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Implementation of the Bologna Process and Model Curriculum Development in Coaching

Introduction

The development of a proposed model curriculum in coaching was, from the outset of the AEHESIS project, set against the wider emergence of a framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications in Europe. This approach was taken to maximise the linkage between the development of curricula for coaching in the Higher Education sector and the wider vocational environment within which coaching operates. The work of the project involved three years of developmental work followed by one year of dissemination, including engagement with international federations and agencies with a strong interest in coach education.

During the 1990s, the European Network of Sports Science, Education and Employment (ENSSEE) had developed the EU 5-/eve/ structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications (European Network of Sports Science, Education and Employment, 1999). This structure, which had been developed through a process of cooperation between university and non-university institutions, became a reference point for the development of coaching qualifications in a number of European countries. The five-level structure focused primarily on levels three to five and provided an important bench-mark against which a common language and direction began to emerge on coaching within the countries of the European Union.

As the AEHESIS project commenced its work, there was a consensus emerging within the European Coaching Council (a sub-committee of ENSSEE) on the need to review to EU 5-level structure. Despite the progress that had been made on the basis of the 1999 document, it had become evident that the relationship between university and non-university based courses in coaching required further clarification. The definition and placement of level 5 programmes had also proven to be a matter of ongoing discussion since the completion of the initial ENSSEE document.

There were a number of European and international factors at play as well. In the European Union, there had been several wider developments within vocational education and training that had significant implications for the way in which coaches are educated and their qualifications recognised. These included the Lisbon, Bologna and Copenhagen processes that have charted new directions for vocational education and Higher Education in the light of the emerging social and economic challenges facing the European Union. These processes had also initiated a proposed European Qualification Framework (EQF) and a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

It was also felt that there was a need to more fully engage with the international federations on the issue of coach education and qualifications. In a global context the International Council for Coach Education (ICCE) had also indicated the need for a framework to guide the recognition of coaching qualifications between different countries. Finally, within the EU itself, there was the impending expansion of Member

States to twenty seven which will include many former Eastern bloc nations. This expansion presented significant challenges for coaching, given the varying traditions and approaches that had prevailed over a protracted period within the widened landscape of the EU.

For these reasons, it was decided that the development of the model curriculum in coaching through the AEHESIS project should be set against a review of the EU 5-level structure. This approach would ensure that the proposed model curriculum had a clear professional and vocational context. In coaching, this approach was deemed to be particularly important, given the strong tradition in many European countries of the development of coaching expertise and qualifications outside the university context. It also recognised the need to develop a paradigm that brokered a common language and set of reference points between the university and non-university sectors. In coaching, the respective national and international sports federations have played a central role in the development of coaching and coach education in the sports for which they hold a mandate.

Within this context, the resultant outputs from the project include:

- a. Review of the EU 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications
- b. Outline framework for the development of coaching qualification
- c. Outline curriculum for the education of coaches at four levels and in two standard occupations (coach of participation-oriented sport-persons and coach of performance-oriented sportspersons)
- d. Sample curriculum to guide the development of coaching qualifications in Higher Education
- e. Guidelines on the recognition of coaching qualifications in the university and non-university sectors
- f. Development of a multi-agency Convention on the Recognition of Coaching Competence and Qualifications, adopted at the final project meeting in Rio Maior, Portugal in September 2007.

Each of the elements will be addressed in turn within the current chapter, with a view to providing the full context for the application of the model to the individual requirements of individual agencies and countries. The Framework provided is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather to act as a reference point for the review of current programmes and the development of new curricula in coaching. It is envisaged that the Framework be subject to further evolution and development in the period 2008-2011.

Review of the EU 5-Level Structure

The European Coaching Council (a sub-committee of the European Network of Sports Science, Education and Employment -ENSSEE) initiated the review of the European Structure for the 5-levels of coaches' training in 2004.

The Review was conducted concurrently with the AEHESIS project and it was agreed at the outset that guidelines on the development of a coaching curriculum would be informed by the ongoing work and findings of the Review. The initial mandate for the Review was as follows:

- Review the EU qualification structure for coaches, in light of the emerging structures for the recognition of vocational and educational qualifications in Europe and taking into account the needs and programmes of European/International and National sports federations.
- Make preliminary proposals on a revised structure for coaching qualifications in Europe.
- Prepare a preliminary report, for consultation purposes, at the ENNSSEE and International Council for Coach Education (ICCE) Forum in Limerick on September 2-4, 2005.

The Review Group included representatives from the European Coaching Council (ECC); International Federations; European Olympic Committee; ICCE and ENSSEE.¹ There was a strong overlap between the composition of the Review Group and the AEHESIS Expert Coaching Group. The Review Group met on 9 occasions in Warsaw; Rio Maior (twice); Limerick; Budapest (twice); Barcelona; Valencia; Magglingen; between 2004 and 2007. In addition, several sub-group meetings took place with the support of the AEHESIS project.

The objectives for the Review were further refined by the Review Group as follows:

- Promote a greater consistency of approach to the development of coaching qualifications across sports and the different EU countries Encourage the development of more relevant education and training provision to meet the needs of national and international federations, athletes and coaches
- Provide a transparent framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications within the EU, taking into account the wider EU developments in vocational and educational training and the need to more clearly define the relationship with the Higher Education sector
- Develop a framework that recognises the role of the non-university and university sectors in the education of coaches, in the context of emerging structures for the recognition of educational and vocational qualifications within the EU
- Raise standards and improve the quality of coaching
- Work towards a greater public recognition of coaching as a qualified, competent and regulated profession, which is integral to successful player development at all levels.

The primary methodology employed by the Review was a desk and expert analysis of:

- the previous 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications
- emerging trends and needs within coach education in the EU and globally
- the changing context for vocational education and training within the EU

¹ The composition of the Group was as follows: Chair: Or Pat Duffy, sports coach UK and Chairman of the European Coaching Council; Mr Corrado Beccarini, CONI, Italy; Ms Jacqueline Braissant, Federation Equestre International; Mr Bruce Cook/Mr Mark Harrington, International Rugby Board; Dr Miguel Crespo, International Tennis Federation; Mr Christophe DeBove, INSEP, France; Mr Elio Locatelli, International Amateur Athletics Federation; Mr Declan O Leary, National Coaching and Training Centre, Ireland; Dr Thierry Marique, Louvain, Belgium; Dr Ladislav Petrovic, Director, Coach Education, Semmelweis University; Mr Jose Rodrigues, Director, Rio Maior; Mr Agoston Schulek, EuropeanAthletics Association; Mr Ton Van Under, European Handball Federation; Mr Hrvoje Zjamic, European Tennis Federation; External advisor: Mr John Bales, President, Coaching Association of Canada and President-elect of the International Council for Coach Education.

This analysis was supported by peer review through the AEHESIS project, where the multi-disciplinary Project Management Team provided periodic comment and analysis. The project also facilitated the appointment of Mr John Bales, President of ICCE, as external evaluator and thus added an important external, credible and wider international component to the work.

Consultation with the national competent authorities in coach education, international federations and other agencies was also a key part of the methodology. As part of this process, an interim consultation document was developed and presented to representatives from ECC, ENSSEE and ICCE at the ENSSEE/ICCE Forum in Limerick in September 2005. Over 80 delegates participated in the sessions that considered the document and feedback was collated. The feedback indicated significant support for the general direction of the revised framework, thus providing a direction for the further development of the document.

The completed Review proposed the following key changes to the initial 5-level structure:

- **The definition of coaching roles and the recognition of coaching competence are central to the proposed new framework.** The Framework refers to the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications: Four main coaching roles have been identified, based on an analysis of the job market and the stages in the development of coaching expertise: Apprentice Coach, Coach, Senior Coach, and Master Coach. The key competencies associated with these roles have also been identified.
- **Two standard occupations are identified rather than one:** The revised framework recognises that there is a diversity of standard occupations within the professional area of coaching. Two standard occupations have been identified: coach of participation-oriented sportspersons and coach of performance-oriented sportspersons. These two standard occupations have been further sub-divided into four main coaching categories: coach of beginner players (children, adolescents, adults), coach of participation-oriented players (children, adolescents, adults), coach of talent identified/ performance players (children, adolescents, adults), and coach of full-time/high performance players. It is recognized that these roles may vary between sports and between countries.
- **The direct equation of educational levels with coaching roles is to be replaced with recognition of the federation, vocational and University coach education streams. These educational streams are recommended to demonstrate a clear link between the four coaching roles, the standard occupations and the associated coaching competence:** Within this context, vocational education agencies, national and international federations will determine the number of levels of education appropriate for their country/sport and demonstrate the relationship between these educational levels and the coaching roles/standard occupations. University qualifications in coaching will be recognised in line with the Bologna process and demonstrate the relationship between these qualifications and the coaching roles/standard occupations.

A system for the recognition of coaching qualifications between vocational and Higher Education sectors within each country is proposed. It is recommended that all national competent authorities in coach education oversee, recognise and, if need be, conduct the sports coaching qualification programmes.

- **Recognition of prior learning and current competence:** the Review recommends that coaches carrying out their role should have either completed a formal and recognised course of learning and/or had their prior learning and current competence formally assessed.
- **The introduction of a coach licensing system is recommended:** as part of the process of moving coaching towards the status of a regulated profession it is recommended that all coaches hold a sport-specific coaching licence. The coaching licence should act as a registration and recognition system overseen and validated by the sports federations and, if need be, by the national competent authority. The coaching licence should be the primary criterion for the recognition of the coaches' mastery of the practical demands and competencies of sports coaching.
- **The revised European Structure for the Recognition of Coaching Competence and Qualifications should be directly mapped to the European Qualification Framework (EQF):** a preliminary comparison has been made between the revised European Structure for the Recognition of Coaching Qualifications (four levels) and the emerging EQF levels) and suggests that the four main coaching roles lie between levels 3 and 7 of the EQF.

The outcomes of the Review formed an important backdrop to the work of the AEHESIS project and the work of the Coaching Expert Group was fully informed by the directions signalled in the Review.

Outline Framework for the Development of Coaching Qualifications

For the purposes of the project, coaching was defined as:

The guided improvement of a person, led by a coach, of sports participants and teams in a single sport and at identifiable stages of the athlete/sportsperson pathway.

Using this definition as the reference point, a framework was developed to guide the design and development of coaching curricula. A number of core principles underpinned this framework:

A. The purpose of coach education

Developing effective, ethical and inclusive coaches should be a central feature of coach education programmes, underpinned by appropriate theoretical content

Coach education programmes should equip coaches to carry out the various elements of their role effectively, ethically and with a clear understanding of the need for equity and inclusion. The coach should be provided with education in practical and theoretical (scientific) areas, which is closely linked with their day-to-day work. The work of

coaches should be underpinned by a strong Code of Ethics and Conduct designed to protect the safety, welfare and rights of all sports participants.

B. Competence to do the job

Coach education programmes should equip coaches with the competence to do the job

The design of coach education programmes should be closely related to the needs of the labour market and the requirements of national/international federations. Coaches should be equipped to do the job, demonstrating and practising the skills that will enhance their effectiveness in fostering athlete progress, confidence, responsibility and empowerment. It should also be recognised that the role of the coach varies according to the pathway stage of the children, players and athletes. Some coaches will play mixed roles across the pathway, while others work at specific stages. The training and qualification of coaches should take the potential for diversification or specialisation of role into account, based on a clear analysis of the labour market and the needs of the relevant federations.

C. The coaching process

Coaching and coach education should be supported by national systems that acknowledge, encourage and value the coaching process. In a quality coaching process, account should be taken of the individual player/athlete; the relationship established between the player/athlete and coach; and the time/route needed for the individual to develop. This process underpins lifelong participation and performance and should be appropriately balanced with product-driven outcomes.

D. Learning modes

The format of coach education programmes should include a range of learning modes

Coach education programmes should consist of a combination of competence-based training; formal coach education sessions; individual learning; e-learning; distance learning; supervised practice and recognition of current competence and prior learning. Theoretical, practical and on-the-job training should be essential features of all coach education programmes, underpinned by adherence to the Code of Ethics and Conduct. **Coaching expertise is built up through a combination of knowledge and life-long experience, practical coaching experience, formal training programmes and self-reflection**

Coach education programmes are one part of the overall development of coaching expertise. These programmes provide essential building blocks and underpinning knowledge for coaches and are most effective when they are closely related to the experience and working context of the coach. The primary element of developing coaching expertise comes from the practice of coaching, guided by well-structured education programmes and informed by the decision-making and self-reflection of the coach.

The design of coach education programmes should recognise prior learning and competence. Lifelong learning and a philosophy of continuous improvement should also be central features of coach education programmes.

Informal and non-formal learning should be recognised and validated.

E. Athlete² and sportsperson³ development

Coach education programmes should be designed so that the coach has the competencies to assist the athletes and sports persons in achieving their goals throughout the appropriate stage(s) of their personal and sporting development

Clear holistic models of athlete and sportsperson development, both generic and sport specific, are central to the creation of participant-centred coach education programmes. The alignment of athlete and sportsperson development models with coach education programmes will maximise relevance and effectiveness for the participating coaches⁴. The early years of sport involvement should be characterised by a strong emphasis on enjoyment, the development of fundamental skills and the sampling of a range of sports activities⁵. At all stages of athlete and sportsperson development coaches should seek to promote responsibility, decision-making and autonomy among athletes.

F. The coaching context

The context in which the coach will work, and the potential roles of the coach, should be taken into account when designing courses (e.g. club, federation/association, school, regional, national, international level).

Coaching includes paid and unpaid aspects

The paid and unpaid aspects of coaching should be recognised in the development of the qualification structure. Recruitment and retention of coaches is an important consideration in the design of any coach education system.

G. Quality assurance systems

Coach education levels should be underpinned by systems of quality assurance and linked to national and European vocational qualification structures All coach education programmes should be underpinned by quality assurance systems that meet the appropriate national and international criteria. These systems should ensure that the design, delivery, assessment and evaluation of coach education programmes are at the required standard measured against the relevant national and international norms.

H. Recognition of coaching qualifications

National and international federations, as well as the competent national authorities, play a central role in the education of coaches and tutors and in the recognition of coaching qualifications

The application of any coach education framework within the EU must have the capacity for sport-specific adaptation. Greater cooperation between the university and

² The term athlete refers to competition-oriented sports participants, including children, adolescents and adults

³ The term sports person refers to participation-oriented sports participants, including children, adolescents and adults

⁴ In cases where coaches play roles across a number of stages of athlete/sportsperson development, coach education programmes should provide the opportunity to develop competencies and achieve learning outcomes that are relevant to each" of the stages.

⁵ The approach taken to early sport experiences varies between countries and depending on whether sports are deemed to be early or late specialisation sports.

non-university sector in the education of coaches and the recognition of coaching qualifications is encouraged.

Transparency, information and guidance

The revised framework for recognising coaching qualifications should provide a transparent system to guide the design and recognition of coaching qualifications across the European Union and between sports.

Outline Curriculum for the Education of Coaches at Four Levels and in Two Standard Occupations

In developing an outline framework for coaching qualifications, it was necessary to classify the roles played by coaches and to identify the main stages associated with the development of coaching expertise. It was also necessary to more closely align the description of coaching roles with the relevant stage of athlete and sports person development. This approach was aimed at promoting a closer relationship between the education and qualifications of coaches and the needs of sports participants and of the labour market.

Two main standard occupations within the professional area were identified, each with two sub-components as follows:

A. Coach of participation-oriented sports persons

1. Coach of beginners (children, adolescents, adults)
2. Coach of participation-oriented sportspersons (children, adolescents, adults)

B. Coach of performance-oriented athletes

1. Coach of talent identified/performance athletes (children, adolescents, adults)
2. Coach of full-time/high performance athletes

The coaching roles outlined above may be carried out on a volunteer, part-time or full-time basis. It is also envisaged that many coaches play roles in more than one of the categories listed. Differences will also exist in the nature of these roles between countries and from sport to sport. To maximise the clarity and effectiveness of the coaching roles, it is recommended that each sport/country have a clear specification of the stages and curriculum for long-term athlete and sportsperson development.

It is also suggested that there are four main phases in the development of coaching expertise and these include early, middle, late, innovation. The phases of coaching expertise can be translated into coaching roles that have relevance for both the labour market and coach education programmes, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 - Suggested classification of coaching roles

Role Title	Role description
Apprentice Coach	Assist more qualified coaches delivering aspects of coaching sessions, normally under supervision. Deliver coaching sessions under direction/support. Acquire and practice basic coaching competencies.
Coach	Prepare for, deliver and review coaching sessions. Demonstrate basic coaching competence.
Senior Coach	Plan, implement and review annual coaching sessions. Demonstrate advanced coaching competence
Master Coach	Plan, implement, analyse and revise multi-annual coaching programmes. Demonstrate advanced coaching competence, innovation and leadership
Coach of participation-oriented sportspeople	
Coach of performance-oriented athletes	

The definition and application of these coaching roles is likely to vary from sport to sport and country to country. Regardless of context, the competencies associated with each of the roles must be clearly defined. The proposed coaching competencies have been mapped against the 1999 Structure for the Recognition of Coaches.

It is recommended that the education structure for coaches be closely related to the coaching roles within the two standard occupations identified in Table 1. Three main streams of delivery in coach education are identified: vocational, federation and university-based education. The number of levels in vocational/ federation-based education will be determined by the relevant country/sport, using the classification of coaching roles as a reference point. University-based coach education will be recognised in line with the Bologna Process, again using the classification of coaching roles and competence. Section 6 of this chapter sets out a framework for the mutual recognition of qualifications between the three and competence educational streams.

It is recognised, however, that education programmes alone may not provide all of the competence and experience required to perform a given role in all its aspects. In cases where initial coach education does not provide all of the competence and experience to fulfil a given role, it is envisaged that coach-licensing schemes and/or clear specification from the competent national authorities/federations will outline how such competencies can be acquired and validated.

The primary methodology employed by the AEHESIS Coaching Group, was the Six-Step Model for curriculum development that is documented elsewhere in the project. This model led to the analysis of the standard occupations within the professional area of coaching. The main elements of the Six-Step Model as it was applied to coaching are outlined in Figure 1.

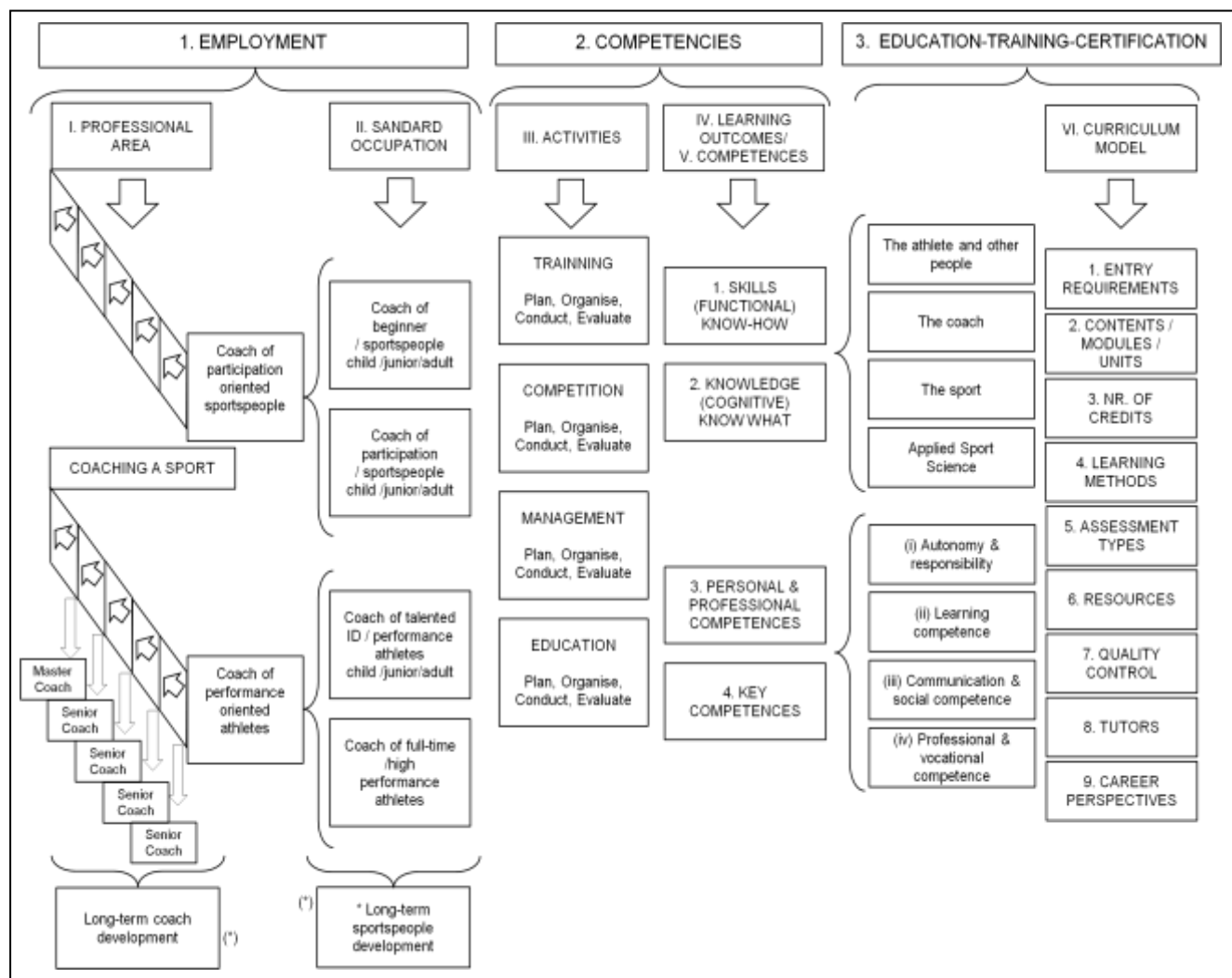


Figure 1 - Outline framework for developing coaching qualifications

Sample Curriculum to Guide the Development of Coaching Qualifications in the Higher Education

The Six-Step Model provided the basis on which a sample curriculum to guide the development of coaching qualifications was created. These guidelines included the identification of competencies, learning outcomes and a sample curriculum model. It should be emphasised that the guidelines provide a reference point and are not prescriptive. It is also recognised that further work is required to refine the guidelines in line with the experiences and requirements of each agency and the systems operating within the respective countries of the European Union.

The key building blocks that were derived from the Six-Step Model, as outlined in Figure 1, included:

1. Employment

I Professional area and II standard occupations: The professional area is defined as coaching, with two standard occupations: coaching of participation-oriented

sportspersons and coaching of performance-oriented athletes. There are two sub-components within each standard occupation.

2. Competencies

III Activities/tasks, IV learning outcomes/ V competencies: The outline competence framework for coaching, against which the education of coaches can be referenced, is outlined in table 2 below.

3. Education training certification

VI Curriculum model: These are elements that need to be defined on a sport-by-sport and individual country basis. International federations may play a role in these. They include entry requirements, content/modules/units, credits, learning methods, assessment types, resources, quality control, tutors and career perspectives:'

Table 2 • Competence framework for coaching

Activities	Tasks	Competencies
The main activities performed by coaches are as follows:	Within each activity, coaches perform the following tasks:	The competencies needed to successfully perform the tasks related to each activity include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training: to prepare sportspeople for competition by planning, organising, conducting and evaluating the appropriate programmes and sessions • Competition: to plan, organise, conduct and evaluate the appropriate events, tournaments, programmes and matches • Management: to lead, direct or control people related to the sport • Education: to teach, instruct or mentor people related to the sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan: ability to put together a step-by-step programme achieve a goal in a session, series of sessions, season, series of seasons • Organise: ability to co-ordinate and make all the necessary arrangements to ensure that the goal will be achieved in an efficient and effective way • Conduct: ability to carry out and execute the planned and organised task • Evaluate: ability to study, analyse and decide on the utility, value, significance or quality of the above process • Research and self-reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge: the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially • Skills: the functions (know-how) a person should be able to perform when functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity • Personal, professional, ethical: knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and possessing certain personal and professional values • Generic/underpinning/key: Communication in mother tongue, communication in another language, basic competencies in maths, science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, interpersonal and civic competencies, entrepreneurship and cultural expression

Note: Knowledge should include the following areas:

1. Knowledge of the sport

- a. Rules, b. Regulations, c. Facilities, d. Equipment, e. Specific characteristics of different modalities.

2. Knowledge of the people in the sport

- a. Athletes and their stages of development
- b. Coaches themselves and their stages of development
- c. Other fellow coaches
- d. Parents and entourage

- e. Officials, referees and agents
- f. Schools, clubs and federations
- g. Media

3. Knowledge of sport sciences as related to the sport

- a. Technique, tactics, physical, and mental aspects of the sport
- b. Medicine, nutrition, first aid, injury prevention
- c. Methodology and pedagogy (didactics)
- d. Psychology and sociology
- e. Biomechanics
- f. **Periodisation** and planning, training theory, lifestyle
- g. Sport-specific model of athlete development

Guidelines on the Recognition of Coaching Qualifications in the University and Non-University Sectors

In order to effectively position Higher Education courses relative to vocational and federation-based coach education, consideration was given to an overarching set of guidelines for the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications. In this regard, three main aspects require consideration:

1. competence of sports coaches
2. education of sports coaches
3. the emerging European qualification framework

It is suggested that the general framework for the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications will relate to coaching roles at Apprentice, Coach, Senior Coach and Master Coach levels in the two standard occupations (coach of participation-oriented teams and coach of performance-oriented athletes) as outlined in Figure 2.

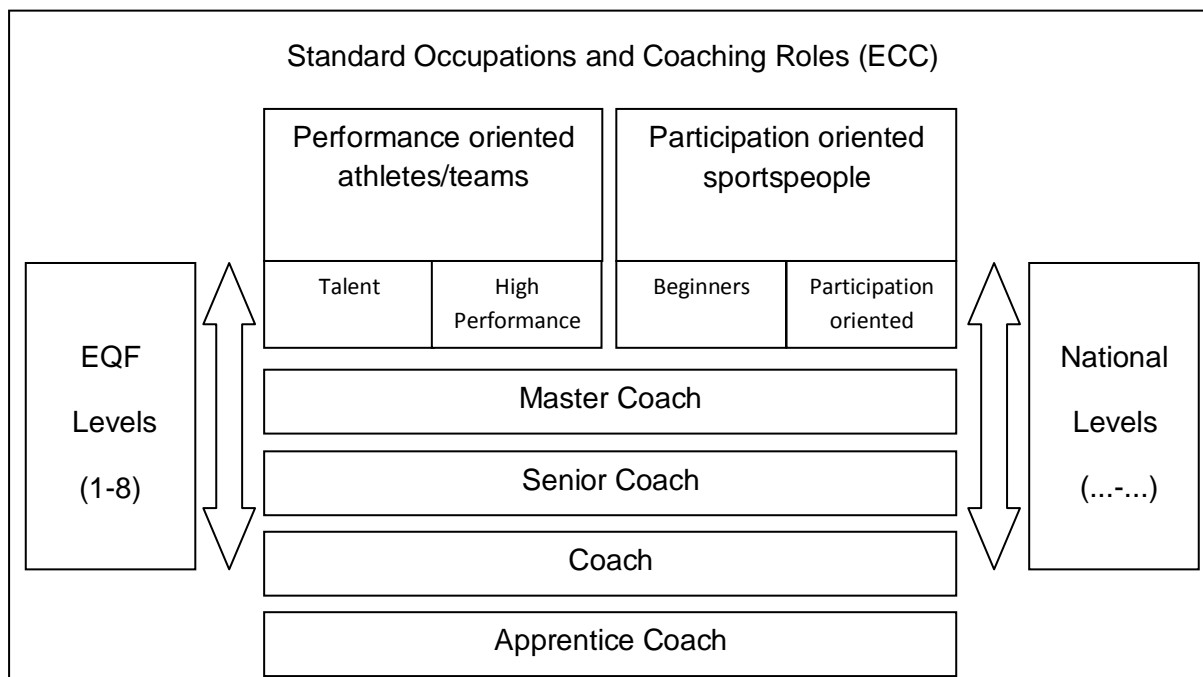


Figure 2 - General Framework for the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications

It is recognised that competence in these areas is built up through three education streams and by engagement in practical coaching. These educational streams vary from country to country, but it is recommended that each EU member develop a clear map of coaching levels. This map should demonstrate the relationship between the educational streams within the country and the role that each stream plays in building coaching competence in the four main coaching roles and across the two standard occupations. The level of competence of the coach can then be mapped against the EQF.

It is recommended that all national competent authorities in coach education oversee, recognise and, if need be, conduct the sports coaching education programmes. These authorities may identify different public or private organisations or agencies to deliver these programmes, as recognised coaching education agencies.

These recognised coach education agencies can be federations, universities, Higher Education institutions or public/private institutions/agencies as identified by the national competent authorities that will follow the guidelines set by the authorities.

Given the sport-specific nature of coaching, the unique position of national federations in the conduct of coach education programmes is recognised.

The revised structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications should consist of three primary strands:

1. Federation-based education
2. Higher education-based education
3. Other recognised coaching education agencies -based education
 - i. **Federation-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by federations at various levels of responsibility (local/regional/national/continental/international).
 - ii. **Higher education-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by institutions of Higher Education and/or other post second cycle institutions (e.g. sports academies, further education etc).
 - iii. **Other recognised coaching education agencies-based education.** This strand is delivered, recognised and/or validated by national competent authorities or by public or private organisations recognised by them. These organisations can be public or private institutions/ agencies recognised by the national competent authorities. It is also recognised that other agencies (e.g. private sector) may be involved in the delivery of the coach education.

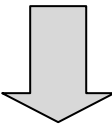
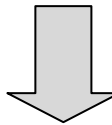
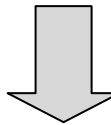
Co-operation between the strands: Cooperation between these strands is recommended with a view to maximising the quality of coach education and making optimum use of resources. It is recommended that where joint working occurs the parties cooperate in all aspects of the education process, regardless of the agency involved in delivery. Dialogue should occur early in the planning process, before the coach education process starts.

Mutual recognition: it is recommended that all strands should be recognised by the rest of parties involved in the process for the following purposes:

- i. **Recognition of federation, Higher Education, and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the National Sports Authorities:** It is recommended that this strand be recognised by the national competent authorities for the purposes of integration into their education system and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking further education in a non-university context.
- ii. **Recognition of federation and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the Higher Education institutions:** It is recommended that these strands be recognised by universities and Higher Education institutions for the purposes of integration into their courses and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking further education in a university context.
- iii. **Recognition of Higher Education institutions and recognised coach education agencies-based education by the federation:** It is recommended that these strands be recognised by federations for the purposes of integration into their courses and for the recognition of the experience and qualifications of coaches seeking to obtain their coaching licence.

Table 3 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications between the federation, Higher Education and other sectors. Criteria for recognition should be developed by each strand.

Table 3 - Framework for the recognition of coaching qualifications between sectors

	National Competent Authorities recognise	
		
Federation-based education	Public or private coaching education agencies	Higher Education based education
MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF ALL QUALIFICATIONS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES		

Coaching Licence

As part of the process of moving coaching towards the status of a regulated profession, it is recommended that all coaches hold a coaching licence. The sport-specific coaching licence should act as a registration and recognition system overseen and validated by the sports federations and, if needed, by the national competent authority. The coaching licence will be the primary criterion for the recognition of the coaches' mastery of the practical demands and competencies of sports coaching. If a license system does not exist, it is recommended that a transparent system be established to verify coaching competence in each coaching role and the relationship between each of the three coach education streams and the competencies required for each of the coaching roles.

It is recommended that the sports coaching licence be issued by the relevant sport federation, with the recognition of the national competent authority. Appropriate systems and infrastructures will be needed within federations and EU Member States to underpin this development.

It is envisaged that a coaching licence will, over time, become a mandatory requirement for those wishing to coach at specified levels, with the timescale for this provision to be discussed and agreed within each sport and each country. Coach licensing schemes should also take the volunteer, part-time and full-time paid nature of coaching into account. The first step of licensing is the attainment of a formal qualification. The achievement of a sports coaching licence will derive from a combination of the following:

- i. **Coaching competence:** Demonstration of competence to coach at a given level of expertise (apprentice coach, coach, senior coach, and master coach) to:
 - Beginners (children, adolescents, adults)
 - Participation/non-competitive sportspersons (children, adolescents, adults)
 - Talent identified/competitive athletes
 - High performance/full-time athletes

Coaching competence may be developed through a number of different routes, or a combination of routes, as outlined in ii) to iv) below.

- ii. **Coach education:** Completion of a systematic course of study which challenges discipline, commitment and willingness to learn on the part of the coach (to include a specified minimum number of hours with a tutor; self-study/distance learning; supervised practice), taking into account sport-specific differences and which is recognised by the relevant national authorities and the federations.

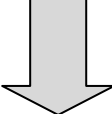
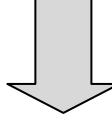
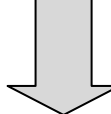
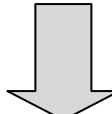
Courses of study may take place within federation, national competent authorities, and Higher Education-based programmes or a combination of them. Other courses of study may be considered based on their contribution to the competence and knowledge framework outlined in this document.
- iii. **Coaching practice:** Practical involvement in sports coaching for a specified period and with specified groups of sports people or coaches.
- iv. **Recognition of prior learning and current competence:** Systems for the recognition of prior learning and current competence that are specific and applicable to the sports coaching context should be put in place and should include recognition of the experience of former athletes, as well as other relevant experience.

The coaching licence may be issued to coaches working in different stages of long-term sports people development (beginner, talent identified, high performance and professional) and at the different stages of long-term coach development (assistant coach, coach, senior coach, master coach). The licence may be issued for a given period of time and may be renewed after successful completion of continuous education activities.

Where possible, the coaching licence may include the benefits of coaching insurance, legal assistance, access to continuous education programmes, resources and other benefits. Table 4 provides an overview of the proposed framework for the licensing of coaches.

The licensing of coaches should be seen as part of the wider process of the establishment of coaching as a regulated sector/profession within the physical activity/sport family. Further research is required to ensure that the development and positioning of the coaching profession takes account of experiences in other relevant areas and the emerging legislative frameworks within the European Union.

Table 4 - Framework for the licensing of coaches

	National Competent Authority recognises	
		
Federation-based education	Public or private coaching education agencies	Higher Education based education
<u>MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND IDENTIFICATION OF COACHING COMPETENCE</u> (WHICH MAY LEAD TO A LICENCE IMMEDIATELY OR MAY REQUIRE COACHING EXPERIENCE! CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT		
		
(COACHING EXPERIENCE AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)		
COACHING LICENCE ISSUED BY THE FEDERATION or the national competent authority and recognised by the national competent authority		

Depending on the level and nature of the coaching qualification, the qualification may itself be regarded as the coaching licence initially. In such cases, it is envisaged that the maintenance of the licence would be contingent upon professional development activities within specified timescales.

The manner in which licensing is applied will vary accordingly between sports and countries, although it is recommended that the licences for senior and master coaches be comparable between sports and between countries. Licences should specify the sport; level of expertise and standard occupation of the coach. The creation of licensing systems has significant resource implications that require careful consideration in each of the Member States and in each sport.

It is recommended that courses in coaching within the Higher Education sector recognise the definition of coaching adopted within this document. Courses that include coaching in their title, must equip students with the skills and relationships to coach in a

sport, or a number of sports, to a specified level. Table 5 provides an outline example of how such an approach might operate where 1, 2 and 3 sports respectively are included within the coaching programme.

Table 5 - Possible curriculum models in the Higher Education sector (Bachelor's degree in coaching, with a specialism in one, two or three sports)

Coaching Level / number of Sports	Apprentice Coach	Coach	Senior Coach	Master Coach
1	X	X	X (possible)	-----
2	X	X	-----	-----
3	X	X (possible)		

All of the above levels would be subject to the licensing criteria identified by the national sports federation. Sport specific content should be delivered in a manner that is in line with the specification of the national federation. Federations will need to develop guidelines for the inclusion of sport specific coaching in Higher Education programmes. Adequate opportunities to engage in practical coaching during the course and through work experience should be provided. Other curriculum models might include coaching as an element with other professional areas within physical activity/sport. Two examples are provided below:

1. Bachelor's degree in sport science with a specialism in coaching and one other area from physical education; health and fitness; sports management (maximum coverage of two sports and subject to the licensing criteria of the national federations)
2. Bachelor's degree in sport science with introductory specialisms in coaching one sport; physical education; health and fitness; sports management (maximum coverage of one sport and subject to the licensing criteria of the national federations)

Convention for the Recognition of Coaching Competence and Qualifications

As part of the dissemination of the AEHESIS project the prospect of developing a multi-agency platform for the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications was explored. Using the work of the Review of the EU 5-level structure and the AEHESIS project as reference points, a consensus emerged on the need for a Convention for the Recognition of Coaching Competence and Qualifications. The Convention, signed by over thirty agencies included the following provisions:

1. Coaches play a central role in providing sport experiences for sportspeople of all ages and skill level.
2. To fulfil their role, coaches must have appropriate competence and training, taking into account the target group(s) with whom they are working
3. Coaches are expected to be as concerned with the well-being of the sportspeople as they are with optimising performance.
4. Coaches should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every sports participant, and treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion and political conviction.

5. Coaches are expected to work in an open and co-operative manner with all individuals responsible for the welfare and performance development of the sportspeople.
6. Coaches should develop and maintain a high standard of training; their action, whilst conducting training sessions, should reflect scientific knowledge and current expertise.
7. Scientific principles should be applied at every level of coaches' training.
8. Responsibilities and professional competence should gradually build up from the initial levels of coaches' qualification to the final qualifications.
9. All coaches should hold a coaching qualification that is recognised by the national competent authority and the relevant federation.
10. The framework for the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications as proposed by the European Coaching Council (ECC) is the European recognised reference point for the period 2008-11.
11. The establishment of a formal review mechanism will be investigated to provide a basis on which prior learning and current competence can be recognised and where coaching qualifications can be reviewed against the ECC framework.
12. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a licensing system that will have international recognition and currency.
13. Each participating agency in the convention will undertake to use the framework as a reference point for their work and to contribute to the further improvement of the framework between 2008 and 2011.

The Way Forward

The AEHESIS Project provided an important vehicle through which coaching could take stock of the existing EU 5-level structure for the recognition of coaching qualifications. The Review of this structure was timely and provided a relevant backdrop for the consideration of a model curriculum for coaching in the Higher Education sector. Indeed, the project clearly established that the development of coaching expertise in isolation from the wider vocational training and employment environment was not a desirable or viable option.

The model presented in this chapter advocates strong and appropriate synergies between the university and non-university sectors in the education and qualification of coaches. A framework for the recognition of qualifications between university, federation and state-based coach education was also provided, recognising federations as the lead agencies in the sport specific education of coaches.

The curriculum model has been positioned within a broader framework for the recognition of coaching competence and qualifications. This broader framework provides a consensual analysis of the standard occupations within the professional area of coaching. The elements of the curriculum model are provided as guidelines, with a view to providing institutions with a set of reference points against which they can review their existing course and plan new programmes.

The work outlined in this chapter represents a further step in the journey of establishing coaching as a professionally regulated vocation, where the education and training of coaches is fully underpinned by a quality assurance system that engages federations,

universities and national competent authorities at the appropriate level. A key feature of the findings is the departure from a one dimensional view of coaching and coach education, where levels of expertise are closely linked with the performance level at which the coach operates.

The new model proposes a parity of esteem for coaches of participation-oriented participants and performance-oriented athletes. This model advocates the creation of stronger educational and vocational pathways for coaches of beginners, often children; coaches of participation-oriented sports persons, often teenagers and adults; coaches of talent identified athletes and coaches of high performance athletes. These categories are not mutually exclusive or new, but they represent an important typology of the emerging structure of coaching as a professionally regulated vocation. The inter-relationship between these pathways and with the other elements of the wider physical activity profession (such as physical education; health and fitness; sport management) will require further analysis and development.

Much further work remains to be done, but it is hoped that the implementation of the Rio Maior Coaching Convention and the application of the coaching curriculum model will lead to further innovation and the consolidation of best practice. Ultimately, the proposals developed through the project will require rigorous review within each country, sport and institution with a view to enhancing bespoke design and delivery solutions in each case. The objective must continue to be the best possible education for coaches as part of their overall journey in developing coaching expertise so that they can further enhance the experiences of sports participants at all stages of their development.

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