

**REVIEW OF THE EU 5-LEVEL STRUCTURE FOR THE RECOGNITION
OF COACHING QUALIFICATIONS**

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FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN COACHING
COUNCIL, A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF SPORTS
SCIENCES

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Executive Summary

This document describes the review process that has been carried out to date on the EU 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications. The Review is being conducted by the European Coaching Council, a sub-committee of the European Network of Sports Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE). The current document represents the third consultative draft for consideration by the member countries of the European Coaching Council and for inclusion in the third year report of the Aligning a European Higher Education Structure in Sport Science (AEHESIS) project.

The need for the Review was identified by the members of the European Coaching Council, given that the initial structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications was first developed in 1999. It was also felt that there was a need to more fully engage with the international federations on the issue of coach education and qualifications. In a wider, global context the International Council for Coach Education has also indicated the need for a framework to guide the recognition of coaching qualifications between different countries.

In addition, there have been several wider developments within vocational education and training in the European Union that have significant implications for the way in which coaches are educated and their qualifications recognised. These include the Lisbon, Bologna and Copenhagen processes that have begun to chart new directions for vocational education and higher education in light of the emerging social and economic challenges facing the European Union. These processes have also initiated a proposed European Qualification Framework (EQF) and a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

The Review to date suggests six main changes to the 5-level structure:

- a. Four levels are proposed rather than five:** The number of coaching levels has been reduced from five to four. This more closely reflects the nature of the coaching role, the stages in the development of coaching expertise and current training provision as identified by the international federations and the national competent authorities in coach education.
- b. Two standard occupations are identified rather than one:** The revised framework recognises that within the professional area of coaching there is a diversity of standard occupations. Two standard occupations have been identified: Coach of participation oriented sportspersons and Coach of competition oriented sportspersons. These two standard occupations may be further sub-divided into four main coaching roles: Coach of beginner players (child, junior, adult); Coach of participation/non-competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of talent identified/competitive players (child, junior, adult); Coach of full-time/high performance players. It is recognised that these roles may vary between sports and between countries.
- c. Coaching competence and learning outcomes are more strongly identified:** In the initial framework, learning hours were central to the description of each of the levels. In the revised framework, greater attention is devoted to coaching competence and learning outcomes.
- d. The introduction of a coach licensing system is recommended:** As part of the process of moving coaching towards the status of a regulated profession it is recommended that all coaches should hold a sport-specific coaching licence. The coaching licence should act as a registration and recognition system overseen and validated by the sports federations and, if needed, by the national competent authority. The coaching licence

should be the primary criterion for the recognition of the coaches' mastery of the practical demands and competencies of sports coaching.

- e. **A system for the recognition of coaching qualifications between vocational and higher education sectors within each country is proposed:** It is recommended that all national competent authorities in coach education oversee, recognise and, if needed, conduct the sports coaching qualification programmes. The revised structure for the recognition of sport coach qualifications should consist of three primary strands: a. Federation-based education; b. Higher Education-based education; c. Other recognised coaching education agencies -based education

- f. **The revised European Structure for the Recognition of Coaching Qualifications has been linked to the emerging European Qualification Framework:** A pre-liminary comparison between the revised European Structure for the Recognition of Coaching Qualifications (four levels) and the emerging European Qualification Framework (8 levels) has been made.

Detailed work has also been carried out on the description of the standard occupations, for the purposes of consultation. A European Coaching Convention is proposed through which it is proposed that the framework for the licensing and recognition of coaches as proposed by the European Coaching Council is the European recognised mechanism that is affirmed and actively supported.

REVIEW OF THE EU 5-LEVEL STRUCTURE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

1. Background to the Review

Since its completion in 1999, the *European structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training*¹ has facilitated a gradual convergence towards a common European framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications. A number of countries have used the structure as a reference point for the further development of their coach education systems², while the document has also been utilised by some international federations³. The structure outlined in the 1999 document is summarised in Appendix 1.

However, it has become evident that there are elements of the structure that have not been implemented or which have not gained full acceptance within the EU coaching community. For example, the nature and positioning of level 5 qualifications has been the subject of considerable debate. This debate has focused on the realisation that expert levels of coaching are derived from many years of on-the-job experience and cannot simply be attained through the completion of a degree course.

There is also a need to more strongly recognise the role of national and international federations in the education of coaches. While the initial document recognised this principle, International Federations were not centrally involved in its development. On a global basis, there has been increasing interest in the need for a comprehensive and transparent system for the recognition of coaching qualifications.⁴ In addition, the trend towards competence-based learning suggests that the initial structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications needs to be revised in line with the latest thinking in this area.

It is also the case that the European context for the recognition of educational and vocational qualifications has changed significantly since the creation of the 1999 document. Some of the main changes in the European landscape that impact on the structure for coach education are summarised in section 4 of this document.

2. The Aims and Methodology for the Review

Taking the above context into account, the European Coaching Council (a sub-committee of the European Network of Sports Science, Education and Employment -ENSSEE) initiated a review of the European Structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training in 2004. The initial mandate for the Review was as follows:

- Review the EU Qualification structure for coaches, in light of the emerging structures for the recognition of vocational and educational qualifications in Europe and taking into account the needs and programmes of European/International and National sports federations.

¹ European Sports Observatory, European Structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training, 1999

² For example, Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Hungary; Portugal; Ireland; Italy; United Kingdom have employed the framework as a reference point to varying degrees in the development of their coach education systems

³ The European Handball Federation has adopted the Rinck Convention, which seeks to align the coach education programmes of its member countries with a structure that has used the European Structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training as a reference point

⁴ The International Council for Coach Education (ICCE), which is the world-wide umbrella body for coach education, considered this issue formally at its biennial Global Conference in Limerick in September 2006. Arising from that event, it is proposed that the current draft document will also be considered by the Board of ICCE in Magglingen, Switzerland on July 4. A number of international federations have also begun to consider the requirements for coach education, including the International Tennis Federation; International Amateur Athletics Federation; Federation Internationale Equestre Internationale; International Rugby Board.

- Make preliminary proposals on a revised structure for Coaching qualifications in Europe.
- Prepare a preliminary report, for consultation purposes, at the ENSSEE and International Council for Coach Education (ICCE) Forum in Limerick on September 2-4, 2005

The Review Group included representatives from the European Coaching Council (ECC); International Federations; European Olympic Committee; ICCE and ENSSEE.⁵ The Review Group met on 7 occasions in Warsaw; Rio Maior; Limerick; Budapest; Barcelona; Valencia; Magglingen. The work was carried out in parallel with the Aligning European Higher Education Structures in Sport (AEHESIS). The ECC wishes to acknowledge the support of that project in facilitating meetings and in the consideration of potential curriculum models for coaching.

The objectives for the Review were further refined by the Review Group as follows:

- Promote a greater consistency of approach to the development of coaching qualifications across sports and the different EU countries
- Encourage the development of more relevant education and training provision to meet the needs of national and international federations, athletes and coaches
- Provide a transparent framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications within the EU, taking into account the wider EU developments in vocational and educational training and the need to more clearly define the relationship with the higher education sector
- Develop a framework that recognises the role of the non-university and university sectors in the education of coaches, in the context of emerging structures for the recognition of educational and vocational qualifications within the EU
- Raise standards and improve the quality of coaching
- Work towards a greater public recognition of coaching as a qualified, competent and regulated profession, which is integral to successful player development at all levels.

In addition to the above, it was recommended that quality assurance procedures should underpin all programmes receiving recognition with the revised framework. Equality of opportunity was also highlighted as a key underpinning principle of the framework, with a strong emphasis on the inclusion of minority groups, girls/women and disabled players and coaches.

The primary methodology employed by the Review was a desk and expert analysis of:

- the previous 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications
- emerging trends and needs within coach education in the EU and globally

⁵ The composition of the Group was as follows: Chair: Dr Pat Duffy, sports coach UK and Chairman of the European Coaching Council; Mr Corrado Beccarini, CONI, Italy; Ms Jacqueline Braissant, Federation Equestre International; Mr Bruce Cook, International Rugby Board; Dr Miguel Crespo, International Tennis Federation; Mr Christophe DeBove, INSEP, France; Mr Elio Locatelli, International Amateur Athletics Federation; Dr Thierry Marique, Louvain, Belgium; Dr Ladislav Petrovic, Director, Coach Education, Semmelweis University; Mr Jose Rodrigues, Director, Rio Maior; Mr Agoston Schulek, European Athletics Association; Mr Ton Van Linder, European Handball Federation. External advisor: Mr John Bales, President, Coaching Association of Canada and President-elect of the International Council for Coach Education.

- c. the changing context for vocational education and training within the EU

This analysis was supported by peer review through the AEHESIS project and by the appointment of Mr John Bales, President of ICCE, as external evaluator to the project.

Consultation with the national competent authorities in coach education, international federations and other agencies was also a key part of the methodology. As part of this process, an interim consultation document was developed and presented to representatives from ECC, ENSSEE and ICCE at the ENSSEE/ICCE Forum in Limerick in September 2005. Over 80 delegates participated in the sessions that considered the document and feedback was collated. The feedback indicated significant support for the general direction of the revised framework, thus providing a direction for the further development of the document.

3. The significance of coaching to the European Union

As the European Union devotes increasing attention to sport as a contributor to social and economic objectives, coaching has significant part to play.⁶ The creation of a coherent, quality assured coach education and qualification system within the European Union will provide many tangible benefits. Coaches play a central role in introducing people to sport and in helping children, players and athletes to improve and achieve success.

Through the further development of coaching and coach education systems, pathways for greater numbers of participants will be widened and enhanced. The consequent contribution to the sporting systems and quality of life within the EU is significant. Suitably qualified and competent coaches are needed to work at all stages of player development. These coaches should be equipped to deal with the age, stage and individual needs of the participants with whom they work.

Within the evolving landscape of the EU, increasing attention is being paid to the vocational structures that exist in sport. Coaching is one of the key sub-sectors of sport and there is a pressing need to ensure that there is a comprehensive and quality assured system for the education, training and recognition of coaches within Europe. Such a system will provide the basis for establishing coaching more strongly as a regulated profession⁷, while recognising the strongly volunteer nature of coaching in many countries.

Notwithstanding the high level of volunteerism in coaching, there are increasing numbers of part-time and volunteer coaches employed within Europe. In 1999, the European Observatoire of Sport Employment (EOSE)⁸ suggested that 50,000 coaches were working in paid employment throughout the then 15 countries of the Union. More recently, the Vocasport⁹ project cited the same figures for the expanded 25-country EU, suggesting that there is a need to research and collate up-to-date and valid statistics concerning the coaching workforce in the EU.

4. Changes in the EU context since the initial Review

⁶ The European Union has indicated that it will prepare a White Paper on sport.

⁷ In this context, a 'regulated profession' is defined as a professional activity or group of professional activities access to which, and the practice of which (or to one of its forms) is directly or indirectly subject to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions concerning the possession of specific professional qualifications (see Appendix 2).

⁸ European observatoire of Sport Employment, 1999

⁹ Report of the Vocasport Report

Since the initial 5-level qualification structure was developed, a number of changes in the European landscape have modified the context within which the education of coaches occurs. These changes have a significant bearing on the current review and four inter-related aspects must be taken into consideration:

1. The implementation of the 'Copenhagen Process'
2. The implementation of the 'Bologna Process'
3. The possible emergence of a future European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
4. The creation of an ECVET (European Credit Systems for Vocational Education and Training)

Each of these elements is summarised below and the main implications for the current review identified.

4.1 The Copenhagen Process

The 'Copenhagen Process' is part of the wider EU 'Lisbon strategy' aimed at establishing '**common objectives of European education and training systems**'.¹⁰ According to this strategy the European Union has set the goal of '**becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion**'.

Key points of the Copenhagen Process include:

- **European dimension of vocational education and training** (inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other trans-national initiatives)
- **Transparency, information and guidance** through the implementation and rationalisation of information tools and networks (eg. European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, Europass into one single framework)
- **Recognition of competences and qualifications** (by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, a credit transfer system, development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level, involvement of social partners)
- **Validation of non-formal and informal learning**
- **Lifelong learning orientation**
- **Quality assurance** (exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training).

The Copenhagen Process strongly signals the need for transparent, European-wide systems for the development and recognition of vocational qualifications. It also identifies the need for enhanced systems for recognising competence and non-formal and informal learning¹¹, as well the significance of common criteria for quality assurance. Each of these dimensions is of fundamental significance to the current review, which seeks to provide a coherent European-wide dimension to guide the education and qualification of coaches.

4.2 The Bologna Process

¹⁰ The Copenhagen and Lisbon processes derived their names from meetings dealing with aspects of education and vocational training in the European Union

¹¹ A glossary of terms currently in use within the European Union is provided in Appendix 2.

The 'Bologna Process'¹² is the result of an inter-governmental initiative, which extends beyond the European Union. It has the end-goal of setting up a European higher-education area by the year 2010 in which staff and students will be able to move easily and enjoy fair recognition of their qualifications. A set of main objectives has been defined in the Bologna declaration:

- A system of easily "readable" and comparable degrees, including the implementation of the diploma supplement
- A system based on three cycles, setting the basis of an over-arching qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area
- A strong attention paid to employability and the needs of the labour market
- A system of accumulation and transfer of credits
- Mobility of students, teachers, researchers
- Cooperation in terms of quality assurance
- European dimension of higher education.

A key objective of the process is therefore to gear higher education in Europe towards a more transparent and mutually recognised system that would place the varied national systems within a common framework. The framework would be based on three levels of qualification – bachelor, master and doctorate – and on the routes through which these qualifications have been obtained.

While a substantial element of the education of coaches occurs outside of the higher education sector, the Bologna Declaration has signalled a set of intentions and processes that will affect the overall framework for the recognition of qualifications within Europe, including coaching qualifications.

In cases where coaching and coach education are integrated or associated with institutions in higher education, the Bologna process will have a more direct impact. It is also the case that the proposed focus on employability and the needs of the labour market is likely to lead to a greater degree of interaction between the higher education sector and national/international federations than heretofore.

4.3 The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Within the context of the Copenhagen, Bologna and Lisbon processes, EU Heads of Government requested, in March 2005, the creation of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF), that is a meta-framework¹³ increasing transparency and supporting mutual trust. It would thereby enable qualifications frameworks and systems at national and sectoral level to be related more closely to each other – thus facilitating the transfer and recognition of the qualifications of individual citizens.

¹² The Bologna process derives its name from a declaration that was signed by the Rectors of Higher Education Institutions in Bologna in 1999.

¹³ A meta-framework is a means of enabling one framework of qualifications to relate to others and subsequently for one qualification to relate to others that are normally located in another framework. The meta-framework aims to create confidence and trust in relating qualifications across countries and sectors. It does so by defining principles for the operation of quality assurance processes, guidance and information and mechanisms for credit transfer and accumulation so that the transparency necessary at national and sectoral levels can also be available internationally.

It is envisaged that the EQF will be developed and implemented on a voluntary basis, not entailing any legal obligations. EQF is not intended to replace national qualifications levels and is not intended to take over any of the established roles of national systems.

An EQF would consist of three main elements:

1. **A set of common reference points** – referring to learning outcomes - located in a structure of 8 levels. Each level will be specified in terms of descriptors including for example the mode, location, timescale, focus (knowledge, skills, competences) context of learning, assessment, quality assurance arrangements, guidance for learners, guidance for users of qualifications. This number of levels was based on analysis of evidence from research, and from the Bologna agreements of cycles in higher education.
2. **A range of support tools and instruments** addressing the needs of individual citizens (an integrated European credit transfer, an accumulation system for lifelong learning, the Europass).
3. **A set of common principles and procedures** providing guidelines for co-operation between stakeholders at different levels – in particular focussing on quality assurance, validation, guidance and key competences.

Within this shared framework, policy makers, education and training institutions and other providers will be able to better situate learning offers according to reference levels commonly understood in the wider Europe. In this way EQF will support the work of policy makers and experts at national and sectoral levels and provide 'a reading grid' facilitating comparisons and cooperation between national and sectoral frameworks and systems.

EQF could thus contribute to the strengthening of the quality of education, training and human resource development in Europe. It is evident that the elements and principles of the emerging EQF are of direct relevance to the current review of coaching qualifications. These include the proposed 8-level structure; the development of credit transfer systems and the enhancement of quality assurance and validation mechanisms. The revised framework for coaching qualifications should take these principles fully into account and should closely monitor emerging developments in the EQF initiative. Table 1 overleaf outlines the main features of the EQF framework.

Table 1
Proposed European Qualifications Framework –indicative qualifications¹⁴

Level	Description
1	Learning contexts are simple and stable and the focus is general learning of basic skills. Leads to further learning opportunities and to access to unskilled employment that may include a further element of training. This level is often the entry point to a lifelong pathway for people with no qualifications. Use basic skills to carry out simple tasks.
2	Learning contexts are stable and the focus is the broadening of skills (including key competences). Provides an entry into qualifications-based training programmes and to access to unskilled employment that may include a further element of training. Use skills and key competences to carry out tasks where action is governed by rules defining routines and strategies.
3	Learning contexts for developing and demonstrating competence are generally stable, but some factors change from time to time leaving scope for personal expression in improving methods used. People with this level will usually have some experience of the field of work or study. Provides access to semi-skilled employment, further training and higher education. A key stage in a lifelong pathway. Use a range of field-specific skills to carry out tasks and show personal interpretation through selection and adjustment of methods, tools and materials
4	The context for developing and demonstrating competence at this level is usually predictable. There are many factors that can cause change in the learning context and some are related to each other. A person with this level of qualification will usually have experience of work of learning in a given field. People with this qualification typically have routes to further learning (sometimes in higher education) and to employment in skilled work. This level of qualification also supports further specialised training for those seeking job enhancement. Qualification at level 4 also provides access to employment in skilled work that can be performed independently and entail supervisory and coordination duties. Develop strategic approaches to tasks that arise in work or study by applying specialist knowledge and using expert sources of information. Evaluate outcomes in terms of strategic approach used.
5	Typical learning situations at this level require that problems are solved in a pre-determined learning process. Learning is based on experience in a given field that is often specialised. Provides access to higher education programmes at level 6 (often with some credit exemption), to employment in highly skilled work or to career progression through increased recognition of work capabilities. May also provide access to job roles requiring managerial duties. Develop strategic and creative responses in researching solutions to well-defined concrete and abstract

¹⁴ Adapted from Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Commission of the European Communities Sec (2005) 957

	problems.
6	Learning situations are not stable and require that complex problems are solved in the learning process. Learning is often highly specialised. Provide access to professional employment opportunities and are often career entry qualifications for professional and managerial work. Demonstrate mastery of methods and tools in a complex and specialised field and demonstrate innovation in terms of methods used.
7	Typical learning situations are unfamiliar and require solving problems that involve many interacting factors. Learning is often highly specialised. Often occurs in a higher education setting, with recognition of professional bodies and associated with the second cycle of qualifications in higher education as part of the Bologna process. Offer access to employment and career progression within the specialist field. Create a research-based diagnosis to problems by integrating knowledge from new or inter-disciplinary fields and make judgements with incomplete or limited information.
8	Learning situations are novel and require solving problems that involve many interacting factors within a highly specialised field. Offer access to employment opportunities in specialised fields and career progression for those involved in jobs requiring research skills, scholarly work and leadership. Research, conceive, design, implement and adapt projects that lead to new knowledge and new procedural solutions.

4.4 The European Credit Systems for Vocational Education and Training

The European Credit Systems for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a European system of accumulation and transfer of credits designed for vocational education training in Europe. It enables the attesting and recording of the learning achievement/learning outcomes of an individual engaged in a learning pathway leading to a qualification, a vocational diploma or certificate.

A credit system makes it possible to divide a qualification into units of partial objectives. In this way, any person could accumulate, capitalise, transfer his/her achieved learning outcomes, to claim for their recognition and validation through individual learning pathways.

The technical principles and specification of the system are defined at the European level. The system is not intended to replace existing national systems for credit accumulation and/or transfer. National authorities, vocational Education Training providers, sectors or other competent bodies will cooperate in this field through a specific Memorandum of Understanding, essential to create the climate of trust in which credit transfer can operate.

The creation of a credit transfer system for coaching would appear desirable in this context. The formulation of a Memorandum of Understanding or Convention for the recognition of coaching qualifications and credits would facilitate such a system and would dovetail with the emerging ECVET process.

5. Guiding principles of the revised framework

It is apparent, therefore, that the current Review of the 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications should fully align with the key principles emerging from the Copenhagen and Bologna processes. In addition, the revised framework should take full account of the emerging EQF framework and the ECVET process. Taking into account this context and the terms of reference for the review, a number of guiding principles were developed for the revised framework:

A. THE PURPOSE OF COACH EDUCATION

Developing effective and ethical coaches should be a central feature of coach education programmes, underpinned by appropriate theoretical content

Coach education programmes should equip coaches to carry out the various elements of their role effectively and ethically. The coach should be provided with education in practical and theoretical (scientific) areas, which is closely linked with their day-to-day work. The work of coaches should be underpinned by a strong Code of Ethics and Conduct designed to protect the safety, welfare and rights of all sports participants.

B. COMPETENCE TO DO THE JOB

Coach education programmes should equip coaches with the competence to do the job.

The design of coach education programmes should be closely related to the needs of the labour market and/or the requirements of national/international federations. Coaches should be equipped to do the job, demonstrating and practising the skills that will enhance their effectiveness in fostering athlete progress, confidence, responsibility and empowerment. It should also be recognised that the role of the coach varies according to the pathway stage of the children, players and athletes. Some coaches will play mixed roles across the pathway, while others work at specific stages. The training and qualification of coaches should take the potential for diversification or specialisation of role into account, based on a clear analysis of the labour market and the needs of the relevant federations.

C. LEARNING MODES

The format of coach education programmes should include a range of learning modes

Coach education programmes should consist of a combination of competence-based training; formal coach education sessions; individual learning; e-learning; distance learning; supervised practice and recognition of prior learning. Theoretical, practical and on-the-job training should be essential features of all coach education programmes, underpinned by an adherence to the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Coaching expertise is built up through a combination of practical experience, formal training programmes and self-reflection

Coach education programmes are one part of the overall development of coaching expertise. These programmes provide essential building blocks and underpinning knowledge for coaches and are most effective when they are closely related to the experience and working context of the coach. The primary element of developing coaching expertise comes from the practice of coaching, guided by well-structured education programmes and informed by the decision-making and self-reflection of the coach.

The design of coach education programmes should recognise prior learning and competence. Lifelong learning and a philosophy of continuous improvement should also be central features of coach education programmes.

Informal and non-formal learning should be recognised and validated¹⁵.

D. ATHLETE¹⁶ AND SPORTSPERSON¹⁷ DEVELOPMENT

Coach education programmes should be designed so that the coach has the competencies to assist the athletes and sportspersons in achieving their goals throughout their appropriate stage(s) of development.

Clear models of athlete and sportsperson development, both generic and sport specific, are central to the creation of participant-centred coach education programmes. The

¹⁵ These terms are defined in the Glossary.

¹⁶ The term athlete refers to competition-oriented sports participants, including children, adolescents and adults

¹⁷ The term sportsperson refers to participation-oriented sports participants, including children, adolescents and adults

alignment of athlete and sportsperson development models with coach education programmes will maximise relevance and effectiveness for the participating coaches¹⁸. The early years of sport involvement should be characterised by a strong emphasis on enjoyment, the development of fundamental skills and the sampling of a range of sports activities.¹⁹ At all stages of athlete and sportsperson development coaches should seek to promote responsibility, decision-making and autonomy among athletes.

E. THE COACHING CONTEXT

The context in which the coach will work, and the potential roles of the coach, should be taken into account when designing courses (e.g. club, federation/association, school, regional, national, international levels).

Coaching includes paid and unpaid aspects

The paid and unpaid aspects of coaching should be recognised in the development of the qualification structure. Recruitment and retention of coaches is an important consideration in the design of any coach education system.

F. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

Coach education levels should be underpinned by systems of quality assurance and linked to national and European vocational qualification structures

All coach education programmes should be underpinned by quality assurance systems that meet the appropriate national and international criteria. These systems should ensure that the design, delivery, assessment and evaluation of coach education programmes are at the required standard against the relevant national and international norms.

G. RECOGNITION OF COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

National and international federations, as well as the competent national authorities, have a central role in the education of coaches and tutors and in the recognition of coaching qualifications

The application of any coach education framework within the EU must have the capacity for sport-specific adaptation. Greater cooperation between the university and non-university sector in the education of coaches and the recognition of coaching qualifications is encouraged.

Transparency, information and guidance

The revised framework for recognising coaching qualifications should provide a transparent system to guide the design and recognition of coaching qualifications across the European Union and between sports.

6. The role and long-term development of the coach

For the purposes of the review, coaching has been defined as:

The guided improvement, led by a coach, of sports participants in a single sport and at identifiable stages of the athlete/sportsperson pathway.

¹⁸ In cases where coaches play roles across a number of stages of athlete/sportsperson development, coach education programmes should provide the opportunity to develop competences and achieve learning outcomes that are relevant to each of the stages.

¹⁹ The approach taken to early sport experiences varies between countries and depending on whether sports are deemed to be early or late specialisation sports.

Key coaching activities include needs analysis and planning; delivery of training sessions; coaching in competition settings and the on-going review of progress

²⁰

The revised framework has, therefore, been developed on the basis that 'coaching a sport' is the main professional area²¹.

In reviewing the existing 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications, it was necessary to classify the roles played by coaches and to identify the main stages associated with the development of coaching expertise. It was also necessary to more closely align the description of coaching roles with the relevant stage of athlete and sportsperson development. This approach was aimed at promoting a closer relationship between the education and qualifications of coaches and the needs of sports participants and of the labour market.

Two main standard occupations within the professional area have been identified, each with two sub-components as follows:

A. Coach of participation-oriented sportspersons

1. Coach of beginners (child, junior, adult)
2. Coach of participation/non-competitive sportspersons (child, junior, adult)

B. Coach of performance-oriented athletes

1. Coach of talent identified/competitive athletes (child, junior, adult)
2. Coach of full-time/high performance athletes

The coaching roles outlined above may be carried out in a volunteer; part-time or full-time context. It is also envisaged that many coaches may play roles in more than one of the categories listed. Differences will also exist in the nature of these roles between countries and from sport to sport. To maximise the clarity and effectiveness of the coaching roles, it is recommended that each sport/country have a clear specification of the stages and curriculum for long-term athlete and sportsperson development.

It is also suggested that there are four main phases in the development of coaching expertise and these include early, middle, late, innovation.²² These phases of coaching expertise can be translated into coaching roles that have relevance for both the labour market and coach education programmes, as outlined in Table 2.

²⁰ This definition has been adapted from the Aligning Higher Education Structures in Sport (AEHESIS) Coaching project which defined coaching as: **'the coaching of one sport specific discipline to clearly identifiable groups of sportspersons at specified levels and recognised by the appropriate national sports federation and/or competent national authority for the sport sector'**.

²¹ It is recognised that coaches may coach in more than one sport. The training and qualification of such coaches should be clearly linked to the programmes of the relevant federations. Systems for recognising skills and competence that may cross the boundary from one sport to another should be considered. Some coaches play a multi-sport or multi-skill role, particularly in working with children. The framework for the training and qualification of coaches working in this context requires further consideration and has not been addressed in this document. There is need to explore further standard occupations such as 'Coaching children' or 'Skills coach' or 'physical education coach' and how these occupations relate to wider roles in coaching, physical education and other related areas.

²² This classification is based on standard expertise literature (for example Ericson, 1994; Berliner, 2001). It is recognised that further research is required to more specifically identify the phases of associated with the development of coaching expertise).

Table 2
Suggested classification of coaching roles

Role title	Role description
Apprentice Coach	Assist more qualified coaches delivering aspects of coaching sessions, normally under supervision. Deliver coaching sessions under direction/support. Acquire and practice basic coaching competences.
Coach	Prepare for, deliver and review coaching sessions. Demonstrate basic coaching competence.
Senior Coach	Plan, implement and review annual coaching sessions. Demonstrate advanced coaching competence.
Master Coach	Plan, implement, analyse and revise multi-annual coaching programmes. Demonstrate advanced coaching competence, innovation and leadership.
Coach of participation-oriented sportspeople	
Coach of performance-oriented athletes	

The definition and application of these coaching roles is likely to vary from sport to sport and country to country.

7. The education of coaches

It is recommended that the education structure for coaches should be closely related to the coaching roles of the professional area and the two standard occupations identified in section 6 above.

Four main levels of coach education are proposed, referenced against the four coaching roles described in Table 2 above. Each of the four coach education levels could also deal with the two main standard occupations (namely, coach of participant-oriented sportspersons and coach of performance-oriented athletes). Table 3 outlines the suggested framework.

Table 3
Proposed revised framework for the education of coaches

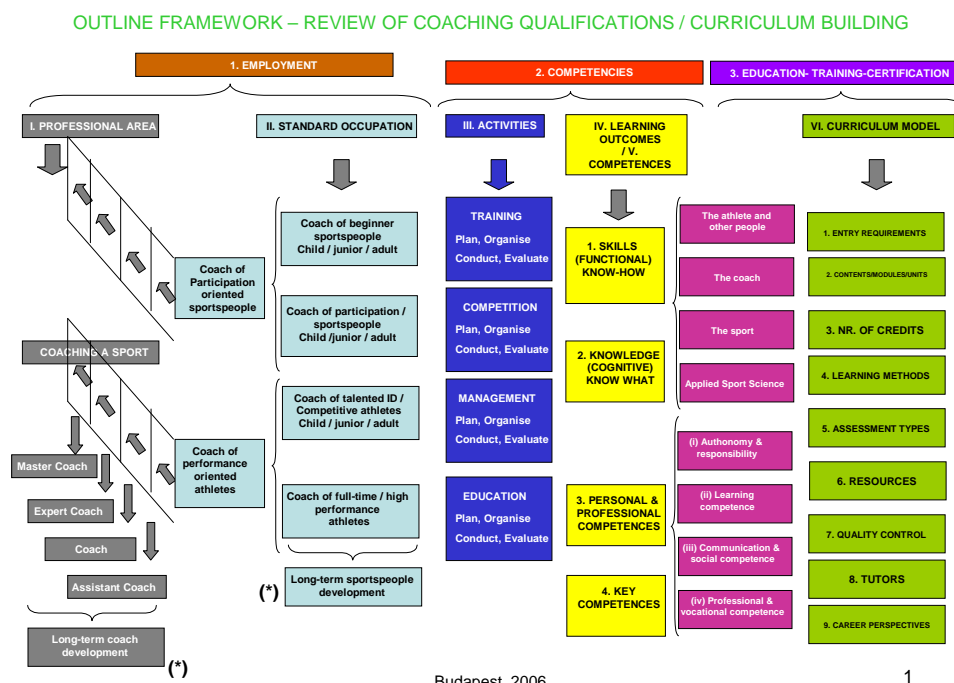
Level	Focus of the education	Coaching role reference point
1	Provide basic skills and knowledge for the apprentice coach role	Apprentice Coach
2	Consolidate skills and knowledge for the coach role	Coach
3	Provide advanced skills and knowledge for the senior coach role	Senior Coach
4	Provide advanced skills, knowledge, leadership and innovation for the master coach role	Master Coach
Coach of participation-oriented sportspersons		
Coach of performance-oriented athletes		

At levels 1 to 4, the education of coaches should seek to prepare coaches as closely as possible for the coaching roles within each of the relevant standard occupations.

It is recognised, however, that education programmes alone may not provide all of the competence and experience required to perform a given role in all its aspects. In cases where initial coach education does not provide all of the competence and experience to fulfil a given role, it is envisaged that coach-licensing schemes will clearly outline how such competences can be acquired and validated. The proposed licensing of coaches will be dealt with in Section 8 below.

The proposed revised framework has been mapped against the 1999 Structure for the Recognition of Coaches and is outlined in Appendix 3. Pre-liminary work has been carried out on how the proposed revised framework for the education and qualification of coaches might be translated into a curriculum framework²³ (see Figure 1, with a larger version presented in Appendix 4).

Figure 1 – Outline curriculum framework



The outline framework provides the basis for curriculum building in coach education and more detailed work on each of the two main standard occupations is included in Appendices 5 and 6.

The outline competence framework for coaching, against which the education of coaches can be referenced, is outlined in table 4.

²³ This curriculum framework has been developed using the six-step model for Curriculum, utilised as part of the AEHESIS project.

Table 4 Competence framework for coaching

Activities	Tasks	Competences
The main activities performed by coaches are as follows:	Within each activity, coaches perform the following tasks:	The competences needed to successfully perform the tasks related to each activity include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training: To prepare sportspeople for competition by planning, organising, conducting and evaluating the appropriate programmes and sessions - Competition: To plan, organise, conduct and evaluate the appropriate events, tournaments, programmes and matches - Management: To lead, direct or control people related to the sport - Education: To teach, instruct or mentor people related to the sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan: Ability to put together a step-by-step programme achieve a goal in a session, series of sessions, season, series of seasons - Organise: Ability to co-ordinate and make all the necessary arrangements to ensure that the goal will be achieved in an efficient and effective way - Conduct: Ability to carry out and execute the planned and organised task - Evaluate: Ability to study, analyse and decide on the utility, value, significance or quality of the above process - Research and self-reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge: the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially - Skills: the functions (know-how) a person should be able to do when functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity - Personal, professional, ethical: knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and possessing certain personal and professional values - Generic/underpinning/key: Communication in mother tongue, communication in another language, basic competences in maths, science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, interpersonal and civic competences, entrepreneurship and cultural expression

Note: Knowledge should include the following areas:

1. **Knowledge of the sport**
 - a. Rules, b. Regulations, c. Facilities, d. Equipment, e. Specific characteristics of different modalities.
2. **Knowledge of the people in the sport**
 - a. Athletes and their stages of development,
 - b. Coaches themselves and their stages of development,
 - c. Other fellow coaches,
 - d. Parents and entourage,
 - e. Officials, referees and agents,
 - f. Schools, clubs and federations
 - g. Media
3. **Knowledge of sport sciences as related to the sport**
 - a. Technique; tactics; physical; and mental aspects of the sport
 - b. Medicine, nutrition, first aid, injury prevention
 - c. Methodology and pedagogy (didactics)
 - d. Psychology and sociology
 - e. Biomechanics
 - f. Periodisation and planning, Training theory, Lifestyle

g. Sport-specific model of athlete development

Further work is required on the classification outlined above, as well on the specific skills to be carried out by coaches of participation sportspersons and performance-oriented athletes.

8. Framework for the qualification and licensing of coaches

Based on the experiences of sports federations, higher education institutions and the national²⁴ competent authorities in sports coach education, it is proposed that the overall framework for the recognition of sports coaching as a profession should take into account three main aspects:

1. education of sports coaches
2. qualification of sports coaches
3. licensing of sports coaches

8.1 Coaching qualifications

A revised framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications is proposed, linked to the stages of development of coaching expertise and based on the four levels of coach education outlined in Section 7. Table 5 provides an overview of the relationships between the revised proposed framework for the qualification of coaches and the EQF.

Table 5
Relationship between the proposed 4-level structure and the EQF 8-level structure

Level	Focus of the education and qualification	Coaching role reference point	EQF levels ²⁵
1	Provide basic skills and knowledge for the apprentice coach role	Apprentice Coach	2
2	Consolidate skills and knowledge for the coach role	Coach	3,4
3	Provide advanced skills and knowledge for the senior coach role	Senior Coach	5
4	Provide advanced skills, knowledge, leadership and innovation for the master coach role	Master Coach	6,7
Coach of participation-oriented sportspersons			
Coach of performance-oriented athletes			

²⁴ References to national sports authorities or national federations can also include local, regional, continental and international organisations (federations).

²⁵ Further review and discussion of the link to EQF is required. The EQF levels included in the table are based on a pre-liminary analysis and prior to the completion of the EQF development process.

8.2 Recognition of coaching qualifications

It is recommended that all national competent authorities²⁶ in coach education oversee, recognise and, if needed, conduct the sports coaching education programmes. These authorities may identify different public or private organisations or agencies to deliver these programmes, as recognised coaching education agencies.

These recognised coach education agencies can be federations, universities-higher education institutions or public/private institutions/agencies as identified by the national competent authorities that will follow the guidelines set by the authorities.

Given the sport specific nature of coaching, the unique position of national federations in the conduct of coach education programmes is recognised.

The revised structure for the recognition of sport coach qualifications should consist of three primary strands:

1. Federation-based education
2. Higher Education-based education
3. Other recognised coaching education agencies -based education
 - i) **Federation-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by federations at various levels of responsibility (local/regional/national/continental/international).
 - ii) **Higher Education-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by institutions of higher education and/or other post second cycle institutions (e.g sports academies).
 - iii) **Other recognised coaching education agencies-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by national competent authorities or by public or private organisations recognised by them. These organisations can be public or private institutions/agencies recognised by the national competent authorities.

Co-operation between the strands: Cooperation between these strands is recommended with a view to maximising the quality of coach education and the maximisation of resources.

Mutual recognition: It is recommended that all strands should be recognised by the rest of parties involved in the process for the following purposes:

- i) **Recognition of Federation, Higher Education, and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the National Sports Authorities:** It is recommended that this strand should be recognised by the national competent authorities for the purposes of integration into their education system and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking further education in a non-university context.

²⁶ The national competent authority is a government-designated or recognised agency responsible for directly overseeing coach education programmes in one of the EU member states, within the context of the overall sports sector and the wider vocational framework. For example, central coaching/coach education agencies would fall into this category, assuming that agreed working arrangements exist with governing bodies. The national competent authority should ideally have a clear relationship with wider systems for the recognition of vocational training and with the higher education sector. Commercial agencies involved in coach education should be subject to quality assurance measures that have the agreement of the national competent authority and the relevant governing body of sport.




- ii) **Recognition of Federation and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the Higher Education institutions:** It is recommended that these strands should be recognised by universities and higher education institutions for the purposes of integration into their courses and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking further education in a university context.

- iv) **Recognition of Higher Education institutions and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the Federation:** It is recommended that these strands should be recognised by federations for the purposes of integration into their courses and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking to obtain their coaching licence.

It is recommended that where joint-working occurs the parties cooperate in all aspects of the education process, regardless of the agency involved in delivery. Dialogue should occur early in the planning process, before the coach education process starts.

Table 6 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications between the federation, higher education and other sectors.

Table 6 Outline framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications between sectors

	National Competent Authorities recognise	
		
Federation-based education	Public or private coaching education agencies	Higher Education based education
MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF ALL QUALIFICATIONS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES		

Criteria for recognition should be developed by each strand, using the Overall Framework outlined in Appendix 3, the Draft Curriculum Framework outlined in Figure 1 and the details of each standard occupation provided in Appendices 5 and 6.

8.3 Coaching Licence

As part of the process of moving coaching towards the status of a regulated profession, it is recommended that all coaches should hold a coaching licence²⁷. The sport-specific coaching licence should act as a registration and recognition system overseen and validated by the sports federations and, if needed, by the national competent authority.

²⁷ It is recognised that prior to formally taking up coaching, coaches may undertake a period of informal induction. The nature of this induction, or pre-coaching experience, will need to be identified within each sport, based on the model of long-term coach development that exists in the sport.

The coaching licence will be the primary criterion for the recognition of the coaches' mastery of the practical demands and competencies of sports coaching.

It is recommended that the sports coaching licence be issued by the relevant sport federation, with the recognition of the national competent authority. Appropriate systems and infrastructures will be needed within federations and EU member states to underpin this development.

It is envisaged that a coaching licence will, over time, become a mandatory requirement to coach at specified levels, with the timescale for this provision to be discussed and agreed within each sport and each country. Coach licensing schemes should also take account the volunteer, part-time and full-time paid nature of coaching.

The first step of licensing is the attainment of a formal qualification. The achievement of a sports coaching licence will derive from a combination of the following:

- i) **Coaching competence:** Demonstration of competence to coach at a given level of expertise (apprentice coach, coach, senior coach, and master coach) to:
 - Beginners (child, junior, adult)
 - Participation/non-competitive sportspersons (child, junior, adult)
 - Talent identified/competitive athletes
 - High performance/full-time athletes

Coaching competence may be developed through a number of different routes, or a combination of routes, as outlined in ii) to iv) below.

- ii) **Coach education:** Completion of a systematic course of study which challenges discipline, commitment and willingness to learn on the part of the coach (to include a specified minimum number of hours with a tutor; self-study/distance learning; supervised practice), taking into account sport specific differences and which is recognised by the relevant national competent authorities and the federations.

Courses of study may take place within federation, national competent authorities, and higher education based programmes or a combination of them. Other courses of study may be considered based on their contribution to the competence and knowledge framework outlined in this document.





- iii) **Coaching practice:** Practical involvement in sports coaching for a specified period and with specified groups of sportspeople or coaches.
- iv) **Recognition of prior learning and current competence:** Recognition of the accredited learning and experience that are specific and applicable to the sports coaching context. Systems for the recognition of prior learning and current competence should be put in place and should include recognition of the experience of former athletes, as well as other relevant experience.

The coaching licence may be issued to coaches working in different stages of long-term sportspeople development (beginner, talent identified, high performance and professional) and at the different stages of long-term coach development (assistant coach, coach, senior coach, master coach). The licence may be issued for a given period of time and may be renewed after a successful completion of continuous education activities.

Where possible, the coaching licence may include the benefits of coaching insurance, legal assistance, access to continuous education programmes, resources and other benefits. Table 7 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the licensing of coaches.

The licensing of coaches should be seen as part of the wider process of the establishment of coaching as a regulated sector/profession within the physical activity/sport family. Further research is required to ensure that the development and positioning of the coaching profession takes account of experiences in other relevant areas and the emerging legislative frameworks within the European Union.

Table 7 Framework for the licensing of coaches

	National Competent Authority recognises	
		
Federation- based education	Public or private coaching education agencies	Higher Education based education
MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS (WHICH MAY LEAD TO A LICENCE IMMEDIATELY OR MAY REQUIRE COACHING EXPERIENCE/CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)		
		
(COACHING EXPERIENCE AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)		
COACHING LICENCE ISSUED BY THE FEDERATION or the national competent authority and recognised by the national competent authority		

Depending on the level and nature of the coaching qualification, the qualification may itself be regarded as the coaching licence initially. In such cases, it is envisaged that the maintenance of the licence would be contingent upon professional development activities within specified timescales.

The manner in which licensing is applied will vary according between sports and countries differences, although it is recommended that the licences for senior and master coaches should be comparable between sports and between countries.

Licences should specify the sport; level of expertise and standard occupation of the coach. The creation of licensing systems has significant resource implications that require careful consideration in each of the member states and in each sport.

8.4 Coaching courses within the Higher Education Sector²⁸

It is recommended that courses in coaching within the higher education sector recognise the definition of coaching adopted within this document. Courses that include coaching in their title, must equip students with the skills and relationships to coach in a sport, or a

²⁸ This section draws heavily from the work of the Coaching strand of the AEHESIS project.

number of sports, to a specified level²⁹. Table 8 provides an outline example of how such an approach might operate where 1, 2 and 3 sports respectively are included within the coaching programme.

²⁹ Many institutions provide opportunities for students to follow course of study in coaching studies, coaching science and related areas. These courses provide useful underpinning knowledge for coaching, but they are not in themselves *coaching*.

**Table 8 Possible curriculum models in the higher education sector
Bachelor's degree in coaching, with a specialism in one, two or three sports**

N of sports/coaching level	Apprentice Coach	Coach	Senior Coach	Master Coach
1	X	X	X (possible)	-----
2	X	X	-----	----- -
3	X	X (possible)		

All of the above levels would be subject to the licensing criteria identified by the national sports federation. Sport specific content should be delivered in a manner that is in line with the specification of the national federation. Federations will need to develop guidelines for the inclusion of sport specific coaching in higher education programmes. Adequate opportunities to engage in practical coaching during the course and through and work experience should be provided. Other curriculum models might include coaching as an element with other professional areas within physical activity/sport³⁰. Two examples are provided below:

1. Bachelor's degree in sports science with a specialism in coaching and one other area from physical education; health and fitness; sports management (maximum coverage of two sports and subject to the licensing criteria of the national federations)
2. Bachelor's degree in sport science with introductory specialisms in coaching one sport; physical education; health and fitness; sports management (maximum coverage of one sport and subject to the licensing criteria of the national federations)

9. Proposed Convention for the Recognition of Coaching Qualifications

It is proposed that the relevant national authorities and the international federations sign up to a Coaching Convention for the recognition of coaching qualifications and licensing which states the following:

³⁰ A more detailed document describing potential curriculum models for in higher education courses is in preparation as part of the AEHESIS project.

1. Coaches play a central role in providing sport experiences for sportspeople of all ages and skill levels
2. To fulfil their role, coaches must have appropriate competence and training, taking into account the target group(s) with whom they are working
3. Coaches are expected to be as concerned with the well being of the sportspeople as they are with optimising performance.
4. Coaches should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every sports participant, and treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or political conviction.
5. Coaches are expected to work in an open and co-operative manner with all individuals responsible for the welfare and performance development of the sportspeople.
6. Coaches should develop and maintain a high standard of training; their action, whilst conducting training sessions, should reflect scientific knowledge and current expertise.
7. Scientific principles should be applied in every level of coaches' training.
8. Responsibilities and professional competence should gradually build up from the initial levels of coaches' qualification to the final ones.
9. All coaches should hold a coaching licence that is recognised by the national competent authority and the relevant federation.
10. The framework for the licensing and recognition of coaches as proposed by the European Coaching Council is the European recognised mechanism that is affirmed and actively supported.
11. A formal review mechanism will be established to provide a basis on which coaching qualifications can be reviewed against the ECC framework.
12. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a licensing system that will have international recognition and currency.
13. Each participating agency in the convention will undertake to identify the implications of the convention for their work, including the appropriate investment in the infrastructures to give effect to the convention.

The contents of this document will be the subject of further consultation in 2006 and early 2007, with a view to adopting a European Convention on the Recognition and Licensing of Coaches in Rio Maior in September 2007. Thereafter, it is proposed to establish a more detailed set of actions for the implementation of the provisions of the convention of the revised structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications. Discussions will also occur with the International Olympic Committee and the International Council for Coach Education concerning the potential application of the revised framework outside the European Union.

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