



How to become an Athletics Coach

Becoming a Coach in Irish Athletics

If you have an interest in becoming an Athletics Coach then this leaflet will give you all the information you require in how to go about it.

The Coach Education System

Athletics Ireland is part of the National Coaching Development programme. This programme designed by Coaching Ireland is based on best practice of several coach education programmes and is the benchmark for Athletics Ireland. Coaching Ireland has a quality control mechanism for ensuring this. Additionally in terms of the sport specific development of syllabi and criteria, Athletics Ireland has looked at the best parts of coach education in a number of sports and some of the most progressive coach development programs in the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Our coach development model aligns itself with the Long Term Athlete Development model with the courses designed to meet the competencies necessary at each stage of development for the athlete and coach.

It is important to remember that the formal coach education system is just a starting point for a coach. There are many workshops and seminars to help Coaches develop especially if you are interested in a particular age group or event. See www.athleticsireland.ie for information.

Join a club

Athletics Ireland has over 200 clubs throughout the country, so join your local club, become a registered member of the Athletics Association of Ireland (AAI), attend a Coach Education course and share your athletics knowledge.

Go on a Coach Education Course

The AAI has currently 5 levels of coach education. This brochure will tell you what courses might suit you. You must start at either Athletics Leader or Assistant Coach. There are numerous courses run throughout the country all year so keep an eye on www.athleticsireland.ie for details

Start coaching.

Start coaching in your local club. You are welcome to attend Regional Squads and attend Courses, Workshops etc to observe other coaches.

Resources

The AAI website contains links, articles, videos and recommended reading for coaches to help you continually update your skills, or you can subscribe to our e-news letter by e-mailing coaching@athleticsireland.ie

Insurance

Once you are a registered member of the Athletics Association of Ireland you are insured to coach other registered members of AAI at venues approved by your club.

AAI Coach Education Program

The aim of the AAI is to continually support and develop the education of its coaches. Currently there are 6 different coaching awards; Athletic Leader, Assistant Coach and Levels 1, 2 and 3. We are also offering entry to the IAAF Academy for Elite coaches an internationally recognised qualification for experienced and suitably qualified coaches.

Our courses are designed to be practical and educational and to meet the needs of the modern coach. The system is designed around each coaches own needs and the Long Term Athlete Development model supported by Coaching Ireland as the internationally accepted standard for the development of athletes.

The LTAD model

The Long Term Athlete Development model underpins the AAI coach education program. The LTAD model suggests a pathway for the long term development of an athlete and the various stages of development the athlete goes through. The AAI coach education program is designed to equip coaches to implement this pathway.



The Athletics Coaching ladder

Athletics Leader

Aim

Athletics Leader focuses on introducing the fundamentals of athletic movement to children. The aim of the Athletics Leader course is to provide teachers, parents and club members with the skills and tools to manage and lead an Athletics Programme in their club or school. The course is focused on the delivery of practical information and lessons. The content focuses on organising athletics games and activities for young children. It is aimed at those who want to coach or assist in their local club or school.

Content

The content for this course includes;

- group coaching skills and identifying ways to make the coaching sessions fun
- The use of Hurdles and obstacles, tumbling, running, jumping, throwing and running
- games to provide fun in developing fitness
- developing an awareness of the growing child and the implications on fitness activities
- games to develop speed and reaction, using acceleration and change of direction
- The ethics of coaching including topics such as winning vs. involvement and recognising the importance of individual improvement
- Practical sessions on running and agility, balance, jumping, throwing and catching
- Planning a session and a programme

Duration

This is a course over 1 day (8 hours)

Entry Requirements

Athletics Leader is open to all

Assessment/ Qualification

There is no exam.

Cost €60- Included in the price for this course is the new Athletics Leader manual full of fun games and activities for use with young athletes

The Athletics Coaching ladder

Assistant Coach

Aim

The aim of the assistant coach course is to give some basic skills to the beginner coach to help assist a more senior coach in the delivery of coaching sessions to young athletes. It is an introduction to the coaching of three key events, running (Sprints and Endurance), Jumping (Long Jump) and Throwing (Shot Putt).

Content

The content for this course includes;

- group coaching skills and identifying ways to make coaching sessions fun
- Fun and functional warm ups and cool downs
- Safety in Athletics
- Rules of key events
- Communicating with young athletes and giving effective feedback.
- Basic running skills
- Basic Long Jump Skills
- Basic Shot Putt skills

Duration

This is a course over 1 day (8 hours)

Entry Requirements

The Assistant Coach Course is open to all

Assessment/ Qualification

There is no exam.

Cost €60- Included in the price for this course is an AAI Assistant Coach Manual.

Level 1

Aim

The Level 1 course is focused on the learning to train stage on the LTAD pathway. Coaches working at this stage will continue to develop the fundamental skills of the athlete. Fun and participation are still the main aims of the course. The crucial development at the “learning to train” stage is the development of sports specific skills, learning the correct posture and movements of all running, jumping and throwing events.

Content

The content for this course includes;

- Developing the techniques of running, jumping and throwing.
- Understanding the effects of puberty in developing the young athlete
- Planning and conducting a training session incorporating Running, Jumping and Throwing
- Developing the mental capacities of the athlete towards fair play, discipline, confidence, concentration etc.
- Developing the fundamental skills of Running, Jumping and throwing and making them more sport specific
- Continuing the development of athletics in a fun environment

Duration

This is a course over 2 weekends (25 hours)

Entry Requirements

Level 1 is open to all but is recommended to those who have completed an Athletics Leader course or an Assistant Coach course or who have had some coaching experience.

Assessment/ Qualification

Practical assessment and continuous assessment throughout the course.

- Sample training session
- Observed Practice
- Oral assessment

Cost-€100 - Included in the price for this course is an AAI Level 1 Coach Manual.

Level 2

Aim

At this level the coach begins to focus on an event group specialisation, i.e. Sprints and Hurdles, Distance, Jumps, Throws or Walks. This course is aimed at the Learning to Train' and transition to 'Training to Compete' phase of the LTAD.

Content

Content for this course includes;

- Developing an awareness of tactics and their application in athletics
- Event specific information, technical, tactical, psychological and physiological.
- The use of sports science in effective coaching.
- An introduction to all the events in the module groups the coach chooses.
- Technique and training progressions.
- Developing coaching skills.
- Developing event awareness and the competitive process.
- Developing mental preparation and skills.
- The coach will qualify in two of the 6 modules - (the 6 being - speed, endurance, throws, jumps, walks, hurdles)
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Duration

Two weekends Saturday and Sunday 9.00 – 5.00 Attendance and practical assessment in event groups at regional squad sessions, plus home study module.

Entry Requirements

Level 2 is open to those who have completed Level 1 or are assimilated at Level 1 and have a minimum of 1 years coaching experience

Assessment

- Practical Assessment
- Written assessment

Cost €120. - Cost includes the book "The Fundamentals of Track and Field" by Gerry Carr

Level 3

Aim

The Level 3 coach is seen as a specialist in their own area. It is currently the highest level of coaching qualification available in Ireland. Initially at Level 3 we will provide courses for speed (Sprints/Hurdles/Relays) and endurance (Middle and long Distance and Steeplechase). We will be adding modules for the other event groups in due course as well as a strand for the coaching of developing athletes.

The course fits at the 'Training to Compete' and 'Train to Win' phases of the LTAD

Content

The course consists of 7 modules delivered in 2 parts. Firstly a generic part, delivered by Coaching Ireland, on general principles of coaching and preparation. This part of the course is delivered to several sports. In this section of the course there will also be sessions to highlight the application of the generic content to Athletics.

The second part of the course is delivered by AAI and is focused on the event group the coach wishes to qualify at level 3 in. (i.e:Coaches opt to take the speed modules or the endurance modules). If at a later date the coach wishes to also qualify as a level 3 endurance coach they only need to sit the specific endurance modules and not the whole course again.

Topics include;

- Understanding technical demands of athletics
- Coaching and learning processes
- Planning and Implementation of Coaching and Training
- Modules on the physiological, psychological and biomechanical demands of sport and the understanding of the role of sports science by the coach.
- Season planning etc

Duration

The course runs over the period of a year and involves 6 weekends of contact time, plus distance learning.

Entry Requirements

Candidates who hold a Level 2 qualification and who can show significant coaching experience may apply to the Director of Coaching for a place on this course. Special exemptions may be possible. Application is made by way of a coaching CV.

Assessment/ Qualification

Each of the 7 modules has a different method of assessment, and assessment is a combination of practical, written and oral assignments.

Cost

€200

IAAF Academy for Elite Coaches

Aim

The IAAF academy for Elite coaches aims to access outside sources to help Level 3 Coaches to upskill in their chosen discipline.

Content

- The programme for this course is variable depending on the events covered but will consist of technical analysis and skill development, season and multi season planning, dealing with high performance athletes, lifestyle and training environment and training development for elite performers

Duration

The course is a 1 week residential course in Loughborough University, UK followed by a yearlong mentoring and project based work programme to achieve the qualification

Entry Requirements

Candidates must have achieved the highest coaching award available domestically (i.e. Level 3) and show significant coaching experience of athletes at a high performance level. Application is made by way of a coaching CV.

Assessment/ Qualification

Projects are assessed by the IAAF education department.

Cost

Athletics Ireland and IAAF cover the costs of the course.

General Information

Throughout the year there will be all around the country Athletics Leader, Assistant Coach and Level one courses. So there will be one near you. A smaller number of level 2 and level 3 courses will also be available. There are also many event specific workshops offered in many areas. Details of all of these courses and how to apply will be posted on www.athleticsireland.ie or you can register your interest by e-mailing coaching@athleticsireland.ie and we will keep you updated on coaching courses in your area. The application form for all Coaching courses is on www.athleticsireland.ie in the Development section and these need to be filled in and returned with appropriate fees to Athletics Ireland Head Office.

Other Info

- Participants should always be dressed appropriately to participate in physical activity.
- If for any reason you cannot partake in physical activity you should inform the Tutor prior to beginning of the course, or if during the course you feel unable to participate in any element of the course immediately inform the Tutor.
- Participants should bring writing materials for taking notes.
- Intending participants should regularly visit our website for updates on courses and venues.
- You will become a certified coach once you have completed the course requirements and completed the necessary log books and coaching hours.
- Participants will receive their Coaching Certificate when they have completed the above requirements appropriate to their course.
- All coaching courses are certified and recognised by the Coaching Ireland formerly known as the National Coaching and Training Centre

SUMMARY OF ATHLETICS IRELAND COACHING LADDER

Course	Target Group	Purpose	Prerequisites	Assessment	Time (hrs)
Assistant Coach	First-time coaches, parents and volunteers	An introduction to basic coaching concepts, where the coach can assist a level 1 or higher club coach in the delivery of a session.	None	No assessment requirements	8 hours
Athletics Leader	Leaders, parents and volunteers		None	No assessment requirements	8 hours
Level 1	Beginner coaches, teachers, parents and volunteers	How to plan, conduct and evaluate a safe, effective coaching session at the novice level, to introduce the basic skills of athletics to young athletes	None	Assessed on course on planning and delivery of short coaching session to peers.	25 hours on Course
Level 2	Coaches seeking either: more knowledge in an introductory context; or to coach at a higher level	How to plan, implement and evaluate a developmental series of coaching sessions	Level One	Workbook coach self analysis practical assessment NZQA units	24 hours workshop 30 self-directed
3	Experienced coaches working with performance athletes	The application of sports science to improve performance and examination of personal coaching approach and methods	Level Two or equivalent	Workbook on Self evaluation of coaching and planning. Individual Tutor assessments	5 weekend workshop 100 Hours self-directed learning
IAAF Academy	Experienced coaches of High performance athletes	To further enhance existing high-performance coaching skills and knowledge	Level 3 and significant coaching experience	Coaching project	5 Day residential course, followed by mentored coaching project in 1 year period

