

# Overall Framework For The Recognition Of Sports Coaching As A Profession

Job market and the establishment of coaching as a profession

Based on the experiences of sports federations and the national<sup>1</sup> 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 two main aspects:

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

## 1. Coaching qualification

It is recommended that all national competent authorities<sup>2</sup> in sports coach education oversee, recognise and, if needed, conduct the sports coaching qualification 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.

Sports coaching has been defined for the purposes of this project 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.' 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.

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<sup>1</sup> References to national sports authorities or national federations can also include local, regional, continental and international organisations (federations).




<sup>2</sup> The national competent authority is the government-designated 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.

## Co-operation between the strands

**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.
- 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.
- iii) **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.

Table 1 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications.

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

*Table 1: Outline framework for recognition of coaching qualifications.*

*Note re criteria for recognition to be developed (linked to curriculum model) and these will have country and sport specific differences*

## 2. Coaching Licence

It is recommended that all sport coaches should hold a coaching licence<sup>3</sup>. 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. The coaching licence will be the primary criteria for the recognition of the coaches' mastery of the practical demands and competencies of sports coaching.

<sup>3</sup> It is recognised that prior to formally taking up coaching, coaches may undertake a period of informal induction. The nature of this induction will need to be identified within each sport, based on the model of long-term coach development that exists in the sport.

It is recommended that the sports coaching licence should be issued by the relevant sport federation with the recognition of the national competent authority.

It is proposed that no sports coaching can be conducted by a sports coach at any level of practice without the appropriate licence to do so.

The first step of licensing is the qualification –re-position 1 and 2 below

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 (, assistant coach, coach, expert coach, and master coach) to:
  - Child or adult beginner sportspeople
  - Talent identified/competitive sportspeople
  - High performance sportspeople
  - Participants of all ages and skill levels not following the high performance route
  
- ii) **Coach education:** Completion of a systematic course of study which challenges discipline and commitment 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. The framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications is outlined in this document.





Courses of study may take place within federation, national competent authorities, and university 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:** Recognition of the accredited learning and experience specific and applicable to the sports coaching context.

The sports coaching licence may be specifically 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, master coach and expert coach). The licence may be issued for a given period of time and may be renewed after a successful completion of continuous education activities). Link to cpd and lifelong learning

Where possible, the sports coaching licence may imply the benefits of a coaching insurance, legal assistance, access to continuous education programmes and resources, and others.

Table 2 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the licensing of coaches.

	<b>National Sport Authorities recognise</b>	
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<b>Federation-based education</b>	<b>Public or private coaching education agencies</b>	<b>Higher Education based education</b>
<b>MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF ALL QUALIFICATIONS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES</b>		
		
<b>COACHING LICENCE ISSUED BY THE FEDERATION or the national competent authority and recognised by the national competent authority</b>		

*Table 2: Outline framework for the licensing of coaches.*

*Define the relationship between the qualification and the licence. Recognise country and sport specific differences. 'Label' from the federation. Link to broader criteria and frameworks for professions within the EU. What is a profession?*

## Revised Framework For The Qualification Of Coaches

A revised framework for the qualification of coaches is proposed below:

- Level 1: Assistant coach
- Level 2: Coach
- Level 3: Expert Coach
- Level 4: Master Coach

Each of the levels should be clearly situated within a coaching specific interpretation of the EQF, with a clear demonstration of how this framework relates to the proposed licensing system for coaches.

Table 3 provides an overview of the relationships between the revised proposed framework for the qualification of coaches and the EQF.

<b>FQC</b>	<b>EQF</b>
Level I (assistant coach)	EQF 1 & 2
Level II (coach)	EQF 3 & 4
Level III (expert coach)	EQF 5 & 6
Level IV (master coach)	EQF 7 & 8

*Table 3: Overview of the relationships between the revised proposed framework for the qualification of coaches and the EQF.*

The competence framework for these qualifications is suggested in table 4 as follows:

Activities	Tasks	Competences
The main activities sport coaches perform can be grouped as follows:	Within each activity, sport coaches can perform the following tasks:	The competences needed to successfully perform the tasks related to each activity include:
<p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Training:</b> To prepare sportspeople for competition by planning, organising, conducting and evaluating the appropriate programmes and sessions</li> <li>- <b>Competition:</b> To plan, organise, conduct and evaluate the appropriate events, tournaments, programmes and matches.</li> <li>- <b>Management:</b> To lead, direct or control people related to the sport</li> <li>- <b>Education:</b> To teach or instruct people related to the sport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Plan:</b> Ability to put together a step-by-step process, programme or method to achieve a goal.</li> <li>- <b>Organise:</b> Ability to co-ordinate and make all the necessary arrangements to ensure that the goal will be achieved in an efficient and effective way.</li> <li>- <b>Conduct:</b> Ability to carry out and execute the planned and organised task.</li> <li>- <b>Evaluate:</b> Ability to study, analyse and decide on the utility, value, significance or quality of the above process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Key:</b> 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.</li> <li>- <b>Knowledge:</b> the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially</li> <li>- <b>Skills:</b> the functions (know-how) a person should be able to do when functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity;</li> <li>- <b>Personal, professional, ethical:</b> knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and possessing certain personal and professional values</li> </ul>

Table 4: Competence framework for the coaching qualifications.

Eg: Knowledge should include:

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 and agents,
  - f. Referees,

- g. Schools, clubs and federations
  - h. 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
  - g. Training theory
  - h. Lifestyle
  - i. Sport-specific model of athlete development

**Possible curriculum models in the higher education sector**

1. Bachelor's degree in coaching, with a specialism in one, two or three sports

N of sports/coaching level	Assistant	Coach	Expert 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 and teaching methodology should be carried out in a manner that is in line with the requirements of the national federation. Federations will need to develop guidelines for the integration of sport specific coaching into higher education programmes. NB: Inclusion of adequate to engage in practical coaching and work experience

2. 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)
3. 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)

## **Coaching convention**

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

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 human being, 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 which 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 which 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 which will have international recognition and currency.