

ICF ASSOCIATE CERTIFIED COACH (ACC) PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Which phrase describes maintaining presence with a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident?**
 - A. Is fully present with the client, but aloof.
 - B. Uses a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident.
 - C. Maintains rigidity to avoid surprises.
 - D. Follows a scripted approach.
- 2. Which topic covers confidentiality and legal compliance?**
 - A. Professional conduct and conflicts of interest
 - B. Commitment to delivering consistent value
 - C. Professional integrity and accountability
 - D. Confidentiality and legal compliance
- 3. Which action best aligns with upholding the core values of ethical coaching?**
 - A. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate.
 - B. Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws.
 - C. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values.
 - D. Develops and maintains a mindset open to clients.
- 4. What is the difference between a coaching agreement and a contract?**
 - A. The coaching agreement outlines the coaching relationship, goals, and logistics; a contract is a separate legal document.
 - B. The coaching agreement and a contract can be combined or kept separate depending on practice.
 - C. A contract is always required for coaching engagements.
 - D. The coaching agreement is legally binding and cannot be changed.
- 5. Which statement best reflects maintaining professional boundaries by recognizing differences among coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions?**
 - A. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values.
 - B. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate.
 - C. Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions.
 - D. Remains unaware of differences among helping professions.

- 6. Which item reflects demonstrating personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders?**
- A. Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders
 - B. Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs
 - C. Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders
 - D. Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching
- 7. What is the key difference between coaching and therapy according to ICF?**
- A. Coaching and therapy are the same document.
 - B. Coaching focuses on present and future goals and actions; therapy addresses mental health and healing, may diagnose; coaches do not diagnose or treat mental disorders.
 - C. Therapy only uses medication; coaching involves no clinical components.
 - D. Coaching requires a medical license.
- 8. What is the recommended approach when a client asks for advice?**
- A. Provide prescriptive guidance and steps.
 - B. Offer direct instructions and tell them what to do.
 - C. Avoid questions and make own decisions for client.
 - D. Use open questions to help the client decide; avoid giving prescriptive advice; explore options with the client's autonomy in mind.
- 9. Maintains Presence: Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process. Which option best describes this behavior?**
- A. Ignores intense emotions to keep the session on track.
 - B. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process.
 - C. Dismisses client emotions as inappropriate.
 - D. Focuses only on cognitive tasks and ignores affect.

10. Which option best completes this statement: Listens Actively involves clarifying messages by...

- A. Noticing trends across sessions.
- B. Reflecting or summarizing what the client communicated to ensure clarity.
- C. Integrating the client's words, tone, and body language.
- D. Creating space for silence.

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Answers

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1. B
2. D
3. C
4. B
5. C
6. C
7. B
8. D
9. B
10. B

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Explanations

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1. Which phrase describes maintaining presence with a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident?

- A. Is fully present with the client, but aloof.
- B. Uses a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident.**
- C. Maintains rigidity to avoid surprises.
- D. Follows a scripted approach.

Presence in coaching means being fully with the client in the moment—attuned, listening deeply, and responsive to what emerges. A style described as open, flexible, grounded, and confident best embodies that presence because it invites exploration safely, adapts as the conversation unfolds, stays steady, and communicates assurance without trying to control the process. This combination shows you're real-time with the client, holding space for their discoveries rather than sticking to a rigid plan. Descriptions that suggest aloofness, rigidity, or a scripted approach undermine true presence by creating distance, limiting responsiveness, or erasing spontaneity, which clogs the coaching flow. When you can remain open and flexible while being grounded and confident, you help the client feel seen, safe, and energized to move forward.

2. Which topic covers confidentiality and legal compliance?

- A. Professional conduct and conflicts of interest
- B. Commitment to delivering consistent value
- C. Professional integrity and accountability
- D. Confidentiality and legal compliance**

Confidentiality and legal compliance represent essential obligations in coaching ethics. The option that names both aspects directly focuses on protecting client information and ensuring adherence to laws, regulations, and professional standards—this combination is exactly what governs how a coach handles data, privacy, consent, and regulatory duties. That direct alignment makes it the best answer. Other options address related ethical areas like conduct, delivering value, or overall integrity and accountability, but they don't explicitly center on confidentiality and the legal requirements that accompany it. Emphasizing these two elements helps you understand why safeguarding client information and staying compliant are foundational to professional practice.

3. Which action best aligns with upholding the core values of ethical coaching?

- A. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate.
- B. Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws.
- C. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values.**
- D. Develops and maintains a mindset open to clients.

Realizing ethical coaching centers on acting in line with a formal ethical framework—the ICF Code of Ethics—and living the Core Values that guide coaching relationships. When a coach consistently abides by the Code and the Core Values, every decision and interaction—confidentiality, boundaries, referrals, informed consent, and client welfare—falls under a unified standard, making actions trustworthy and professional. This is why choosing the option that explicitly commits to the Code and Core Values is the best fit: it signals a comprehensive commitment to ethics that informs all behaviors, not just isolated good deeds. The other actions described—maintaining confidentiality, offering referrals when appropriate, or staying open and curious—are essential elements of ethical practice, but they are best understood and applied within the overarching ethical framework. Following the Code ensures these behaviors are aligned with professional standards and the values that clients rely on.

4. What is the difference between a coaching agreement and a contract?

- A. The coaching agreement outlines the coaching relationship, goals, and logistics; a contract is a separate legal document.
- B. The coaching agreement and a contract can be combined or kept separate depending on practice.**
- C. A contract is always required for coaching engagements.
- D. The coaching agreement is legally binding and cannot be changed.

In coaching work, there are two kinds of documents that can govern the engagement, each serving a different purpose. A coaching agreement describes how the coaching will happen—the relationship, goals, scheduling, logistics, confidentiality, and expectations about the coaching process. It focuses on the interaction and what you'll do together. A contract, when used, is a legally binding document that sets out terms around payment, responsibilities, liability, termination rights, and remedies if something goes wrong. It's about the legal side of the agreement. Because practices vary, you can either combine these terms into one document or keep them separate. Some coaches include the legal terms in a separate contract, while others embed essential legal terms within the coaching agreement or simply use a single combined document. That flexibility is why the best answer is that they can be combined or kept separate depending on practice. The other statements imply rigid rules that aren't accurate: contracts aren't always required, and a coaching agreement isn't inherently legally binding or unchangeable.

5. Which statement best reflects maintaining professional boundaries by recognizing differences among coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions?

- A. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values.
- B. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate.
- C. Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions.**
- D. Remains unaware of differences among helping professions.

Recognizing differences among coaching, consulting, psychotherapy, and other support professions is essential for maintaining professional boundaries. When you understand and uphold the distinct roles and scopes of practice, you know what support you're equipped to provide as a coach and when it's appropriate to refer clients to another professional. This helps prevent offering services outside your training, avoids blurring lines between disciplines, and protects client safety and trust. For example, coaching focuses on growth, goals, and accountability without diagnosing or treating mental health conditions; if such issues appear, guiding the client to a licensed mental health professional is the responsible course. While following the Code of Ethics is important, it doesn't explicitly demonstrate the act of maintaining professional distinctions across professions, and remaining unaware would violate ethical practice.

6. Which item reflects demonstrating personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders?
- A. Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders
 - B. Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs
 - C. Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders**
 - D. Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching

Demonstrating personal integrity and honesty in interactions is about consistently acting in truthfulness, reliability, and transparency with clients, sponsors, and stakeholders. This behavior directly builds trust and credibility in the coaching relationship, because others can rely on your words and actions aligning with your stated values. The other aspects are important as well, but they don't capture the essence of integrity in interaction. Using language that is appropriate and respectful supports a professional and considerate tone, but it's about communication style rather than the core honesty of your actions. Being sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values, and beliefs shows cultural competence and inclusion, which is essential but not the same as openly demonstrating integrity in every interaction. Understanding and consistently applying coaching ethics and standards reflects knowledge and commitment to rules, yet integrity in practice centers on honest, trustworthy behavior in real-time exchanges with all parties.

7. What is the key difference between coaching and therapy according to ICF?
- A. Coaching and therapy are the same document.
 - B. Coaching focuses on present and future goals and actions; therapy addresses mental health and healing, may diagnose; coaches do not diagnose or treat mental disorders.**
 - C. Therapy only uses medication; coaching involves no clinical components.
 - D. Coaching requires a medical license.

The essential distinction here is that coaching centers on a client's present and future goals and the actions needed to achieve them, while therapy focuses on mental health and healing and may involve diagnosing and treating mental disorders. Because coaching does not diagnose or treat mental health conditions, coaches refer clients to licensed mental health professionals if concerns arise. This is why coaching and therapy are separate practice areas under ICF—the coaching relationship aims at growth, performance, and forward momentum, not clinical treatment. The other options don't fit: a document isn't what separates the practices, therapy isn't defined by medications alone, and coaching does not require a medical license.

8. What is the recommended approach when a client asks for advice?

- A. Provide prescriptive guidance and steps.
- B. Offer direct instructions and tell them what to do.
- C. Avoid questions and make own decisions for client.
- D. Use open questions to help the client decide; avoid giving prescriptive advice; explore options with the client's autonomy in mind.**

The main idea is to maintain the client's autonomy by guiding rather than directing. When a client asks for advice, the best approach is to use open questions that invite them to clarify goals, explore options, and weigh trade-offs. This helps the client own the decision and choose a path that fits their values and situation, which supports lasting change and accountability. Giving prescriptive guidance or direct instructions can undermine ownership and shift responsibility away from the client, weakening the coaching partnership. By inviting exploration—asking what outcomes matter most, what options exist, and what the potential risks and benefits are—you help the client generate viable paths and decide for themselves. If helpful, you can offer a clear framework or reflections to organize thinking, but the choice remains with the client.

9. Maintains Presence: Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process. Which option best describes this behavior?

- A. Ignores intense emotions to keep the session on track.
- B. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process.**
- C. Dismisses client emotions as inappropriate.
- D. Focuses only on cognitive tasks and ignores affect.

Maintaining presence means staying fully with the client, staying calm and curious, and working with whatever emotions arise rather than avoiding them. Demonstrating confidence in working with strong client emotions shows you're not rattled by affect but use it as a meaningful signal to deepen understanding and move the coaching forward. In practice, that looks like acknowledging the emotion, staying attuned to what it reveals about the client's goals and beliefs, and asking thoughtful questions to explore its impact, all while keeping the coaching relationship safe and focused on progress. This approach aligns with how presence is described in coaching standards: being in the moment with the client, listening deeply, noticing affect, and responding in a way that supports the client's development. By handling emotions confidently, you help the client feel seen and supported, which strengthens trust and momentum. Choices that ignore or dismiss emotions or that fixate only on cognitive tasks fail to meet this standard because they shut down the emotional data the client brings, undermining connection and the coaching process.

10. Which option best completes this statement: Listens Actively involves clarifying messages by...

- A. Noticing trends across sessions.
- B. Reflecting or summarizing what the client communicated to ensure clarity.**
- C. Integrating the client's words, tone, and body language.
- D. Creating space for silence.

Active listening hinges on confirming you understood the client's message. Reflecting or summarizing what the client communicated does exactly that: you restate the content in your own words and invite the client to confirm or correct, ensuring clarity and accuracy. This practice prevents misinterpretation, demonstrates you were truly listening, and helps surface any subtle nuances or intentions that may be missed otherwise. Other aspects of listening are valuable but address different skills: noticing trends across sessions focuses on patterns over time, integrating the client's words, tone, and body language is about reading the overall signal, and creating space for silence emphasizes pacing. While important, they don't center on clarifying the specific message in the moment like reflecting or summarizing does.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://icfacc.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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