

## REFLECTIVE ESSAY BRIEFING NOTE

### Purpose of the Essay

There are three reasons why the Reflective Essay is part of the culmination of the Business Coach Programme:

1. To consolidate your learning; the Essay provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on the development in your coaching and your business applications of it;
2. To motivate and encourage you to develop and explore your own unique approach to the subject; the Essay allows you to celebrate your journey and achievements; and
3. To contribute to the wider community; everyone accepted onto the Programme brings to it considerable expertise in a fascinating range of areas including business leadership, HR and academia. You have fresh and interesting things to say, and this is one of your opportunities to say it.

This note gives more information on the Essay and on how the Essays will be marked.

### The Essay

Please write and submit to us by **the deadline set in your 'Invitation to Graduate' letter**, a 'Reflective Essay' of no more than 1,500 words. This should be a serious piece, scholarly if appropriate, on any aspect of your learning, or on a particular perspective, expertise, or experience which you wish to write about. You might take this opportunity to showcase your organisation as a leading-edge employer, by writing of the scope of your work, and its impact to date. You may alternatively wish to discuss an aspect of coaching which particularly interests you; or its connection with another field in which you are also qualified; or to describe a particular case study which interested you and may have lessons for others.

Please don't overtly 'sell'; the focus is on reflecting on your learning and your particular 'take' on coaching – much more effective! Please also don't see this as an opportunity to thank your Tutor etc, (no Oscar speeches!) It's rather about thinking through and articulating an aspect of coaching on which you have your own unique perspective. In the past people have written about all sorts of things: coaching the wayward sons of Greek ship-owners; a passionate plea to have the internal coach in organisations taken seriously; stages of learning as a coach, the position of Non-Executive Director becoming unattractive through regulatory changes and those people hence switching to business coaching, and many more. (And one year, coaching and tomatoes ...)

### The assessment process

The first marker will be your Tutor. They will give you feedback on your first draft, so the earlier you can get this draft to your tutor, the better. In the event that they believe it does not meet the pass criteria (see below), they will recommend you revise your draft and resubmit. More usually they will perhaps point out areas that are weaker or could be improved, or that are strong and could be made even better. In all cases, they will be basing this feedback on having worked with you for up to a year, and wanting to encourage you to achieve your very best work and for you to fully utilise and demonstrate your strengths.

Initial feedback from your tutor will be given asap, normally within 2 weeks of receipt of your first draft. Once they are happy that your essay has met the pass standard, their assessment will remain provisional until the second marking. This involves 'blind' independent marking from an external assessor. This second marking normally confirms the initial first marking and in a few rare circumstances, the grade of pass may be raised to 'Distinction'. The final confirmed grade and some brief written feedback will be sent via email to all participants in early September.

### The assessment criteria

One of the core principles of the Business Coach Programme is recognition that each participant is unique and has a different experience on the Programme. Thus, as this is a personal reflective piece of work, the content of essays will vary widely, with the assessment criteria needing to allow for that diversity of expression. However, there are basic themes contained in these criteria and these provide guidance in giving you an indication of what is required. These themes are; the structure & presentation of the essay, the arguments &/or content presented; and the reflections &/or contributions of the essay. There are 3 categories of grade awarded, 'resubmit', 'pass', 'distinction'; with appropriate descriptive criteria for each of the three themes.

<b>Grade/Theme</b>	<b>Structure &amp; Presentation</b>	<b>Argument &amp; Content</b>	<b>Reflections &amp; Contributions</b>
<b><i>Resubmit</i></b>	Inadequate presentation and structure; Some examples of incorrect grammar, spelling and citation.	Narrow focus; Limited use of coaching learning; Some incorrect use of relevant sources.	Unsatisfactory observations; insufficient insightful contributions; Basic level of reflection.
<b><i>Pass</i></b>	Orderly presentation; Clear structure with introduction, main body and conclusion; Correct grammar, syntax, spelling, citation.	Focused essay describing a clear and consistent development of ideas or presenting a coherent argument; Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of coaching material used; Uses a range of relevant sources.	Critical reflection; A personal contribution; Evidence of application of your learning to your business coaching.
<b><i>Distinction</i></b>	Exceptional presentation; Logically and coherently structured with a flair of expression; Cogent use of grammar, spelling and citation;	Outstanding knowledge of coaching material and ability; Original independent critical thinking; Innovative use of coaching material.	Excellent evidence of fresh personal reflections; Contribution of new/emerging tools, approaches or insights; Creative, dynamic application of reflections to business coaching.

### **Your Profile**

So readers may know a little about you, please append at the bottom of the Reflective Essay your name, and a description of your work role or your practice's particular approach if appropriate. No more than 100 additional words for this part please. You're welcome to add your contact details if you wish.

Intellectual property of the pieces will naturally rest with you, but we request your permission to distribute the essays at Graduation, and to show the document to others in future as part of our thought leadership in coaching work. We also reserve the right to edit papers slightly in the unlikely event that there are elements with which we are uncomfortable – this is unlikely to happen, and if it did it would naturally be in full consultation with you.

### **Further Guidance**

- The deadline for the essays is as stated in your Invitation to Graduate letter.
- The essays are to be no more than 1,500 words in length. Participants will not be penalised for shorter essays if they feel their submission can be presented more succinctly.
- Past essays are available on the secure Alumni website for reference; although do not feel restricted or hindered by the topics covered by previous participants.
- If you need coaching and / or inspiration, your Tutor would be happy to help in the scheduled Telephone Tutorial sessions.

We hope you enjoy this process, and find it useful and stimulating. Good luck!