

- **A professional coaching relationship:** A professional coaching relationship exists when coaching includes a business agreement or contract that defines the responsibilities of each party.

In order to clarify roles in the coaching relationship, it is often necessary to distinguish between the client and the sponsor. In most cases, the client and sponsor are the same person and therefore jointly referred to as the client. For purposes of identification, however, the International Coach Federation defines these roles as follows:

- **Client:** The "client" is the person(s) being coached.
- **Sponsor:** The "sponsor" is the entity (including its representatives) paying for and/or arranging for coaching services to be provided.

In all cases, coaching engagement contracts or agreements should clearly establish the rights, roles, and responsibilities for both the client and sponsor if they are not the same persons.

when coaching includes an agreement (including contracts) that defines the responsibilities of each party.

- **Roles in the Coaching Relationship:** In order to clarify roles in the coaching relationship it is often necessary to distinguish between the client and the sponsor. In most cases, the client and sponsor are the same person and are therefore jointly referred to as the client. For purposes of identification, however, the ICF defines these roles as follows:

Client: The "Client/Coachee" is the person(s) being coached.

Sponsor: The "sponsor" is the entity (including its representatives) paying for and/or arranging for coaching services to be provided. In all cases, coaching engagement agreements should clearly establish the rights, roles and responsibilities for both the client and sponsor if the client and sponsor are different people.

Student: The "student" is someone enrolled in a coach training program or working with a supervisor or coach mentor in order to learn the coaching process or enhance and develop their coaching skills.

- **Conflict of Interest:** A situation in which a coach has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective of his or her official duties as a coach and a professional.

As noted above, a couple of new definitions were added to provide further information about students and conflicts of interest.

Part 2: The ICF Standards of Ethical Conduct

Section 1: Professional Conduct At Large

As a coach:

- 1) I will not knowingly make any public statement that is untrue or misleading about what I offer as a coach or make false claims in any written documents relating to the coaching profession or my credentials or the ICF.
- 2) I will accurately identify my coaching qualifications, expertise, experience, certifications and ICF Credentials.
- 3) I will recognize and honor the efforts and contributions of others and not misrepresent them as my own. I understand that violating this standard may leave me subject to legal remedy by a third party.
- 4) I will, at all times, strive to recognize personal issues that may impair, conflict or interfere with my coaching performance or my professional coaching relationships. Whenever the facts and circumstances necessitate, I will promptly seek professional assistance and determine the action to be taken, including whether it is appropriate to suspend or terminate my coaching relationship(s).
- 5) I will conduct myself in accordance with the ICF Code of Ethics in all coach training, coach mentoring and coach supervisory activities.
- 6) I will conduct and report research with competence, honesty and within recognized scientific standards and applicable subject guidelines. My research will be carried out with the necessary consent and approval of those involved and with an approach that will protect participants from any potential harm. All research efforts will be performed in a manner that complies with all the applicable laws of the country in which the research

Part 2: The ICF Standards of Ethical Conduct

Section 1: Professional Conduct at Large:

As a coach, I:

1. Conduct myself in accordance with the ICF Code of Ethics in all interactions, including coach training, coach mentoring, and coach supervisory activities.
2. Will take the appropriate action with the coach, trainer, coach mentor and/or will contact ICF to address any ethics violation or possible breach as soon as I become aware, whether it involves me or others.
3. Communicate and create awareness in others, including organizations, employees, sponsors, coaches and others, who might need to be informed of the responsibilities established by this Code.
4. Refrain from unlawful discrimination in occupational activities, including age, race, gender orientation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender orientation, religion, national origin or disability.
5. Make verbal and written statements that are true and accurate about what I offer as a coach, the coaching profession or ICF.
6. Accurately identify my coaching qualifications, expertise, experience, training, certifications and ICF credentials.
7. Recognize and honor the efforts and contributions of others and only claim ownership of my own material. I understand that violating this standard may leave me subject to legal remedy by a third party.
8. Strive at all times to recognize my personal issues that may impair, conflict, or interfere with my coaching performance or my

Note that the phrase “I will” was removed from the beginning of each standard and the new header includes the word “I”. This allows the standards to be less of a list of rules and more of a statement of how a coach enters into their relationships with clients.

Several of the standards were repositioned and renumbered within each section. The goal was to position inter-related standards close together so that someone reading the Code would quickly be able to get a picture of how a coach should “show-up” in any particular area.

is conducted.

7) I will maintain, store, and dispose of any records created during my coaching business in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security and privacy, and complies with any applicable laws and agreements

8) I will use ICF Member contact information (email addresses, telephone numbers, etc.) only in the manner and to the extent authorized by the ICF.

professional coaching relationships. I will promptly seek the relevant professional assistance and determine the action to be taken, including whether it is appropriate to suspend or terminate my coaching relationship(s) whenever the facts and circumstances necessitate.

9. Recognize that the Code of Ethics applies to my relationship with coaching clients, coachees, students, mentees and supervisees.
10. Conduct and report research with competence, honesty, and within recognized scientific standards and applicable subject guidelines. My research will be carried out with the necessary consent and approval of those involved, and with an approach that will protect participants from any potential harm. All research efforts will be performed in a manner that complies with all the applicable laws of the country in which the research is conducted.
11. Maintain, store, and dispose of any records, including electronic files and communications created during my coaching engagements in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security and privacy, and complies with any applicable laws and agreements.
12. Use ICF member contact information (email addresses, telephone numbers, and so on) only in the manner and to the extent authorized by the ICF.

New Standard 9 specifically calls out the applicability of the Code across all aspects of one's coaching practice.

Section 2: Conflicts of Interest

As a coach:

9) I will seek to avoid conflicts of interest and potential conflicts of interest and openly disclose any such conflicts. I will offer to remove myself when such a conflict arises.

10) I will disclose to my client and his or her sponsor all anticipated compensation from third parties that I may pay or receive for referrals of that client.

11) I will only barter for services, goods or other non-monetary remuneration when it will not impair the coaching relationship.

12) I will not knowingly take any personal, professional or monetary advantage or benefit of the coach-client relationship, except by a form of compensation as agreed in the agreement or contract.

Section 3: Professional Conduct with Clients

As a coach:

13) I will not knowingly mislead or make false claims about what my client or sponsor will receive from the coaching process or from me as the coach.

14) I will not give my prospective clients or sponsors information or advice I know or believe to be misleading or false.

15) I will have clear agreements or contracts with my clients and sponsor(s). I will honor all agreements or contracts made in the context of professional coaching relationships.

16) I will carefully explain and strive to ensure that, prior to or at the initial meeting, my coaching client and sponsor(s) understand the nature of coaching, the nature and limits of confidentiality, financial

Section 2: Conflicts of Interest:

As a coach, I:

13. **Seek to be conscious of** any conflict or potential conflict of interest, openly disclose any such conflict and offer to remove myself when a conflict arises.

14. **Clarify roles for internal coaches, set boundaries and review with stakeholders conflicts of interest that may emerge between coaching and other role functions.**

15. Disclose to my client and the sponsor(s) all anticipated compensation from third parties that I may receive for referrals of clients or pay to receive clients.

16. **Honor an equitable coach/client relationship, regardless of the form of compensation.**

Section 3: Professional Conduct with Clients:

As a coach, I:

17. **Ethically speak what I know to be true to clients, prospective clients or sponsors about the potential value of the coaching process or of me as a coach.**

18. Carefully explain and strive to ensure that, prior to or at the initial meeting, my coaching client and sponsor(s) understand the nature of coaching, the nature and limits of confidentiality, financial arrangements, and any other terms of the coaching agreement.

19. Have a clear coaching service agreement with my clients and sponsor(s) **before beginning the coaching relationship and honor this agreement. The agreement shall**

As internal coaching continues to grow, a new Standard 14 was added to address some of their concerns particularly for those that may serve in both an HR and coaching capacity.

Issues regarding confidentiality continue to frequently come before the IRB. These standards seek to provide more information and instruction around this issue

arrangements, and any other terms of the coaching agreement or contract.

17) I will be responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern any physical contact I may have with my clients or sponsors.

18) I will not become sexually intimate with any of my current clients or sponsors.

19) I will respect the client's right to terminate the coaching relationship at any point during the process, subject to the provisions of the agreement or contract. I will be alert to indications that the client is no longer benefiting from our coaching relationship.

20) I will encourage the client or sponsor to make a change if I believe the client or sponsor would be better served by another coach or by another resource.

21) I will suggest my client seek the services of other professionals when deemed necessary or appropriate.

Section 4: Confidentiality/Privacy

As a coach:

22) I will maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information. I will have a clear agreement or contract before releasing information to another

include the roles, responsibilities and rights of all parties involved.

20. Hold responsibility for being aware of, and setting clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern interactions, physical or otherwise I may have with my clients or sponsor(s).

21. Avoid any sexual or romantic relationship with current clients or sponsor(s) or students, mentees, or supervisees. Further, I will be alert to the possibility of any potential sexual intimacy among the parties including my support staff and/or assistants and will take the appropriate action to address the issue or cancel the engagement in order to provide a safe environment overall.

22. Respect the client's right to terminate the coaching relationship at any point during the process, subject to the provisions of the agreement. I shall remain alert to indications that there is a shift in the value received from the coaching relationship.

23. Encourage the client or sponsor to make a change if I believe the client or sponsor would be better served by another coach or by another resource and suggest my client seek the services of other professionals when deemed necessary or appropriate.

Section 4: Confidentiality/Privacy

As a coach, I:

24. Maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless release is required by law.

25. Have a clear agreement about how

You will notice that standards 21 and 27 attempt to ensure that a coach holds his or her staff to high levels of ethical behavior as it pertains to sexual relationships and confidentiality.

person, unless required by law.

23) I will have a clear agreement upon how coaching information will be exchanged among coach, client and sponsor.

24) When acting as a trainer of student coaches, I will clarify confidentiality policies with the students.

25) I will have associated coaches and other persons whom I manage in service of my clients and their sponsors in a paid or volunteer capacity make clear agreements or contracts to adhere to the ICF Code of Ethics Part 2, Section 4: Confidentiality/Privacy standards and the entire ICF Code of Ethics to the extent applicable.

coaching information will be exchanged among coach, client and sponsor.

26. Have a clear agreement when acting as a coach, coach mentor, supervisor or trainer, with both client, sponsor, student, mentee or supervisee about the conditions under which confidentiality may not be maintained (e.g., illegal activity, pursuant to valid court order or subpoena, imminent or likely risk of danger to self or to others, etc) and make sure both client and sponsor, student, mentee or supervisee voluntarily and knowingly agree in writing to that limit of confidentiality. Where I reasonably believe that because one of the above circumstances is applicable, I may need to inform appropriate authorities.

27. Require all those who work with me in support of my clients to adhere to the ICF Code of Ethics, Number 26, Section 4, Confidentiality and Privacy Standards, and any other sections of the Code of Ethics that might be applicable.

Section 5: Continuing Development

As a coach, I:

28. Commit to the need for continued and on-going development of my professional skills.

Part Three: The ICF Pledge of Ethics

As an ICF Professional Coach, I acknowledge and agree to honor my ethical and legal obligations to my coaching clients and sponsors, colleagues, and to the public at large. I pledge to comply with the ICF Code of Ethics and to practice these standards

Part Three: The ICF Pledge of Ethics:

As an ICF coach, I acknowledge and agree to honor my ethical and legal obligations to my coaching clients and sponsors, colleagues, and to the public at large. I pledge to comply with the ICF Code of Ethics and to practice these standards with those

Standard 28 is new and appeals to a coach's need for continued training and education. This ties into the second recommendation from the task force which would require three hours of ethics education to renew a credential.

<p>with those whom I coach.</p> <p>If I breach this Pledge of Ethics or any part of the ICF Code of Ethics, I agree that the ICF in its sole discretion may hold me accountable for so doing. I further agree that my accountability to the ICF for any breach may include sanctions, such as loss of my ICF Membership and/or my ICF Credentials.</p>	<p>whom I coach, teach, mentor or supervise.</p> <p>If I breach this Pledge of Ethics or any part of the ICF Code of Ethics, I agree that the ICF in its sole discretion may hold me accountable for so doing. I further agree that my accountability to the ICF for any breach may include sanctions, such as loss of my ICF membership and/or my ICF credentials.</p> <p>For more information on the Ethical Conduct Review Process including links to file a complaint, please click here.</p>	
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