



**THE FRAMEWORK FOR INSTRUCTIONAL COACH ENDORSEMENT  
GUIDELINES**

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## **DEFINITION OF AN ENDORSEMENT CERTIFICATE**

Following approval by the Department, baccalaureate or graduate degree granting institutions, alone or in cooperation with other institutions, community colleges or school entities, may offer short programs (12 credits maximum) that lead to the Program Endorsement. The Program Endorsement documents knowledge in new and emerging areas where formal certification does not exist. The Program Endorsement is intended to improve a teacher's skills in dealing with complex classroom settings. These endorsements would be added to existing Level I or Level II Certificates but are not required to perform service in these areas.

## **INTRODUCTION TO INSTRUCTIONAL COACH ENDORSEMENT GUIDELINES**

This document describes the professional knowledge, skills and competencies that candidates will learn by completing a prescribed sequence of courses (including field placements). In addition to specific requirements and competencies, these guidelines discuss the Instructional Coach program design, candidate competencies, field experiences and any prerequisite certificates needed by the candidate.

All endorsement programs must include some components of field experiences. Field experiences are defined as a range of formal, required school and community activities participated in by candidates who are enrolled in educator preparation programs. These activities generally include supervision and mentorship of a teacher with expertise in the endorsement area. Effective field experiences provide candidates with increasing exposure to learning situations and school settings under the guidance of program faculty and trained mentors throughout the preparation program. The minimum field experience hours for this Instructional Coaching Endorsement Program are 45.

Institutions must demonstrate:

1. How they implement field experiences.
2. The duration of candidate field experiences.
3. How these experiences are closely integrated with coursework, assessment practices and program goals.

At least one experience must include students in inclusive settings. An inclusive setting is defined as an educational setting which includes students and children with and without special needs. An inclusive setting includes at least one child with an IFSP/IEP.

### **Prerequisite for Instructional Coach Program**

To be admitted into an Instructional Coach Endorsement Program, candidates must hold an Instructional I or II certificate and have at least three years of successful teaching experience.

## **OVERVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACH**

Instructional coaching is one method of professional development that has shown potential to improve the knowledge, skills and practices of teachers, thus enhancing student achievement. In a 2004 study by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, instructional coaching was found to significantly increase the implementation rate of newly learned practices. This study indicated that without support and follow-up, teacher implementation of new instructional methods is about 10%, but with follow-up support and coaching the percentage increases to 85% (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaching as a professional development activity involves a highly skilled professional (the coach) working with other professionals (the teachers) in a collegial manner to raise instructional practice to the highest possible level. Coaching promotes teacher growth and problem solving. It is ongoing, classroom based and personalized for each teacher. Instructional coaching should provide consistent support to teachers as they work to improve practice based on collaboration, inquiry and consultative feedback from the coach. It represents sound, job-embedded professional development that has the potential to improve instructional practice and ultimately student achievement. As effective facilitators of adult learning, coaches lead teachers in reflective and inquiry-based professional development that advances collective leadership, continuous improvement of instructional practices and improved student achievement.

## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

The professional core courses, competencies and experiences for the Instructional Coach Endorsement program should be designed to address the specific set of issues, knowledge and competencies that are relevant to teaching and learning. The program must prepare coaches who will be able to support teachers' efforts to help students master academic standards and the content assessment anchors. The program consists of required competencies and includes field experiences.

The program design must describe clearly how the relevant set of knowledge, skills and competencies inform the program design. The application must also indicate how the institution will assess whether candidates have acquired the required knowledge, skills and competencies.

All professional education courses should be grounded in theories of cognitive, emotional and social development, and should enable candidates to gain the knowledge and experience to work successfully with all school staff and the school community.

An instructional coach (Pre K–12) must

1. Be an effective content teacher at the Pre K-4, 4-8 or secondary level.
2. Hold an Instructional I or II certificate, and have a minimum of three years of effective teaching experience on the certificate.
3. Complete an approved Instructional Coaching program.

### **Core Content for All Instructional Coaches**

1. Instructional coaching knowledge and skills
2. Instructional practice knowledge and skills
3. Assessment and data analysis knowledge and skills
4. Organizational Leadership and School Change knowledge and skills

Content knowledge has been identified as important for professional educators, from those who teach to those who lead or serve as administrators (Shulman, 1987; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005; Coburn, Toure, Yamashita, 2009). In other words, educators need an in-depth knowledge and understanding of either an academic discipline and/or the processes of reading and writing to teach effectively, to help others teach effectively and to guide the development of a comprehensive curriculum in a given area. Thus, content knowledge is identified as a critical variable in the list of candidate competencies for the instructional coach endorsement.

Instructional coaches may be responsible for different grade levels and different subjects or academic disciplines, thus specific indicators are not identified in this document. Rather, the institution providing the endorsement program is expected to provide evidence as to how their program prepares instructional coaches to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content knowledge competencies.

### **Sources for Ensuring Subject Area Content**

For those who serve as content coaches at any level (e.g., math or science), the standards of various professional organizations will provide information about the required competencies. See [NCTM](#), [NSTA](#), [ISTE](#) and [NCSS](#) for examples. It is expected that instructional coaches working at the middle school/secondary level will have in-depth knowledge of at least one content area or academic discipline (e.g., Instructional I or II certification and at least three (3) years satisfactory teaching experience). The Instructional Coaching Endorsement, in conjunction with the Instructional I or II certificate + three (3) years' satisfactory teaching experience in the discipline, indicates that individuals have both discipline knowledge and coaching knowledge.

For coaches who will serve primarily as literacy coaches at the Pre K-4 level, the PA certification guidelines for reading specialist

([http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/institutional\\_program\\_approval/8817](http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/institutional_program_approval/8817)) and the [IRA Standards for Reading Professionals 2010](#) provide useful information about content knowledge. In Pennsylvania, coaching is considered a part of the Reading Specialist certification. In other words, an individual with reading specialist certification is eligible for a coaching position; however, the Instructional Coaching Endorsement is available for reading specialists who desire to further strengthen their professional knowledge and skills in instructional coaching.

To provide the literacy knowledge necessary for those whose focus is literacy across the disciplines, *Standards for Middle and High School Literary Coaches* (IRA, 2006) <http://www.reading.org/General/CurrentResearch/Standards/CoachingStandards.aspx> provides specific knowledge competencies for English, mathematics, science and social studies.

Likewise, the PA Comprehensive Reading Plan document, [The Pennsylvania Literacy Framework \(PLF\)](#), may provide a valuable framework for literacy.

The professional core of courses, competencies and experiences for the Instructional Coach preparation program must be designed to address the issues and knowledge that are relevant for coaching, teaching and learning. The philosophy of Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System ([SAS](#)) must permeate the candidates' course experiences, as well as their field experiences. Programs have flexibility in how they address accommodations, adaptations and cognitive development of diverse students in an inclusive setting, and English Language Learners.

## **CANDIDATE COMPETENCIES**

The Professional Core courses, competencies and experiences for the instructional coach preparation program should be designed to address the broad set of issues, knowledge and competencies that are relevant to teaching and learning. The program must prepare coaches who will be able to support teachers in students' mastery of PA Academic Standards and the Content Assessment Anchors. The Professional Core component of the program design must be maintained regardless of the configuration or options that the training program selects, either from samples in this document or others it develops. The Professional Core in coaching consists of 12 credits and includes 45 hours of field experience. Effective educational services require professionals to acquire a wide range of instructional and clinical skills related to coaching.

Programs have flexibility in how they address adaptations, accommodations and cognitive development of diverse students in an inclusive setting.

Aligned resources and tools to support the acquisition of these competencies can be found on the Standards Aligned System (SAS) portal at [www.pdesas.org](http://www.pdesas.org).

Competencies I, II and V also include examples of opportunities for coaching candidates to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and disposition of instructional coaches in a field experience within a school setting. These are offered as examples that will provide the coaching candidate practice involving demonstration and observations of intended job skills. The described experiences have been aligned with the competencies for the Instructional Coach Endorsement.

### **Competency**

#### **I. Content**

Candidates will demonstrate their abilities in and understanding of:

- A. Implementing the PA Framework for Standards Aligned Systems for instructional planning.
- B. Demonstrating content-specific knowledge of PA Academic Standards, the PA

Standards Aligned System and professional education association standards (e.g. NCSS, NCTM, IRA, NCTE, NSTA, NSDC, etc.).

- C. Demonstrating knowledge of adult learning theory and sound professional development practices as identified by the National Staff Development Council.

## II. Instructional Coaching Skills and Abilities

- A. For individual coaching of teachers, the coach will know and be able to:
1. Describe key elements of various coaching approaches, their strengths and underlying conceptual frameworks.
  2. Recognize the factors that may create barriers to effective coaching (lack of understanding of role, lack of teacher buy-in, school leadership, etc.) and develop approaches for addressing these factors.
  3. Conduct cycles which include preconferring, observing, analysis of data and conferring with the teacher.
  4. Analyze instructional practice and provide meaningful and timely feedback to educators.
  5. Plan collaboratively with educators for the continuation, modification or addition of specific skills and strategies in response to feedback and data.
  6. Model in the classroom as a means of providing specific demonstration of specific instructional techniques, strategies or approaches.
  7. Co-teach in the classroom as a means of providing support and guidance to teachers.
  8. Demonstrate an understanding of needs of adult learners in making decisions about working with colleagues in schools.
  9. Reflect on their own work and use that reflection to improve coaching.

### Suggested Field Experiences Aligned with Competency II A:

- 1) Model lessons and observe colleagues teaching lessons
  - Support and assist teachers with instruction delivery
  - Create an effective classroom environment
  - Provide professional and instructional resources
  - Model best practices
  - Engage in reflective practices
- 2) Complete one or two coaching cycles with another teacher, including planning, observing, analysis and feedback. (This can be videotaped or observed by the professor.) Analyze portion of taped conference to determine feedback and interaction with teacher.
- 3) Plan two or three lessons with teachers, helping to select ideas, materials and approaches that would meet the needs of students in the classroom.
- 4) Plan and co-teach lessons with teachers.

- B. For group coaching, the coach will know and be able to:
1. Lead group meetings in ways that facilitate group discussion, shared leadership and accomplishment of goals (process and content are appropriate for the task).
  2. Plan, implement and evaluate professional development in the content areas that take into account adult learning principles.
  3. Reflect on own work and use that reflection to improve coaching.
  4. Recognize the factors that may create barriers to effective coaching (lack of understanding of role, lack of teacher buy-in, school leadership, etc.) and develop approaches for addressing these factors.

### Suggested Field Experiences Aligned with Competency II B:

- 1) Lead a study group
  - Facilitate dialogue and teamwork
  - Assess needs of teachers
  - Design learning and learning materials
  - Differentiate for diverse learners
  - Demonstrate presentation skills
  - Follow up with learners
  - Demonstrate meeting management skills
  - Communicate effectively
  - Write a reflection describing the study group, teacher responses and reflections on successes and plans for improvement
- 2) Lead student data review meetings with teachers and write a reflection of each meeting describing the data, data presentation, teacher responses and reflections on successes and plans for improvement.
- 3) Create a collaborative instructional improvement plan with one or more teachers that includes three or more coaching experiences designed to support improvements in classroom instructional practices.
- 4) Lead an informal book or article teacher discussion group.
- 5) Conduct a professional development session for teachers.
- 6) Conduct a professional development session for a paraprofessional group.
- 7) Conduct a parent workshop for your school.

### **III. Instructional Practices**

Candidates will demonstrate their abilities in and understanding of:

- A. Coaching educators in the effective delivery of research-based instruction appropriate to the content area.
- B. Coaching educators in the use of educational technology and its integration into instructional practice.
- C. Coaching educators in becoming independent, reflective practitioners.
- D. Coaching educators in instructional planning through standards-aligned systems.
- E. Coaching educators in the appropriate selection and implementation of instructional materials and assessment tools.
- F. Coaching educators in instructional strategies for special needs, ELLs, gifted and other subgroups.
- G. Coaching educators in formal and informal assessment and decision making to improve instructional practice.
- H. Coaching educators in culturally responsive pedagogy.
- I. Coaching educators in classroom management.

### **IV. Assessment**

Candidates will demonstrate their abilities in and understanding of:

- A. Using assessment data from multiple measures, especially from formative assessments, to guide instruction and make decisions about coaching.
- B. Monitoring the results of interventions and altering instruction accordingly.
- C. Using multiple assessments (authentic, screening, diagnostic, formative, benchmark and summative) that are developmentally appropriate.



- D. Demonstrating effective use(s) of technology in student assessment measures and data analysis.
- E. Using multiple assessment strategies that effectively measure student mastery of the curriculum in more than one way.
- F. Designing assessments that target academic standards and assessment anchor content standards in subject areas.

**V. Organizational Leadership and School Change**

The candidate will know and be able to:

- A. Understand the school change literature that speaks to the importance of schools as communities of learners.
- B. Exhibit effective interpersonal skills that reflect respect for others and understanding of the importance of collegial interactions for promoting student learning.
- C. Listen effectively to others, understanding both content and feeling during formal and informal dialogue, and communicate in a manner that inspires trust, communicates respect and is nonjudgmental in nature.
- D. Work collaboratively with school leadership to promote common goals and vision in the school.
- E. Work collaboratively with colleagues in setting goals and establishing directions for school improvement and reform.
- F. Promote shared leadership in the school.
- G. Communicate with internal (administrators, etc.) and external audiences (parents, foundations, etc.) about school change efforts.

Suggested Field Experiences Aligned with Competency V:

- 1) Analyze a school-wide content area program and develop an action plan for improvement; or audit a school program and develop an action plan for improvement. This could include:
  - Data analysis/ needs analysis
  - Collecting data/information to develop a detailed action plan
  - Communicating effectively with principal, department chair, experienced teachers, specialists or mentor teachers
  - Facilitating action plan
- 2) Shadow a content area specialist or another instructional coach.
- 3) Attend a team or department meeting that focuses on curriculum. After discussion with the department head, write a reflection describing the meeting and develop a coaching plan that could be used by a coach to implement the curriculum.
- 4) Use appropriate technology for data analysis/administrative tasks.

**Sample Instructional Coaching Professional Core Program (12 credits)**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Competencies</b>
Leadership and School Change	3	Competencies under I and V
Foundations of Instructional Coaching	3	Competencies under I, II and III
Assessment Analysis and	3	Competencies under III and IV

Instructional Decision Making		
Instructional Coaching Practicum	3	Competencies under II, III and V. Supervised field experience (45 hours)

Note: Programs have flexibility in how they distribute the competencies among courses. Field experiences may be required in courses other than the Practicum course. Credits can be reduced depending on candidate's experience.

## FACULTY

Endorsement programs submitted for review to the Department will include the qualifications of faculty assigned to teach each course within the program. Faculty who teach in instructional Coaching programs must have expertise in instructional coaching, teaching experience in a K-12 setting and advanced degrees in disciplines appropriate to coaching. Additionally, program proposals will be expected to include evidence of collaboration with current practicing instructional coaches and administrators.

Faculty teaching in instructional coaching programs should represent a strong combination of current practical and theoretical knowledge about schools, teachers, adult learners and coaching. Instructional Coaching programs should consider the following elements when assigning faculty to teach the core courses:

- Faculty should have expertise in these areas:
  - ✓ principles of coaching,
  - ✓ adult learning,
  - ✓ school leadership and change and
  - ✓ assessment and data analysis.
- Expertise may be evidenced through a combination of:
  - ✓ educational degrees,
  - ✓ professional development,
  - ✓ experience in Pre K-16 teaching/coaching and
  - ✓ school leadership and scholarship.
- For faculty teaching coaching courses, a doctoral degree is preferred. However, a master's degree may be sufficient if accompanied by other experiences that ensure the relevant expertise.

- Faculty should have experience in teaching and/or coaching in Pre K-12 schools. Additionally, faculty should have experience in professional development and school leadership. This may include, but is not limited to:
  - ✓ success in administrative positions,
  - ✓ leading professional development workshops,
  - ✓ attending professional conferences and
  - ✓ leadership roles in professional organizations.
- Evidence of scholarship includes (but is not limited to):
  - ✓ publishing articles or books,
  - ✓ presentations at professional conferences,
  - ✓ participation in curriculum development and
  - ✓ program accreditation.

Programs may be approved if at least 80% of faculty members for this program are qualified to teach their assigned course(s). If any faculty are found to be unqualified for their assigned course(s), the institution will have two years to ensure that 100% of the faculty are qualified.

## **RELATED INFORMATION**

### **Application Process**

The institution's certification officer will recommend the candidate for the endorsement after successful completion of the Instructional Coaching Endorsement Program. The candidate must complete the required PDE application for endorsement and pay the appropriate fee to add the endorsement to their instructional certificate. The application process may be found at the following link: <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=506890&mode=2>.

### **Professional Development Specifications**

- Coursework must include at least 12 semester credits (180 credit hours).
- Coursework may be face-to-face, on-line or a blended model of the two. While some on-line courses may be a component of the program, to ensure that field experience and competencies are developed, programs that are delivered completely on-line will not be approved.
- Coursework must demonstrate candidate competencies through coursework assessment.
- Coursework must include a planned practicum with a mentor relationship.
- Coursework may be offered as university coursework and/or approved IU courses or

PDE-affiliated programs in conjunction with an institution of higher education, and extensive, well-designed clinical experiences.

## References

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