



**The Coaching & Mentoring Network**

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## FAQ Guide: What training do I need?

### What mandatory training do I have to have to be a coach?

First things first. There is no regulatory body for coaching in the UK (as far as we know Austria is the only country with this structure). There is no single accrediting body. This means that:

- There is no one specific qualification, or set of qualifications, required to be a coach
- There is no such thing as a 'An Accredited Coach', although you can be a coach 'accredited' by the training provider and this qualification may be externally validated and recognised (eg through an academic or vocational system)
- You don't actually NEED any training to call yourself a coach, however, most people (coaches and clients alike) would agree that it is essential to be able to demonstrate competence in core coaching skills and how to apply them safely and effectively in the context in which you are working.

This means that it is a complicated and confusing process to select the right training and there is no guarantee that the training you choose will give you the credibility and expertise to qualify for accreditation in the event that such a regulatory structure were to be introduced.

### Is there likely to be regulation?

Nobody has a crystal ball so nobody can answer this question with absolute authority. Where regulation is introduced for other professional activities there has usually been a period of consultation and grandfathering which is based on competencies rather than alignment with a specific training programme or professional association.

There are many different views about if or when this could or should happen within the coaching sector and you will, no doubt, hear these as you explore your training options. There are a number of associations and organisations that have proposed standards and the basis for a regulated environment. However, there is no universal agreement about what this should contain and who should be responsible for implementing and overseeing it. There is some useful information at <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/12030>

The prevailing view within the sector tends to steer towards self-regulation and so selecting training that would be recognised within such a framework is important.

### So what should I look for in a training course?

Although there are many diverse views of what constitutes 'coaching', at the heart of most coach training courses is a common core skill set. What tends to separate them is how these core skills are structured within a range of different coaching models, the specifics of the ethical standards and the context in which these skills are applied (eg the difference between life coaching, executive business coaching and coaching psychology – see <http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/information-portal/what-are->



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[coaching-and-mentoring.aspx](#) for more details). This guide will take you through some of the key things you should consider. What level of training you need will be dependent on your prior training, qualifications and experience in the context in which you plan to work as a coach.

### Content

If you are looking for training that will give you all the core skills you should look for training that covers the following at the bare minimum. In all cases, these should be relevant to the area in which you plan to work eg life coaching, skills coaching, spiritual coaching, executive coaching etc.

- A structural framework for a coaching relationship which includes key contracting processes (whether informal or formal) eg how to set up the relationship, manage it and bring it to a positive conclusion
- An ethical framework which provides a clear and robust set of principles which guide appropriate management of and engagement in the coaching relationship eg coach responsibilities towards the well-being of the client and management of boundaries within the contractual context of the relationship and the coach's competence.
- A framework for structuring coaching conversations, individually and over time
- Core soft skills, which fit within the frameworks, which include the following:
  - Supporting others to identify and clarify situations, needs or aspirations
  - Supporting others to set appropriate goals for themselves
  - Asking effective questions to facilitate the client's thinking
  - Listening and accurate interpretation
  - Being able to summarise and reflect back understanding to support the client to gain insight and clarity
  - Suspending your own judgement and views in order to support the client to identify their own path
  - Recognising how your own values and beliefs will shape your view of the world and how to manage this appropriately within the context and purpose of the coaching relationship
  - Understanding the boundaries and overlaps between coaching and other forms of personal and professional development or support
  - Supporting the client to assess and monitor progress against goals
- Support to achieve your personal goals for undertaking coach training (eg to set up a coaching business, to supplement your management skills etc)

Ensure that these core skills are set in a context appropriate to you. For instance if you are planning to work in a business context, the frameworks will differ from a personal context even if the soft skills are basically the same.

### Qualifications

Within the context that there is no single accrediting structure, consider the level of qualification you need in terms of the following. According to your existing skills and experience you may enter at any point, as long as you meet the prerequisites for the individual course.



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- Most coach training programmes tend to fall within one of three levels, although what these mean will vary according to country and programme objectives:

- **Foundation:** assumes no prior formal coach training and covers the core skills and context. Useful for people who are looking for core skills as well as some simple frameworks and processes in which to operate as a coach.

This level of course will typically offer qualifications at a Certificate level.

- **Intermediate:** tend to build on core skills. Some focus on specialist areas eg specific suites of coaching models with more contextually-specific frameworks and approaches. Useful for people who can demonstrate the core skills in a coaching context but are seeking to build on these in certain areas.

This level of course will typically offer qualifications at Certificate and Diploma levels

- **Advanced:** advanced degree (usually postgraduate) level, generally leading to a Master or Professional Doctorate qualification or advanced CPD covering specialist skills eg psychology, business modelling, organisational change etc. Useful for people who can demonstrate core skills (although it is not mandatory to complete foundation or intermediate training first) and are seeking to either gain an advanced qualification, enhance specialist skills or bring together knowledge, skills and practices from a number of disciplines into an integrated, contextual model.

This level of course will typically offer qualifications at a Masters of Doctorate level.

Whichever course you choose, pay attention to the programme's alignment within the sector, for instance validation from vocational, academic or professional bodies.

### **Delivery methods**

When selecting an appropriate course, evaluate training that will be appropriate for you in terms of:

- Appropriate balance of theory and practice opportunities
- Timeframe for course delivery and completion
- Method of training delivery eg formal face-to-face classroom, teleconference, paper or web-based distance learning, one-to-one tutoring or mentoring, residential workshops etc
- Method of assessment eg essays, formal research and dissertations, audio, video or live observed practice of coaching sessions, presentations to tutors or peers, learning / reflective practice logs, diaries and portfolios



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- What is the learning culture (eg directive versus facilitative - formal learning agendas versus self-directed or collaborative learning)
- Although not strictly related to delivery method, also assess the cost of the programme and what you receive for this payment. Also check out payment terms (eg do you pay up front or in phases) and what grounds exist for reimbursement or extension in the event that you do not complete the programme
- What additional support services are available to augment the core training offering eg Alumni services and networking, tutor follow-up, mentoring, client referral, continuing professional development (CPD) and supervision. Which of these are included within the standard price?

The attached questionnaire will support you to construct conversations with potential training providers to gain an understanding of what they offer within this context.

### Where do I go for more information?

<http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/information-portal/what-are-coaching-and-mentoring.aspx>

<http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/information-portal/training-and-accreditation.aspx>

**This is part of a series of Guides offered by the Coaching & Mentoring Network. Please let us know how useful it was to you by emailing [guides@coachingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:guides@coachingnetwork.org.uk)**



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## Training provider exploration guide

You are welcome to copy and paste this checklist for the purposes of selecting appropriate training for your needs. For any commercial use please contact the Coaching & Mentoring Network for permission.

Note: These questions are designed to help you work through the complexity of what is available and to evaluate the options against your individual needs. As such, even the most rigorous and highly regarded training companies may struggle to give you a simple answer to these questions. However, they should be able to have an informed and constructive conversation with you about their philosophy, guiding principles, relevance to your needs and specifically what qualifications the course provides, if any. Coach training is an investment of your time and money. Ultimately, you are the client and you should choose the course that you believe will help you move furthest and quickest towards your goal.



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### Training Exploration Guide

<b>Training Company:</b>	
<b>Course name:</b>	
<b>Contact information:</b>	

Questions	Notes
<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <p>What level is the course?            What qualification do I get?            Who accredits the qualification?            What does the qualification entitle you to in the wider context? <i>(eg assessed membership of a professional body, academic CATS points (ie points towards next level of academic study), academic / vocational qualification (eg MSc, NVQ etc)</i>            How does the qualification align with client expectations in my intended field of practice?</p>	
<p><b>Content</b></p> <p>What does the course cover and at what level?            What models and theories underpin the course content?            What prior knowledge is assumed / prerequisite?            What specific competencies can I expect to develop – and what coaching contexts are they most suited to (eg life / business)?            What aspects of ethical practice does your course cover?            Who delivers the training and what are their qualifications?</p>	
<p><b>Delivery method</b></p> <p>How is the course delivered?            What time commitment will I be expected to make and over what period?            How is knowledge and competency assessed?            What recognition is given for</p>	



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<p>my prior knowledge (if any) and how would this affect what I would get? How much does it cost? What is included - what is extra? What are the payment terms? What additional support services do you offer?</p>	
<p><b>Validating your findings</b> <i>The following questions are all intended to help you to get a broader perspective and make an informed choice</i></p> <p>Can I speak to other people like me who have been on the course? How do I find these people (to get a balanced view)? What open events or taster sessions do you offer? Can I speak to the course tutors eg to discuss fit?</p>	

**Note: Be mindful that the people you speak will want to sell you their course. Most should be supportive of you taking time to make your decision and one that is right for you. Ensure you are comfortable with your decision before signing up to anything and, as a general guide, speak to at least 3 providers before making your final decision.**