Association for Coaching

AC Leader Coach Accreditation Scheme

Applicant Guide Worked Examples

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Introduction

Thank you for embarking on applying for the Association for Coaching's (AC) **Leader Coach Accreditation**, joining other leaders who are looking to have their coaching skills as a leader recognized independently with a global professional body, as the AC.

What is a Leader Coach?

The **Association for Coaching's (AC)** definition of a **Leader Coach** is someone who applies a **coaching mindset** or **coach approach** to get the best out of their talent, enable growth for future success and to achieve collective **business and team performance.**

A Leader Coach inspires and enables others to adapt to constantly changing environments in ways that unleash fresh energy, innovation, and commitment. To **strengthen cultures at work** for **future generations to thrive**.

AC Leader Coach membership is for individuals at any level i.e., **C-level, executives, emerging leaders** and **people managers**.

This Guide contains worked examples for a number of sections of the **AC Leader Coach Accreditation application**.

Please read this document in conjunction with

1. The **AC Leader Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide** and
2. The **AC Leader Coach Accreditation Application Form.**

The examples in this Guide indicate the standards that meet the criteria at certain levels of application.

They are designed to give you some ideas about completing certain sections rather than being prescriptive of the approach required.

The AC welcomes individuality in coaching style and approach, and as a result, your application may have quite different content to that in the worked examples.

Please ensure that you carefully read and comply with the requirements for each section, as specified in the AC Leader Coach Accreditation Applicant Guide.

Section 4: Personal Coaching Approach

Worked example:

Perspective

We like John Whitmore's definition of coaching:

"Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them."

This is consistent with my values and beliefs. I want to create a working environment in which my direct reports feel empowered to do their best, enjoy coming to work, and feel they have the opportunity to learn and develop.

The models that made the most sense to me during my coaching training were:

The listening model

We were shown a model that compared different types of listening. You can listen for content, in which case you are listening to the other person's words and unwittingly making assumptions about what they mean. Or you can listen for meaning, in which case you are constantly checking your assumptions to make sure you are tuning in to what people mean to say. Or you can listen to the person's identity and ask yourself why the person is trying to say what they are trying to say. I have found this model very useful in making sure I slow down and am present when intending to coach people.

The feedback model

My staff expect me to give them feedback, and so I use the feedback model:

- Outline the situation
- Note the behaviour
- Detail the consequences

This framework helps me structure a feedback conversation. I also make time to compose myself before giving feedback so that I can 'speak from the I', making sure I don't label people or make judgments.

I also like the idea of solutions-focused, gently nudging my coachee to think about what they will do without spending too much time ruminating on the issue as a problem.

Purpose

I coach people because I want to be known as a leader for whom people want to work. I want people to see my team as a place where they will have the opportunity to develop and grow. I want my team to be happy and successful, and I want to demonstrate to other leaders in the organization how it is possible to be successful and maintain a work-life balance.

Process

I always make sure that we are clear about what kind of conversation we are having at any one time. So before coaching, I might say something like:

- I'd like to coach you through this issue, is that OK?
- Is an opportunity for a coaching conversation?

Sometimes I may not be so explicit, but I might say something like:

- Let me help you work this one out for yourself.
- What do you think the answer is?

I will always ask the person what they would like to get out of the conversation before we start and check how much time we each have for the conversation. This helps me stay focussed on what the other person is saying without getting distracted by closing the meeting down to go to another meeting.

We were introduced to the GROW model, which I like because it shifts the coachee's attention to what they would like to achieve, rather than spending too long complaining about what is wrong. But I also like the CLEAR model, which reminds me to be curious and make sure I am in listening mode. So I have combined these two models to become:

P	Prepare	Prepare to listen. Clear my mind of distractions.
I	Issue	What is the issue? What do you want to talk about?
A	Agree	Is this an opportunity for a coaching conversation?
G	Goal	What would you like to get out of this conversation?
E	Explore	Explore the issue.
T	Tie-up	Tie it all up and agree on actions.

I always make time to follow up with the person being coached to see how they are going and to see if I can help.

Section 7: Coach Fitness to Practise

Recorded Sessions Written Reflection

Recording one:

Context

One of my direct reports came to see me about problems she was having with a colleague in another team. She said that he was hard to get hold of and made promises he didn't keep. This was causing her stress and meant she had to work long hours. She was finding herself becoming unfriendly toward him, and she didn't want the relationship to deteriorate. I thought immediately that this might be a coaching opportunity and so asked if she would be OK if I recorded some of the conversation and explained why. We made a time later in the day to talk about the issue, which gave me time to Prepare myself and make sure I wasn't distracted.

In the recording we hear the first 15 minutes of the conversation.

Reflection on my coaching

At the beginning of the conversation, I asked her to provide more detail on the Issue. She spent five minutes talking about a specific interaction with the colleague, during which she became quite upset. I think I became a bit uncomfortable, made worse because I was recording the session. Fortunately, I composed myself, reminding myself that I didn't need

to use the recording. That helped me tune back into what she was saying and how she seemed to be feeling.

At that point, I checked in to see if she would still like me to coach her on the issue and she **A**greed enthusiastically, saying she felt she needed to work it out for herself but that she would value my guidance.

The **G**oal question worked well I thought. She painted a picture whereby she and the colleague were getting on very well, in which they understood each other's perspectives and were attentive to each other's needs. She even talked about seeing herself laughing with him at one of the company social events. In talking through this goal her mood seemed to shift and she seemed happier.

We then **E**xplored the issue further. Sometimes she seemed to lapse back into describing how frustrated she currently was. I let her talk about her frustrations up to a point but kept asking questions as to how she might take steps to get to her goal. A couple of times I think this annoyed her, and I think I need to get better at judging when is the moment to move from problem to solution. I could even just ask the person if they are happy to talk solutions or if they want to spend more time getting the issue clear in their mind first.

The recording ends as she starts to talk about inviting him for coffee to share, she has been feeling and apologize for being short-tempered. She became quite excited at the idea of finding out more about what makes him tick as a first step in establishing a more productive relationship. By the time we finished our conversation, she had committed to inviting him out for a coffee before the end of the week, at which she would refrain from complaining and focus on asking him questions and getting to know him better. This was the **T**ie-up.

Upon reflection, and with reference to the AC competency framework, I think I did the following things well:

- I made sure we agreed to have a coaching conversation.
- I felt I was respectful throughout the conversation. I did believe she could work out the answer for herself.
- I stayed present and engaged most of the time.
- I listened well. For example, I learned that having close working relationships is important to her, and she gets upset when relationships are difficult.
- I asked open questions.
- I made sure she had a clear way forward before the end of the conversation.

I think I could have done the following things better:

- Stayed present and engaged at the beginning of the conversation when she got a bit upset
- Checked-in more often as to what she wanted to get out of the conversation at that point
- I wonder if I might have steered her a bit toward the solution she came up with. I didn't make the suggestion, but a couple of my questions may have been leading questions

Overall, I found it very useful to listen to myself coaching. I noticed things I found quite surprising.

Section 11: Coach Self-Assessment & Professional Development Plan

Worked example:

This part-complete example is for a Coach Accreditation application

AC Coaching Competency	Self-rating (1-5)	Areas Identified for Coaching Development	Actions to Meet Coaching Development Need. Priority (H/M/L) and Planned Date/Timescale for Activity.
Coaching Competencies for All Coaches			
1. Meeting ethical and legal guidelines	2	I need to make sure I understand these in the context of my role as leader-coach. I will ask to include some discussion of the Code of Ethics in our peer supervision sessions.	I will ask to include some discussion of the Code of Ethics in our next peer supervision sessions. High Priority. This month.
2. Establishing the coaching agreement and outcomes	4	I think I do a good job here, but sometimes it feels a bit clunky asking people if they want to have a coaching conversation.	Asking others what they do in our peer supervision sessions. Medium Priority. Within next three months, or informally.
3. Establishing a trust-based relationship with the coachee	3	I find it hard sometimes to accept some of my direct reports and peers 'as is'. I feel quite judgmental toward some of them.	When preparing to talk with someone who I find 'difficult' I need to make the time to prepare myself, remind myself that they are just different to me, and go into the conversation curious and respectful. In some cases that may be hard! In which case I may take those instances to peer supervision. High priority. Ongoing.
4. Managing self and maintaining coaching presence	3	It can be hard to stay focussed and present, especially on days when there is just too much going on. I am pretty good at deferring conversations to future time, but I don't want to be seen to always be putting coaching conversations off to another date.	I want to put aside at least an hour a day for unplanned conversations, whether it's a coaching conversation or a different type of conversation. High priority. Start immediately.
5. Communicating effectively	4	Doing well – could always do better, but not an immediate area of focus.	

AC Coaching Competency	Self-rating (1-5)	Areas Identified for Coaching Development	Actions to Meet Coaching Development Need. Priority (H/M/L) and Planned Date/Timescale for Activity.
6. Raising awareness and insight	3	I do ask questions but need to get better at knowing when to stay on the issue at hand and when to move the conversation forward.	Make a habit of checking in with people where to go next instead of guessing. High priority. Start immediately.
7. Designing strategies and actions	4	Doing well – could always do better, but not an immediate area of focus.	
8. Maintaining forward momentum and evaluation	4	Doing well – could do better, but not an immediate area of focus.	
9. Undertaking continuous coach development	3	Asking for feedback and making time to reflect.	I need to ask coachees for feedback at the end of each session, then spend at least five minutes reflecting on that feedback. Medium priority. Start within next month.
10. Working within the organizational context	4	Doing well I think, though sometimes may focus too much on specific one-to-one relationships.	Read up on what a more 'systemic' approach may look like. Ask my peer supervision group if they have any suggested books to read. Or my OD manager. Medium priority. Within next three months.

Key:	3 = Developed – scope for further development
1 = Significant development needed	4 = Very developed
2 = Some further development needed	5 = Highly developed – may be a significant strength