



COACH EDUCATION

# CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

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COACH EDUCATION | CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

# SECTION 1

# OVERARCHING STATEMENT

## Overarching Statement

The curriculum framework brings together our philosophy of coaching, curriculum design concepts, and learning principles to create a coherent, progressive, and integrated approach to developing coaches through coach education.

The framework provides a clear set of foundational ideas and principles that guide the design of impactful, meaningful, and authentic learning experiences for coaches. It brings clarity to both *what* effective coach education is and *how* we will facilitate learning that is purposeful and aligned with our wider vision.

Coach education sits within a broader learning and development ecosystem alongside a range of coach development opportunities. These have been intentionally designed to be coherent, connected, and mutually supportive, working together to promote a continuous learning approach and foster a strong, sustainable learning culture.





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## SECTION 2

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

This document articulates the thinking and underpinning ideas that shape the coach education curriculum, showing how each element connects to form a purposeful, progressive, and coherent system. It outlines the beliefs that inform our view of coaching, the design concepts that structure the curriculum, and the learning principles that guide how learning is facilitated and experienced.

By presenting these ideas explicitly, the framework has been integral to the design of the curriculum. As a set of thinking tools, it underpins the decisions we have made and ensures a principled, evidence-informed approach that brings both rigour and quality to our work.

If we expect coaches to develop expertise in supporting others to learn, it is incumbent upon us to have equivalent expertise in how we design and facilitate learning. Our curriculum is therefore grounded in both fundamental and contemporary principles of education, learning, and assessment. By bringing together the theory and practice of learning and coaching, we have created a curriculum that is both relevant and fit for purpose.

Furthermore, the framework will support coaches, educators, and stakeholders to understand *why* we have structured and positioned coach education as we have. It therefore provides clarity on the rationale behind our approach and how each component contributes to an effective and ethical coach education system that meets the needs of coaches, clubs, and Aquatics.



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## SECTION 3

# PHILOSOPHY OF COACHING



## Philosophy of Coaching

To create a coach education curriculum where we can support coaches to develop the skills necessary to meet the demands of coaching, it is essential that we take a position on the nature and demands of coaching itself.

Our position of coaching is grounded in the understanding that coaching is a social process between human beings that have individual cares, concerns, motivations, and goals. People's background and biography shape and influence how they frame and experience sport and the world around them.

How we treat each other matters; respect, dignity, autonomy and meeting people's needs are what each person deserves. This means we think about coaches, athletes and participants as whole, worthy and valuable. We can, on the one hand, want people to get better and on the other, acknowledge they are good enough as they are.

We acknowledge that many people might feel they learn more from failure and challenge than from success or support but for people to flourish, they need to have positive emotions and feel a sense of competence, joy and fulfillment in what they do. This leads us to believe that effective and ethical coaching is a balance between catching people doing things well and challenging them to improve. To learn, grow, and change requires taking risks and becoming comfortable with uncertainty and the vulnerability that accompanies it. For people to engage fully in this process, they must feel psychologically safe, accepted, and that they genuinely belong.

Coaching happens in a complex, dynamic, and ever-changing world. Coaching does not happen in a vacuum – it is situated and contextual, and influenced by many people and things, some of which are obvious and in plain sight, some of which are not. In this regard, context, culture, people and relationships will either enable or constrain the outcomes coaches achieve.

Coaching sits at the intersection of theory and practice, but not in the traditional sense. We position coaching as a process of active experimenting with ideas and reflecting-in-action as well as on-action and for-action. Where understanding is built through and from the experience of coaching itself. In this sense, coaches are not just users of theory—they are builders of theory, developing working explanations of what is happening, why it is happening, and what to do next as they coach.

Building on that, we see coaching as a process of co-construction, where the coach and the athlete/participant work together to explore what is possible, making sense of what emerges, and learning together over time. The coach is a facilitator of learning, supporting the athlete or participant to solve problems and make sense of what they are trying to achieve.

By embracing the complexity of coaching rather than reducing it, we aim to develop coaches who are reflective, relational, and responsive – capable of creating environments where

people can flourish, grow, and pursue their own personal excellence in ways that are meaningful to them.

## Philosophy of coaching - principles

### 1. Coaching is complex and multi-layered

Coaching involves visible actions and also deeper, often unseen influences such as emotions, relationships, constraints, and motivations. Coaches learn to notice and work with these layers rather than rely solely on what is immediately observable.

### 2. Coaching is contextual

What works in one situation may not work in another. Effective coaching requires reading the moment, understanding the person, and adapting practice to the specific environment, culture, and circumstances.

### 3. Athlete development is non-linear and unfolds over time

Insights, habits, and confidence grow gradually through experiences. Coaches pay attention to patterns across time and recognise that every session contributes to a broader trajectory.

### 4. Coaching has multiple stakeholder and multiple goals

Athletes, coaches, parents, and organisations all bring different needs and expectations. Skilled coaches navigate these layers, help surface underlying motivations, and co-create meaningful and ethical ways of being.

### 5. Coaching is a process of informed experimentation

Because outcomes cannot be predicted in advance, coaches test ideas, observe what happens, and adjust their approach in real time to work towards goals and objectives. Theory and practice inform one another, and learning emerges through inquiry, curiosity, and reflection.

### 6. Knowledge is partial and always developing

There is no single “right” way to coach. Coaches build understanding through experience, dialogue, evidence, and critical thinking. They remain open to revising their assumptions as new insights emerge.

### 7. Coaching is ethical and relational

Coaching is fundamentally about people. Ethical practice involves acting with care, integrity, and courage, prioritising the wellbeing, autonomy, and long-term development of athletes while still pursuing excellence.

### 8. Coaching is shaped by culture and evolves with society

As cultural expectations shift – around wellbeing, inclusion, voice, and power – coaching must adapt. Coaches develop practices that honour dignity, agency, and contemporary

values while it is still possible to strive for high performance.

**9. Learning is social, experiential, and sense-making**

Coaches learn best through doing, observing, discussing, and reflecting with others. Sense-making is central: coaches interpret experiences, explore why things happened, and use these insights to guide future action.

**10. Coaches are producers of knowledge, not passive consumers of it.**

Coaches generate knowledge **in** and **from** practice. Ideas and theories about practice are valuable to develop and guide practice-based theories, but it's the 'figuring out' through doing that captures the craft of coaching.



COACH EDUCATION | CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

**SECTION 4**  
**CURRICULUM  
DESIGN  
CONCEPTS**

## Curriculum Design Concepts

Curriculum design concepts are the principles, frameworks, and strategies used to plan, organise, deliver, and evaluate learning experiences to achieve specific educational outcomes. Curriculum design concepts provide a clear, integrated way of organising the coach education curriculum, helping us stay connected to the real complexity of coaching. They are essential for building a progressive and coherent curriculum because they keep development focused on the capabilities that matter, rather than fragmenting learning into disconnected tasks or oversimplified checklists.

### 1. Who-What-How organising framework

The **Who-What-How** framework offers a simple but powerful framework to design and organise the curriculum, ensuring that learning is connected to the real responsibilities of coaching. The framework supports the prioritisation of capabilities that matter, rather than fragmenting learning into disconnected tasks or oversimplified checklists.

As a first-person account of coaching practice, we can use the **Who-What-How** to meaningfully identify and explore the real tasks and responsibilities of coaching.



**Each element in the Who-What-How is interrelated and interdependent**



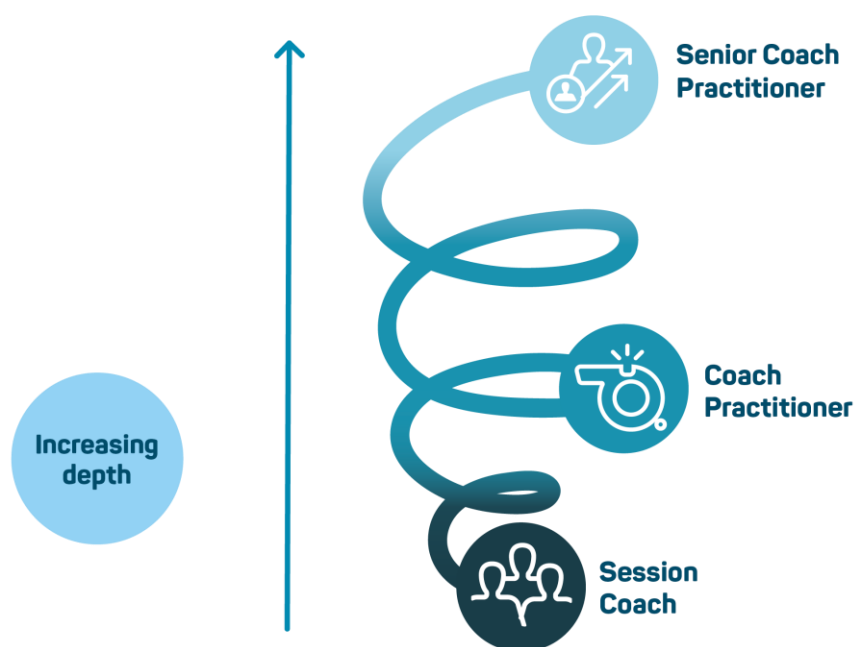
A conceptual framework for coaches' knowledge and decision-making  
(Muir & Lyle, 2025, p. 196 – adapted from Abraham & Collins, 2011a; Muir et al., 2011b; Muir et al., 2015)

As the primary organising framework, we have extrapolated the elements and intersections of **Who–What–How** to establish the core responsibilities of coaching. The interrelated and interdependent nature of the **Who-What-How** helps ensure that coaching is always representative of real life.

Holding the framework at this level of integration prevents us from reducing coaching to checklists and instead supports a more holistic, practice-based understanding of coaching expertise. It gives coaches and coach educators a shared structure that is simple enough to use, yet rich enough to capture the true demands of coaching in the real world.

## 2. Spiral curriculum

The entire curriculum is designed around the concept of a spiral curriculum. The spiral curriculum structure means that all the coaching responsibilities are in play at some degree at each level. This ensures that courses are always representative of real coaching. This is different to linear curriculums, where skills are often taught in isolation and only combined later.



In a spiral curriculum, learners repeatedly revisit the same core coaching capacities with increasing depth, complexity, and independence. This allows understanding to develop progressively through practice, reflection, and integration rather than through a sequence of disconnected competencies.

This approach ensures that the courses and programmes are progressive and vertically coherent, which creates a connected and challenging curriculum structure.

### 3. Constructive alignment

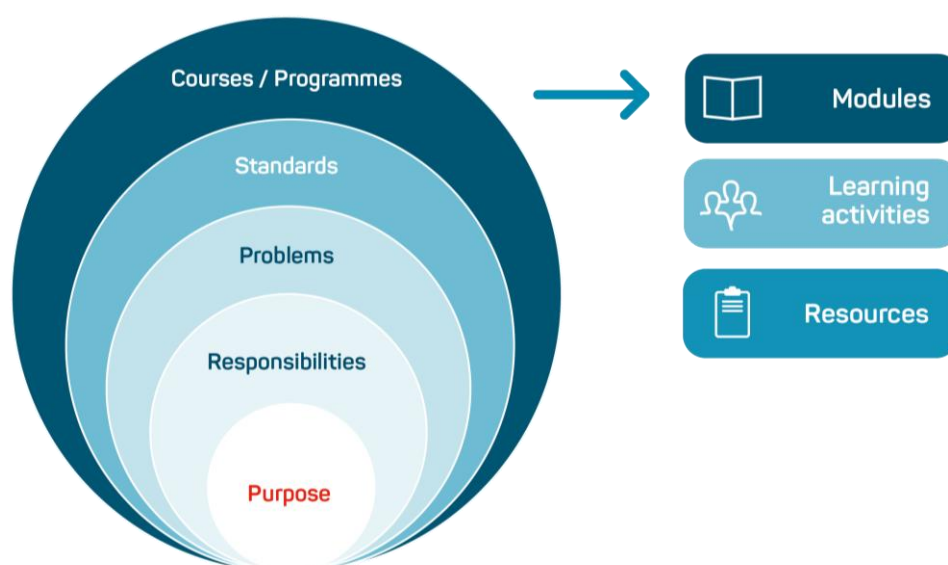
At its most fundamental level, the purpose of coaching underpins all aspects of curriculum design. The intended purpose of coaching shapes the role and function of the coach, which in turn determines the knowledge, behaviours, and skills required for effective practice. Grounded in our philosophy of coaching, the coaching courses and programmes within the curriculum are therefore designed around the responsibilities learners are expected to undertake and the capabilities they are expected to develop.

Rather than focusing solely on assessment outcomes, we believe it is more meaningful to frame expectations through standards of coaching practice. Unlike isolated course outcomes, coaching standards are grounded in the realities of practice and reflect the knowledge, judgement, behaviours, and skills required in authentic coaching environments. Therefore, for each area of responsibility at every level of the curriculum, there is an associated coaching standard that defines effective and ethical practice.

These standards are statements of expertise rather than minimum competencies. They articulate what it means to engage successfully with the real responsibilities, challenges, and complexities of coaching practice. As such, the standards serve as the assessment criteria

against which learners are evaluated. To successfully complete any course or programme within the curriculum, learners must demonstrate that they meet the course-specific standards outlined in each curriculum guide.

This diagram shows how the curriculum is constructively aligned from purpose to the design of each module.



## Summary

**Coaching responsibilities** – The core areas of coaching that contribute to the craft and practice of coaching.

**Coaching problems** – The real problems and challenges that coaches face in their practice in which they navigate effectively and ethically.

**Coaching standards** – Statement and expectations that suggest what good coaching is when the responsibilities are enacted well.

## Curriculum responsibilities and standards overview

Each course and programme within the curriculum will have its own specific responsibilities and standards. The overview simply aims to illustrate the broader intent and structure of the curriculum, while highlighting the reflective and practice-oriented questions that support coach learning and development.

The responsibilities and standards act as a central reference point not only for the courses and programmes, but also for both the coach and the coach educator throughout the learning process.

<b>Coaching Responsibilities Simplified Overview</b>	
Who	Who are you coaching and how are you supporting their needs and wants?
Who - How	How are you creating a culture and environment to support, engage, and motivate people?
Who - What	What and how are you planning to help participants/athletes achieve their goals?
What	What are you coaching with whom and why?
What - How	What strategies are you using to support and bring about learning?
Self-context	How does the coach and their assumptions shape their decisions and actions?
Effective and Ethical	What is effective and ethical coaching in context, and how do they relate?
Community	How are you learning both from and with others, and how are you contributing to the coaching community?
<b>Coaching Standards Overview</b>	
<p><b>Good coaching is... enacting the standards</b></p> <p><b>Effective and Ethical coaching is... enacting the standards</b></p> <p>The standards describe the core responsibilities carried out well. They aim to capture not only what coaches do, but also how they approach and enact their craft.</p> <p>The standards are not intended to function simply as targets to be achieved, but as reference points for learning and development. They are not demonstrated through a single outcome or a checklist of actions. Instead, they are explored and negotiated collaboratively between the learner and educator, helping to stimulate reflection, deepen understanding, and catalyse ongoing development.</p>	



**SECTION 5**

**LEARNING  
PRINCIPLES**

## How Learning Happens?

If we want to facilitate learning, it is important to have a clear view of how learning happens. At a basic level, the process of learning can be understood through two broad conceptions of learning.

One view positions learning as the accumulation and transmission of knowledge. In this conception, information is delivered to the learner and stored in the form it is given. Knowledge is seen as something that can be transferred from one person to another.

Within this view, the educator (teacher, coach, or coach educator) becomes the supplier of knowledge. The educator is positioned as the knower and giver of knowledge, while the learner becomes the receiver. The educator determines what is correct, what should be learned, and the sequence in which learning should occur. The primary role of the educator is therefore to either give knowledge or identify incorrect knowledge and replace it with correct knowledge.

A second and far more realistic (and useful) conception of learning takes a constructivist perspective. This view focuses on the activities and processes of the learner in making sense of knowledge, experience, and the world around them. Rather than seeing humans as passive recipients of information, constructivism positions people as active constructors of meaning.

This helps explain why two people can witness the same event or participate in the same session, yet notice different things, interpret events differently, and draw very different conclusions.

From this perspective, when people encounter new ideas, they initially attempt to fit those ideas into what they already know and believe. However, when new experiences create tension or dissonance with existing beliefs, deeper learning can occur. In these moments, it is not simply the new idea that changes to fit an existing worldview; rather, the worldview itself may begin to shift in response to the experience.

Learning, therefore, is not simply a process of accumulating knowledge. It involves the ongoing reconstruction of meaning, where individuals either adapt new knowledge to fit who they are, or change aspects of themselves and their understanding of the world through experience and reflection.

### Implications

If we position knowledge as something that is simply given, coach learning becomes primarily a process of transmitting information to coaches in order to solve problems they may not yet fully understand. While this approach can support short-term knowledge acquisition, it is limited in its ability to foster person-centred, effective, and ethical coaching practice. Furthermore, an overreliance on giving knowledge can make learners passive, reduce autonomy, and encourage dependency rather than independent thinking.

Whereas, if we position knowledge as something that is constructed, coach learning becomes a process of inquiry, reflection, interpretation, and sense-making. In this view, the role of the educator is not simply to provide answers, but to create the conditions in which coaches can question assumptions, explore experiences, test ideas in practice, and develop

their own understanding. Learning therefore becomes relational, social, contextual, and deeply connected to the development of professional judgement and craft.

## Learning Principles

Learning principles ensure that every learning experience is aligned with our coaching philosophy and grounded in the realities of how people learn. They are essential for creating a progressive and coherent curriculum, shaping an educational approach that will develop the capabilities coaches need rather than relying on surface-level techniques or disconnected activities.

### 1. Coaches learn by Inquiring into practical problems

Inquiry encourages learners to explore questions, investigate problems, and critically reflect on their own practice. Rather than passively receiving information, learners actively engage in discovering solutions, testing ideas, and making sense of real coaching situations.

Collaborative inquiry extends this process into a group context, where coaches work together to examine challenges, share experiences, and co-construct knowledge. Through dialogue, questioning assumptions, and collective reflection, learners develop deeper understanding, enhance problem-solving skills, and strengthen practice.

### 2. Learning should focus on *how* learners are learning

We recognise a clear distinction between teaching and learning. Teaching is the act of providing information and more broadly, the use of instructional strategies, whereas learning is the internal process through which individuals make meaning, connect ideas, and transform their understanding.

Because learning cannot simply be 'delivered', our approach moves from providing information and sharing content to facilitating learning. This means creating conditions in which coaches actively engage with ideas, reflect on their experiences, question assumptions, and construct their own understanding. In this way, coaches are not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in a process that deepens understanding and strengthens professional judgement.

### 3. Good judgement requires expertise

The curriculum is built on the belief that coach education needs to move beyond basic competence toward the richer, more adaptive qualities associated with expertise. Competence can ensure that coaches meet minimum expectations, but it does not

necessarily prepare them to think flexibly, respond to complexity, or make principled decisions.

By contrast, expertise involves deeper understanding, critical thinking, and the ability to work with ideas across varied people and contexts. To support coaches to understand why their decisions matter, to recognise the mechanisms that shape learning, and to adapt their practice with confidence and purpose.

In doing so, we aim to develop coaches who are not just capable, but genuinely skilful – able to navigate real-world challenges with insight, creativity, and reasoned judgement.

#### **4. Assessment should contribute towards learning**

‘Assessment as learning’ is central to our curriculum design because it positions coaches as active agents in their own development. Rather than treating assessment as a judgement of performance, we use it as a structured opportunity for coaches to think, reflect, and make sense of their practice. Assessment in this way shifts from purely a judgement to part of the learning process – supporting higher standards.

By embedding assessment within the learning process, we are ensuring that coaches are not simply meeting standards but actively developing the capabilities required for real-world coaching.

#### **5. Coaches' biography shape and influence how they engage with learning**

Coaches come into education with histories, experiences, and beliefs that shape what they pay attention to, what they value, and how they make sense of new ideas. Their existing knowledge influences what they are curious about, what they question, and how they interpret the world around them.

In practice, this means recognising that every coach’s learning journey is unique: their biography will steer their interests, filter their perceptions, and guide the connections they make. Effective learning environments work with this – creating space for coaches to surface their assumptions, explore how their experiences shape their practice, and build new understanding that is grounded in who they are and the contexts they work in.

#### **6. Coaches use dialogue to learn**

Coaches develop their thinking through dialogue – by exploring ideas together, questioning assumptions, and making sense of real situations in conversation with others. Using dialogic approaches, coaches will work collaboratively to generate insights that none of them would reach alone. In practice, this means creating learning environments where coaches talk through problems, share experiences, test interpretations, and build

understanding collectively. Dialogue becomes a practical tool for refining judgement, strengthening decision-making, and producing contextual knowledge.

## **7. Learning happens *in and on* practice, not just *for* practice**

Coaches learn by reflecting on what they do and why they do it. Our approach to learning is grounded in coach's actual practice. Rather than preparing coaches to memorise content or perform routine tasks, we design learning around the actual situations, decisions, and uncertainties they encounter in practice.

When education is based on the realities of coaching, it develops the judgement, adaptability, and curiosity that coaches need to work effectively and continue learning throughout their careers. This approach not only prepares coaches for the demands of coaching; it also fosters lifelong learners.

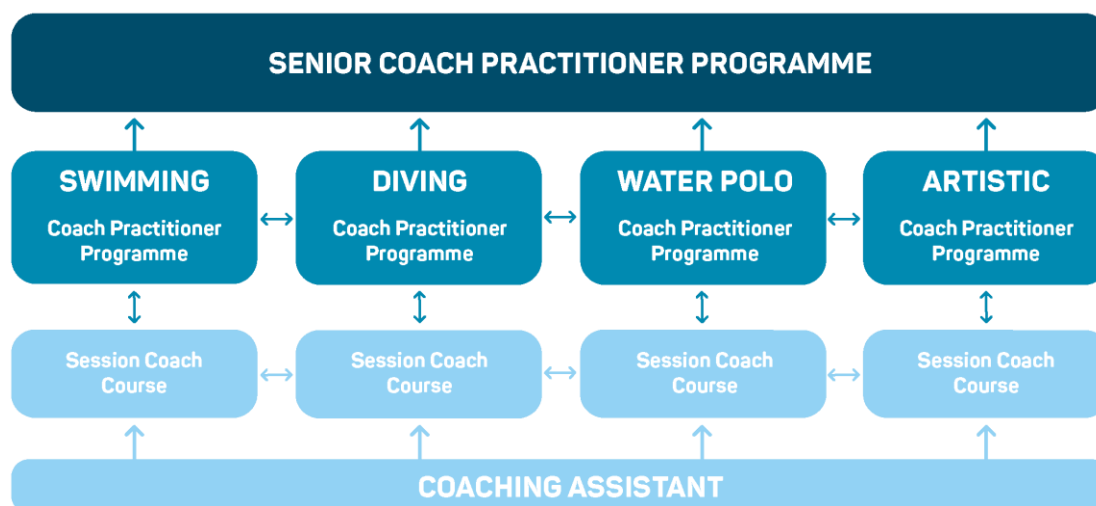


**SECTION 6**

**CURRICULUM  
STRUCTURE**

## Curriculum Structure

The curriculum is more than a pathway – it is a complete rethinking of coach education. Based on a four-level structure, each level has been redesigned to meet the needs of the sport and re-levelled to reflect the real demands of coaching.



- The **Coaching Assistant** opportunity is designed to provide volunteers with an efficient, accessible, and low-cost route into coaching by supporting and assisting more experienced coaches within real coaching environments.
- The **Session Coach Course** is designed to introduce learners to the craft of coaching, enabling them to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to coach independently with the skills to continue to grow and refine their practice.
- The **Coach Practitioner Programme** is designed to provide coaches with a challenging, supportive, and meaningful learning experience that deepens and expands their practice. The programme aims to develop reflective practitioners who can engage effectively and ethically with the realities, responsibilities, and complexities of coaching. Through this experience, coaches are encouraged to examine and reframe their understanding of what coaching is and what it can become.
- The **Senior Coach Practitioner Programme** is designed to offer experienced coaches a highly stimulating and transformative developmental experience. The programme challenges established ways of thinking and practicing, pushing practitioners to explore new possibilities for coaching practice and leadership. Its purpose is to develop forward-thinking practitioners capable of advancing, shaping, and influencing the future direction of coaching.



**SECTION 7**  
**GREAT  
COACHING  
FOR ALL**

## Great Coaching for All: Developing Expertise Across the System

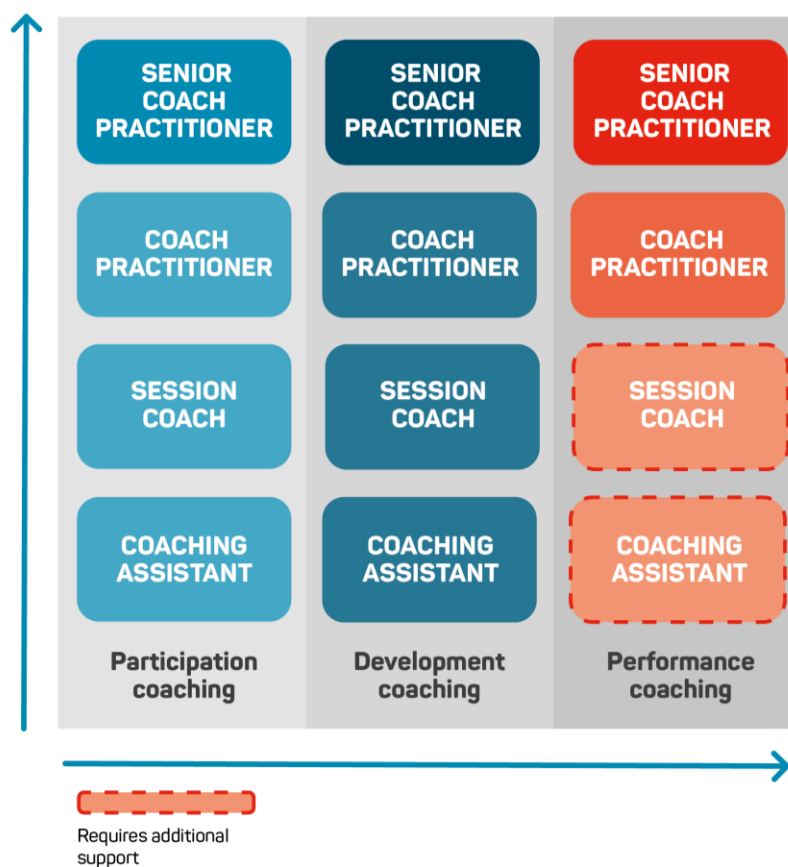
The curriculum is designed to support the development of high-quality coaching at every level of sport. We recognise that great coaching is not defined by the context in which it takes place, but by the quality of thinking, judgement, and care a coach brings to their practice. As such, this curriculum aims to build expertise across the entire coaching system – from those supporting participation and early development through to those working in high-performance settings.

By creating a coherent and progressive structure, we ensure that all coaches have access to meaningful development opportunities, regardless of their role or environment. This approach strengthens the system, enabling more coaches to become reflective, adaptive, and effective practitioners who can create impactful learning environments for the people they work with. In doing so, we aim to ensure that every participant benefits from thoughtful, informed, and ethical coaching, and that expertise is recognised, developed, and valued across all levels of coaching practice.

### Coaching domains

Coaching takes place across three broad domains – **participation, development, and performance** – each of which serves a distinct purpose while remaining closely interconnected. Participation coaching focuses on engagement, enjoyment, and fostering a lifelong relationship with sport; development coaching supports the progression of skills, understanding, and confidence over time; and performance coaching is concerned with optimising outcomes in more pressured and achievement-focused environments.

While these domains are linked as part of a wider system, they are not simply stages in one linear process – each has its own priorities, challenges, and measures of success. As such, effective coaching requires **context-specific expertise**, with coaches developing the knowledge, judgement, and practices that best meet the needs of the people and environments they work within. By recognising both the connections and distinctions between these domains, we can better support coaches to develop relevant expertise and ensure high-quality coaching experiences across the whole system.



## Coaching Across Developmental Stages

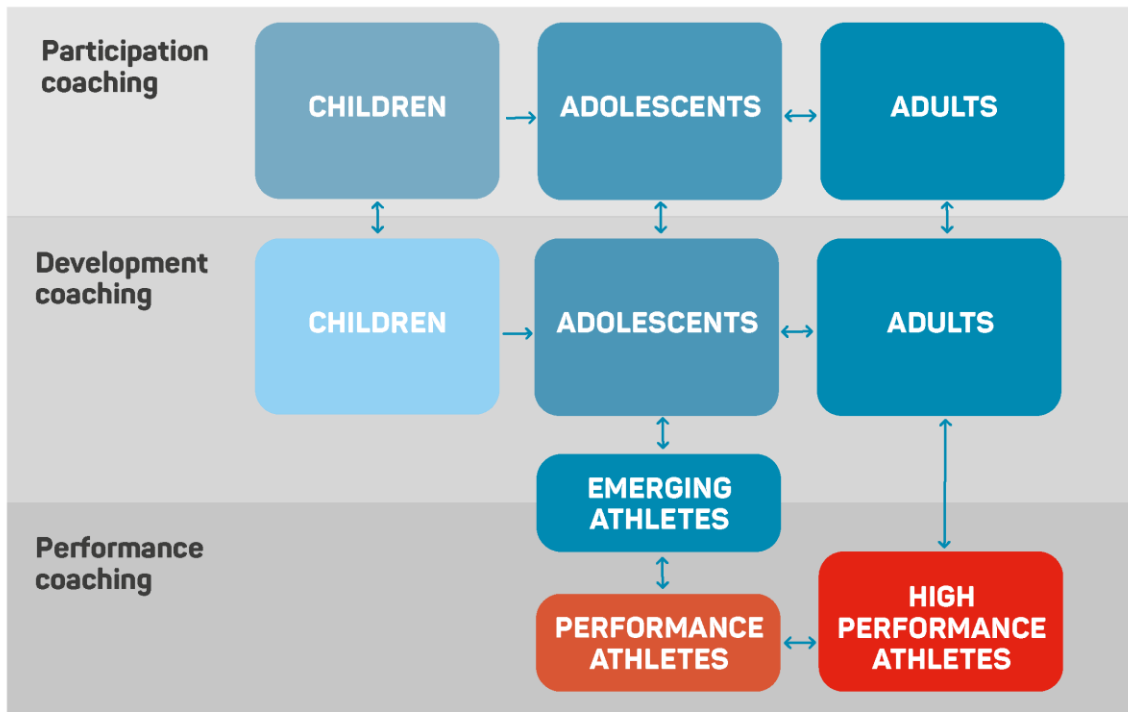
Coaching across different stages of life – children, adolescents, and adults – requires an understanding that learners bring distinct needs, motivations, and developmental characteristics to the coaching environment.

Coaching children often emphasises exploration, enjoyment, and the development of fundamental skills, creating positive early experiences that shape long-term engagement.

Coaching adolescents introduces greater complexity, with a need to support identity formation, social dynamics, increasing autonomy, and more structured skill development, while remaining sensitive to rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes.

Coaching adults, meanwhile, often centres on self-direction, purpose, and individually meaningful goals, with participants bringing established experiences, expectations, and motivations to their learning.

While these stages are connected as part of a lifelong relationship with sport, they are not simply scaled versions of the same approach. Effective coaching requires recognising these differences and developing context-specific expertise, adapting practice to meet the unique demands of each stage while maintaining a consistent commitment to high-quality, person-centred coaching.







COACH EDUCATION | CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

## SECTION 8

# COACHING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Coaching Roles and Responsibilities

The curriculum is built around supporting the practice of coaching, recognising that as coaches develop their practice, they take on different levels of responsibility aligned to their capabilities and expertise. To support the practical need of the sport to have delineated different roles, we have broadly aligned courses and programmes to different coaching roles. However, it is important to emphasise that coaching is not defined or limited by these roles.

By designing the curriculum to support this dynamic development, we position roles as guides – not boundaries – acknowledging that coaches will continue to expand their capability long after any formal qualification.

Role	Example descriptors	Levelling (for reference only)
<b>Coaching Assistant / Helper</b>	<p>Assists in the delivery of sessions.</p> <p>Basic understanding and engagement in a limited number of core coaching responsibilities.</p> <p>Coaching Assistants carry out simple tasks with guidance. Understanding is emerging, and actions tend to follow examples or instructions.</p>	The Coaching Assistant achieves some of the criteria of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) at Level 1.
<b>Session Coach</b>	<p>Plans, facilitates and reviews sessions and blocks of coaching sessions independently, typically working within a wider plan and programme<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>Competent engagement in the core coaching responsibilities.</p> <p>Session Coaches can apply ideas reliably in familiar situations. They make sound decisions and adapt ideas to individualise coaching.</p>	The Session Coach Course is notionally benchmarked against the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) at Level 2, with several learning outcomes aligned to Level 3.
<b>Coach Practitioner</b>	<p>Plans, facilitates, and evaluates coaching sessions leading the development of a group of participants / athletes over the long term.</p>	The Coach Practitioner Programme is notionally benchmarked against the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) at Level 4,

<sup>1</sup> session coaches can advance their capabilities with further development

	<p>Advanced engagement in the core coaching responsibilities.</p> <p>Coach Practitioners can work effectively across varied and unpredictable situations. They are reflective practitioners, integrate ideas, create solutions, engage in reasoning, and adjust their practice based on what they notice in real time.</p> <p>They can play a leading role in the structure of the programme, supporting other coaches, and are an emerging leader in the coaching community.</p>	<p>with several learning outcomes aligned to Level 5.</p>
<p><b>Senior Coach Practitioner</b></p>	<p>Plans, delivers, leads, and evaluates coaching to a very high level.</p> <p>Deep, integrated and advanced expertise across the core coaching responsibilities.</p> <p>Senior Coach Practitioners are critically reflective practitioners. They integrate ideas fluently, generate solutions to complex problems and unpredictable situations, and engage in sophisticated reasoning.</p> <p>They contribute to the wider learning environment through mentoring and supporting the development of others.</p> <p>They are leaders within the coaching community, shaping culture, supporting peers, and elevating standards.</p>	<p>The Senior Coach Practitioner Programme is notionally benchmarked against the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) at Level 7.</p>

## Rigour and relevance

Re-levelling is essential if coach education is to meet the real demands of coaching practice. Coaching is complex work, and education needs to reflect that complexity – not by making learning harder for its own sake, but by ensuring that each level is progressive, relevant, and appropriate to the practice of coaching and role of a modern sport coach.

		Old UKCC framework	New Curriculum framework
Level 8	At the frontier of coaching. Ability to create new knowledge through critical analysis, and innovation.		
Level 7	Highly specialised understanding. Critical awareness. Ability to think strategically and innovate.		Senior Coach Practitioner
Level 6	Advanced and critical understanding. Ability to evaluate complex coaching situations and decisions.		
Level 5	Comprehensive, specialised understanding. Ability to develop coaching solutions and manage complexity.		Coach Practitioner
Level 4	Specialist understanding. Ability to solve unpredictable problems.		
Level 3	Detailed understanding. Ability to analyse coaching independently.	Level 3	
Level 2	Good knowledge of processes and ideas. Ability to apply coaching skills to straightforward problems.	Level 2	Session Coach
Level 1	Basic knowledge and understanding. Ability to carry out simple coaching tasks with guidance.	Level 1	Coach Assistant
Level 0	Simple, routine coaching tasks. Learning is introductory and highly supported.		

The curriculum is **not formally regulated** or accredited within the RQF. This means we are not bound by the assessment criteria, academic conventions, or regulatory requirements typically associated with formal qualifications. Instead, they are designed specifically for the practical and applied nature of sports coaching, where learning is experiential, flexible, and grounded in real-world environments. In practice, this means we prioritise practical coaching skills, understanding, and decision making over academic knowledge.



# SECTION 8

# APPENDICES

# Appendices

## Glossary

### **Coaching**

A complex, relational, and context-dependent practice in which coaches support individuals and groups to learn, develop, and perform through informed decision-making and interaction.

### **Coaching Responsibilities**

The core areas of practice a coach must attend to in order to coach effectively and ethically, as organised through the Who–What–How framework.

### **Coaching Problems**

The real, often unpredictable challenges that emerge in practice, requiring coaches to interpret situations, make decisions, and adapt their approach in context.

### **Coaching Standards**

Descriptions of what effective and ethical coaching looks like when responsibilities are enacted well in real-world environments, focusing on quality of thinking and practice rather than checklists.

### **Who-What-How Framework**

An organising framework used to structure the curriculum around the key dimensions of coaching: who is being coached, what is being coached, and how learning and performance are supported.

### **Context**

The specific environment in which coaching takes place, including the people, relationships, culture, goals, and constraints that shape practice and decision-making.

### **Practice-Based Learning**

An approach to learning grounded in real coaching situations, where understanding develops through experience, reflection, and application rather than abstract instruction.

### **Inquiry**

A learning approach in which coaches explore questions, investigate problems, and reflect on practice to develop deeper understanding and improve decision-making.

### **Reflective Practice**

The process of critically examining experiences to inform future actions, develop insight, and improve coaching effectiveness.

### **Expertise**

The ability to apply knowledge, skills, and judgement flexibly and effectively across varied and complex situations, developed over time through experience and reflection.

**Competence**

The ability to perform tasks to a required standard in familiar situations, often representing a baseline level of capability.

**Spiral Curriculum**

An approach to curriculum design where key ideas and responsibilities are revisited over time, each time at a deeper level of complexity and understanding.

**Constructive Alignment**

The design principle that aligns learning activities, coaching responsibilities, and assessment standards so they support the development of intended capabilities.

**Assessment as Learning**

An approach where assessment is used as a tool to support learning, encouraging reflection, sense-making, and the development of judgement rather than simply measuring performance.

**Participation Domain**

The area of coaching focused on engagement, enjoyment, and encouraging sustained involvement in sport.

**Development Domain**

The area of coaching focused on building skills, understanding, and progression over time.

**Performance Domain**

The area of coaching focused on optimising performance in more demanding, outcome-oriented environments.

**Developmental Stages**

Different phases of human development (e.g. children, adolescents, adults), each with distinct needs, motivations, and characteristics that influence coaching practice.

**Learning Environment**

The social, physical, and cultural conditions created by the coach to support learning, development, and performance.

**Community of Practice**

A group of coaches who learn with and from each other through shared experiences, dialogue, and collaboration.

**RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework)**

A national framework used as a reference point to describe levels of learning and progression. In this curriculum, it is used as a guide rather than a formal regulatory structure.

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