

Annex D -

International Coaching Diploma Course

Explanatory Note regarding the Diploma

and what else this course could give you

The Diploma granted from the ICCI

When you complete the full course of study of our International Coaching Diploma Course (Phase 1 and Phase 2), timely and successfully execute all assignments, and pass the final exams - we proudly provide you with a Diploma. The Diploma states the hours studied and the topics covered during both phases of the course.

When you successfully complete just Phase 1 of the course, you receive a Certificate of Participation, stating the hours studied and the topics covered during Phase 1.

The purpose of this document is to explain the status and value derived from completing our courses and obtaining these certifications, especially the Diploma. It should help you have a better impression of how doing so supports your journey to become a coach, placing this issue in the broader context of coaching as a profession.

Bear in mind the global variation

Much like the situation with many other professions, there is no formal universal or international accreditation or recognition of diplomas or credentials. This means that just like practitioners from other professional areas might need to adjust their training and certification when moving to another country, so might you as a coach. It is therefore important that wherever you wish to work, you start with checking the requirements of being a coach in that country. This document, unless otherwise stated, focuses on the situation in the Netherlands.

Coaching in the Netherlands

The starting point is that in the Netherlands, like in many other countries, coaching is considered a free profession, in the sense that there is no governmental exam or accreditation system for this profession, nor is there a formally recognised diploma, and having a coaching diploma is not mandatory.

Obtaining a diploma: not legally necessary, but highly advisable

So legally, you do not need to have a diploma and nothing prevents you from practicing coaching in the Netherlands at will. You do not even need to have completed a course. That said, from the professional, ethical, and commercial perspectives, there are strong reasons

to first educate yourself and strive to obtain certifications, such as the ICCI Diploma, that prove what you have done in preparation to becoming a professional coach. Here is why.

Professionally, completing a course and obtaining certifications means that you haven't just decided one day to call yourself a coach, rather you have treated coaching as a profession that needs to be learned. You are in a much better position to help others as a coach if you have learned enough about yourself and the theories and skills that professional coaches can effectively use in helping clients. Working without proper training not only means that you are not performing optimally for the benefit of your clients, it also means that you are putting yourself under a greater risk of harming them, which is the opposite of what you set yourself to do and of what they legitimately expect from you. This may have consequences for you as the chances of having unsatisfied clients (and maybe even of having to deal with a complaint) increase significantly. Beyond that, conducting yourself like that is in tension with professional ethics, which is a good bridge to the next point.

Ethically, as a coach you have a lot of responsibility towards the wellbeing of your clients, and this gives rise to norms regarding appropriate conduct, with various do's and don'ts. Knowing how to set clear professional boundaries is also very important. All this is not something that is easily self-learned. As a practicing coach you will likely face difficult and sensitive situations that involve ethical and moral dilemmas. You better be well prepared to deal with such challenges when they come, and they will.

Commercially, potential clients and organisations which may send you clients have a clear tendency to prefer coaches that have been properly trained, and that hold certifications attesting to that. Mentioning your coaching education and training and the fact that you have obtained a diploma increases the trust in you and provides comfort to your clients, as well as a reason to prefer you over other coaches. It is therefore a strong marketing tool to advance your practice.

To summarise this point: although you can call yourself a coach without any education, the thorough and appropriate training we offer will assist you to professionally develop yourself to help people with their issues, work in an ethical manner and grow your confidence as a practitioner - so you can really give your clients the services they need and expect from you. The Diploma provides proof of your success in completing this challenging professional preparation with success.

The Diploma as a door opener to professional associations

Following a full course to obtain a Diploma is first of all for yourself: It is a proof that you have gained the skills and knowledge needed to help people in a professional manner and to be reassured that you have properly prepared to work both professionally and ethically as necessary to provide your clients with quality service. Secondly, as already pointed out, the Diploma is something that (potential) clients tend to appreciate, even look for. But there is more, and for this you need to understand the role of professional associations in this field.

Nature, status and role of professional bodies

The fact that coaching in the Netherlands (and other countries) is a free profession in the sense explained above, without formal state recognition, means that such recognition has to come from other sources. In this context, a special role is played by professional organisations and various bodies for the coaching profession, such as associations, councils and federations, that lead the field forward and contribute to its further professionalisation.

Associating yourself to one or more such professional organisations provides a stamp of approval to your work and status as a professional coach, which is appreciated by clients and employers. It goes beyond merely holding a certification from an education institute, as it gives you the *external authoritative recognition* that you have trained to a certain (high) standard, that you adhere to a solid ethical code and that you have gained enough practical experience to present yourself as a professional coach and offer coaching services. In succeeding to associate yourself with such organisations, the Diploma can be highly instrumental.

Belonging to, or associating yourself with such professional organisations is therefore highly recommended. The appreciation of the positive impact and importance of the help given by coaches is globally on the rise, it is more and more seen as a beneficial type of help - provided that it is offered by those who can demonstrate their quality standards and ethical norms that guide their conduct. Consequently, it has become ever more important to belong to a respectful professional organisation once you offer your services as a coach.

Those bodies typically offer a number of paths for people to become members or associates. One of them is for people who studied in an independent institute which provides high quality training for coaching. In considering membership requests, these bodies tend to rely on the number and quality of training hours, coaching hours and supervision hours which the applicant had. They typically ask for a proof of studies, like a diploma, and a proof of (supervised) practice hours. They often also ask for one or more of the following: knowledge exam, cover letter from course provider or supervisor, some recording of work with clients, proof that you have been getting coaching sessions for yourself, an interview etc.

We can teach you, prepare you for practice, certify you and help you get recognised

If you do wish to affiliate yourself with a professional organisation or association, the training at the ICCI, an independent institute which provides high quality training in the Netherlands, should take you a long way in that direction.

Our institute, our course and trainers have been audited by and registered at the Dutch Central Register for Vocational Education (CRKBO), which means compliance with a quality code. Completing our 2-year diploma course provides you with enough theory learning, training hours, skills, practical hours with clients, supervision and intervision to allow you to meet the entry requirements for membership in various respectful professional organisations or bodies here in the Netherlands, as well as some International ones, or provides a good preparation towards passing their exams. Furthermore, the number of

study and practice hours required to successfully complete our Diploma course exceeds the requirements of many of these professional bodies.

Your responsibility to understand requirements

Such professional organisations and associations are operating independently. They may have different areas of focus, agenda or style. It is your responsibility to search for the professional bodies that suit you, checking among other things whether the agenda, ethical code and requirements resonate with you.

Furthermore, membership requirements vary, and change from time to time. It is your responsibility to check for yourself and see what different organisations are requiring as membership criteria at the time of your interest, and so to evaluate whether our course and Diploma provide what you need to become a member.

Eventually, it is for them to decide if you've impressed them enough to join them. We don't guarantee that.

Coaching, insurance companies and the BIG register

In the Netherlands, the BIG register is a statutory public register for professions in individual healthcare. Only those registered in the BIG register may use a protected professional title and may independently perform the reserved actions associated with the profession. Among other things, its importance is that many insurance companies would only reimburse costs for help received from those professionals listed in the BIG register.

Counselling and coaching, however, are most often non-medical approaches towards helping people with common issues and difficulties they encounter in daily life. As such, these professions do not fall within the framework of the BIG register, but rather into the category of 'alternative' or 'complementary' healthcare. Dutch medical insurance companies accordingly seldom reimburse for this kind of non-medical help. That said, some special insurances might be willing to reimburse clients for the costs of a coaching process, usually upon presenting a paid invoice from a professional coach.

Nevertheless, as a rule of thumb as an independent coach you need to be able to get to clients also where insurance coverage is not available. It is not uncommon for clients to get their sessions paid for by, for example, their employer. There are also clients who have access to funding for coaching via schemes operated by municipal or other authorities. In such cases, they can see you without necessarily paying you directly, and without having to have special insurances. For this, recognition and solid professional reputation are crucial.

What is clear, whether for the insurance-track, or for the 'free' track - the Diploma you can obtain from us is instrumental for your success as a professional coach.

Voluntary self-regulation?

The fact that few legal requirements apply to coaching, there's no official register and this profession is not formally regulated, allows for a relatively high degree of freedom in how you operate as a coach. This is a good thing, but the relative lack of external regulation and control highlights the importance of working according to a sound ethical code and with

clear professional boundaries - a point which we emphasise during our courses. Furthermore, it may sometimes be useful and advisable to abide by certain standards on a voluntary basis.

A case in point is the requirements under the Law on Quality, Complaints and Disputes in the Dutch Health Industry (known as the WKKGZ). As of 2017, this law obliges certain 'health care professionals' to offer a reliable (external) complaints procedure to their clients. Depending on the nature of the care one provides, there is some room for interpretation as to whether a particular care provider does or does not fall within the ambit of this law. But as a rule of thumb it can be said that the WKKGZ does apply to (most) counsellors, which means that they are legally required to offer a reliable complaints procedure to their clients, while (most) coaches are exempt from that. When you start practicing, it is your responsibility to check your particular situation carefully.

Moreover, bear in mind that some coaches, even though they don't have to, may choose to align with that standard voluntarily. Adhering to such norms, and offering clients options in the form of proper procedures in case of complaints, safeguards ethical practice and may help others in perceiving you as a high level professional.

The difference between the full course 'Diploma' and the Phase 1 'Certificate'

If you only finished Phase 1 of the ICCI course, you can obtain a Certificate of Participation but not the Diploma. That document will state the hours and topics of training you had in Phase 1, but for many professional organisations these will not be enough. They will therefore most likely ask you to have more training and practice (coaching hours with clients) to enter. Some of them however, operate a kind of a student-membership for which purpose the Phase I Certificate may be sufficient as an initial entry point.

Summary: What can you do once you finish our course and obtain a diploma?

- The complete ICCI course (Phase 1 and Phase 2) - when followed properly and after fulfilling all requirements - provides you with 2 main assets:
 - Solid basic knowledge to start your career as a coach;
 - A Diploma which will prove that you have successfully acquired the basic knowledge and skills to be a coach and that you have been assessed externally (via the essays and exam).
- You can open your own practice, once you follow all the legal and administrative requirements for this. How to go about it is something which a financial, legal or business advisor can help you with. Some municipal authorities offer advisory services for free or for a subsidised fee. They will advise you on the steps to take (like if and when to register at the Chamber of Commerce (KvK) and how to manage your taxes).
- You can try to find positions within companies or big organisations.
- If you do not wish to work for yourself or become an entrepreneur, and if you don't want to work with companies, you can still look for an organisation which can receive services from you. You might need to start as a 'student-volunteer first' to carve your way in, but it is not always like that. Here are a few ideas to start from:
 - NGO's
 - Refugee centres
 - Charities such as the HIV centre
 - (International) schools (working with their staff)
 - Universities and other higher education centres
 - 7 cups of tea (although this isn't face to face)
 - The different gemeentes (some are operating a help desk and appreciate professional help)
 - International Health Centres (more relevant if you have a medical background)
 - Being a "body" to someone who goes through some difficulties
 - Hospitals and recovery centres

The need for effective, timely and flexible help is greater than ever, and coaching is increasingly seen as an effective form of helping people. Some organisations are surprisingly open to coaching or what they see as a new form of working with clients. Others remain, for now, rigidly closed.

Since there is much going on in help and care here and abroad, it is worth being well trained and gaining confidence and practice. Ultimately, the quality of what we can offer as coaches is not found in so-called 'official recognition' of any kind, but in our real and perceived sincere professionalism and reliable humane presence. Completing appropriate education, all the way to the Diploma, is a great start.