

# 2019 Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report

APRIL 1, 2019–MARCH 31, 2020

The Independent Review Board (IRB) is an integral part of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and a cornerstone for the Association’s guidelines regarding ethics and values. The IRB’s charge is to uphold the standards of the coaching profession as stated in the ICF Code of Ethics. This report summarizes the IRB’s progress and accomplishments during fiscal year (FY) 2020 via the Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process. It includes an overview of the complaints received in FY 2020. Further, this overview includes compliance matters brought before ICF during this time frame.

## Standards and Compliance Overview

ICF invests significant resources in refining and maintaining the ECR process. It is our goal to support ICF Members in better understanding the charge of the IRB and the role of the ECR process and its value to the industry. We hope that by providing information about the number of cases that come before the IRB, including the standards that have been breached, trends we are seeing and areas in which coaches need to be particularly mindful, we will enhance awareness and promote greater ethical behavior.

This work also contributes to the IRB’s educational initiatives regarding the ICF Code of Ethics and how it can be improved to ensure coaches are held to higher standards within the industry.

Further, by sharing some statistical information regarding the number of trademark disputes managed, we can enhance ICF Members’ understanding of our efforts to ensure the sustained value of the ICF brand. Individuals who have not met and committed to the stringent ICF standards for membership and/or credentialing cannot refer to themselves as ICF Members and/or ICF Credential-holders.

ICF is committed to upholding high standards and educating our members and the public. We believe the best way to do this—and to hold ourselves accountable to making it a continuing commitment—is through transparency.

## Independent Review Board 2019

**Chair:** Sue McMahon, PCC (USA)

**Vice Chair of Development:**  
Samuel P. Magill, MCC (USA)

**Vice Chair of Operations:**  
Scott Howard, MCC (USA)\*

### Members:

Jürgen Bache (Germany)

Thomas Chen, PCC (Malaysia)

José Manuel Estrada, PCC (Argentina)

Michael Marx, Ed.D., PCC (USA)

Frances Penafort, Ph.D., MCC (Malaysia)\*

Gürkan Sarioğlu, PCC (Turkey)

Janine Schindler, MCC (USA)

Lily Seto, PCC (Canada)

Sandra Stewart, MCC (USA)

Katherine Taberner, PCC (Canada)

## Growing the IRB

In late 2019, the IRB began the process of onboarding new Board members. A record 68 applications were received. Following an interview process and final global Board approval, ten new IRB members were selected for service beginning April 1, 2020.

*\*Scott Howard and Frances Penafort resigned from the IRB on December 31, 2019 to serve on other ICF Global Boards.*

## ICF Global Staff

**Chief Operating Officer:** Todd Hamilton

**Assistant Director of Ethics, Policy and Compliance:** Kristin Kelly



2365 Harrodsburg Road, Suite A325  
Lexington, Kentucky USA 40504  
1.888.423.3131 or 1.859.219.3580  
icfheadquarters@coachfederation.org  
coachfederation.org

# 2019 Complaint Summary Fact Sheet

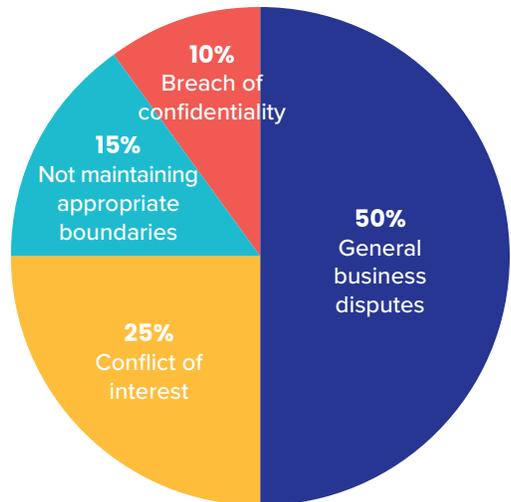
**20 Total Formal Complaints Filed**  
**9 Complaints Met Requirements for Initial Review**  
**4 Cases Administered by the IRB**

Many complaints submitted are against non-ICF-affiliated personnel or outside the purview of the ECR process.



Map represents the countries in which complaints were received.

## THEMES OF CONCERN:



## Trademark Summary

We are diligent in maintaining ICF intellectual property, including the management of trademark infringement, to ensure brand alignment and the continued value of affiliating with the ICF brand. Conveying one's affiliation with ICF appropriately is imperative for market clarity; therefore, we strictly enforce logo usage policies as outlined in our brand guidelines.

### Individual Issues: 37

#### TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

- A non-ICF Member using the ICF logo on marketing materials
- An individual ICF Member using the ICF logo on their employer's website, conveying an overarching affiliation with ICF
- An individual ICF Member using an ICF program accreditation logo to convey that they completed ICF-accredited coach-specific training

### Organizational Issues: 32

#### TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

- A non-approved ICF coaching program using an ICF program accreditation logo on marketing materials
- A coaching school with an ICF-accredited program using ICF program accreditation logo to imply that all programs offered are ICF-accredited (when they are not)
- An organization using the ICF logo on its website to convey an overarching relationship with ICF

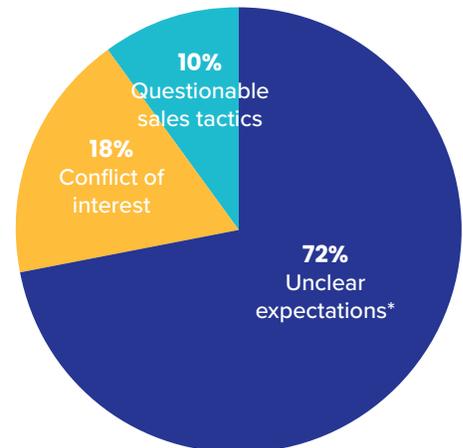
### Unauthorized Database Usage Issues: 9

#### TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

- An organization or individual purposely or inadvertently using the ICF Credentialed Coach Finder or the Member Database for outreach purposes that are not in line with the ICF Spam Policy.

## ICF-accredited Programs Complaints: 11

### THEMES OF CONCERN:



\*Service didn't meet expectation of students, students didn't meet expectation of trainers, etc.

ICF takes all complaints very seriously. In FY 20, four ICF-accredited coach training programs lost their accreditation status.

## Do you have an ethics question?

Email [ethics@coachfederation.org](mailto:ethics@coachfederation.org)  
 or call +1.859.226.4245.

## 2019 ICF IRB Complaints

The cases below are heavily redacted to ensure anonymity. As a result, nuances upon which the IRB based a final decision may not be present in the text.

### COMPLAINT 1:

**The coach in question exhibited behavior that did not honor the efforts and contributions of others.**

#### Outcome:

The IRB recommended a set of learning actions that included writing an essay that focused on best practices for giving proper source attribution and securing advance permission for the use of another's Intellectual Property.

### COMPLAINT 2:

**The coach in question failed to maintain appropriate boundaries and blurred the lines between coaching and counseling.**

#### Outcome:

The IRB recommended a set of learning actions that included the coach working with a coach supervisor or mentor coach.

### COMPLAINT 3:

**The coach in question did not accurately identify coaching qualifications/experience/training/certifications.**

#### Outcome:

The IRB determined this coach was not in breach of the ICF Code of Ethics.

### COMPLAINT 4:

**The coach in question did not have clear contracting in place and did not maintain appropriate boundaries.**

#### Outcome:

At the time of publishing, this complaint is still under review by the IRB.

Learn more about ICF's industry leadership in the areas of ethics, standards and self-regulation at [coachfederation.org/ethics](https://coachfederation.org/ethics).

## 2019 ICF Code Review

Every three years, the ICF Code of Ethics is reviewed. Throughout 2018 and 2019, the Code Review Team worked in earnest to review the Code in its entirety. Their dedication to upholding the standards of the profession resulted in the revised ICF Code of Ethics, which was formally approved by the Board in September 2019 and went into effect on January 1, 2020. A supplemental resource, the Ethical Interpretative Statements, were created by the Code Review Team around each of the 28 standards of the ICF Code of Ethics. It allows members and credential holders a greater understanding of the thought behind each standard and how the standard can show up in their lives.

## 2018–2019 Code Review Team

### Steering Committee:

Chair: Gürkan Sarioğlu, PCC (Turkey)    Scott Howard, MCC (USA)    Michael Marx, Ed.D., PCC (USA)  
Joy Harcup, PCC (United Kingdom)    Samuel P. Magill, MCC (USA)    Sue McMahon, PCC (USA)

### Members:

Jürgen Bache (Germany)    Anita Gupta, MCC (India)    Mirna Pérez, PCC (Mexico)  
Teri-E Belf, MCC (USA)    Cynthia Haro, ACC (Mexico)    Susie Sadler, PCC (Singapore)  
Monique Betty, PCC (USA)    Tatiana Krawczyńska-Zaucha, PCC  
(Poland)    Janine Schindler, MCC (USA)  
Michael Brazzel, PCC (USA)    Harriet Kretschmar, PCC (Germany)    Sandra Stewart, MCC (USA)  
Tina Elliot, PCC (USA)    Karin Meerhoff, MCC (Switzerland)    Katherine Taberner, PCC (Canada)  
José Manuel Estrada, PCC  
(Argentina)    George Nuthu, PCC (Kenya)