

THE PROFESSIONAL CHARTER

For Coaching, Mentoring, and Supervision of Coaches, Mentors, and Supervisors

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Part 1 Goals, status and general definitions

1.1. Goals

This Professional Charter establishes a set of guidelines whose main goal is to establish a benchmark for ethics and good practice in coaching, mentoring and the supervision of coaches, mentors and supervisors of coaches, mentors and coach/mentor supervisors (hereafter shortened to supervision). It aims to ensure that coaches, mentors and supervisors conduct their practice in a professional and ethical manner. It also gives guidance to professional coaching, mentoring and supervision bodies as regards the acceptance by their members of an appropriate Code of Ethics, and as regards their role in the monitoring of this Charter and applying sanctions in case of breach.

This Professional Charter is also meant to inform clients of coaching, mentoring and supervision services, and to promote public confidence in coaching, mentoring and supervision as processes for professional and personal development.

The Professional Charter reflects the mission of professional bodies to promote and ensure good practice in coaching, mentoring and supervision.

The Professional Charter is the basis for the development of self-regulation for the coaching, mentoring and supervision professions. It is a public document and is drafted with regard to European law such as to be registered on the publicly accessible European Union database, co-managed by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, which lists self-regulation initiatives in Europe at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/policies/policy-areas/enterprise/database-self-and-co-regulation-initiatives/142>.

1.2. Status

This Professional Charter, unless and until adopted by a regulatory authority, does not have the force of law. Nonetheless, the fact that this Charter has been adopted by the respective approving professional bodies is viewed as establishing a benchmark standard of ethical and professional practice.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional and ethical behaviour, coaches, mentors and supervisors must consider this Professional Charter in addition to applicable national laws and regulations. If this Charter establishes a higher standard of conduct than is required by law, coaches, mentors and supervisors belonging to any professional body which has adopted this Charter must meet the higher standard.

1.3. General definitions

Various definitions exist for coaching, mentoring and supervision, and their aims. The following high-level descriptions are for the purposes of this Professional Charter and are not intended as definitive statements.

1.3.1. Coaching, mentoring and supervision

Coaching, mentoring and supervision are activities within the area of professional and personal development with focus on individuals, groups and teams and relying on the client's own resources to help them to see and test alternative ways for improvement of competence, decision making and enhancement of quality of life.

Thus, a professional coach, mentor or supervisor can be described as an expert in establishing a relationship with people in a series of conversations with the purpose of serving the clients to improve their performance or enhance their personal development or both, choosing their own goals and ways of doing it.

Professionals in coaching, mentoring and supervision are individuals who adhere to ethical standards and hold particular knowledge and skills derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others. As professionals, they adhere to a Code of Ethics that requires behavior and practice in respect of the services provided to the public and in dealing with professional colleagues that goes beyond the personal moral obligations of an individual.

1.3.2. Coaching

Coaching can be described as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Coaching is based on trust and listening, where the coach accompanies without advising, taking contextual factors into consideration.

It is a dialogue which facilitates the client's learning process by using professional methods and techniques to help the client to improve what is obstructive and nurture what is effective, in order to reach the client's goals.

Coaching can be said to be based upon three axes: *professional identity* (values, qualities of being in relationship and interpersonal skills); *frames of reference* (expressed through professional knowledge, technical skills, and education in coaching and related fields) and *practice* (methods, tools, mobilization of strategic skills, and awareness of the social roles played by the coach).

Within organizational contexts, coaching may include one-to-one (individual coaching) or one-to-several (group or team coaching) interactions.

1.3.3. Mentoring

Mentoring can be described as a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts, and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.

1.3.4. Supervision of coaches, mentors and supervisors

Supervision is a form of professional support for the coach, mentor or supervisor practitioner, and occurs separately from the interaction with the client. It is primarily a dialogue relating to their practice, an opportunity to reflect on and make sense of actual client encounters.

Supervision can be described as a safe space for reflective dialogue with someone who is experienced in coaching/mentoring and supervision, supporting the supervisee's practice, development and wellbeing.

Supervision may occur one-to-one (individual supervision) or one-to-several (group supervision) interactions.

Part 2 Professional conduct

2.1 Boundaries of competence and capability

Coaches, mentors and supervisors shall only provide their services to populations and in areas within the boundaries of their competence, based on their professional education and training, study, and professional experience. In other cases, where appropriate, they shall cooperate with other professionals by making appropriate referrals in order to serve clients effectively.

Coach, mentor and supervisor specific competencies shall be measured against a Competency or Capability Framework which is broadly recognised by professional bodies.

Links to examples of such Frameworks are listed in the Annex.

If in doubt, coaches, mentors and supervisors shall take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients and others from harm.

For the avoidance of doubt, coaching, mentoring and supervision knowledge and practice fall outside the scope of mental health services. Therefore, should coaches/mentors/supervisors be asked to provide mental health services to individuals, such individuals should be advised that coaches, mentors and supervisors do not provide such services and they should seek such services from a qualified mental health service provider.

2.2 Training

It is recognised that there is a body of research-based scientific and professional knowledge in the disciplines of coaching, mentoring and supervision and that coaches', mentors' and supervisors' practice is founded on this established knowledge. Practitioners shall therefore have or obtain relevant coach-specific, mentor-specific or supervisor-specific training which will include both theoretical and practical competence in the exercise of their profession. Competency is based upon the ability to coach, mentor or supervise rather than in the theoretical knowledge.

2.3 Continuous Personal and Professional Development

Coaches, mentors and supervisors shall undertake ongoing efforts to develop and maintain their competence and capability through relevant education and training.

Coaches, mentors and supervisors are encouraged to maintain ready access to suitably qualified supervisors.

2.4 Commitment to a Code of Ethics

Coaches, mentors and supervisors shall explicitly abide by a Code of Ethics which as a minimum shall include the requirements for coaches, mentors and supervisors to:

- a) operate at all times within the scope of their own professional competence;
- b) seek to create the right environment for the coaching, mentoring or supervision to take place;
- c) make and honour clear agreements with clients and, where appropriate, with the sponsor organization. Such agreements shall include:
 - i. context and agreed aims for the work;
 - ii. role of the coach/mentor/supervisor;
 - iii. ethical code provisions;
 - iv. programme details: duration, number of sessions, location etc.;
 - v. fees and payment conditions, where applicable;
 - vi. mutual right of the client, coach, mentor, supervisor to end the contract.
- d) maintain strict levels of confidentiality with all client information, unless required by law to disclose certain information;
- e) not make untrue or misleading statements (for example, concerning qualifications, competence levels, outcomes from the coaching, mentoring or supervision process, etc.);
- f) not take credit for the work of others;

- g) not take advantage of clients or collude in any manner (e.g., financial, sexual, etc.);
- h) avoid any conflicts of interest or to discuss and manage them appropriately;
- i) maintain, store, and dispose of any records created during their activity in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with any applicable laws and agreements such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe.

Links to examples of such Codes are listed in the Annex.

Professional coaching, and/or mentoring and/ supervision organizations shall make it a condition of membership that their members abide by any of the attached, or an equivalent, Code of Ethics.

Professional coaching, mentoring and/or supervision organizations shall have, and publicize to their membership, a disciplinary and complaints procedure to deal with cases of alleged breaches of their Code of Ethics.

2.5 Coaches, mentors and supervisors shall cooperate in ethics investigations and proceedings, and shall consider themselves bound by any resulting requirements imposed by the professional body to which they belong. Failure to cooperate shall in itself be seen as an ethics violation.

2.6 If coaches', mentors', or supervisors' ethical responsibilities conflict with law, they shall comply with the applicable law. In cases of doubt, the coach, mentor or supervisor should approach the professional body to which they belong with a view to resolving the conflict in a responsible manner, in keeping with basic principles of human rights.

Part 3 Monitoring and Sanctions

Each professional coaching, mentoring and supervision organization subscribing to this Professional Charter shall have a procedure in place to monitor and deal with cases of alleged breach of their Code of Ethics.

The organization responsible for overseeing the procedure shall be independent of the executive board/board of directors, and may be the same Ethics Committee set up to deal with issues arising out of alleged breaches of ethical codes.

The complaints committee shall be composed of members of the professional body, as well as non-members from outside the professional organization in question, and shall be such as to ensure no conflict of interest.

Alternatively, professional bodies subscribing to this Professional Charter may agree to set up a single independent board to oversee the monitoring and sanctions procedures, with a view to acting for the profession as a whole.

The codes of ethics encourage the resolution of concerns about a member's professional conduct directly and on an informal basis, if this is appropriate and achievable. Complainants should first approach the individual or organization concerned about their complaint.

In case of a breach of the code of ethics, determined after due process, it is recommended that the following sanctions may be imposed, calibrated according to the perceived gravity of the breach:

- A warning;
- A requirement to effect improvement in practice in a specific way, or to take suitable actions such as further training or additional and/or specific supervision, any of these to be completed within a specified time frame;
- Suspension of accreditation, authority to supervise or train, recognised status or membership of their professional body for a set period or until certain conditions are met;
- Termination of accreditation, authority to supervise or train, recognised status or membership of their professional body;
- Termination of membership of their professional body.

Each organization subscribing to this Professional Charter shall formally review the operation of the Charter no more than every five years, and shall communicate their findings to all other subscribing organizations with a view to discussing and agreeing possible changes to this Professional Charter over time.

Part 4 Signatories to the Charter

Association for Coaching (AC)	www.associationforcoaching.com	
Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS)	www.apecs.org	
Association of Business Mentors (UK)	https://www.associationofbusinessmentors.org/	
Association of Coaching Supervisors (AOCS)	https://www.associationofcoachingsupervisors.com/	
European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)	https://www.emccglobal.org	
International Coaching Federation (ICF)	https://coachingfederation.org/	
International Mentoring Association (IMA)	www.mentoringassociation.org	
Société Française de Coaching (SfCoach)	https://www.sfcoach.org/	

ANNEX

Links to Codes of Ethics

AC Code of Ethics

<https://www.associationforcoaching.com/page/AboutCodeEthics>

APECS Code of Ethics

<https://www.apecs.org/ethical-guidelines>

AOCS Code of Ethics

<https://www.associationofcoachingsupervisors.com/community/global-code-of-ethics>

Global Code of Ethics

<https://www.globalcodeofethics.org/>

ICF Code of Ethics

<https://coachingfederation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>

SfC Code of Ethics

http://www.sfcoach.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SFCoach_Codeofethics_2011_01_31.pdf

Links to Competency or Capability Frameworks

For Individual Coaches & Mentors

AC

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.associationforcoaching.com/resource/resmgr/Accreditation/Accred_General/Coaching_Competency_Framework.pdf

APECS

<https://www.apecs.org/members/membership-categories-criteria-guidelines>

EMCC

<https://emccdrive.org/0gzGExIyhoRpVFng5DB7ucXeu1FpQ6pJZk35YbTh>

ICF

<https://coachingfederation.org/core-competencies>

SfC

https://www.sfcoach.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Microsoft-Word-SFCoach-Pr_351sentation-r_351f_351rentiel-comp_351tences-coaching-individuel.pdf

IMA

<https://mentoringassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IMA-Program-Standards-Rev-6-04-2011.pdf>

Team Coaches

APECS

<https://www.apecs.org/members/membership-categories-criteria-guidelines>

EMCC

<https://emccdrive.org/6xBxG2JrgqydXqyx2ORxbg4lrKGhsZviSbcM7LHv>

ICF

<https://coachingfederation.org/team-coaching-competencies>

Leader Coaches

AC

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.associationforcoaching.com/resource/resmgr/accreditation/2021_lca_docs/competency_framework_-_leade.pdf

Supervisors

AC

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.associationforcoaching.com/resource/resmgr/accreditation/coaching_supervisor_accreditation/supporting_documentation/aug19/csa_ac_principles_framework.pdf

APECS

<https://www.apecs.org/members/membership-categories-criteria-guidelines>

EMCC

<https://emccdrive.org/u58uwr2myu9PIkhJKFzpOKneuVDmH9Gbg5wyHBUP>

Links to Complaints Procedures

AC

<https://www.associationforcoaching.com/page/ACComplaintsProc>

APECS

<https://www.apecs.org/ethical-guidelines>

AOCS

<https://www.associationofcoachingsupervisors.com/about/aocs-complaints-procedure-march-2020>

EMCC

<https://www.emccglobal.org/leadership-development/complaints/>

ICF Ethical Conduct Review Process

<https://coachingfederation.org/ethics/ethical-conduct-review-process>