

Describing Coaches' Experiences with the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP)

This study explored coaches' experiences with the NCCP's coaching streams and certification structure. Online surveys were completed by 169 coaches; focus-groups and interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of 20 coaches.

The majority of coaches surveyed had positive perceptions of the NCCP's structuring and pathways, citing that they were clear and informative, with just over half intending to advance to 'trained' (58.0%) or 'certified' (55.6%) status - with younger coaches (<35 years) and those with <5 years of experience indicating a higher willingness to continue NCCP pathways. Clarity of the Locker for professional development, remote courses and evaluation, and support offered by all levels of governance (regional, provincial, national, CAC) were also positively perceived. Those who had negative perceptions or indicated low intention to continue in their NCCP pathways cited a lack of incentive or value, low quality of facilitators and access to evaluators, high cost and time commitment, and lack of clarity around maintenance of certification.

Areas for improvement included: course duplication and transferability, transitioning to the new system, clarity of NCCP pathways at individual sport level, 'next steps' in Locker, bureaucracy, mentorship, and recognition of equivalency credits. Collectively, results suggest both positive and negative perceptions of NCCP streams and certification structure, impacting coaches' intentions to continue their education. Implementation of suggested improvements may be most impactful in enhancing perceived value and importance of NCCP certification among older coaches (35+ years), those with 5+ years of coaching experience, and those coaching single versus multiple sports.

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