

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> Oxford Brookes University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 17, Business and Management		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shaping coach education, assessment, and ethical practice by developing the coaching discipline		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2014 – 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Prof Tatiana Bachkirova Dr Ioanna Iordanou Dr Judie Gannon Dr Elaine Cox Dr Peter Jackson  Dr Adrian Myers Dr Carmelina Lawton-Smith	Professor, Director of ICCaMS Reader Senior Lecturer Senior Lecturer Senior Lecturer, Co-Director of ICCaMS Senior Lecturer Senior Lecturer	[text removed for publication]
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 – 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>The International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies' (ICCaMS) empirical and conceptual research has directly impacted on the development of coaching as an applied discipline. Established in 2014, ICCaMS is the only dedicated university-based, specialist centre for interdisciplinary coaching research, education and training in the UK. Specifically, our work has reformed the accreditation, practice evaluation, professional standards, and coach training approaches employed by coaching practitioners, enriching and enlightening their work. The main beneficiaries of our research are: professional coaching bodies (e.g. the European Mentoring and Coaching Council - EMCC); coach educators, trainers and providers of continuing professional development (CPD) (e.g. Georgetown University School of Medicine and Sydney Business School); organisations adopting coaching as service users (e.g. the Civil Service and the NHS); and many coaching communities (i.e. coaches and coaching clients).</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Despite the exponential growth of coaching in recent decades, its theoretical understanding and empirical groundwork are recognised as under-developed. To avoid the risks of being 'a profession without discipline' (Bachkirova &amp; Borrington, 2018 – 1ii), ICCaMS became one of the few university-based centres for coaching research, education and training in the world. The Centre is now recognised as a catalyst in the development of a rigorous, evidence-informed discipline, using its multivalent expertise across psychology, education, management, and organisation studies to contribute to and develop the knowledge-base of coaching. It has accomplished this status through pioneering empirical and conceptual research that has resulted in critiquing outdated practices, spearheading fact-based innovations, reframing debates, and developing fresh theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Our multifaceted research has been supported by grants from the Institute of Coaching (Harvard, USA) and commissioned by the NHS (e.g. London Deanery). As coaching is still a developing discipline in terms of both knowledge and practice, ICCaMS' empirical and conceptual studies have instigated change in three major areas:</p>		

**1. Professional development of coaches** – ICCaMS is an established and renowned thought leader in the area of professional education, training and development of coaches. Our empirical and conceptual outputs (**1, 2 and 3**) challenge established professional education and training by shifting the focus of coach development to the root philosophical underpinnings of coaching rather than viewing coaching as a skills-based and value-neutral intervention. This position emphasises the multifaceted role of the coach's self as an instrument of coaching in the content and delivery of coaching programmes. Through our research (see specifically **1i-1iii**), we challenge the oversimplified and underdeveloped models dominating contemporary coach training, offering fresh propositions that create a shift in thinking and practice. For example, our proposed 3P model of practice (see **1i**) has been well integrated into the coach education offered at Sydney Business School primarily because it foregrounds the value of reflecting on the philosophy and purpose of one's coaching practice, aside from the actual rudiments of that practice (see Section 4, **E11**).

**2. Ethical coaching standards** – A second strand of ICCaMS' applied research is levelled at a range of non-academic beneficiaries, including domestic and international coaching practitioners, professional coaching associations, and the wider public seeking coaching services as coaching clients. This strand has provided a solid conceptual foundation for the development of widely accepted ethical principles for the coaching profession, shifting the emphasis from prescribed codes of ethics to the development of a professional culture that prioritises a shared understanding of ethical standards. At a micro-level, this work informs and supports ethically minded coaching practice in a variety of professional contexts, including business, education, and healthcare. At a macro-level, it serves wider audiences such as businesses that deploy coaching and professional coaching associations, by developing an ecology of ethics in the currently unregulated coaching world (see **2**).

**3. Quality assessment and accreditation of coaches** is a function of the professional coaching bodies, which also influences professional education and training programmes. The quality of this process has been heavily dependent on the use of competence frameworks. In paper **3**, such reductive competence frameworks were examined and critiqued and a new model for assessment of coaching proposed. This model developed a notion of capability of coaches in addition to competence, acknowledging a complex array of factors in the self of the coach that influences coaching interactions. The notion of capability has been translated into the mechanisms of coach assessment, which is more congruent with the complexity of coaching practice.

### 3. References to the research

The following studies are described in this impact case:

**1i.** Bachkirova, T., Jackson, P., Gannon, J., Iordanou, I. and Myers, A. (2017). Re-conceptualizing coach education from the perspectives of pragmatism and constructivism, *Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal*, 2(2), pp. 29-50. DOI:10.22316/poc/02.2.03

**1ii.** Bachkirova, T. & Borrington, S. (2019). Old wine in new bottles: Exploring pragmatism as a philosophical framework for the discipline of coaching, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 18(3), pp. 337-360. DOI:10.5465/amle.2017.0268

**1iii.** Bachkirova, T. (2016). The Self of the Coach: Conceptualization, Issues, and Opportunities for Practitioner Development, *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(2), pp. 143-156. DOI:10.1037/cpb0000055

**1iv.** Bachkirova, T., Arthur, L. and Reading, E. (2015). Evaluating a coaching and mentoring programme: Challenges and solutions, *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 10(2), pp. 175-

189. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2015-48361-006>

2. Iordanou, I., Hawley, R., and Iordanou, C. (2017). *Values and Ethics in Coaching*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 9781473919563

3. Bachkirova, T. & Lawton Smith, C. (2015). From competencies to capabilities in the assessment and accreditation of coaches, *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 13(2), pp. 123-140. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-40282-009>

#### 4. Details of the impact

Empirical and conceptual research conducted by ICCaMS has shaped coach accreditation and ethical standards, as well as coach training and education, contributing to the development of coaching as a robust discipline and improving coaching practice worldwide. The impact of our research is described in relation to three main groups of beneficiaries:

##### **Professional coaching bodies: Strengthening accreditation and ethical standards**

Bachkirova and Lawton-Smith's research (3) on capabilities has been instrumental in the introduction of improved accreditation approaches and guidelines at the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentoring (IAPCM) (E1, E2). The EMCC, a major professional coaching association with 6,000+ members across 61 countries, used this research directly to revise their '*accreditation frameworks ... for validation of training programmes and the assessment of coaches*' (E1). More specifically, as a result of said research, the Council changed its approach to coach assessment and accreditation for members, from an established competences-based framework to one focusing on capabilities (E1). This is significant, as accreditation is one of the few quality assurance mechanisms available to coaching as an unregulated profession. The Chief Operating Officer of the IAPCM (900+ organisational and individual members across 24 countries) also attests to changes in their assessment and accreditation processes for their global membership, as a result of Bachkirova and Lawson-Smith's research, confirming that they have devised '*an excellent method of truly exploring the holistic element of coaching*' (E2, E3).

Iordanou's conceptual work on coaching ethics (2) resulted in a re-evaluation of the EMCC's code of ethics and shaped its new best practice guidelines. More specifically, Iordanou's contribution to an EMCC green paper on ethical standards for coaching as an unregulated profession led directly to the EMCC remodelling its focus on ethical standards (E4). Furthermore, Iordanou consulted on and co-drafted the 'FCC Guidance Document' (2017), a policy document on the principles of efficacious, evidence-based coaching that aligns with ethical practice (E5) produced by the Future of Coaching Collaboration (FCC), a multi-stakeholder group that includes representatives from corporations (e.g. GlaxoSmithKline, KPMG, PricewaterhouseCoopers, the John Lewis Partnership etc.), leading coaching professional bodies (e.g. Association for Coaching and EMCC), academic institutions and research institutes. Bachkirova and Iordanou also contributed further guidance on ethical standards as expert panellists to the FCC.

##### **Organisational commissioners of coaching and their coaching communities: Improving coaching practice**

ICCaMS' research outputs (3 and 1iv) have changed coaching practice in the NHS (E10), parts of the Civil Service (E6), and Bournemouth University's Learning and Development Department (E7). These organisations have adopted new models on capabilities developed by ICCaMS to inform the assessment and accreditation of coaches. For example, Civil Service Learning (CLS) highlighted that '*Oxford Brookes University have provided invaluable support to the coaching offer we in CSL provide for around 450,000 Civil Servants*', and this includes '*developing an approach to validation for around 200 internal coaches and running validation sessions to ensure a consistent standard of*

*internal coaching*' (E6). Moreover, our research has changed the way practice is evaluated in the medical sphere. As Dr Margaret Carey, Co-founder of 'A Whole New Doctor' – a leadership development and coaching program for medical students at Georgetown University School of Medicine – has confirmed: 'Your article has helped recognise coaching and mentoring as complex adaptive systems, which resonates with the medical profession' and it is now used as 'our instruction manual' (E9). These are important impacts in a developing a discipline caught between the tensions of an unregulated but rapidly expanding field of learning and development.

The Centre's scholarly commitment to informing non-academic audiences about coaching as a quality learning and development intervention is testament in its wider outreach activities. In 2015, ICCaMS was commissioned to provide the regular research-led column "Research matters" in *Coaching at Work*, the largest practitioner coaching magazine (2,000+ subscribers, primarily in the US and the UK, but also in other European countries, and a global LinkedIn group with almost 42,000 members). As part of this endeavour, ICCaMS members publish outlines of evidence-based research outputs, written in an accessible style for non-specialist audiences. The editor of *Coaching at Work* has testified that 'from feedback to *Coaching at Work*, we know that the *Research Matters* column produced by ICCaMS has engaged and challenged the coaching community with its latest academic research and thought-provoking pieces' (E8). This column typically draws on the open access, peer-reviewed periodical the *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, which, founded by ICCaMS in 2003, publishes extended, rigorous conceptual and research-based papers.

### **Coach educators, training and CPD providers: Shaping education and professional development**

ICCaMS research on coaches' educational and professional development has had documented impact on educators and training providers, informing, modifying, and improving their programmes (E9, E10, E11), with ICCaMS' work adopted as a 'model of practice' (E11). A priority of ICCaMS has been in creating a solid knowledge base for the professional education and development of coaching practitioners. References 1i, 1ii and 1iii challenge the oversimplified models of coach training and education, shifting thinking and practice. For example, Sydney Business School have used 1i as the underlying framework for their Master of Business Coaching programme. As one Associate Lecturer from Sydney Business School has testified '[Your] model [proposed in 1.i] has enabled us to make tangible a key tenet of [our] programme, which is that the way we choose to coach is deeply personal, based upon our preferred theoretical models and personal values' (E11).

ICCaMS research has resulted in the production of extensive professional guidance, which is being implemented by leaders in the field of coach training. The *Complete Handbook of Coaching* (2010, 2014, 2018), edited by members of the ICCaMS team, is adopted as the main coaching textbook by leading university-based training programmes (including Cambridge, Warwick, and Henley Business School) and it has been purchased by over 350 libraries worldwide. This text sits alongside three handbooks published by ICCaMS staff, recognised as the ultimate guidebooks shaping the knowledge base of coaching. Moreover, Iordanou's volume on ethical coaching practice (2) achieved recognition as the Henley Business School's Coaching Book of the Year (2017). These publications have engaged the coaching profession and led to recognition that the sustainable development of coaches depends on engagement with rigorous research and theories (E12, see also E7).

In sum, ICCaMS has contributed to the development of coaching as a robust discipline, producing both empirical and conceptual research that has been shaping coach training and education, assessment, and ethical practice.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact****Professional coaching bodies**

**E1** European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), Testimony from EMCC President, 11 April 2019.

**E2** International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentoring (IAPCM), Testimony from Chief Operations Officer, 29 March 2019.

**E3** Website, International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentoring (IAPCM). Available at: <https://coach-accreditation.services/accreditation/>

**E4** EMCC International, Green Paper on the value of ethics in coaching: Wall, T., Hawley, R., Iordanou, I., Csigás, Z., Cumberland, N., Lerotic-Pavlik, N., Vreede, A. (2018). *Research Policy and Practice Provocations Report: Coaching and Ethics in Practice: Dilemmas, Navigations, and the (Un)spoken*. Brussels: European Mentoring and Coaching Council International. ISBN: 978-1910487228. (Output 2 referenced on pages 5-7, 21-24, 26)

**E5** Future of Coaching Collaboration, AA. VV. (including Iordanou, I.) (2017). A Future of Coaching Collaboration Guidance Document. Framework for professional executive coaching in organisational settings. London: Future of Coaching Collaboration. Available at: <https://www.coaching-at-work.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/FCC-Guidance-Document.pdf>

**Organisational commissioners of coaching and their coaching communities**

**E6** Civil Service Learning, Testimony from a Learning Consultant, 8 February 2016.

**E7** Bournemouth University, Testimony from Head of Organisational Development, 2 April 2019.

**E8** Testimony from the Editor of *Coaching at Work*.

**E9** Testimony from co-founder of 'A Whole New Doctor' – a leadership development and coaching program for medical students at Georgetown University School of Medicine, 20 March 2019.

**E10** NHS Professional Support Unit & ICCaMS (2014). Evaluation of HENCEL, HENNWL, HESL Professional Support Unit's coaching and mentoring services for dentists and doctors.

**Coach educators, training and CPD providers**

**E11** Testimonies from universities and training providers, including a member of staff from Sydney Business School (University of Wollongong).

**E12** ImaginativeHR, e-bulletin 'Coaching qualifications and accreditations – what are they built on and what do they mean?', July 2016.