

Sport Coaching Executive Summary

The Coaching Expert Group applied a six-step model for curriculum design to coaching. The Group developed an overall framework for the planning of curricula in coaching within the higher education sector, taking into account the evolving nature of the coaching qualification structure within Europe.

The framework also provides higher education institutions with a set of reference points against which to plan and design courses within the context of the educational and coaching systems in their country. The relationship between coaching courses in the higher education sector and courses delivered by sports federations was also addressed.

For the purposes of the project, the professional occupation of coaching was defined as follows:

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

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

The sport-specific nature of coaching is a key element of this definition, as is the linkage of coaching activity to specified population groups. It is recognised that coaches may play roles across a number of sports; or in developing discrete aspects of a sport such as fitness. However, for the purposes of this project, the definition focused on sport and population specific activity.

The implication for higher education institutions is that courses that include coaching in their title, should equip students with the skills and relationships to coach in a sport, or a number of sports, to a specified level.

The overall framework for the qualification of coaches proposes four levels, related to the level of expertise of the coach: Assistant Coach; Coach; Senior Coach and Master Coach. The framework also recommends the creation of two major strands of coach education, linked to two main standard occupations in coaching: coach of performance-oriented participants and coach of participation-oriented participants. A standard classification of coaching activities and competences was developed, as well as model curricula.

This Group also worked in parallel with a wider Review Group from the European Coaching Council (a sub-committee of the European Network of Sports Science Education and Employment) on the European Structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications. This approach ensured that there was a close relationship between the AEHESIS findings relating to coaching courses within the higher education sector and the wider framework for the qualification of coaches within Europe.

The findings of the Group will now form the basis for wider consultation with EU member states and International Sports Federations, with a view to establishing a convention on coaching qualifications on a European-wide basis.