



COMPARING THE ICF AND MCF
— How do they Compare? —
— How do they Differ? —

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As the field of Coaching continues to evolve, so are the organizations which are providing Coach Training and those which are providing Coach Credentialing and Assessment. Historically the ICF (International Coach Federation) has been the oldest organization involved in the later— credentialing coaches and so it is the most well-known organization. In 2003, Michelle Duval took the lead in initiating the MCF (Meta-Coach Foundation) for the credentialing and assessment for Meta-Coach Certification and Accreditation. And there are many other organizations doing the same.

- So what is the difference between the ICF and the MCF?
- Are the standards, values, and definitions of Coaching different?
- Are the assessment and coaching skills different?
- Which certification and credentials is best?

Inasmuch as these, and many other similar questions, are frequently now being raised, this article is design to begin to answer them.

Distinguishing the Two Organizations

There are several similarities as well as differences between these two organizations:

ICF	MCF
Anyone can be a member	Membership exclusive to Licensed Meta-Coaches
A Credentialing Organization	A Credentialing Organization
Not a Coach Training Organization	A Coach Training & Certification Organization
Sponsors Chapter Meetings	Sponsors Chapter Meetings
List of Coach Competencies	List of Coach Competencies
Competencies <i>not</i> benchmarked	Competencies benchmarked by behavioral measurements

The ICF

Regarding the ICF, anybody can become a general member, it is just a matter of signing up and paying a fee. No special qualifications are necessary to become a general member. Qualifications only come into play if you wish to gain Professional Credentials. For the Professional Credentials there are three levels:

ACC — Associate Certified Coach

PCC — Professional Certified Coach

MCC — Master Certified Coach

Because the ICF itself *is not a training organization*, you cannot be trained by the ICF. The ICF accredits people from all different training institutions and they have rules governing the pathways to reach these credentials.

Pathway 1 is with an accredited coach training program. If you take your training in a Coach Training course approved by the ICF, you would then apply for your credential and demonstrate you have taken training. Pathway 2 is the portfolio certification. If you have taken your training by an organization that is not ICF approved, then you similarly apply for your credential and demonstrate you have taken Coach Specific Training of a minimum of 125 hours for PCC and another 75 hours for MCC.

One final distinction. The ICF is an credentialing organization, but not an accreditation body. That is, it provides credentials and credentially of the ACC, PCC, and MCC ICF credentials. But it is not itself an accreditation body unlike what we have established in the Meta-Coach Foundation. In the MCF, all Meta-Coach training through modules 1 to 3 for the ACMC credentials is accredited through the ISNS (International Society of Neuro-Semantics).

The MCF

Given that the Portfolio Certification is the way a Meta-Coach gains certification through the ICF, you would applying for the credential by demonstrating that the training you took was “Coach Specific” and that it met the ICF Core Competencies. Meta-Coaching meets and far exceeds this criteria. The basic Meta-Coach training involves 180 hours of Coach Specific training and involves 7 core competencies by which you are benchmarked, 8 Axes of Change competencies, and then another 12 competencies for framing, pattern detection, etc.

Numerous Meta-Coaching Graduates have gone through the Portfolio Credentialing path of the ICF and have obtained ICF credentials in addition to their Meta-Coaching credentials. And to facilitate this, in 2005, Michelle Duval created all of the paperwork that a Meta-Coach needs to submit for the ICF.

What goes far beyond the ICF is that in the Meta-Coaching System, the competencies are benchmarked to specific behavioral actions and so provides behavioral measurement of the coaching competencies. In Meta-Coaching, we have rigorous credentialing that far exceeds the standards of the ICF.

Collaborations

Why have we in Meta-Coaching not become an ICF approved organization? In 2002 when Meta-Coaching began, there was significant difference between the Meta-Coaching System the ICF. They believed that dealing with “beliefs” was “therapy,” and we did not. They had six very general competencies, we had seven core competencies and 20 advanced competencies— and all were benchmarked. So we deliberated and made the strategic decision to build the professionalism of Coaching as we were developing it.