



Content Outline

Board Certified Coach Examination (BCCE)

Definition

The Board Certified Coach Examination (BCCE) is a certifying examination that measures coaching knowledge based on the Center for Credentialing & Education (CCE) core competencies (i.e., Ethical and Professional Standards, Agreements and Goal-Setting, Coach Presence and Applied Skills, Effective Coach–Client Communication and Rapport, Facilitating Client Growth and Accountability, and Coaching Business Practices and Professional Development) and how to apply the competencies and follow ethical guidelines. The qualifying criteria to take the BCCE are stated in the minimally qualified candidate profile. Coaching is a professional practice in which the coach has specialized education, training, and experience to help clients identify specific goals; collaborate with clients on solutions; and offer strategies that assist individuals, groups, and organizations in reaching identified goals.

Examination Purpose

The BCCE provides a standardized measure of the CCE core competencies associated with professional coaching; thus, the BCC certification informs clients that certified coaches subscribe to professional standards and ethics. The examination’s development was based on a national job analysis of 395 coaches (of which 95% have an active BCC credential) who determined the core competencies of coaching and developed the examination content of the BCCE.

The core competencies associated with professional coaching were determined to be:

- 1. Ethical and Professional Standards**

The principles and guidelines that govern the conduct and behavior of coaches to ensure integrity, credibility, and accountability within the profession.

- 2. Agreements and Goal-Setting**

The process of establishing mutual understanding between the coach and client about the purpose of and commitments required for effective and efficient coaching.

- 3. Coach Presence and Applied Skills**

The skills and abilities coaches should demonstrate to provide effective and efficient coaching.

4. Effective Coach–Client Communication and Rapport

The creation and maintenance of a strong working relationship between a coach and a client.

5. Facilitating Client Growth and Accountability

The ability to help a client reflect on their progress, identify next steps, and ultimately move toward achieving their goals and transition upon attainment.

6. Coaching Business Practices and Professional Development

The strategies and techniques involved in running a coaching business and staying up to date on coaching best practices.

Target Population and the Minimally Qualified Candidate

The minimally qualified candidate (MQC) for the BCCE has a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution, has completed CCE-approved training for coaching, and has completed the required number of coaching hours. The MQC, through the combination of education, training, and coaching experience, can appropriately demonstrate knowledge and competencies in the domains of Ethical and Professional Standards, Agreements and Goal-Setting, Coach Presence and Applied Skills, Effective Coach–Client Communication and Rapport, Facilitating Client Growth and Accountability, and Coaching Business Practices and Professional Development.

Examination Form

The BCCE is composed of 120 multiple-choice questions that pertain to the field of coaching. Of the 120 items, 100 are scored and 20 are unscored. The 20 unscored multiple-choice questions provide statistical information about items that may be used in future examinations. Both scored and unscored items are of the same structure, and they appear in a randomized order throughout the examination. Applicants for the BCC certification have 3 hours to complete the examination.

Job Analysis and Content Outline

The BCCE was developed based on a national job analysis of 395 coaches (of which 95% have an active BCC credential) who identified the competencies most relevant to the field of coaching. This content outline was drafted and approved by the BCCE Subject Matter Expert (SME) Committee in 2024. The committee's responsibilities included, but were not limited to, developing the examination blueprint by finalizing the content outline and deciding on weighting for each domain and sorting items into the domains. Table 1 presents the six domains and the percentage and number of scored items on the BCCE for each domain.

Table 1*The weight for each domain*

	Domain	Percent of Scored Items	Number of Scored Items	Number of Unscored Items
1	Ethical and Professional Standards	20	20	4
2	Agreements and Goal-Setting	10	10	2
3	Coach Presence and Applied Skills	25	25	5
4	Effective Coach–Client Communication and Rapport	15	15	3
5	Facilitating Client Growth and Accountability	15	15	3
6	Coaching Business Practices and Professional Development	15	15	3

The following work behaviors are supported by the coaching literature and resulted from a job analysis completed by credentialed coaches. These work behaviors are meant to be general in scope and applicable to various contexts (e.g., life, executive, business, career, health and wellness).

Table 2*Skills and knowledge areas related to the domains***1. Ethical and Professional Standards**

- A. Abide by governing laws and regulations (i.e., HIPAA, GDPR)
- B. Adhere to the BCC *Code of Ethics*
- C. Operate with honesty and integrity
- D. Refer the client to other helping professionals or service providers as necessary
- E. Consult with peer coaches when necessary
- F. Explain the difference between coaching, mentoring, consulting, counseling, and therapy

- G. Determine if there is a fit between the coach and the client
- H. Obtain client agreement to the nature of coaching
- I. Establish responsibilities for both client and coach
- J. Understand client diversity and intersectionality
- K. Identify and discuss any dual relationships that could influence the coaching process
- L. Identify and acknowledge a sponsor, if present
- M. Manage conflicts of interest effectively
- N. Describe to clients the parameters of privacy
- O. Confirm terms of privacy and interactions between a sponsor and client
- P. Maintain boundaries for the client and yourself
- Q. Adhere to best practices of client privacy
- R. Securely maintain client data and records

2. Agreements and Goal-Setting

- A. Obtain client verbal/written agreement for codesigning the coaching partnership
- B. Clarify expectations of sessions and protocols
- C. Confirm with the client the direction of the session
- D. Partner with the client to identify and prioritize their desired outcomes
- E. Assist the client in identifying achievable short- and long-term goals
- F. Support the client in creating their vision
- G. Identify how a client's goals may be measured using an assessment
- H. Support the client in modifying or changing goals
- I. Revisit and/or clarify the client's goals as needed

3. Coach Presence and Applied Skills

- A. Support the client with an appropriate level of empathy
- B. Recognize the client as a whole, resourceful, and creative person
- C. Utilize socio-emotional skillset to provide a space for the client's emotions
- D. Identify limiting beliefs
- E. Identify client assumptions
- F. Recognize themes, trends, and patterns of the client
- G. Recognize when the client is falling into a thinking trap
- H. Remember what the client said about their past success
- I. Assess the client's confidence
- J. Notice an absence of verbal communication
- K. Pay attention to nonverbal communication
- L. Remain client-centered
- M. Remain flexible to client shifts
- N. Listen for what is not being said
- O. Avoid assuming the client's next words
- P. Maintain silence when appropriate
- Q. Check in during the session to determine alignment with the client's desired agenda
- R. Be fully present and focused
- S. Remain curious and open-minded
- T. Control your own reactions
- U. Follow your intuition in the coaching process
- V. Be genuine in how you present and conduct yourself

4. Effective Coach–Client Communication and Rapport

- A. Respectfully acknowledge the client as a unique individual shaped by intersecting identities
- B. Remain in the role of coach while interacting with clients
- C. Provide feedback when appropriate to challenge the client
- D. Provide additional perspectives
- E. Be supportive of and positive toward the client
- F. Demonstrate respect for the client
- G. Establish and maintain trust
- H. Celebrate and build on successes
- I. Acknowledge the client’s self-disclosure
- J. Acknowledge the client through verbal and nonverbal cues
- K. Adapt communication style to meet the needs of the client
- L. Reflect or paraphrase the client’s words
- M. Use inclusive language
- N. Avoid interrupting client or finishing their thought

5. Facilitating Client Growth and Accountability

- A. Ask the client how they are going to monitor their progress
- B. Ask the client how they will gather evidence of their success
- C. Help the client to establish achievable actionable steps and timelines
- D. Support the client in identifying their accountability measures
- E. Identify obstacles to attaining goals
- F. Invite the client to try new approaches
- G. Discuss the progress of previously established action steps with the client
- H. Help the client use past success to guide future actions
- I. Use assessments to measure a client’s progress toward goals

- J. Utilize assessment tools as appropriate
- K. Share available resources or tools
- L. Assist the client in shifting their thinking paradigm, perspectives, or limiting beliefs
- M. Reflect on what did not work for the client between sessions
- N. Acknowledge the client's progress
- O. Celebrate client wins and provide affirmation

6. Coaching Business Practices and Professional Development

- A. Establish expectations for coaching terms of service
- B. Have a contract signed by the client and yourself
- C. Follow your own contract thoroughly
- D. Plan end of coaching engagement with client and/or sponsor
- E. Respond to client communication in a timely manner
- F. Pursue opportunities to hone skills as a coach
- G. Maintain professional certifications, accreditations, and business licenses
- H. Stay active with professional associations
- I. Stay up to date with new trends, research, and technology
- J. Research and develop tools, models, and frameworks to help the client
- K. Remain a qualified provider of specific tools, models, and assessments
- L. Seek learning opportunities that will impact the client
- M. Immerse self in valid professional models
- N. Attain liability insurance when needed
- O. Maintain legitimacy of your business
- P. Utilize social media with confidentiality
- Q. Disclose the use of artificial intelligence (AI)