



# Master Coach Designation

**The Credential for Experienced Coaches**

***Programme Overview: How You Can Benefit***



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## Master Coach Designation – with specialisms in Coaching and Coaching Psychology

### *A Vital Step in Defining the Coaching Profession*

**I**n the spirit of encouraging the development of the coaching profession, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) participates in this industry's self-regulation activities. Such work includes helping to define and promote professional standards.

One function of professional standards is to bond coaches as a professional group, or conversely, to distinguish us from those who do not perform this specific type of work. To this end, since the EMCC has engaged in a number of activities including setting advanced qualification and requalification standards for coach training and further, has worked to establish appropriate standards to distinguish Foundation from Practitioner and Master qualification levels .

Good progress so far ... but what remained undone was to identify and recognise a **mastery level** of expertise for experienced members of the coaching and coaching psychology profession. With this in mind, the Professional Development Foundation began seeking a rigorous programme that would identify candidates for a high-level designation and offer them a professional development programme as a means to that end. In parallel The Worldwide Association of Business Coaches has also created standards for senior members working within business coaching. (Details of the WABC scheme are available separately, please ask.)

It was important that both the EMCC Master Coach and WABC Master Business Coach programmes be sophisticated; they had to identify genuine expert levels of knowledge, skill, and commitment to professional development. The actual Designation must proclaim its value, and never lose its value. Perhaps most importantly (returning to the theme of industry progress), the new designations had to clearly distinguish the emerging specialists in business coaching, other coaching specialisms and coaching psychology, emphasising the expertise required for the specialisation.

WABC Certified Master Business Coach™ (CMBC™) is a world-class, designation. The EMCC programme provides a parallel designation for coaching and coaching psychology

We envisioned a professional designation that would give a person credit for experiential learning—learning gained from past work and training—and identify that person as a master in our profession.

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council have been collaborating with a number of other bodies in the field to create an agreed set of competencies for coaching.

This collaboration has extended to the creation of defined standards for coach training. The PDF/Middlesex University Master Coach Designation has been recognised by the EMCC Quality Mark as a Master's programme for Coaches. The unique feature of this programme is that it is solely to recognise the expertise of experienced coaches.



The opportunity this would create for professional development was not to be overlooked. While we definitely did *not* want to produce yet another industry course, with yet another certificate of completion, we certainly wanted to create a valuable experience in itself. The Programme for certification must be a powerful self-learning experience, a reflection on the candidate's professional practice—something that could even *improve* the candidate's practice.

## Five Benefits of the Designation

Are you able to market your expertise? The EMCC recognised Master Coach Designation offers a valuable, senior credential. Plus, the credentialing programme is, in itself, a highly focused, professional development opportunity, **at University Master's level and above (Doctorate level)**. It can additionally lead to a Master's Degree with an opportunity to convert to a Doctorate.

Candidates will also appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the emerging profession, both to its body of knowledge and its public image. Consider these key benefits for acquiring this credential:

### #1: Superior Credentials

*Why not proclaim your mastery level of expertise as a coach or coaching psychologist? Your clients and prospective clients will value this explicit statement of your expertise.*

If you can demonstrate your expertise in coaching or coaching psychology through; relevant and prior professional and academic knowledge; at least five years of coaching experience and positive client reports; and you can reflect on your work with intelligence and desire for improvement; then you will want to begin this programme and earn the right to the Designation.

### #2: Independent and Expert Recognition of Your Experience

*If you have been in practice for five years or more, then you have demonstrated a commitment to the emerging profession and have developed expertise that can and should be recognised. You have the opportunity to have that expertise recognised by independent, expert evaluation.*

Can you imagine having a qualified team review your professional work from your inside track and give you credit for your expertise?

While obtaining the Designation of Master Coach is not a trivial task, to a great extent it is based on the evaluation of a Portfolio that is, in effect, already in your possession! Are you effectively leveraging your experience in your marketing? This Designation will showcase your wealth of experience!

*The EMCC and WABC are both powerful credentials. Prospective clients can be confident that the holders are genuine master coaches.*

*WABC Certified Master Business Coach the credential for Business Coaches.*



### #3: Focused Professional Development

*The credentialing programme leading to the Designation will improve skills and the quality of your practice.*

This is not an incidental benefit. The Designation is, by design, intended to help professional coaches improve their skills. This is a unique, highly focused professional development experience, consisting of formalised personal reflection, external facilitation, and profound synthesis. It offers an opportunity to learn through a self-directed but guided process. This process is further enriched by online resources, shared learning with peers, and the guidance of a Programme Advisor.

Perhaps most importantly, you will receive valuable feedback from specially trained, independent assessors—not just one time, but three times! This is a tremendous learning experience.

### #4: Valuable University Credit

*The recipient of the Designation holds 180 credits of learning under the United Kingdom University Credit System (equal to 45 credit hours in the USA, and 90 ECTS points in Europe).*

As university-valued credits, they can be further applied towards a Master's Degree from Middlesex University (by arrangement with the Professional Development Foundation and the National Centre for Work-Based Learning at Middlesex University).

To receive the degree of **Master of Arts in Professional Development (Coaching) or the Master of Science in Professional Development (Coaching Psychology)** requires successful completion of additional work valued at 90 credits.

The degree may be pursued *concurrently* with submission toward the Designation or after that Designation has been awarded. Alternatively a doctorate can be pursued.

Clearly the fields of coaching and coaching psychology are emerging. We are committed to actively supporting and evolving this field at every level. For example, we are actively involved in research with the relevant bodies to ensure that this credential has and retains its value over time. We are working to ensure that the relevant competencies in the field reflect the highest standards of evidence-based practice and that these are demonstrated in our Designations.

### #5: Distinguishing Our Emerging Profession

*You will want to take a role in distinguishing the true coach and coaching psychology professional and simultaneously raise the profile of the coaching profession.*

The development of the Designation comes at a time when, worldwide, there are a large number and wide range of training courses and “certifications”, including some that have dubious value.

Simultaneously, there is a worldwide boom in those who self-designate themselves as coaches and/or claim to have valuable resources as coaches. In response to this emerging market confusion, coaching associations are striving to identify and even legitimise their specialism.



In this context, the need for a high-level, coaching-specific, professional designation has never been greater. This Designation and that of the WABC Master Business Coach will further distinguish our profession and those who have legitimate skills or training in it. Your participation will also contribute to the status of the Designation and will assist in advancing the certification programme.

## A Professional Designation That Stands Up to Scrutiny

We have taken steps to ensure that the Designation of Master Coach will stand up to thorough professional, academic, and client scrutiny at any time. To accomplish this, we have identified the following objectives, which form the foundation of the programme that leads to the Designation:

- a) The Designation is based on **independently verifiable** standards determined through sound research by expert programme developers;
- b) Requires coaches to **prove their competencies**;
- c) Is awarded through **expert evaluation**, by independent assessors, in a university context;
- d) Requires that recipients **maintain the Designation** on a regular basis;
- e) Provides a significant number of **university-level credits**, transferable into a post-graduate degree programme; and
- f) By working closely with relevant professional bodies we ensure that the Designation reflects current and emerging standards.

The following sections explain the development of the certification programme, the process of submission for the Designation, and the benefits of this Designation.



## A Meticulously Designed Programme

To ensure that the programme leading to the EMCC Recognised Designation Master Coach is of the highest calibre, we combined resources of experienced and recognised coaches, with highly specialised expertise in certification, accreditation, and programme development. We were able to draw upon the experience of the International Centre for the Study of Coaching, National Centre for Work-Based Learning Partnership, Professional Development Foundation, research on competencies and standards conducted by EMCC, WABC, and Australian and UK work on coaching psychology.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work of these organisations, our members and other stakeholders, including an exhaustive investigation of research into coaching in practice. The process to identify criteria for the Designation and create a programme to evaluate individuals included the following steps:

### **1. Identifying Mastery-Level Competencies**

How did we determine what competencies define a mastery level of coaching? We combined an extensive review of various coaching models, a series of focus groups consisting of experienced coaches and clients, the work of the WABC International Expert Panel, the competency and standards work of the EMCC, Special Interest Groups in Coaching Psychology (UK and Australian) and a detailed review of more than 170 studies from around the world. We devised a framework of competencies, and through partners these have been tested. The WABC circulated their questionnaires among an International Expert Panel. The results were integrated with other emerging international knowledge bases, and a final document was produced that identified the competencies expected of a Master Coach. (Future relevancy will be assured through an ongoing review.)

### **2. Defining differing forms of Coaching**

We investigated the activities, objectives, and nuances of coaching within organisations, of external coaches, internal coaches, and the manager as coach. WABC compared these to clarify the function of the business coach, we did the same for coaching psychology and other forms of coaching and the level of expertise that is relevant to a Master Coach Designation.

### **3. Assigning Credit Rating and Testing the Programme**

To conform to university standards, the competencies and indicators of those competencies were assigned an appropriate credit rating. Our independent assessors participated in verifying the competencies, the indicators, and the weighting of each.



## Credit for Your Prior Professional Work and Training

Evaluation of candidates who make a submission to receive the Master Coach Designation requires a reliable and sophisticated method. This is a challenge. We have to be concerned with competence in practice. A written examination is not thorough in assessing professional competence, and a candidate-supplied summary of achievements is insufficient.

The method used in this certification process is Credit Rated Learning (CRL). This is a proven system of applying credit on evidence of prior learning (relevant training courses and experiential learning, typically that gained from professional experiences). It was important that we offer a method for highly experienced coaches to be able to gain this senior designation by receiving credit for their expertise.

Substantial CRL also relies on the candidate demonstrating ability to comprehend and synthesise their prior learning. This requires that the candidate reflect on their prior learning—and the experience of preparing the Portfolio of prior learning. Obviously, this turns the entire process into a rich learning experience—a valuable professional development activity in itself!

**Note:** Of course, the Portfolio (and reflection) must be focused on the specialisation sought. Hence different criteria apply to coaching and coaching psychology. (Or for Business Coaches the separate WABC CMBC Designation.)

In summary, the candidate creates a Portfolio that presents (1) evidence of mastery-level learning including client work and (2) a reflection upon (synthesis) of that evidence. Through this Portfolio, the candidate is making a written presentation, requesting credit for prior learning.

It is also expected that the candidate will prepare the Portfolio by utilising various supplied resources, including online resources, shared learning with peers, a Programme Advisor, and evaluations provided by the independent assessors who recommend the award of credits. (The candidate receives feedback and dialogue at each stage of assessment.) This enriched Programme is designed to not only improve the Portfolio, but also to create a truly useful professional development experience.

To summarise the credentialing process, the candidate takes part in a sophisticated professional development programme that is guided by an advisor and is completed with evaluation by specially trained, independent assessors.



## Admission Requirements

### 1. Professional Membership

The candidate must be a Full Member in good standing of a relevant body and maintain all the applicable membership standards, as amended from time to time.

### 2. Established Practice

The candidate must also have been actively engaged in coaching for at least five (5) years. The candidate's CV and/or résumé must document and verify evidence of this practice.

### 3. Prerequisites

We maintain a selection process to ensure the qualifications of candidates.

## Independent and Rigorous Evaluation

Although EMCC has approved this award as a Master Level programme the credential and the evaluation processes are wholly independent of EMCC but subject to its inspection.

*Assessment processes are independent and rigorous, and are recognised for university credit. Candidates may also progress to a Master or Doctoral Degree award.*

Each candidate will be assigned an advisor, who will facilitate the creation of a Portfolio, as well as provide feedback on draft submissions and discuss the assessments, if that is required. All advisors are also trained assessors.

Three assessors, operating to a specific procedure, conduct a total of three assessments, assuring fair evaluation. The three assessments are sequential, encouraging considerable feedback and even dialogue after each step. Each assessor is permitted to invite the candidate for an informal interview for discussion and clarification of points or require further evidence to be contained in the Portfolio. This may be done in person, by telephone or via Internet conference.

**Expert assessors and advisors** are specifically trained and experienced for this designation programme. They submit their own relevant Portfolios to establish their credentials and then undertake two days of training. After conducting three assessments under supervision, they each write a report and reflection of this work, which is also assessed. Finally, each assessor is moderated for a year (minimum of ten assessments) before working as a full assessor. All assessors are approved by PDF.

The assessors determine the amount of credit to be given, using a special credit scale that has been devised to cover the entire range of requirements for the different specialisms within the Master Coach Designation. The assessor recommendations are made to the Assessment Board, which consists of representatives from the Professional



Development Foundation, Middlesex University, and an external examiner. This Board is responsible for reviewing the assessor recommendations and determining the amount of credit of the award.

Full credit will lead to the Designation of Master Coach. Partial credit will include sufficient evaluation information to enable the candidate to devise a personal development plan (learning plan) to make up any shortfall, and to resubmit for the Designation at a future date. (Candidates are permitted to complete the Designation after one year and up to three years from the date of receiving this partial credit.)

## Programme Process and Schedule

This following information is *not* a guide to preparing your Portfolio for evaluation. The *Candidate's Guide*, which is provided when you begin your Programme, is a highly detailed document that will show you how to create a complete submission.

**Note:** Please be aware that this Programme, leading to the Designation, is conducted under the auspices of the Professional Development Foundation (PDF Net) and Middlesex University. References in this section to the administration or evaluation entities are references to those facilitating authorities, not to EMCC.

### Step 1: Application and Payment of Fees

Complete the online application: <http://www.mastercoaches.com/forms/cmbc.php>. This form requires that you answer a few basic questions about yourself and your practice. It also requires you to declare that you meet the prerequisites. We reserve the right to ask for proof that you meet these prerequisites.

Because this form is also processed independently of your professional body (by the Professional Development Foundation), please do not assume that the admissions department will know of any pre-information. In other words, please complete the admissions form completely and accurately. This first step also requires that you make full payment. (See *Frequently Asked Questions* for information about refunds.)

### Step 2: Confirmation of Acceptance into the Programme

Within five working days after your application form and payment are received, you will be notified by email that you are accepted into the Programme or further information will be requested. This email will also contain information about your Programme resources, your advisor, and a username and password that will give you access to the online PDF Learning Net. This online learning net will allow you to interact with peers and other candidates, and will give you access to bulletins, special resources and, in general, assist and enhance your learning experience as you complete your Portfolio.

Please be aware that these are resources only; however, we strongly encourage the use of these resources. (The *Candidate's Guide*, provided to candidates enrolled in the Programme, shows how to apply these resources.)

### Step 3: Prepare Your Portfolio



You may begin work on your Programme at any time. In brief, you will prepare a Portfolio requesting credit for prior learning gained through courses and experience by following the directions in the *Candidate's Guide*.

**Evidence of Master-Level Ability:** The candidate must be able to demonstrate, through supplied evidence, that they have achieved the necessary level of professional competencies and has a proven commitment to professional development. The evidence is contained within the Portfolio as set out in the *Candidate's Guide*. A wide range of Portfolio items are possible, including but not limited to, a curriculum vitae, videos, audiotapes, written work, photographs, business plans, created products, case studies, certificates, correspondence and statements by associates or clients, referee reports, client references, and evidence of appropriate courses completed.

**Reflection on Past Learning:** Through various reflective, written documents, which include completed questionnaires, a coherent model of practice, records of reflective conversations with advisors, clients or others, and commentaries on presented evidence, the candidate must demonstrate professional understanding and request credit.

**Essay:** Through a reflective essay, approximately 2,000 words in length, the candidate must describe the learning gained through completing the Programme for certification.

#### Step 4: Completion

After you and your advisor are satisfied that you have correctly prepared your Portfolio and essay, you can submit them. We will begin the three-stage evaluation process. (See the previous section entitled *Independent and Rigorous Evaluation*.)

We require up to 28 business days for each assessment (after the date we receive your Portfolio). After each assessment, you will be directly notified of the status of that assessment, and receive a constructive critique. You may be invited for a dialogue with the assessor. You will have an opportunity to modify your Portfolio at your discretion. Up to 60 days are allowed for resubmission. We will proceed with the next sequential assessment at any time you resubmit, or as soon as we receive your request for the next assessment. A total of three complete assessments are carried out.

**Note:** This triple assessment process is your opportunity to further reflect and improve on your professional practice. We encourage your full participation, as your schedule allows.

When the entire assessment process is complete and you receive a pass, we will provide you with a Certificate of Credit and simultaneously notify the relevant body of the credit. Different bodies apply different rules, for example, for WABC the Certificate does not constitute designation as a WABC Certified Master Business Coach™ (CMBC™). Rather, WABC will grant you that designation within 30 business days after the administrators provide you with the Certificate of Credit, providing you are a WABC Full Member in good standing.

**Deadlines for Completion:** You must complete the Programme within a period discussed with and agreeable with your advisor. You must establish this target date



within the first month after you receive the Confirmation of Acceptance into the Programme (by email).

Normally, we expect your completion period to be no more than 12 months, but we do not place any value on how little time it takes you to complete the Programme. So if you have the opportunity to complete it very quickly, then do so without fear that it will affect the evaluation. We expect that most candidates will finish within three to six months.

Of course, the completion period you set will probably depend on your own commitments, reflective ability, and the organisation and quality of your existing professional records. (For example, if you have kept detailed records and notes, then you will likely have less trouble compiling a Portfolio.)

One extension to your completion date is permitted, without penalty. After three months into the completion period, extensions will only be accepted due to extenuating circumstances or with payment of a continuation fee (25% of the full fee). The rationale is that reasonable self-discipline is part of being a professional, and, of course, we cannot allocate resources (such as an advisor) indefinitely.

## Re-Certification Requirements

The Master Coach is an ongoing credential, requiring renewal every five (5) years. Renewal is not onerous, although strict. It requires:

- 1. Maintaining Full Professional Body Membership in good standing at all times.**
- 2. Submitting a record of the professional development that has taken place during that time.** This report will be independently evaluated by PDF or your professional body to permit the Designation to remain in force. We expect you to be able to show that you have kept your learning and practice up-to-date through appropriate professional development activity and reflection on your case work and model of practice. Evidence of this might include conferences, workshops, work-based learning, training and supervision activities, research, presentations, and involvement with your professional association. A guide to completing this record will be provided to you at the time you request renewal.

Our objective is that the Designation be a powerful statement of professional credibility, not a mere record of achievement. In this way, a Master Coach is demonstrably an active coach practitioner.

## Fees

**Currently the fee is £5,200.** This one-time fee covers all costs for the Programme leading to the Designation: materials, advisor assistance, assessments, use of normal resources, and the Designation Certificate. Fees are due at the time the candidate completes the online submission form (or within 30 days of the date of the submission if paying by cheque or money order). (See *Frequently Asked Questions* for information about refunds.)



Re-certification fees every five (5) years will be additional and nominal. (Expect a fee of approximately £100)

The Master Coach Designation is an advanced, professional credential. Thus, full membership of a relevant professional body is a requirement at all times. Your membership fees to maintain such status are not covered by the Programme fee.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the timelines for Programme completion?

For a full detail of timelines, read the earlier section entitled *Programme Process and Schedule*. Generally, we expect most candidates to complete the Programme and be awarded their Designations within three to six months. It might take you a year, but considerably longer would be very unusual. There is a financial penalty if you exceed the period you initially agree (after one “free” extension to a maximum of 24 months in total). We cannot keep your support resources in place indefinitely! But we will try to accommodate your professional and personal needs.

### What is the refund policy?

If, after submitting your application and payment, you are not accepted—most likely because you do not meet the admission requirements—you will receive a refund of your payment, minus a £100 administrative fee.

Once you have paid and been accepted (that is, you have been issued with an online password), you are “enrolled” and, as with all academic and professional programmes, the full fee is generally non-refundable.

After you are enrolled, we will provide a 75% refund within the first month, if it is clear that you have not utilised our resources (e.g., advisor, online learning net).

From that point on, we will consider withdrawal submissions on a fair basis, but without any guarantees. Our internal guidelines are to refund up to 50% of your fee prior to any submissions to your advisor, and a 25% refund prior to your first assessment.

### Will client work be kept confidential?

Absolutely. The administration authorities (PDF and Middlesex University) will retain your submission, but will not use this submission in any way other than for evaluation without your written permission. We will never reveal your clients or others referenced in your submissions, or the work you have conducted with your clients, except with your written permission.

We understand that the content of your submission is proprietary; that is, it belongs to you. We will not use this information without your permission. We acknowledge and respect academic and professional proprietary rights.

We do reserve the right to permit any or all of the assessors, your advisor, and consultants to the assessment process to read or otherwise analyse (such as listen to an audio tape) your submission, but only for the task of evaluation.



### **I hold various credentials. Will they be accepted?**

The evaluation process recognises your prior experiences, including existing awards. This includes professional designations and those from other organisations. Candidates are encouraged to include the details of their training in their Portfolios, so that they can be given a credit rating towards the Designation Master Coach.

Candidates should understand this is an advanced award for experienced coaches. While other credentials may have some credit value towards the Designation, it is extremely unlikely that they would constitute full equivalence. (Note: we are currently cooperating with other professional bodies to determine the relationship between different awards in the field.)

### **How is this Designation different/better than others?**

This certification-level designation Programme is unique—entirely different—from all others. Key differentiators include:

- **Quality Marked by international professional coaching associations** (WABC, EMCC);
- **Coaching Specialist** focused;
- Certification of a **mastery-level of expertise**;
- Based on the candidate's prior learning experience (professional practice and training);
- **Developed with broad stakeholder involvement**, including that of business coaches (internal and external), training bodies, and client groups (businesses and organisations);
- **Assessment processes are independent and rigorous**. PDF and Middlesex University, an international leader in work-based professional development programmes, will assess candidates' CMBC™ Portfolios and award credit;
- **Successful candidates will receive two awards** for their efforts—the Master Coach Designation and an award of 180 credits (out of 270 required) towards the Master's Degree in Professional Development with specialism in Coaching, Business Coaching or Coaching Psychology; and
- **We hold and will continue seeking accreditation by leading accrediting bodies** in key markets around the world such as the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC).

### **My English language skills are not great. Can I take the Programme?**

The Master Coach Designation is in English. Wherever possible, we will try to support candidates whose primary language is not English; however, doing so may require that the candidates incur additional translator costs.

### **What are the relationships and roles of WABC, EMCC, Professional Development Foundation (PDF), the International Expert Panel, and Middlesex University?**



The Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC) is the driving force behind two new, advanced, and rigorous credentials: the Designation; Certified Master Business Coach™ (CMBC™); and a Master's Degree; Master of Arts in Professional Development (Business Coaching). WABC owns the Designation Programme and the rights to the Designation Mark, and has the sole right to confer the Designation to successful candidates.

EMCC has established standards for coach training programmes and developed new levels of coaching credentials. This programme is recognised by the EMCC Quality Mark at Master's Level.

Middlesex University provides the university credits that are awarded to successful candidates for either of these credentials. In the case of the WABC Certified Master Business Coach™ (CMBC™) Designation, these credits are submitted to WABC, who in turn, issues the Designation Award. The Master Degrees will be awarded through a collaborative programme by PDF and Middlesex University.

## Apply Now!

**Ready to become a Master Coach Click here now:**

[http://www.cfnl.co.uk/PDFApplication.nsf/EMCC\\_App\\_Form?OpenForm](http://www.cfnl.co.uk/PDFApplication.nsf/EMCC_App_Form?OpenForm)

**or telephone** PDF.Net on: +44 (0) 207 987 2805