



Preparing Your Recording for the ICF Performance Evaluation

Like every SeattleCoach, you arrived at coach training and development already having spent years becoming the best in town at something else. Now, as you’ve learned to “do the craft and be the coach,” you’ll likely be hired by people and companies who want a professional coach but who also place value on your other notable subject matter expertise (SME). So, it’s not uncommon for our most successful coaches to build practices that reflect both their past professional SME and their new coaching SME.

But here’s the deal: Coaching SME is the ONLY SME the ICF assessors care about. Your application has several parts to it, including the challenge of creating a “performance evaluation” recording that reflects your understanding of the Core Competencies. Here are my top seven practical tips for creating a recording that will pass:

1. Give yourself a few months to practice and learn. Record lots. You’ll learn and refine and repeat. And you’ll know when you’ve got the session you want to submit.
2. Choose a non-coach client instead of another coach (like someone in your Cohort). Sometimes coach-clients are overly helpful and you can’t showcase your range. New coaches often offer a few sessions pro-bono or at a low fee in exchange for feedback and written permission to record. As always, you’ll want to create a coaching agreement that reflects a clear agenda.
3. Don’t submit a one-off or a first session. You won’t have established much of a partnership yet.
4. The ICF allows you to submit a recording of up to sixty minutes (and a minimum of twenty minutes). Shoot for a minimum of 30 minutes to demonstrate your full coaching skills and presence. Make sure your coachee understands the time limit you are planning on.
5. [Click here](#) to review all of the technical requirements of submitting your recording and transcript as a part of your “ACC ACSTH” application. A few good services: [Transcribeme](#), [Raenotes](#) and [Scribie](#).
6. Above all else, you’ll want to demonstrate your coaching presence along with the info on the Play Card (below).
7. Listen to excerpts of good recordings with your mentor coach.
8. You’re not just checking a box. Use this process for the deepening of your coaching skills and presence.

And of course, remember how the co-creative coaching partnership—a great and trusting alliance--produces the “arc”:

- ***A beginning:*** *What do you want to work on? How will we know we’re making progress? What are the personal strengths and values you could bring to this? Who else is in your thinking as we talk about this? How is this big enough to matter to you?*
- ***A middle:*** The partnership explores, marks potential next steps.
- ***A collaborated close:*** The partnership identifies experiments and a plan for following up on what results.

Explore

Find the Experiment(s)



You know that the arc is never perfectly linear and the time spent on each of the elements evolves as your partnership grows: You clarify the agenda at the beginning and then check in mid-way through. You mark potential next steps as you explore, and then return to them together at the close.

In the interest of pure coaching (and submitting a recording that reflects the skills and presence that you are capable of, here are a few questions about each Core Competency to ask yourself as you evaluate your work:

1. *Remember, the first Core Competency, “**Demonstrates ethical practice**” is assumed and you’ll need to know it well for the Coach Knowledge Assessment, but it’s not usually evaluated by assessors (unless, when your agreement is to coach, you spend the whole session giving advice).*
2. *“**Embodies a coaching mindset.**” This is you, growing for as long as you’re in this work.*
3. *“**Establishes and maintains agreements.**” Does the coachee choose the focus? Do you clarify and explore it?*
4. *“**Cultivates trust and safety.**” We know you’re trying to be a really good coach--it’s natural to focus on your own behavior and performance. But here’s the paradox, when that’s your focus, what happens to trust? And here’s a second question: Given who you are, how do you personally foster enough psychological safety? What is your personal way of acknowledging a coachee’s brave and consistent work?*
5. *“**Maintains presence.**” When you focus on what you want to teach or offer or fix, or on a favorite approach or tool, or how you’re performing, what do you miss? It’s probably what the coachee offers. Sometimes you miss a “breadcrumb.” Remember, your presence and curiosity usually beats your content.*
6. *“**Listens actively.**” What happens when you are fully focused on and responsive to the coachee’s language, emotion, behavior, and energy? Listening with your eyes? To what the coachee wants to achieve? I.e. When you are working at level 3 vs. performing and demonstrating? How are you doing with silences?*
7. *“**Evokes awareness.**” Are you helping your coachee to explore beyond their current thinking about themselves and their situations? (vs. Your view of things, expertise, direction or leading questions?) Are you responding with the clearest, simplest, fewest words? Are you using your coachee’s language and co-creating the right pace for the moment? Again, how are you doing with silences? Is your coachee doing most of the talking? Are you solving or are you connecting the dots, staying curious about how your coachee will integrate new ideas and hunches? Remember, awareness is quick and contagious and energy follows awareness. Ask, “What are you taking away from this conversation?”*

8. ***“Facilitates client growth.”***

Is there a complete partnership as you notice and co-create (vs. assigning homework)? Can you explain the purpose of any tools or exercises that you suggest? How do experiments and next steps relate to your coachee’s agenda, strengths and stage of change? How does the partnership explore and evaluate progress? Who (besides you) will know about their progress and experiments? How will you help your coachee to emotionally rehearse their plan? To reality-test it? “Let’s play it out.” What would it take for their confidence in their next steps to increase? Is there a persistent connection between your coachee’s meta-agenda and your current work? How are you tracking the evolution? Evaluating your pace and process? What are you carrying forward from this experience? Can you partner even in the closing of a session?

Did you notice how every single one of these competencies assumes both a differentiated (“*grace and truth*”) coach and a great and trusting alliance—a deeply respectful and co-creative partnership?

The Assessment Markers below are [© The International Coaching Federation, 2020](#). These markers are the observable behaviors that ICF assessors look for in reviewing “performance evaluation” recordings. FYI, these markers reflect the bar required to pass a PCC-level evaluation. We know this is a higher bar than is required for the initial ACC credential, but it’s the bar we use in developing SeattleCoaches.

In addition to the key questions above, try using these assessment markers as you review your recordings and as you select one to submit with your application. In this process you will discover both strengths and areas for growth and skill development.

The ICF’s Assessment Markers

- Competency 1: Demonstrates Ethical Practice

Familiarity with the ICF Code of Ethics and its application is required for all levels of coaching. Successful PCC candidates will demonstrate coaching that is aligned with the ICF Code of Ethics and will remain consistent in the role of coach.

- Competency 2: Embodies a Coaching Mindset

Embodying a coaching mindset—a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered—is a process that requires ongoing learning and development, establishing a reflective practice, and preparing for sessions. These elements take place over the course of a coach's professional journey and cannot be fully captured in a single moment in time. However, certain elements of this Competency may be demonstrated within a coaching conversation. These particular behaviors are articulated and assessed through the following PCC Markers: 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.5, 7.1, and 7.5. As with other Competency areas, a minimum number of these markers will need to be demonstrated to pass the PCC performance evaluation. All elements of this Competency will also be evaluated in the written assessment for ICF Credentials (Coach Knowledge Assessment).

- Competency 3: Establishes and Maintains Agreements

	Observed?	Evidence
3.1. Coach partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what the client wants to accomplish in this session.		
3.2. Coach partners with the client to define or reconfirm measure(s) of success for what the client wants to accomplish in this session		
3.3. Coach inquires about or explores what is important or meaningful to the client about what they want to accomplish in this session.		
3.4 Coach partners with the client to define what the client believes they need to address to achieve what they want to accomplish in this session.		

- Competency 4: Cultivates Trust and Safety

	Observed?	Evidence
4.1. Coach acknowledges and respects the client’s unique talents, insights and work in the coaching process.		
4.2. Coach shows support, empathy or concern for the client.		
4.3. Coach acknowledges and supports the client’s expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs or suggestions.		
4.4. Coach partners with the client by inviting the client to respond in any way to the coach’s contributions and accepts the client’s response.		

- Competency 5: Maintains Presence

	Observed?	Evidence
5.1. Coach acts in response to the whole person of the client (the who).		
5.2. Coach acts in response to what the client wants to accomplish throughout this session (the what).		
5.3. Coach partners with the client by supporting the client to choose what happens in this session.		
5.4. Coach demonstrates curiosity to learn more about the client.		
5.5. Coach allows for silence, pause or reflection.		

- Competency 6: Listens Actively

	Observed?	Evidence
6.1. Coach’s questions and observations are customized by using what the coach has learned about who the client is or the client’s situation.		
6.2. Coach inquires about or explores the words the client uses.		
6.3. Coach inquires about or explores the client’s emotions.		
6.4. Coach explores the client’s energy shifts, nonverbal cues or other behaviors.		
6.5. Coach inquires about or explores how the client currently perceives themselves or their world.		
6.6. Coach allows the client to complete speaking without interrupting unless there is a stated coaching purpose to do so.		
6.7. Coach succinctly reflects or summarizes what the client communicated to ensure the client’s clarity and understanding.		

- Competency 7: Evokes Awareness

	Observed?	Evidence
7.1. Coach asks questions about the client, such as their current way of thinking, feeling, values, needs, wants, beliefs or behavior.		
7.2. Coach asks questions to help the client explore beyond the client’s current thinking or feeling to new or expanded ways of thinking or feeling about themselves (the who).		
7.3. Coach asks questions to help the client explore beyond the client’s current thinking or feeling to new or expanded ways of thinking or feeling about their situation (the what).		
7.4. Coach asks questions to help the client explore beyond current thinking, feeling or behaving toward the outcome the client desires.		
7.5. Coach shares, with no attachment, observations, intuitions, comments, thoughts or feelings, and invites the client’s exploration through verbal or tonal invitation.		
7.6. Coach asks clear, direct, primarily open-ended questions, one at a time, at a pace that allows for thinking, feeling or reflection by the client.		
7.7 Coach uses language that is generally clear and concise.		
7.8 Coach allows the client to do most of the talking.		

- Competency 8. Facilitates Client Growth

	Observed?	Evidence
8.1. Coach invites or allows the client to explore progress toward what the client wanted to accomplish in this session.		
8.2. Coach invites client to state or explore the client's learning in this session about themselves (the who).		
8.3. Coach invites the client to state or explore the client's learning in this session about their situation (the what).		
8.4. Coach invites the client to consider how they will use new learning from this coaching session.		
8.5. Coach partners with the client to design post-session thinking, reflection or action.		
8.6. Coach partners with the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support or potential barriers.		
8.7. Coach partners with the client to design the best methods of accountability for themselves.		
8.8. Coach celebrates the client’s progress and learning.		
8.9. Coach partners with the client on how they want to complete this session.		