



## **AC Coach Accreditation Scheme Integrated Coaching Competency Framework May 2011**

This document outlines the coaching competencies that form part of the AC's new Individual Coach Accreditation Scheme (categories 1-9) and the Executive Coach Accreditation Scheme (categories 1-12).

### **1. Meeting ethical, legal and professional guidelines**

The coach:

- 1.1 clearly communicates their own coaching philosophy and model, what coaching is and is not, and how it is different from other helping professions and roles
- 1.2 follows the AC's professional standards and codes of conduct (as detailed in the AC's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice" and "Shared Statement of Values")
- 1.3 acts ethically and with the highest integrity
- 1.4 promotes the coaching profession in a positive light to all stakeholders
- 1.5 complies with the prevailing laws of the country in which the coaching takes place and/or client organisation is operating, whichever is the most applicable and stringent.

### **2. Establishing the coaching agreement and outcomes**

The coach:

- 2.1 clearly explains the coaching process and any models, techniques and approaches that underpin this to the client
- 2.2 helps the client establish coaching goals and outcomes and agrees an approach to working with the client that will achieve them
- 2.3 describes their coaching style and explores the client's outcomes and assesses with the coach whether the coaching style will meet the client outcomes
- 2.4 agrees a coaching contract that all stakeholders can adhere to, having discussed and agreed this with the client before the coaching starts. This should include, but not be limited to: agreeing confidentiality, logistics of coaching sessions (duration, frequency, location) purpose, contingencies, monitoring and measuring progress, reporting on progress, commercial arrangements
- 2.5 ensures a formal Coaching Agreement is agreed with the client and any sponsors and includes clear and measurable goals and outcomes
- 2.6 establishes clear roles, responsibilities and boundaries between the different stakeholders, including the coach and client.



### **3. Establishing a trust-based relationship with the client**

The coach:

- 3.1 establishes a safe and supportive climate for coaching
- 3.2 treats people equally and fairly, with respect and dignity
- 3.3 is inclusive of diversity and cultural, gender, racial and other differences
- 3.4 is optimistic for and encourages self-belief in the client
- 3.5 establishes a high level of rapport to build an open dialogue with the client
- 3.6 accepts the client 'as they are' and believes in the client's potential and capability
- 3.7 acts openly and honestly at all times and role models these behaviours for clients (e.g. tackles difficult conversations with the client, uses themselves and their reactions to give the client feedback, avoids colluding with the client on issues that block progress)
- 3.8 maintains agreed levels of confidentiality.

### **4. Coaching presence and coach self-management**

The coach:

- 4.1 stays fully present and engaged with the client
- 4.2 remains focused on the agreed client agenda and outcomes
- 4.3 acts flexibly whilst staying aligned to their own coaching model and philosophy
- 4.4 stays aligned to their personal values while respecting the values of the client
- 4.5 remains professional and ensures their intervention gets the best outcome for the client
- 4.6 is aware of their professional boundaries and refers on to another as appropriate.

### **5. Effective communications**

The coach:

- 5.1 demonstrates effective listening and clarifying skills and can differentiate between what is said and what is left unsaid
- 5.2 uses straightforward, easy-to-understand language that moves the client towards the client's agreed outcomes
- 5.3 adapts their communication style so that it reflects the client's needs and helps meet the client's agreed outcomes
- 5.4 provides relevant information and feedback, where appropriate, to serve the client's learning and goals
- 5.5 asks powerful questions that move the client forwards towards the client's agreed outcome
- 5.6 communicates clearly, confidently and credibly with the client (including in an organisational setting where appropriate).

### **6. Awareness and Insight raising**

The coach:

- 6.1 asks questions to challenge the client's assumptions, elicit new insights, raise self-awareness and gain learning
- 6.2 helps broaden a client's perception of an issue or situation and challenges to stimulate new possibilities



- 6.3 supports the client in generating options to achieve the agreed outcomes and holds the client to account on achieving them
- 6.4 provides observational feedback, where relevant, and leaves the client free to choose to act upon it or not.
- 6.5 uses 'self' as a resource for the development of the client's self-awareness and learning by offering "here and now" feedback.

## **7. Designing strategies and actions**

The coach:

- 7.1 supports the client to build relevant strategies to meet their outcomes
- 7.2 inspires the client to identify self-directed learning opportunities, and put this into practice
- 7.3 leaves accountability with the client while following through on their own actions and commitments
- 7.4 encourages the client to seek support from others to help them achieve their outcomes.

## **8. Maintaining forward momentum and evaluation**

The coach:

- 8.1 maintains an outcome-focused approach
- 8.2 checks client progress against agreed actions, exploring what is working and what is getting in the way
- 8.3 acknowledges client progress and achievements; questions and challenges lack of progress
- 8.4 provides support while the client tries out new ways of working/behaviours
- 8.5 discourages dependency on the coach and develops the client's ability to self-coach
- 8.6 checks the client's motivation to apply learning from the coaching
- 8.7 measures the effectiveness of coaching (both during and at an appropriate time after the coaching ends).

## **9. Coach Continuous Self Development**

The coach:

- 9.1 regularly requests client feedback to help develop their coaching practice
- 9.2 actively and regularly monitors and reflects on their coaching and acts on their own critical reflections and client feedback to improve their coaching practice
- 9.3 constantly seeks and acts upon ways to improve their excellence as a coach
- 9.4 participates in regular coaching supervision to reflect upon and improve their practice
- 9.5 regularly participates in continuous professional development (CPD) activities to ensure their methods are up to date and they continue to develop as a coach.



## **Executive Coaching competencies**

For the AC's Executive Coaching Accreditation scheme, applicants will need to demonstrate the nine categories above, plus the following three:

### **10. Organisational context**

The coach:

- 10.1 understands the organisational context in which the client operates (e.g. is aware of the long term vision, mission, values, strategic objectives, market/competitive pressures, etc.)
- 10.2 understands the client's role, position and authority within the organisational system
- 10.3 understands the key stakeholders (both internal and external) within the organisational system
- 10.4 is familiar with the key talent and human resource and people policies, procedures and practices
- 10.5 aligns coaching goals to support organisational aims and objectives
- 10.6 understands the relationship between the coach, client and internal sponsor(s) of coaching
- 10.7 demonstrates knowledge and experience of working in an organisational setting
- 10.8 has awareness of, and works with the organisation's values, policies and practices
- 10.9 takes a systemic approach in their coaching with the client, including an awareness of the complexities of multiple stakeholders, different perspectives and conflicting priorities potentially present in the organisation.

### **11. Leadership**

The coach:

- 11.1 recognises the challenges faced by leaders working in organisations, along with the attributes and behaviours they need to be successful
- 11.2 identifies ways of, and opportunities for, developing the client through coaching
- 11.3 demonstrates knowledge and experience of working with organisational leaders
- 11.4 uses language appropriate for, and recognised by, the client and organisation
- 11.5 constructively challenges the leader to raise his/her standards in the relevant areas appropriate to the coach and organisation
- 11.6 models positive, constructive, and coach-like behaviours that encourage the client
- 11.7 promotes self-learning and accountability with the client, so that they are not reliant on the coach when the assignment ends.

### **Working in partnership with the organisation**

The coach:

- 12.1 develops relevant networks and strategic partnerships in the organisation
- 12.2 designs an effective coaching and commercial agreement and contract and working alliance with the individual client, line manager and coaching sponsor within organisational parameters and policies for coaching and operates within these
- 12.3 actively involves key stakeholders in the set-up, monitoring and evaluation of the coaching, while maintaining agreed levels of confidentiality



- 12.4 understands the wants and needs of the coaching sponsor(s) and integrates these into the coaching agreement/contract
- 12.5 communicates the progress of the coaching with the client and key stakeholders openly and honestly, while maintaining agreed levels of confidentiality
- 12.6 identifies ways of adding value to the client at the individual, team and organisational level.