording before a rescore is conducted. In cases where the rescore reverses a failed performance evaluation resulting in a pass, the candidate will receive a refund of the rescore fee.

Request a Retake

Within six months of receiving a results letter, candidates may request a retake, allowing them to submit new recordings for evaluation without submitting a new credential application. Candidates must pay a fee of \$150 USD per recording for the scoring of their new recordings, which covers the cost of administering the performance evaluation review with a trained assessor. Regardless of the result, retake fees are not refunded.

Appeals regarding Performance Evaluation procedures undergo review by designated ICF staff and may be directed to the Appeals Committee for their consideration.

**Credential candidates must read and follow policies and procedures for the ICF exams as included on the ICF website. Appeals based on the following reasons are not considered grounds for appeal and will not be considered by the Appeals Committee:

- The examinee's lack of knowledge or understanding of the test administration policies or procedures.
- The examinee's failure to follow examination administration instructions and procedures.
- The examinee's mental state during the exam, including nervousness or anxiety.
- Personal circumstances of the examinee that may have affected the examinee's completion of the exam.
- Examinee errors or omissions related to understanding exam items, or understanding or recording answers, except those caused by circumstances outside the examinee's control.
- Computer-related or technical problems.
- Reasonable and commonly occurring sounds and noises in the testing center or room.
- Late arrival for the test administration appointment or not showing up for the exam administration appointment.
- The validity of the content of the exam.
- The passing score of the exam established by ICF and the process used to determine the passing score.

Review of Appeal Requests

Upon submission of an appeal request, the appellant will receive an automated confirmation that their appeal submission has been received by ICF.

Within 15 business days, designated ICF staff will review the appeal submission and notify the appellant if additional information is needed.

Designated ICF Credentials and Standards staff will review the appeal request and determine the appeal type. There are two types of appeals that may be submitted:

1. **Procedural appeals** — are cases where a clear policy, rule, or standard exists. Procedural appeals allow applicants to contest an adverse decision made in conflict or misalignment with an existing policy, rule, or standard. Appeals contesting the content of existing policies, rules, or standards, and resulting in an adverse decision for the applicant, will not be considered.

Examples of Procedural type appeals may include disputes regarding:

- Pre-requisite credentials.
- Required number of hours of education, experience, or mentor coaching.
- Exam administration procedures.

Designated ICF staff will respond to procedural appeals by conveying the relevant policy/rule to the appellant and will communicate the status of the appeal (denied or accepted) and any next steps available to the appellant.

2. **Judgement appeals** — are cases where a decision may be subject to interpretation and will require consideration by the Appeals Committee.

Examples of Judgment type appeals may include disputes regarding:

- Instances where an appellant believes that certification policies and procedures were not followed.
- Appellant concerns that a conflict of interest or bias influenced a certification decision.
- Unique instances where a certification policy or procedure is unclear or does not exist.

The Appeals Committee will be presented with all Judgement type appeals and will:

- Meet to consider information presented.
- Gather and request additional information as needed.
- Make a determination.
- Prepare a written report that is forwarded to the vice president of ICF Credentials and Standards.

The vice president of ICF Credentials and Standards (or staff designee) will notify the appellant the decision of the committee and any next steps available to the appellant.

While Procedural appeals will be decided by designated CS staff, the Appeals committee will receive a report of all appeals submissions and the resulting determination. Information from this report may be used by the Appeals committee to inform changes to the appeals process and workflow.

Appeals Process Timelines

Within 24 hours of submitting the appeal form, appellants will receive an automated message acknowledging that the form has been received.

Within 15 business days following submission, the appeal request will undergo a preliminary review by staff, and appellants will receive an update and information regarding the next steps in the process. Appellants may be asked to provide additional information regarding the appeal request.

Following the preliminary review period, review may take up to 45 business days for staff or the Appeals Committee to thoroughly review, consider, and make a determination regarding the appeal.

Within 15 business days of a determination, the appellant will receive information regarding the outcome of the appeal and information regarding any next steps that the appellant may wish to take.

Documentation and Reporting

Written records will be created and securely maintained for all Appeals Committee activities. These records include:

- Appeal submissions.
- Notices to appellants.
- Decisions of the designated ICF Credentials and Standards staff.
- Decisions of the Appeals Committee.

There shall be no discriminatory action against the appellant.

Other Policy Information for ACC Candidates

The ICF Definition of Coaching

ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. The process of coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity, and leadership.

Having a clear understanding of the ICF definition of coaching and how it guides the work of professional coaches is critical for individuals who are pursuing an ICF credential. It serves as a guide in differentiating coaching from other modalities and professions.

The ICF Core Competencies

The [ICF Core Competencies](#) were developed to support a greater understanding of the skills and approaches used within today's coaching profession as defined by ICF. These competencies and the ICF definition of coaching form the foundation for coaching practice and are used as the basis for all assessments used in the ICF credentialing process.

Given their significance, ICF conducts a comprehensive analysis of the competencies every five to seven years to ensure they remain relevant and reflect current best practices in coaching. This process, known as a job task analysis, uses research methods aligned with certification best practice standards to identify the tasks, knowledge, abilities and other characteristics (KAOs) essential for competent coaching, and involves the input of thousands of coaching subject matter experts from around the world.

Please visit [ICF Core Competencies](#) for more information.

The ICF Code of Ethics

The [ICF Code of Ethics](#) describes the ICF core values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of behavior for all ICF professionals. Candidates for ICF credentials must have a clear understanding of coaching ethics and how they are applied in any coaching related interactions.

Please review the Code of Ethics in Appendix B.

The ACC Minimum Skills Requirements

The [ACC Minimum Skills Requirements](#) are designed to support coaches as they prepare for the Associate Certified Coach (ACC) performance evaluation. It provides an understanding of what assessors evaluate in relation to each ICF Core Competency. The ACC Minimum Skills Requirements offer the minimum level of skill necessary to successfully demonstrate an ACC level of competency, and also the non-coaching behaviors that might prevent successful completion of the ACC

performance evaluation. While useful to developing coaches, these requirements are not a tool for coaching and should not be used as a checklist or formula for passing the performance evaluation.

ICF Credentials and Standards Policies and Procedures

All policies and procedures have been adopted by the ICF Credentials and Standards Global Board of Directors for the operation of the ICF credentialing program. The policies listed below are included as a reference. For assistance or questions, please contact the ICF Credentials and Standards staff team at support@coachingfederation.org.

Scope of the ICF Credentials

ICF credentials are intended for individuals who provide coaching services to their clients in alignment with the ICF definition of coaching, ICF Core Competencies, and ICF Code of Ethics. The purpose of all ICF credentials is to assure that those holding the credential have the skills, knowledge, and professional capability needed to serve their clients.

Secure Storage of Confidential Information

All confidential application materials will be retained in a secure manner as required by the ICF security and record retention policies. CS staff and examination assessors keep confidential and secure all submitted application materials. ICF Credential application materials are maintained in a secure database for five years, after which the materials are securely destroyed. Materials may be securely retained longer in certain circumstances with explicit permission from the applicant.

Rationale for Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements for ICF credentials are derived from a variety of sources, including job analysis, subject matter expert (SME) input, exam results, market research, and demographic data.

Information gained from SMEs, supported by data from the ICF Coaching Job Analysis (2019), showed that knowledge of coaching ethics is a critical element of coaching practice.

Input from SMEs and analysis of assessment and performance exam results has shown that hours of education specific to the ICF Core Competencies, ICF definition of coaching, and ICF Code of Ethics is necessary to ensure that coaches have the knowledge and skills required to work with their clients effectively.

Input from SMEs suggests that hours of experience working with clients is critical in the development of coaching skills and that skills diminish when coaches are not actively working with clients.

Market research and input from SMEs support the use of knowledge and performance exams as a way for a candidate to objectively demonstrate their knowledge of coaching and skills as a coach.

ICF Membership Not Required

Applicants are not required to be members of ICF Professional Coaches or ICF Coaching in Organizations or any other organization. Applicants who are members of ICF Professional Coaches or ICF Coaching in Organizations shall not be granted an advantage or be subject to additional requirements when applying for or holding an ICF credential.

Prohibition of Grandfathering

No candidate may be awarded ACC status unless they have met all eligibility and assessment criteria, as adopted by the ICF Credentials and Standards Global Board of Directors, and in effect at the time of the candidate's application.

Reciprocity

ICF does not accept as equivalent credentials/certifications awarded by other organizations or entities. No candidate may be awarded an ICF credential unless they have met all eligibility and assessment criteria currently in place, as adopted by the ICF Credentials and Standards Global Board of Directors, and in effect at the time of the candidate's application.

Verification of Credential Status

The ICF website will, upon inquiry by anyone, provide information to verify whether a specific person is currently credentialed or not. The names of ICF credential-holders and their credential status are not considered confidential and will be published by ICF.

Information relating to an individual's application status, whether an individual has taken the exam, and score information is confidential and will not be released.

Use of Credential Mark/Logo/Badge

The credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark may only be used by individuals who hold the credential, who remain in good standing with ICF, and who strictly adhere to and maintain published standards and requirements. No credential-holder may use, sell, license, transfer, or otherwise authorize any third party to use the credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark without the prior written authorization from ICF.

Acceptable Usage

The credential name, designation, acronym, mark, badge, or logo shall be used only in connection with the credential held by the individual and shall not be used in conjunction with any other coaches or coach programs. The designation and logos must be used in such a way that they indicate

approval of only the individual credential-holder and not an organization or business as a whole. For example, on a website, the designation and logo may be used only where the approved credential-holder is described, not where the organization as a whole is described.

The credential name, logos, badges, or marks may not be revised, altered, or amended in any manner by the credential-holder or any third party. This prohibition against alternation or misuse includes, but is not limited to, cropping of the name, logo, badge, or mark; bleeding off a page; screening behind text; and tilting or skewing of the marks/logos in any way. In every case, the names, acronyms, designations, marks, badges, and logos must be printed in full strength, with no screens or “watermark” effects. Logos, badges, and marks shall at all times be used intact, with no alteration, substitution, isolation, or highlighting of any particular feature.

The credential designation shall at all times be displayed against a neutral background only so that it does not conflict graphically or interfere with readability or recognition of the designation, logo, badge, or mark. Nor shall the name, acronym, designation, logo, badge, or mark be displayed on patterned backgrounds incorporating dots, wavy lines, or other designs, etc.

The credential name, acronym, designation, logo, badge, and mark incorporate specific coded colors within the Pantone Matching System. The ICF selected and designated color scheme is mandatory and shall not be altered or substituted in any way. No other colors may be used, substituted, or incorporated into the logo, badge, or mark.

Use of the credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark is exclusively limited to professional use on materials promoting the approved credential-holder, including:

- Promotional and marketing literature, brochures, pamphlets, business cards or folders.
- Advertisements of any type or nature.
- Websites.
- Print, digital, or photographic media.

Use in connection with any other form of publication or documentation shall be permitted only upon written authorization and approval by ICF.

Any ICF credential-holder who loses or has their ICF status suspended for any reason, including, but not limited to, failure to adhere to these usage standards or the applicable ICF credential-holder requirements, shall immediately discontinue all use of the credential name, designation, acronym, logo, badge, or mark, and shall not renew use of the same until their status has been restored in full.

Violations of Usage

Any unauthorized or unapproved use or alteration of the credential name, acronym, designation, logo, badge, or mark shall result in termination and loss of the individual’s ICF credential.

Changes to the ICF Credentialing Program

ICF Credentials and Standards reserves the right to change the standards, policies, procedures, application, fees, and/or eligibility requirements for the ICF credentialing process at any time. Any changes will be posted to the ICF website and shared through direct email communications in compliance with the ICF Privacy Policy. This guide will be updated periodically to reflect changes. Please check the ICF website to be sure you are using the most recent version of the guide.

Appendix A: Links to Useful Information

[Client Coaching Experience](#)

[Ethical Standards and the Code of Ethics](#)

[International Coaching Federation \(ICF\) home page](#)

[ICF Credentialing](#)

[ICF Core Competencies](#)

[ACC Exam](#)

[Mentor Coaching](#)

[Education Requirements](#)

[Performance Evaluations](#)

[ACC Information](#)

[Criteria for Assessing Coaching at the ACC Credential Level](#)

[ACC Level 1/Level 2 Application: Sample](#)

[ACC Portfolio Path Application: Sample](#)

[Credential Renewal Application: Sample](#)

[What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: Pearson Testing Centers \(video\)](#)

[What to Expect When Testing with Pearson VUE: OnVUE Online Proctoring \(video\)](#)

Appendix B: ICF Code of Ethics (2025)

(Please note that current exam content is based on the 2020 version of the ICF Code of Ethics – please review the [2020 ICF Code of Ethics](#) when preparing for the ACC Examination, it can be found on the ICF website)

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) Code of Ethics is composed of five main parts and an appendix:

PURPOSE

ICF CORE VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

COMMITMENTS FOR ALL WITHIN THE ICF ECOSYSTEM

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR ICF PROFESSIONALS

THE PLEDGE OF ETHICS

PURPOSE

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) is the world's leading coaching association.

The ICF is made up of six family organizations (FOs). Together, they form the ICF Ecosystem. The FOs are: ICF Professional Coaches, ICF Credentials and Standards, ICF Coaching Education, ICF Foundation, ICF Coaching in Organizations, and the ICF Thought Leadership Institute. The ICF Global Board provides strategic direction for and coordination of the complete ICF ecosystem.

Based on its mission and responsibility, ICF provides a code of ethics setting out ethical standards of professional conduct required to be adhered to by all within the ICF Ecosystem, whether acting as ICF professionals (see definition) or in any other capacity. The roles and responsibilities governed by the ICF Code of Ethics include ICF professionals, ICF staff (see definition), volunteers, members of ICF boards, leaders of ICF Communities of Practice, and members of ICF global committees, task forces, and core teams (whether they are ICF professionals or not).

The ICF Code of Ethics incorporates the core values of the International Coaching Federation (ICF Core Values) as a foundation to understanding the ICF Code of Ethics, ethical principles, and ethical standards of conduct.

The ICF Code of Ethics serves to uphold the integrity of ICF and the global coaching profession by:

- Setting standards of conduct consistent with ICF core values and ethical principles.
- Guiding ethical reflection, education, and decision-making.
- Adjudicating and preserving ICF ethical standards through the ICF Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process.
- Providing the basis for ICF ethics training in ICF accredited programs.

This Code of Ethics is intended to assist those persons subject to the Code by directing them to the ethical factors, values, and principles that need to be taken into consideration whenever they need to engage in ethical reasoning and ethical decision-making.

The ICF Code of Ethics applies when people represent themselves as belonging within the ICF ecosystem and/or ICF professionals in their professional interactions.

The challenge of working ethically means that those within the ICF ecosystem will inevitably encounter situations that require responses to unexpected issues, resolution of dilemmas, and solutions to problems.

People within the ICF ecosystem strive to be ethical, even when doing so involves acting courageously and making difficult decisions that uphold the “DO GOOD” principle when it comes to their stakeholders.

Part 4 of the Code articulates the ethical obligations of ICF professionals who are acting in their different roles as coach, coach supervisor, mentor coach, trainer, and student coach-in-training.

The ICF Independent Review Board serves to uphold this Code of Ethics through the Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process, which is applicable to all ICF professionals.

ICF mandates that all credentialed ICF professionals have continuous ethical education and training. Furthermore, ICF accredited coaching education programs are required to provide ethics training as ICF considers ethics to be the foundational element of the coaching profession.

The ICF Code applies to all individuals or entities falling within the ICF ecosystem. No individual or entity falling within the ICF ecosystem may opt out of any section or part of the Code, nor are they permitted to delete, modify, or amend any provisions within the Code.

ICF CORE VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The Code of Ethics provides guidelines for implementing the core values and ethical principles and shows how they are put into practice. All values and principles are equally important, support one another, and are aspirational. All within the ICF ecosystem are expected to honor the core values and align with the principles in all their professional interactions.

The core values and the related ethical principles are listed on the ICF website and are reiterated below. (See <https://coachingfederation.org/about/values/>)

Professionalism: A commitment to a coaching mindset and professional quality that encompasses responsibility, respect, integrity, competence, and excellence.

I demonstrate professionalism by:

- Ensuring my professional conduct is consistently aligned with the value of humanity and the coaching mindset competency in all my professional interactions.
- Being true and accurate in my statements.
- Committing to my life-long professional learning and personal development.
- Supporting the ongoing personal and professional development of my clients, students, and ICF professionals.
- Delivering on my commitments.
- Being aware of ethical dilemmas and issues and responding with adherence to the ICF Code of Ethics.
- Adding to the knowledge base and sharing expertise and skills as described in the ICF Core Competencies.
- Being resilient and confident when faced with challenges.
- Behaving with respect and transparency in all business dealings related to coaching.
- Making clear and accurate representations in all my professional interactions in relation to coaching.
- Committing to honesty, courage, consistency of action, ethical practice, and the highest standards for ICF and the coaching profession.

Collaboration: A commitment to developing social connection and community building.

I work collaboratively by:

- Making commitments and progress towards promoting professional coaching through fostering joint creativity and resourcefulness.
- Partnering with others, both within and across multiple social-identity groups.
- Being mindful and intentional in my own participation while working in any collective effort.
- Cooperating with other ICF professionals working with client(s) and sponsor(s).
- Partnering and communicating with related professions, associations, and people in other coaching organizations and professions.

Humanity: A commitment to being humane, kind, compassionate, and respectful towards others.

I demonstrate humanity by:

- Accepting that, as humans, I am not meant to be perfect, and with a coaching mindset, expressing imperfections is an opportunity for me to spread a culture of openness and self-acceptance.
- Knowing I always have more to learn and being open to other points of view.
- Creating authentic relationships that support honesty, transparency, and clarity.
- Continuously seeking and developing self-awareness.
- Being willing to acknowledge and own my mistakes.
- Accepting responsibility for my actions and learning from them.
- Being modest about my achievements.
- Avoiding any behaviors or communication that suggest superiority in any way.
- Committing to inclusivity, dignity, self-worth, and human rights.

Equity: A commitment to using a coaching mindset to explore and understand the needs of others so I can practice equitable processes at all times that create equality for all.

I am equitable by:

- Recognizing and respecting all identity groups and their contributions.
- Treating everyone with the same dignity and sense of fairness.
- Bringing awareness to systemic patterns of conscious and unconscious biases in myself and in others.
- Exploring to understand and bring awareness to social diversity, systemic equality, and systemic oppression, and how they show up in the coaching profession.
- Maintaining equality and partnership in all my coach-client, trainer-student, mentor-coach, and supervisor-coach relationships.

COMMITMENTS FOR ALL WITHIN THE ICF ECOSYSTEM

The values are aspirational and a robust guide for ethical reasoning and decision-making. All within the ICF ecosystem are expected to honor and uphold these values in all their professional interactions.

We:

- Mindfully perform our duties with integrity and accountability by thinking globally, being courageous in our thoughts, actions, and speech, being aware of our impact, and bearing the responsibility of any consequences.

- Commit to excellence through continued personal, professional, and ethical development.
- Remain alert to cultural filters and demonstrate respect for cultures different from our own through open conversations about cross-cultural and multicultural differences.
- Maintain awareness of relationships and how they are influenced by factors including biases, power dynamics, and forms of systemic oppression, and actively address these factors through continuing education and open conversations.
- Cultivate our ethical growth and maturity through continuous self-reflection and increased self-awareness. If an ethical dilemma arises, we will pursue assistance where needed to resolve the matter.
- Respectfully attempt to communicate our concerns with others if we become aware of unethical conduct by them, and if necessary, seek ethical guidance for next steps.
- Communicate with those who need to be informed of the ethical responsibilities established by this Code by providing access to this Code of Ethics.
- Accept that behaving ethically means going beyond what is written in the Code of Ethics.

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR ICF PROFESSIONALS

Meeting these ICF ethical standards of conduct is the first of the ICF core coaching competencies (ICF Core Competencies): “Demonstrates Ethical Practice: understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards.”

The following ethical standards are applied to the professional activities of ICF Professionals – regardless of an existing formal coaching relationship (see definitions) or not. These ethical standards are divided into five sections:

- 1) Agreements for Client and/or Sponsor Engagement.
- 2) Confidentiality and Legal Compliance.
- 3) Professional Conduct and Conflicts of Interest.
- 4) Commitment to Delivering Consistent Value.
- 5) Professional Integrity and Accountability.

Section 1: Agreements for Client and/or Sponsor Engagement

As an ICF Professional, I:

- 1.1 Communicate (before coaching begins) with coaching client(s), sponsor(s), and/or other involved parties that the coach is in a direct relationship with to explain the nature of coaching and to co-create a coaching agreement regarding roles, responsibilities, confidentiality, financial arrangements, and other aspects of the coaching engagement.

- 1.2 Respect all parties' right to terminate the coaching relationship at any point for any reason during the coaching engagement, subject to the provisions of the agreement.

Section 2: Confidentiality and Legal Compliance

As an ICF Professional, I:

- 2.1 Maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all parties involved, regardless of the role I am fulfilling.
- 2.2 Have a clear agreement about what information is exchanged and how it is exchanged among all parties involved during all coaching engagements.
- 2.3 Have a clear agreement with client(s), sponsor(s), and other involved parties about what confidential information may need to be disclosed to the appropriate authorities, e.g., illegal activity, required by law, valid court order or subpoena; or imminent/likely risk of danger to self or to others.
- 2.4 Maintain, store, and dispose of any records, including electronic files and communications, in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with applicable laws and agreements.
- 2.5 Fulfill my ethical and legal obligations to my coaching client(s), sponsor(s), colleagues, and to the public at large directly and through any technology systems I may utilize (i.e. technology-assisted coaching tools, databases, platforms, software, and artificial intelligence).
- 2.6 Am responsible for my support personnel's adherence to the relevant standards of the Code of Ethics.
- 2.7 Maintain the privacy of ICF professionals and use of their contact information (email addresses, telephone numbers, and so on) only as authorized by ICF or the ICF professional.
- 2.8 Comply with copyright laws and recognize and honor the contributions and intellectual property of others, only claiming ownership of my own material.

Section 3: Professional Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

As an ICF Professional, I:

- 3.1 Am aware of and discuss with all involved parties the implications of having multiple agreements and relationships, and the potential for conflicts of interest.
- 3.2 Manage conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest with coaching client(s) and sponsor(s) through self-reflection, coaching agreement(s), and ongoing dialogue. This includes addressing organizational roles, responsibilities, relationships, records, confidentiality, and other reporting requirements.

- 3.3 Resolve any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest by working through the issue with relevant parties, seeking professional assistance, or suspending or ending the professional relationship.
- 3.4 Hold responsibility for being aware of and setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern professional interactions, physical or otherwise.
- 3.5 Maintain fairness by being aware of my biases and addressing them so that I do not discriminate toward others based on race, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, spiritual practice, ability, and other groups, classes, and categories of human differences.
- 3.6 Am mindful of the level of intimacy in the coaching relationship. I do not participate in any sexual or romantic relationship with client(s) or sponsor(s). If I detect a shift in the relationship, I take appropriate action to address the issue or cancel the coaching engagement.
- 3.7 Understand that ICF professionals often serve in multiple professional roles based on prior training and/or experience (i.e. mentor, therapist, HR specialist, assessor), and it is my responsibility to disclose to the client when I am acting in a capacity other than the role of an ICF professional.
- 3.8 Disclose to Client(s) the information of compensation and benefits that have been paid/received or will be paid/received for referrals.

Section 4: Commitment to Delivering Consistent Value

As an ICF Professional, I:

- 4.1 Am aware of and, in partnership with my client, actively manage any power or status differential between us that may be caused by cultural, relational, psychological, or contextual issues.
- 4.2 Recognize my personal limitations or circumstances that may impair my coaching performance or professional commitments. I will seek support if necessary, including relevant professional guidance. This may require suspending or terminating my coaching relationship(s).
- 4.3 Remain alert to indications that there might be a shift in the value received from the coaching relationship and discuss this with the client. If appropriate, explore changes in the coaching relationship and/or the potential for a different coach, professional, or resource.

Section 5: Professional Integrity and Accountability

As an ICF Professional, I:

- 5.1 Accurately identify my coaching qualifications and work within the boundaries of my level of coaching competency, expertise, experience, training, certifications, and my ICF credential.

- 5.2 Make verbal and written statements that are true and accurate about what I offer as an ICF professional, what is offered by ICF, the coaching profession, and the potential value of coaching.
- 5.3 Adhere to the philosophy of “doing good” versus “avoiding bad,” recognizing the impact of my professional conduct on my clients, stakeholders, the coaching profession, and society.

I understand that ICF may, at its discretion and according to the ECR process, hold me accountable for violations of the ICF Code of Ethics. I further agree that my accountability to ICF may include sanctions for any violation, such as mandatory additional coach education, mentoring, supervision, or loss of my ICF membership and/or ICF credentials.

THE PLEDGE OF ETHICS:

While fulfilling any role within the ICF ecosystem, I promise to uphold my ethical obligations by adhering to the ICF Code of Ethics in all my professional interactions. I commit to doing my best to represent the integrity and professional reputation of coaching and the ICF.

KEY DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE CODE

- “Artificial Intelligence” – any algorithm or machine-based technology that enables computers and other digital devices to simulate human intelligence and problem-solving skills. (See Standard 2.5)
- “Client” – the individual, team, or group member being coached, the coach being coached, mentored, or supervised, or the coach in training. (See Standards 1.1, 2.3, 2.5, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.3)
- “Coaching” – partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to recognize and maximize their personal and professional potential. (See Part 4)
- “Coaching Agreement” – a formal document established between an ICF professional and the client(s)/sponsor(s) that outlines the terms, expectations, and conditions of their coaching relationship. It typically includes details such as the goals of the coaching, the duration and frequency of sessions, confidentiality policies, payment terms, cancellation policies, and the responsibilities of both the coach and the client. (See Standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2)
- “Coaching Engagement” – the structured interaction between an ICF professional and the client(s)/sponsor(s). This engagement encompasses the entire coaching process, including the initial assessment, goal setting, regular coaching sessions, progress tracking, and evaluation of outcomes. (See Standards 1.1, 2.2, 3.6)
- “Coaching Relationship” – a relationship that is established by the ICF professional and the client(s)/sponsor(s) under an agreement that defines the responsibilities and expectations of each party. (See Standards 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 4.2, 4.3)

- “Coach Supervisor” – an experienced coach who engages in reflective dialogue and a collaborative process with a coach (or group of coaches) for personal, professional, and ethical development and learning. (See Parts 1 & 2)
- “Code” – ICF Code of Ethics; this document, which includes the purpose, core values & ethical principles, commitments, standards, key definitions, glossary, and pledge.
- “Confidentiality” – the protection of any information obtained in or around the coaching relationship unless there is a legal reason or requirement, a threat of harm, or written consent to release is given by the client. (See Standards 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2)
- “Conflict of Interest” – a situation in which an ICF professional is involved in multiple interests where serving one interest could work against or conflict with another. This could be financial, personal, intrinsic, professional, or a perceived conflict with a client, prospective client, or sponsor. (See Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
- “Core Competencies” – specific skills of professional coaches. (See Parts 1 & 2)
- “Equality” – a situation in which all people experience inclusion and access to resources and opportunity, regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, immigration status, mental or physical disability, and other areas of human difference. (See Part 2 and Standard 3.5)
- “ICF Accredited Coaching Education” – a program offered by an educational institution that has gone through a rigorous review process by the ICF and demonstrates that its curriculum aligns with the ICF definition of coaching, ICF Core Competencies, and ICF Code of Ethics. (See Part 1 and Standard 5.1)
- “ICF Credential” – a professional certification indicating a person has met specific standards and requirements designed to develop and refine their coaching skills. ICF credential designations include Associate Certified Coach (ACC), Professional Certified Coach (PCC), and Master Certified Coach (MCC). (See Part 1 and Standard 5.1)
- “ICF Ecosystem” – ICF is made up of six family organizations (FOs). Together they form the ICF ecosystem. The FOs are: ICF Professional Coaches, ICF Credentials and Standards, ICF Coaching Education, ICF Foundation, ICF Coaching in Organizations, and the ICF Thought Leadership Institute, all under the umbrella of the ICF Global Board of Directors. (See Part 1)
- “ICF Professional” – individuals who represent themselves as an ICF member and/or ICF credential-holder, in roles including, but not limited to, coach, coach supervisor, mentor coach, coach trainer, coach in training, board member, volunteer, or leader. (See Parts 1, 2, & 4 and Standards 2.7, 5.2)
- “ICF Staff” – any person who is employed or contracted by ICF, or any management company contracted by ICF, to provide management and administrative services for ICF. (See Part 1)
- “Intellectual Property” – creations of the mind that are legally recognized as the property of their creator or owner. Intellectual property rights grant the creator or owner exclusive rights to use,

produce, and distribute their creations, which are protected under laws against unauthorized use or infringement. (See Standard 2.6)

- “Legal” – Compliance with the law(s) of the country where the Coach practices. (See Part 4 and Standards 2.2, 2.5)
- “Mentor Coach” – an experienced coach who provides a collaborative learning process (mentor coaching) through which feedback is provided to another coach based on observed or recorded coaching sessions, to further develop their unique coaching style and skills in alignment with the ICF Core Competencies. (See Parts 1 & 2 and Standard 3.7)
- “Sponsor” – the entity (including its representatives) or individual paying for and/or arranging or defining the coaching services to be provided. This includes those having parental responsibility for minors. (See Part 2 and Standards 1.1, 2.3, 2.5, 3.2, 3.6)
- “Support Personnel” – the people who work for ICF professionals and who have access to information about clients and/or coaches. (e.g. administrative assistants, marketing, accounting, etc.) (See Standard 2.6)
- “Systemic Equality” – gender equality, race equality, and other forms of equality that are institutionalized in the norms, language, images, beliefs, ethics, core values, policies, structures, laws, practices, and cultures of communities, organizations, professional associations, nations, and society. (See Part 2 and Standard 3.5)
- “Systemic Oppression” – Systemic racism, colorism, sexism, and other forms of systemic inequality that are embedded in the norms, beliefs, language, images, ethics, core values, policies, structures, laws, practices, and cultures of communities, organizations, professional associations, nations, and society and that perpetuate widespread prejudicial and harmful treatment of people with marginalized identities and reward and benefit people with privileged identities. (See Parts 2 & 3)

GLOSSARY OF OTHER TERMS

- “Coaching Platform” – a coaching platform uses digital technology to enable an integrated and seamless coaching journey between coaches and clients at a large scale.
- “Coaching Platform Provider” – an organization utilizing a coaching platform developed on their own or by a platform developer and branded as their own coaching technology platform.
- “Coaching Provider” – a for-profit or nonprofit organization providing professional coaching services including but not limited to a corporation, limited liability company (LLC), nonprofit, or partnership.
- “Coaching Supervision” – a dynamic and reflective process of collaboration, guidance, and support through which coaches develop their personal, professional, and ethical capacity and maturity.

- “DEIB” – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging: the combination of key concepts that support a range of similarities and differences, fair access and treatment, being welcoming, feeling a part of a group, and fairness.
- “Diversity” – race, color, caste, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, rank, socio-economic status, age, spiritual practice, national origin, ability, and other groups, classes, and categories of human differences, such as personality characteristics, appearance, communication styles, and leadership styles.
- “Equity” – actions that provide access to resources and opportunities and establish norms, actions, policies, infrastructure, and culture so that everyone can realize their full potential.
- “Inclusion” – action that includes and fully supports people from marginalized as well as privileged groups; by creating and maintaining processes, infrastructure, and culture; so their inclusion goes beyond assimilation and differentiation to integrating them in the life and work of the organization in a way that they participate in decision-making about what the organization’s work is, and how the work gets done.
- “Belonging” – sustained sense of connectedness and involvement with the organization and its work by marginalized and privileged members of an organization, based on their experience that their presence, contributions, and inherent worth are truly valued and affirmed as demonstrated by the ongoing actions of the organization.
- “External Coach” – a coach, hired from outside of an organization who is neither a part time nor full time employee of an organization, to coach employees of the organization.
- “Group Coaching” – coaching a group of individuals who have similar goals or interests, serving each to move forward in their progress, where the coach and other group members offer support and inspiration on individual abilities and potential.
- “ICF Assessor” – a credentialed coach that has successfully completed ICF assessor training; ICF assessors review and assess the recorded coaching sessions for ACC, PCC, or MCC candidates.
- “ICF Certified” – indicates ICF credentialed and applies only to those with an ICF credential such as ACC, PCC, or MCC.
- “Internal Coach” – an individual who is employed within an organization and coaches either part-time or full-time the employees of that organization.
- “Team Coaching” – partnering in a co-creative and reflective process with a team and its dynamics and relationships in a way that inspires them to maximize their abilities and potential in order to reach their common purpose and shared goals.