

## What's the difference between Credentialing and Certification?

### **Distinctions Between Professional Credentialing and Assessment-Based Certificates:**

**Certificates:** Earning a professional credential is a voluntary process through which an individual is evaluated against predetermined standards for knowledge, skills or competencies for a particular job or profession. A credential may include other eligibility criteria such as training and experience. Private credentialing, sometimes referred to as certification, is offered by an independent, nongovernmental body, such as a professional association or organization, and not by the provider of education or training. Credentials are what prospective clients look at to validate your coaching level.

By contrast an assessment-based certificate program offers an individual a certificate after successfully completing a training program and passing the training assessment provided by the training provider. This assessment evaluates an individual on the knowledge gained through that particular course.

The ICF awards its credentials to professional coach candidates based on their meeting the eligibility requirements, including required training and experience, as well as demonstrating the required knowledge and skill in coaching as determined by the credentialing assessments.

Certificates are awarded by coach training programs to graduates to demonstrate or verify successful completion of the training program. Professional coaches who apply for an ICF credential may use a certificate provided by a coach training program to verify they have completed the required coach-specific training hours for the credential.

### 1) Certifications

#### a) General:

- i) ICF- Accredited Coach Training Program certificates: Earning a certificate by passing all the training requirements for an ICF Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP) streamlines the ICF credential application process, since the coach training organization incorporates a number of the requirements--including performance evaluations, training in Ethics, and mentor coaching--within the training program. When a student who has been certified by an ICF ACTP applies for an ACC or PCC credential, the candidate need only send a copy of the certificate, attest to the number of coaching hours and clients, and earn a passing score on the Coach Knowledge Assessment.

(1) Note: a Certification is NOT required to attain a credential. It simply makes the credential application process much easier.

- ii) Other certificates: Some coach training organizations offer "Coach Certification", but are not accredited through the ICF as an Accredited Coach Training Program, or ACTP, or as an Approved Coach Specific Training Hours provider, or ACSTH. Certificates earned through a non-

ICF accredited training provider, along with additional requirement curriculum documentation, will be considered, however approval of such training hours is contingent on the training's alignment with the ICF definition of coaching, ICF Core Competencies and definition of coaching. Credential applicants who attain a certificate that is NOT an ACTP or ACSTH certificate will need to use the Portfolio path to apply for a credential, which includes completion of required client coaching experience hours, submission of recorded coaching sessions to be assessed, having 10 hours of mentor coaching and completion of the Coach Knowledge Assessment.

b) Specializations

- i) Many coach training organizations offer certificate programs in specialized areas, such as ADHD coaching, Divorce Coaching, etc. These certificates validate that the student has satisfied all the requirements for that training organization to graduate. However, these specialized certificates will not be recognized by ICF to ease credentialing requirements. Credential applicants who attain a certificate that is NOT an ACTP or ACSTH approved training certificate will need to use the Portfolio path to apply for a credential, which includes completion of required client coaching experience hours, submission of recorded coaching sessions to be assessed, having 10 hours of mentor coaching and completion of the Coach Knowledge Assessment.