

ICF Credential Renewal Guide



Credentials
and Standards

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Purpose of Credential Renewal.....	3
Renewal Cycle.....	3
Renewal Application.....	3
Renewal Requirements.....	4
Associate Certified Coach (ACC) Renewal Requirements.....	4
Professional Certified Coach (PCC) Renewal Requirements.....	4
Master Certified Coach (MCC) Renewal Requirements.....	5
Advanced Certification in Team Coaching (ACTC) Renewal Requirements.....	5
Earning Continuing Coach Education (CCE) Hours.....	6
Elevate your Coaching Knowledge and Skill.....	6
Advance the Coaching Profession.....	8
Expand Social Impact.....	10
Tracking Professional Development Activities.....	10
Credential Renewal Application Fees.....	11
How to Submit Payment.....	11
Failure to Renew or Meet Recertification Requirements.....	11
Credential Upgrade Policy.....	12
Upgrade Extension Period.....	12
Failure to Upgrade.....	12
Extenuating Circumstances Policy.....	13
Reinstatement of a Lapsed ICF Credential.....	13
Release of Information.....	14
Appeals.....	14
Purpose of the Appeals Process.....	14
Appeal Submissions.....	14
Reasons for Appeals.....	15
Review of Appeal Requests.....	16
Appeals Process Timelines.....	17
Documentation and Reporting.....	17
Other Policy Information for Credential Renewal Candidates.....	19
The ICF Definition of Coaching.....	19
The ICF Core Competencies.....	19

The ICF Code of Ethics	20
ICF Credentials and Standards Policies and Procedures.....	20
Scope of the ICF Credentials	20
Secure Storage of Confidential Information	20
Rationale for Eligibility Requirements	20
ICF Membership Not Required.....	21
Prohibition of Grandfathering.....	21
Reciprocity	21
Verification of Credential Status	22
Use of Credential Mark/Logo/Badge.....	22
Changes to the ICF Credentialing Program.....	23
Appendix A: Links to Useful Information	24
Glossary	25

Introduction

Purpose of Credential Renewal

The coaching profession is knowledge-driven, and it is essential for competent professionals to be familiar with updates to best practice and ethical standards to best meet the needs of coaching clients. Recertification reinforces the importance of advancing your knowledge and skills and enhances ongoing professional development. The professional development required to maintain your ICF credential also helps sustain the global recognition, status, and value of ICF credentials.

ICF maintains high standards for professional coaches worldwide and requires renewal for all ICF credentials every three years.

Renewal Cycle

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

Renewal Application

Credential-holders can access their renewal application by logging into their **ICF Profile** and clicking on their credential renewal application under “My Credentials” at the bottom of the page.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the sample credential renewal application (found on the **renew credential page** of the website) prior to starting the recertification process. The estimated timeline for the review of renewal applications at any level is 6-8 weeks.

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. Completing the audit may require submission of additional or supplementary documentation for reported professional development activities.

Renewal Requirements

Associate Certified Coach (ACC) Renewal Requirements

For ACC recertification, the following is required:

At least 40 Continuing Coach Education (CCE) credits completed in the three years since the initial award of your credential or since your last renewal.

Of the 40 CCE credits required:

- At least 24 CCE credits must be in **Core Competencies**.
- At least three Core Competency credits must be in coaching ethics. (Coaches can obtain coaching ethics hours by completing **ICF's Complimentary Ethics** course online).
- 10 hours of **Mentor Coaching** with an eligible mentor coach* over a minimum of three months** in the three years since the initial award of your credential or since your last recertification.*** The 10 hours will count as 10 CCEs towards the 24 CCE credits in Core Competencies.

Credential renewal candidates are strongly encouraged to verify a mentor coach's credential status and eligibility using the ICF Verify a Coach directory.

The remaining 16 hours can be in Resource Development or Core Competencies.

*If your mentor coach holds an ACC credential, they are required to have recertified at least once. Credential renewal candidates are strongly encouraged to verify a prospective mentor coach's credential status using the **ICF Verify a Coach** directory.

** The mentoring must be at least three months or longer. Example: If the first session is March 14, then the last session must be June 14 or after.

***Mentor coaching is required for each ACC recertification cycle.

Professional Certified Coach (PCC) Renewal Requirements

For PCC recertification, the following is required:

At least 40 Continuing Coach Education (CCE) credits completed in the three years since the initial award of your credential or since your last recertification.

Of the 40 CCE credits required:

- At least 24 CCE credits must be in **Core Competencies**.
- At least three Core Competency credits must be in coaching ethics. (Coaches can obtain coaching ethics hours by completing **ICF's Complimentary Ethics** course online).

The remaining 16 credits can be in Resource Development or Core Competencies.

TIP: Up to 10 hours of mentor coaching (giving or receiving) AND up to 10 hours of coaching supervision (giving or receiving) may be used towards the required 40 CCE credits for recertification and count as Core Competency CCEs.

Master Certified Coach (MCC) Renewal Requirements

For MCC recertification, the following is required:

At least 40 Continuing Coach Education (CCE) credits completed in the three years since the initial award of your credential or since your last recertification.

Of the 40 CCE credits required:

- At least 24 CCE credits must be in **Core Competencies**.
- At least three Core Competency credits must be in coaching ethics. (Coaches can obtain coaching ethics hours by completing **ICF's Complimentary Ethics** course online).

The remaining 16 credits can be in Resource Development or Core Competencies.

TIP: Up to 10 hours of mentor coaching (giving or receiving) AND up to 10 hours of coaching supervision (giving or receiving) may be used towards the required 40 CCE credits for recertification and count as Core Competency CCEs.

Advanced Certification in Team Coaching (ACTC) Renewal Requirements

For ACTC recertification, the following is required:

You must maintain an active ICF credential (ACC, PCC, or MCC) and complete 20 Continuing Coach Education (CCE) credits in team coaching every three years.

Of the 20 team coaching CCE credits required:

- A minimum of 16 CCE credits must be directly applicable to the **ICF Team Coaching Competencies**.
- The remaining four credits can be in other training or Team Coaching Competencies, but must be related to team coaching practice.

TIP: The total required 20 CCE credits may also be submitted toward the recertification of the prerequisite ICF credential (ACC, PCC, or MCC), allowing you to count the 20 CCE credits toward both recertifications.

TIP: Up to 10 hours of coaching supervision may be used towards the 16 credits of Team Coaching Competencies CCE requirements for recertification of the ACTC.

Earning Continuing Coach Education (CCE) Hours

Elevate your Coaching Knowledge and Skill

Enhance your knowledge, skill, and capacity as a coach through education and skill development. Approved professional development activities in this category include a variety of educational options through trainings, courses, and reflective practice activities designed to enhance your skills and capacity as a coach practitioner.

Qualifying Activities	Documentation Required
ICF Ethics Course (Free)	ICF Learning Portal transcript or certificate
ICF Communities of Practice events	ICF Learning Portal transcript
ICF Chapter webinars/events approved for CCEs	Certificate issued by the ICF Chapter, including candidate name, the name of the event, date, the total number of CCEs, and CCE credit breakdown (CC/RD)
ICF Regional or Global conference or event	Certificate, transcript, or passport issued by ICF with the name of the candidate, event, date(s), total number of CCEs earned, and CCE credit breakdown (CC/RD)
ICF CCE training program or course	Certificate, letter, or email issued by the program provider with the name of the candidate, event/course, date, total number of CCE units earned, and CCE credit breakdown (CC/RD)
ICF Accredited Coach Education Programs	<p>Certificate, letter, or email issued by the program provider with the name of the candidate, event/course, date, and the total number of educational hours completed.</p> <p>Note: All ICF accredited Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and AATC programs are approved as Core Competency credits and include coaching ethics content. When entering the program, three (3) credits for Coaching Ethics may be documented.</p>

Coach education course not accredited by ICF (Live / synchronous)	<p>Certificate of completion, letter, or email issued by the provider with the name of the candidate, course/training, date, and number of training hours completed. For any hours to count toward Core Competency credit requirements, applicants must submit supplemental documentation demonstrating course alignment with the ICF Core Competencies, Code of Ethics, and definition of coaching. Additional documentation may include course curriculum and delivery method, course syllabus, summary, student manual, or course handouts or materials that demonstrate course content.</p>
E-learning or self-paced online course	<p>Certificate of completion, letter, or email issued by the provider with the name of the candidate, course/training, date, and number of training hours completed. For hours to count toward Core Competency credit requirements, supplemental documentation demonstrating course content, including modules/content aligned with the ICF Core Competencies, instructional hours for each module, and verification of learning or assessment must be submitted. Supplemental documentation may include course curriculum and delivery method, course syllabus, summary, student manual, or course handouts or materials that demonstrate course content.</p>
Mentor Coaching (receipt)	<p>Name of the mentor coach, mentor coach's email address, start and end dates of the mentor coaching engagement, and total number of mentor coaching hours completed. Note: Up to 10 hours of Mentor Coaching with an eligible mentor coach can be used toward Credential Renewal for each renewal cycle. Mentor Coaching hours are counted as Core Competency credits.</p>
Coaching Supervision (receipt)	<p>Name of the coaching supervisor, coaching supervisor's email address, start and end dates of the coaching supervision engagement, and total number of coaching supervision hours completed. Note: Up to 10 hours of Coaching Supervision can be used toward Credential Renewal for each renewal cycle. Coaching Supervision hours are counted as Core Competency credits.</p>
Reading that contributes to your personal or professional development as a coach	<p>Book or article title(s) and date(s) of publication; dates of reading/research; summary of reading or research and how it contributed to development as a coach, total time spent reading or researching. Note: Self-study reading, or research, may only count toward Resource Development credits.</p>

Advance the Coaching Profession

Earn credits by contributing your knowledge, experience, and thought leadership through activities that contribute to the development of coaching practice and the coaching profession.

Qualifying Activities	Documentation Required
Mentor Coaching (delivery)	Name of the mentor coaching client, client's email address, start and end dates of the mentor coaching engagement, and total number of mentor coaching hours completed. Note: Up to 10 hours of Mentor Coaching with an eligible mentor coach can be used toward Credential Renewal for each renewal cycle. Mentor Coaching hours are counted as Core Competency credits.
Coaching Supervision (delivery)	Name of the coaching supervision client, client email address, start and end dates of the coaching supervision engagement, and total number of coaching supervision hours completed. Note: Up to 10 hours of Coaching Supervision can be used toward Credential Renewal for each renewal cycle. Coaching Supervision hours are counted as Core Competency credits.
Serving as instructor of an ICF-accredited program or course	Signed letter on the accredited education program letterhead from a representative authorized to verify the instructional delivery. The letter must include the candidate's name, role within the educational organization, the name of the program/course delivered, dates of the program/course, and the total number and breakdown of CCE credits. Note: The hours of one delivery per course only may be claimed for each renewal cycle.

<p>Delivery of a non-ICF accredited course, presentation, or training aligned with the ICF Core Competencies</p>	<p>Signed letter on the education program letterhead from a representative authorized to verify the instructional delivery. The letter must include the candidate's name, role within the educational organization, the name of the program/course delivered, dates of the program/course, and the number of training hours completed. For any hours to count toward Core Competency credit requirements, applicants must submit documentation demonstrating course content, including modules/content aligned with the ICF Core Competencies and instructional hours for each module. Supplemental documentation may include course curriculum and delivery method, course syllabus, summary, student manual, or course handouts or materials that demonstrate course content.</p> <p>Note: The hours of one delivery per course only may be claimed for each renewal cycle.</p>
<p>Authoring, co-authoring, editing and publishing articles, chapters, white papers, or books on coaching-related topics. (Writing for social media posts, blogs, or vlogs is not accepted.)</p>	<p>Summary of the published content and how activities related to the publication contributed to development as a coach, a link to the published content, date of publication, and the total number of hours of writing. For any Core Competency credits, description of publication alignment with or related to the ICF Core Competencies should be included.</p> <p>Note: Up to 20 Core Competency credits can be earned through this activity and used toward Credential Renewal per renewal cycle.</p>
<p>Serving as an officer or member of an ICF Global board, committee, council, or task force</p>	<p>Name of the ICF board, committee, council, or task force, role (officer position or member), and dates of service. Note: Two (2) Resource Development CCE credits per year of service may be earned and used toward Credential Renewal each renewal cycle.</p>
<p>Serving as an ICF Chapter Board officer or member</p>	<p>Name of the ICF Chapter, role on the board (officer position or member), and dates of service.</p> <p>Note: Two (2) Resource Development credits per year of service may be earned and used toward Credential Renewal each renewal cycle.</p>
<p>Serving as an ICF Subject Matter Expert (SME) volunteer</p>	<p>Certificate, letter, or email issued by ICF that includes the name of the SME volunteer, the name of the SME related activity, start and end date of engagement, and total hours of service.</p>

Expand Social Impact

Accelerate coaching's impact on humanity and social progress while earning credits toward your credential renewal through participation in an ICF Foundation project or initiative.

Qualifying Activities	Documentation Required
Participation in an ICF Foundation project	Certificate from the ICF Foundation, including candidate name, role in the project, dates of participation, and total hours contributed to the project. Note: Two Resource Development credits per engagement.

Tracking Professional Development Activities

Your credential renewal application will be created as soon as your credential is awarded or following its last renewal. You may access it at any time to enter CCEs as you earn them. You may submit your renewal application up to 10 months prior to your credential expiration date. Submitting your renewal application early will not affect your next expiration date.

1. Log in to your [ICF Profile](#) (You may be prompted to enter your ICF username and password.)
2. Under "My Credentials," click on the "Credential Renewal Application" link listed by your current ICF credential.
3. Select the "Continuing Coach Education" tab in your Credential Renewal Application.
4. Click on "Enter Education Hours" to begin logging CCE hours toward the CCE requirement.

Keep Track of Your Continuing Coach Education (CCE) Hours

For ease, keep track of your CCE hours as they are earned by entering them into your renewal application as they are earned, or use a spreadsheet to make the recertification process easier.

Routine Application Audits

When renewing an ICF credential or certification, you are required to report Continuing Coach Education (CCE) activities in your renewal application. When entering CCE activities, you have the option to upload documentation, such as certificates of completion, for each activity.

As part of our commitment to maintain high standards, a percentage of renewal applications will be randomly selected for additional review through an audit check. *If your application is selected for audit, you will be required to provide supplemental documentation to verify each reported CCE activity if you have not submitted documentation with your application.*

Credential Renewal Application Fees

ACC, PCC, and MCC Renewal Application Fee

ICF Members: \$175 USD / Non-Members: \$275 USD

ACTC Renewal Application Fee

ICF Members: \$100 USD / Non-Members: \$150 USD

How to Submit Payment

Payment for recertification is the last step of the application process. Click “checkout” to complete. All major credit cards are accepted online.

If you have any issues with payment, please contact support@coachingfederation.org.

ICF Credential Refund Policy

ICF credential and credential renewal 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 USD 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.

Failure to Renew or Meet Recertification Requirements

Failure to submit a renewal application and required documentation of CCE credits will result in a lapse of credential status following the two-month grace period. Once

lapsed, the certification is no longer active, and the coach must discontinue the use of all ICF credential logos and marks.

Credential Upgrade Policy

ICF credential holders can apply for a higher-level credential, for which they are eligible, at any time. The Credential Upgrade Policy supports coaches who apply for a higher-level credential within one year of their current expiration date (before or after) by extending their active certification status up to 12 months.

NOTE: It is not possible to upgrade to a higher level credential through the credential renewal application. If you wish to pursue a higher level credential, you must complete an application for that credential and complete it in full. To create an application, please complete the Credential Path Survey.

Upgrade Extension Period

If a credential-holder applies for a higher-level credential within one year of the current credential expiry date, the current credential expiry date can be extended for a maximum of one year AND no recertification application or fees are required while the higher-level application is being processed.

If the credential-holder applies for a higher-level credential after the holder's current credential expiry date BUT before the end of the 'Lapsed' period of one year following the original expiry date, the expiry date can be extended for a maximum of one year from the end of the original expiry date AND no recertification application or fees are required while the higher-level application is being processed.

When the credential-holder successfully completes the higher-level credential process (passes exam, evaluation, all documentation, and pays the required fees), the prior credential status will be relinquished and replaced by the higher-level credential achieved. A new certification expiry date based on the completion of the higher-level credential will be calculated and applied (last day of the month of award, plus three years).

Failure to Upgrade

Should the higher-level credential not be completed for any reason (including failed exams, failed evaluation, missing documentation, etc.), the holder is responsible for submitting a renewal application and accompanying fees to renew the original credential by the extended expiry date. Failure to do so will result in termination of the credential (no grace period or lapsed status will be awarded).

Submitting the credential renewal application within 90 days of the expiration date may result in a period of lapsed credential status while the renewal application is reviewed. The Credential Renewal application will not be extended beyond the 'review period' 120 days past the (extended) expiry date. At any time after the expiry date, but before the 120-day review period has elapsed, all credentials are considered

inactive or lapsed. After the 120-day review period, all credentials are terminated if renewal requirements are not successfully met.

After termination, the only method to regain credential status is by submitting a new credential application.

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

ICF understands that extenuating circumstances can prevent a credential-holder from meeting the requirements for and submitting their credential renewal application within the three-year credential cycle. Credential holders unable to meet the requirements for their credential renewal prior to their credential expiration date may request a temporary extension of their credential, up to 12 months, under the Extenuating Circumstances policy. Extenuating circumstances considered under this policy may include serious personal illness, family emergency, long-term medical disability, force majeure, or military deployment.

To request an Extenuating Circumstances extension, complete the [Credential Renewal Extenuating Circumstances Request](#) form at least 30 days prior to the credential expiration date. Provide a description of the extenuating circumstance and the requested extension (in months) along with supporting documentation detailing the extenuating circumstances.

If the individual granted an extension under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy fails to renew their credential during the extended period, their credential will be terminated, and they will be required to reapply for the credential and pass the exam to reinstate their credentialed status.

ICF retains sole and reasonable discretion in the granting of a credential extension under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and may require the applicant to provide additional documentation to support their request.

Reinstatement of a Lapsed ICF Credential

A coach can recertify a lapsed ICF credential for up to one year following the expiration date by submitting a credential 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 ICF credential expiration date, the credential is considered fully expired and cannot be reinstated. Credential renewal applications submitted before full expiration must be submitted, complete, and approved within 120 days for credential reinstatement. After the 120-day review period, all credentials are terminated if renewal requirements are not successfully met. To reinstate a fully expired ICF credential, a coach must submit a new credential application.

Release of Information

A directory of all active ICF credential-holders is available online at [Verify a Coach](#). Credential-holders are listed upon award of their certification. Information in Verify a Coach includes name, ICF membership status, type of certification held, dates certification held, city, province, state, territory, and/or country location.

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 the 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. ICF Credentialing Exam results**.
4. ICF Credentialing 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:** 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. **Judgment appeals:** 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 Judgment type appeals and will:

- Meet to consider the 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 of 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 appeal 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, the 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 Credential Renewal 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. 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.

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 ensure 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 have shown that hours of education specific to the ICF Core Competencies, ICF definition of coaching, and ICF Code of Ethics are 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 are 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 alteration 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

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

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

[ICF Credentialing](#)

[ICF Core Competencies](#)

[Credential Renewal Information page](#)

[Professional Development for ICF Credentialed Coaches page](#)

[Credential Renewal Application: Sample](#)

Glossary

Credential Renewal/Recertification: The process of renewing and maintaining professional coaching credentials issued by the International Coaching Federation (ICF) every three years to ensure coaches stay up to date with the latest coaching techniques, approaches, and ethical standards.

Continuing Coach Education (CCE) Hours: Educational hours earned by coaches through various approved programs, workshops, conferences, or courses to fulfill recertification requirements.

Core Competencies: Essential skills and knowledge areas defined by the ICF that form the foundation of effective coaching practice.

Mentor Coaching: A process where a coach receives guidance and feedback from a more experienced coach to enhance their coaching skills and performance.

Coaching Supervision: A collaborative learning and reflective practice process where coaches engage in discussions with a supervisor to improve their coaching skills and effectiveness.

Resource Development: Activities aimed at enhancing personal or professional development as a coach, including self-paced study, research, and non-coach-specific training.

Renewal Application: The online form submitted by coaches through their ICF profile to initiate the credential renewal process.

Renewal Fee: The cost associated with submitting a recertification application, payable online through the ICF website.

Grace Period: A two-month period following the credential expiration date during which coaches can still submit their recertification application without penalty.

Credential Renewal Late Fee: The additional fee required to reinstate a lapsed credential within one year of the expiration date. This fee is required in addition to the standard credential renewal application fee.

Reinstatement: The process of renewing a lapsed ICF credential within one year of its expiration date.

Appeals Process: A formal procedure for coaches to request reconsideration of adverse decisions related to their eligibility for ICF credentials, recertification, or disputes regarding policies and procedures.

Procedural Appeals: Appeals based on clear policies, rules, or standards, where designated staff review and respond to the appeal.

Judgment Appeals: Appeals involving cases subject to interpretation or requiring consideration by the Appeals Committee, which convenes to make a determination.

Verify a Coach: An online directory provided by ICF where active credential-holders are listed along with their certification details.