

Do Your Best on the ICF Credentialing Exam

TOPICS	Expect to learn about ...
What This Document Is ... And Isn't!	Information gathered from ICF/Official Sources, from Accredited Coach Training Programs, from individual exam takers, and from my mentoring clients - so, <u>a MIX of official and unofficial information sources.</u>
Who needs to take the ICF Credentialing Exam?	You MAY need to take the new credentialing exam even if you took the previous version.
<u>What should I know about the exam procedures, content, and accomodations?</u>	View ICF's exam Sample Questions, as well as information about what's covered in the exam. https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/credentialing-exam-content#sample-questions
How can I best prepare to take the <u>ICF Credentialing Exam?</u>	In addition to ICF and Test Center information, this section includes exam best practices; specific tips to help you navigate the "best answer/worst answer" format.
Should I take the exam in my home office, or go to a testing site?	Many thanks to two coaches for sharing their exam experience and suggestions for you! Coach Berri Wells who sat down with me for an hour to catch up and fill us in on her 2023 home office/ Testing Center selection. Coach J more recently took the Exam in their home office and offer suggestions to make that process easier for you.
Additional Resources	I will update this article as I learn more about coaches' experiences with the exam. I'd love to hear your experience and sharing on how others can excel. Please reach out and <u>let's chat.</u>

10-page ICF Guide
"Preparing Students for the ICF Credentialing Exam"
 June 2024

What This Document Is ... And Isn't!

Hi, I hope this document is helpful to you in **preparing for the ICF Credentialing Exam**. I offer it with my compliments and you may share with others.

In return, **I ask you to do your part!**

Your part includes acknowledging that this is **a MIX of official and unofficial information sources**, all shared with permission. I intend to update this document and welcome your feedback, experience, and questions. Send comments to CoachAnne@ANewLeafCoaching.com or, even better, schedule a chat!

I gathered this information from a variety of sources, some official, like the International Coaching Federation (ICF). I also sought out unofficial sources (past exam takers, Accredited Coach Training Programs, fellow coaches and my mentoring clients) who shared their tips on the exam process.

Who needs to take the ICF Credentialing Exam?

Learn **who needs to take the Credentialing Exam**, what **Accommodations** are available, options for **remote or testing center** locations, and much more.

View information in the FAQ's copied from the ICF Credentials & Standards page here:

Read more Exam FAQs here ...

What should I know about the exam procedures, content, and accommodations?

View ICF's **Sample Exam Questions**, details on **exam procedures**, what's covered in the exam, and **requesting accommodations**.

Exams are offered 24 hours to be able to accommodate all time zones around the globe. **Students should be careful to double check the time when they register for their exam if using the online platform.**

[Exam Accommodations - International Coaching Federation](#)

[ICF-Exam-Accommodations-Request-Form.pdf \(coachingfederation.org\)](#)

Remote Proctored Testing Information (Pearson OnVUE)

[Pearson VUE Online Testing Guide](#)

[International Coaching Federation \(ICF\) OnVUE exam information // Pearson VUE](#)

Read more [here](https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/credentialing-exam-content#sample-questions): <https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/credentialing-exam-content#sample-questions>

How can I best prepare to take the ICF Credentialing Exam?

Because this exam may be formatted differently than many of us are used to, I've found and shared here a variety of techniques to help you do your best. Read through them all and decide which may work best for you. If you find additional resources and have permission to share, please let me know and I'll include in future versions of this article.

When possible I've noted the individual(s) who originally shared Exam taking tips with me.

Credentialing Exam Resources and Tips:

Coach Lyssa deHart’s free resource, “5 Keys to the Updated ICF Credential Exam”: <https://academy.lyssadehart.com/icf-exam-support>



Tips on Exam format (shared by Teri-E Belf, MCC, from Cathy Liska)

Another way to recognize best and worst answers for the Credentialing exam.

Best answer criteria	Worst answer criteria
Ask	Tell
Acknowledge	Lead
Transparency	Dismiss or diminish
	Choose



Tips on Exam Experience - Shared by Brittany Macdonald, The Academies

Hello! Please note that I am not responding as someone who has taken the new ICF exam, or even necessarily as a coach.

In my early coaching days, I worked with students, and in addition to coaching, I also spent a significant amount of time preparing students to take and pass standardized tests. I agree with Teri, standardized testing can, at times, almost feel like the antithesis of a coaching brain! However, I share some initial thoughts in hopes that it may help.

Multiple-Choice Testing

With multiple-choice tests like this, your greatest allies are 1) immediately recognizing the correct answer or 2) process of elimination to arrive at the correct answer. I believe the second would likely be the most helpful in an "identify the worst-case scenario" answer.

My recommendation would be to start by identifying the answer that seems to be the BEST. Then, instead of looking for the "Worst," start to identify the "next best" or "also appropriate" answers. By narrowing it down this way, it is very likely to end with just one or two choices that could qualify as the "Worst."

If one answer remains - great! That is your choice.

If two answers remain, then you can put on your "worst case scenario" thinking hat and use critical thinking to try to determine what the correct response would be. If it is still not obvious, make a guess! But guessing between two answers is better than guessing from all of them.

Reviewing Questions

Another important tip is to not overthink or second guess yourself. The correct answer is surprisingly often the first one (or the one our "gut" or "instinct" tells us is right). If an applicant TRULY has no idea what the right answer could be, it would be best if they leave that question unanswered, then ONLY review the unanswered questions after they have attempted to answer all the questions in that section. (This assumes that there is an option to review your responses, which there generally is in a standardized test).

So to break it down more clearly, the test-taker should answer EVERY question. When answering questions, they should do their very best to come to the answer they think is correct the first time through. Once they have selected an answer, they should not mark it for review or revisit their answer. Trust their experience and their gut, and move on.

If they reach a question that TRULY stumps them (absolutely no understanding of the question and/or possible answers), they should not answer the question, but leave it unanswered for review at the end. This

allows them to allocate their time more appropriately, and not feel pressure and worry that they may not get through all the questions. If, at the end of the test, they only have a few minutes to review their unanswered questions, just select any answer - an answered question has some chance of being right; an unanswered one has no chance of being right!

If they have more time at the end, they can safely dedicate a few minutes to each difficult question to do their best to come to a thought-through answer.

I hope that may help - I would love feedback to hear if it ends up feeling helpful to your applicants in any way.

Brittany Macdonald
The Academies

~~~~~

**Should I take the exam in my home office, or go to a testing site?**

I interviewed two coaches who both successfully passed the exam. Read about their choices of **home office or testing site**.

**Coach J: Home Office - with Suggestions for Success**

Coach J took the exam in Spring 2024 **from their home office**. We sat down for an interview afterward and here are their tips and suggestions:

- After submitting your application you will hear back from the ICF that you have 60 days to register and take the exam. In hindsight I wish I'd **made that exam appointment sooner** rather than waiting till close to the end of that period.
- Allow **plenty of time for pre-exam set up** if taking the exam **remotely/ in home office**. Thirty minutes was suggested but took me closer to one hour.

- Part of the home office/remote option was **uploading ID cards and photo** for proctor. This was followed by using my laptop to show the exam proctor a **360 degree view of the room** I was in. **Nothing** but the laptop should be on the desk. No Kleenex, water bottle, phone, wallet/purse, etc.
- The format was as expected, two sets of questions with a break in between. The **screen displayed** how many questions I'd answered (like you're at 35 out of 41 and how much time is remaining.)
- You can **flag a question and return** to it later, time allowing.
- When you get all the way to the end, it will then return you to a chart showing whether each question was completed, whether it's flagged or whether it's incomplete. I actually missed the first question. I didn't even see it was there.
- **Hint to prepare:** Time for questions is split equally among all eight Core Competencies. That's the best way to think about it. Don't spend all your time reviewing one competency, unless you're particularly weak in it for some reason.

**Thank you Coach J and Congratulations on your PCC!**

~~~~~

Coach Berri: Started at Home Office - switched to Testing Center

The following are highlights of a 5/31/23 call with wonderful Coach **Berri Wells, PCC, of Turning Point Solutions**. Berri has the unique perspective of having “prepared” to take the new exam both in her **home office** ... and later took the exam **in a proctored setting**. Continue reading to learn more ...

Note: Elsewhere in this handout are “**official**” **resources** taken directly from the **ICF website** and from the **test proctor's website**. I thank Berri for sharing her “unofficial” and enlightening experience with the new exam.

I ask you, my reader, to consider this unofficial information as you prepare to do your best on the **ICF Credentialing Exam**. For the latest in official

policy and exam details, please visit <https://coachingfederation.org/credentials-and-standards/credentialing-exam>.

Now, on to Berri's adventure! (Edited for brevity and clarity)

~~~~~

Anne Kelly: Berri, thank you so much for sharing your recent ICF Credentialing Exam experience. **Did you take the exam in your office, or in person at a Pearson VUE testing facility?**

Berri: I originally chose to take the exam at my home office. I later realized, while going through the exam day set-up process with Pearson VUE, that an in-person test center would work better for me.

Anne: Why was that?

Berri: Soooo much had to be set up or moved in my office that by the time I was due to start, I was too frustrated to take such an important exam. I was able to reschedule (after many phone calls) and take the exam at a proctored site - for no additional fee.

Anne: **What advice do you have for coaches who take the exam in their home office?**

Berri: Clear EVERYTHING off of the desk or work area you'll be using. Everything! I had a small fan on my desk and that along with everything else had to go. If I'd know, I'd have set up elsewhere. An empty table or work space with nothing except the computer would be best.

Anne: So you rescheduled at a Pearson VUE site?

Berri: Yes, it was not easy to reschedule and took multiple calls.

Anne: **How would you describe the proctored facility experience?**

Berri: It was a good experience. When I arrived I showed my ID and they took a palm print. To prepare I had to empty all of my pockets and pat myself down. I could take no paper into the room, but I was given a laminated piece of paper on which I could take notes or write notes to

myself, once the exam started. Noise canceling headsets were offered for use if desired.

Anne: **How did time seem to go? Was there a break?**

Berri: The computer at the testing site showed a time count down, as well as the number of questions I had remaining to answer. I finished before time on both of the two sections of the exam. That extra time meant I could go back and review **that section only** of the exam.

**For a break** I raised my hand and waited for the proctor to enter the room. I had five minutes for a bathroom break. I think any extra time might count against the time I had remaining to take the exam. When I returned to the exam room I once again repeated the palm scan, showed my ID, emptied my pockets and did a pat down of myself.

Anne: **When did you find out the results of the exam, whether you'd passed?**

Berri: **Immediately.** The proctor gave me a paper with my score before I left the testing site. They told me both my numeric score and whether I'd passed. (I did!) I was not told how I did on individual topics to get that total score.

Anne: **What else would you like prospective exam takers to know?**

Berri: The format of exam requires coaches to choose both a BEST answer and a WORST answer for scenarios posed with multiple choice answers. Some of the scenarios were clear to me and didn't require a lot of thought or time. Other scenarios were more nuanced and did require more consideration and time.

Thank you again to Berri Wells, PCC, and to Coach J, for sharing their experience. Congratulations to both!

~~~~~

10-page ICF Guide
"Preparing Students for the ICF Credentialing Exam"
June 2024