maria wade
THINKING PARTNERSHIP

FOR ICF COACHES AND CREDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Mentor coaching or coaching supervision?

They are not the same. The difference shows up when you apply for, or renew, your ICF credential.

What differs · what overlaps · what changes in 2027

Swipe →

WHY THIS MATTERS

Coaches often confuse the two.

Both involve an experienced professional. Both look at real coaching. So the confusion is understandable, and it tends to surface at the worst moment: when a credential application is being prepared.

Supervision does not count as mentor coaching for a new ICF credential.

Even when supervision explores coaching competencies, the hours cannot be reclassified as mentor coaching after the fact.

What decides which one it is? **The purpose agreed at the start**, written into the agreement.

COMMON GROUND

What they share

- An experienced professional working with you on your real practice
- Trust and clear contracting from the first conversation
- Ethical awareness throughout the work
- Reflective dialogue that challenges assumptions and reveals blind spots
- Greater self-awareness, confidence and more intentional choices

That overlap is real. What separates them is not the questions or techniques. **It is the purpose of the relationship.**

THE DIFFERENCE

Same raw material. Different purpose.

	Mentor coaching	Supervision
PURPOSE	Develop coaching competence	Explore the coach within the practice
FOCUS	Observable coaching behaviors, measured against the ICF Core Competencies	Relationships, ethics, assumptions, context, patterns and well-being
MATERIAL	Recorded or observed coaching sessions	Situations that stay with you after a session ends
THE CORE QUESTION	“What did I do, and what was its effect on the client?”	“What is happening in me, and around this work?”

ONE MOMENT, TWO CONVERSATIONS

A HYPOTHETICAL SESSION

A client falls silent after a question. The coach waits, grows uncomfortable, and asks another question.

Mentor coaching

We listen to the recording together. What was happening before the silence? Did the next question support the client's thinking, or interrupt it?

Supervision

We begin with the coach. What made the silence uncomfortable? Was there pressure to show value? Is this a pattern across the practice?

Neither conversation is deeper. **The lens is different.**

HOW OFTEN, AND WHEN

Set hours or ongoing practice

Mentor coaching

- **ACC/PCC/MCC application:** 10 hours over at least 3 months, 3 of them individual
- **ACC renewal:** 10 hours in each 3-year cycle, required
- **PCC and MCC renewal:** optional, up to 10 Core Competency CCE

Supervision

- **ACC/PCC/MCC application:** not required, and supervision cannot replace mentor coaching
- **Throughout your career,** at a rhythm you agree on
- **Any credential renewal:** up to 10 Core Competency CCE

PCC and MCC: up to 20 of the 24 Core Competency CCE required for renewal can come from the two combined. The same hour is never claimed twice.

Mentor coaching in 2027

	Until now	In 2027
WHO MENTORS YOU	A qualified ICF credential-holder	FROM JAN 1, 2027 An MCS holder at your credential level
HOW COMPETENCE IS SHOWN	A separate ICF Performance Evaluation	FROM APR 1, 2027 At least 3 sessions observed and reviewed by your mentor coach
WHAT YOU SUBMIT	Recordings and transcripts	FROM APR 1, 2027 A Competency Review Form from your mentor coach
UNCHANGED	10 hours over at least 3 months, including at least 3 individual hours	

Key dates

By Dec 31, 2026	Qualifying hours completed by then stay valid, even if you apply in 2027.
Jan 1, 2027	New hours, for a credential or a renewal, need an MCS mentor at your level.
Jan 1 – Mar 31, 2027	ACC and PCC Portfolio: submit the Performance Evaluation or the new Competency Review Form.
From Apr 1, 2027	The Competency Review Form is required. Earlier hours count, but you may need extra sessions with an MCS mentor.

MCC: Performance Evaluation unchanged. **Level pathways:** built into your program.

SUPERVISION IN 2027

Who supervises you will matter, too.

From January 1, 2027, supervision hours count toward ICF credential renewal only when your supervisor is suitably qualified:

- the ICF Coaching Supervisor Specialization (CSS), or
- a recognized supervision accreditation from another professional body, such as EMCC Global's Supervision Individual Accreditation (ESIA)

Before you begin, ask your supervisor or mentor coach which qualification they hold, and how your hours will be documented.

A QUICK CHECK

What do I want to achieve right now?

Tick what is true for you now.

Mentor coaching

- [ ] Prepare for an ACC, PCC or MCC application
- [ ] Get evidence-based feedback on recorded sessions
- [ ] Notice habitual interventions and widen my range
- [ ] Meet my ACC renewal requirement

Supervision

- [ ] Think through an ethical dilemma or boundary
- [ ] Understand why a client relationship unsettles me
- [ ] See the patterns across my whole practice
- [ ] Stay resourceful in complex, demanding work

NOT EITHER / OR

Both are right. Often at the same time.

Mentor coaching sharpens what you do in the session. Supervision deepens how you hold the work around it. An experienced MCC can gain a great deal from mentor coaching; a newer coach can meet complexity that makes supervision invaluable.

Grounded in the same standards

- The ICF Core Values and Code of Ethics
- A clear agreement naming which role is being undertaken
- Accurate records: dates, hours, and the provider's qualifications
- Protected confidentiality for coaches and their clients

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I OFFER BOTH

Not sure which you need, or whether your hours will count?

Ask me.

I work with coaches as a coaching supervisor and as a mentor coach. A short conversation now can save months later. The full article is in my newsletter.

Maria Wade, MCC · Mentor Coach · Coaching Supervisor, ICF Coaching Supervisor Specialization (CSS) and EMCC Global ESIA

Credentialing details reflect ICF guidance as of November 2026. Confirm the requirements for your credential, pathway and submission date.