



How to choose your Coaching School

Coaching is one of the fastest growing industries in Australia and New Zealand. There are many forms of coaching; life coaching, business coaching, workplace coaching, executive coaching, etc. Coaching can be one of the most fulfilling and satisfying careers.

But since there is no regulation for coaching, there is also no regulation on the coaching schools. This means that picking a school can be a 'hit' and 'miss' affair. This article helps you to select your coaching school carefully, explains why the selection process is so critical for any person considering learning how to coach and provides potential students with questions to ask.

Because there is no body governing the coaching industry, anyone can open a coaching school today or start offering a coaching course and can make wild claims about the success of the program. In fact you would have already heard some of these claims before; 'earn \$150k working part time'.

One of the claims many schools make is that their courses are 'accredited'. Having an accreditation gives peace of mind to students because it means that the course is recognised. The only flaw with accreditation is that there is no one single body in the world at this time that is deemed to be the single reliable source when it comes to validating or accrediting a coaching school, or course, or indeed an individual Coach.

There are several professional coaching associations, some bigger than others, some have been around longer than others, some are broader and some apply to particular streams of coaching, some are overseas, etc. Here are just a few of the professional coaching bodies around as at the time of writing this article:

- International Association of Coaches (IAC)
- European Coaching Institute (ECI)
- International Coaching Federation (ICF)
- Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC)
- European Mentoring Coaching Council (EMCC)
- Professional Coaches and Mentors Association (PCMA)
- Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS)
- International Consortium of Coaching in Organisations (ICCO)
- Australian and New Zealand Institute of Coaching (ANZI Coaching)

It is up to you as an individual to decide which organisation is best for you and for your particular coaching skill set. Many schools are opting for ICF accreditation for their courses. Not necessarily because it is the best accreditation, but because the ICF is probably the most widely known of all the professional bodies above. The ICF is able to accredit courses that meet a wide range of criteria (for example the number of face-to-face training hours on the course).



Another form of accreditation is from the Government through the VET (Vocational Education and Training) sector. The school must become a Registered Training Organisation ('RTO') and as such has to abide by the Australian Quality Training Framework ('AQTF') standards for training and assessing.

So whilst the ICF assess the quantity of coach training, RTO accreditation assesses the quality of the training and the assessing. Therefore a school which has both ICF and RTO status may possibly be a good coaching school.

Having said that, there are some very good schools that have neither ICF nor RTO accreditation. There are other lesser known forms of accreditation; for example accredited by a well-known coaching brand such as 'Sir John Whitmore', or any of the other credible coaches or coaching methodologies.

In summary – as a potential coach you can ignore phrases like 'most accredited', or 'highly accredited' when picking your school. The real proof in the pudding is the calibre of coach that the school produces.

As with most things, word of mouth is usually the best referral. Some schools will allow you to make contact with their students, but they usually hand-pick the students that they will put you in touch with. If you do get to talk with other students be sure to find out what stage of their studies they are at. It is very common for coaching students to feel euphoric at the beginning of their studies; the real test is the recommendation of a student who has completed the course and is now working as a coach.

Questions to ask a current or former student:

When did you start/finish the course?

In what way are you affiliated with the school?

What did you have to learn that the course didn't cover?

How many students in your intake completed their studies?

How many students who completed the course now have successful coaching businesses and are working full-time coaching?

Questions to ask the coaching school

What is the refund policy? Beware of schools with aggressive refund policies. What happens if you change your mind? A school that declares the right to your full fee as soon as they post the welcome pack (i.e before you even take receipt of it), does not have a very good satisfaction guarantee.

Who conducts the training and what are their skills, qualifications and experience? Ensure that the trainer is a qualified coach (we know of a school that had a student training the other students). The trainer should also have Certificate IV in workplace training and assessment (TAA not BSZ) if the school is an RTO.



Who conducts the assessments and what are their skills, qualifications and experience? Ensure that the assessor is a qualified coach (the same school above had a student who was not only not qualified as an assessor, they had failed their coaching exam). The assessor should also have Certificate IV in workplace training and assessment (TAA not BSZ) if the school is an RTO.

Who are the mentors? Are these qualified, experienced coaches with their own successful coaching businesses? Or like the school above, are these mentors just students on the intake the month before yours?

What is the content of the coaching course? Does it specialise in a particular form of coaching (i.e coaching in the workplace) or is it packed out with life coaching, NLP, how to set up and run your business and any other skill you can think of that remotely relates to coaching? The broader the syllabus, the shallower the training will be in any of these elements. It is far more effective to do a 6-month NLP course and a 12-month course in one specific coaching form than it is to try and learn everything and to not go into enough depth in anything.

If the training includes CDs and DVDs, ask when these materials were produced. You want to ensure that you are learning the latest coaching tools and techniques and not watching or listening to recordings that are 5 years old.

Finally, ask about the relationships the school has with other coaching businesses, professional associations, local industry, etc. Does this school have collaborative relationships with others?

Get brochures from at least 3 schools, and don't allow yourself to be swayed by smooth talking sales people. Listen to your intuition, if it doesn't feel right it probably isn't. Good luck with your coaching journey!

ANZI Coaching is committed to the professional development of the Coaching Industry and to the ongoing development of all Coaches within the Industry. ANZI Coaching provides an accreditation service for skilled and/or qualified coaches, a professional voluntary code of conduct and is the producer of the leading coaching professional development program, "ANZI Insights". To find out more about coaching or about any of our products and services, please visit www.anzicoaching.com