

# 2020 ETHICAL CONDUCT AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

*April 1, 2020–March 31, 2021*

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) 2021 via the Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process. It includes an overview of the complaints received in FY 2021. Further, this overview includes compliance matters brought before ICF Global 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, as well as 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 2020

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

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

**Vice Chair of Operations:** Katherine Taberner, PCC (Canada)

### Members:

Jürgen Bache (Germany)

Thomas Chen, PCC (Malaysia)

Jayaveni Lola Chetti, MCC  
(Hong Kong)

Carrie Doubts, PCC (USA)

Cecilia Engquist, PCC (USA)

Ed Higgins, PCC (USA)

José Manuel Estrada, PCC  
(Argentina)

Anita Gupta, MCC (India)

Michael Marx, PCC (USA)

Decimar Daisy Ogutu, ACC (Kenya)

João Luiz Pasqual, MCC (Brazil)

David Ribott, MCC (UAE)

Gürkan Sarioğlu, PCC (Turkey)

Mukesh Sharma, PCC (India)

Janine Schindler, MCC (USA)

Lily Seto, PCC (Canada)

Sandra Stewart, MCC (USA)

Svea van der Hoorn, MCC  
(South Africa)

## Growing the IRB

Three IRB members left the IRB to pursue other activities in FY2021, including Vice Chair of Development Samuel P. Magill, Lily Seto, and Ed Higgins. João Luiz Pasqual was selected to fill the vacant Vice Chair of Development seat upon Sam's departure. The IRB Leadership Team continues to develop a sustainable model for staggered succession planning and is actively making plans to bring on a new group of IRB members in 2022.

## ICF Global Staff

**Chief Operating Officer:** Todd Hamilton

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

# 2020 Complaint Summary Fact Sheet

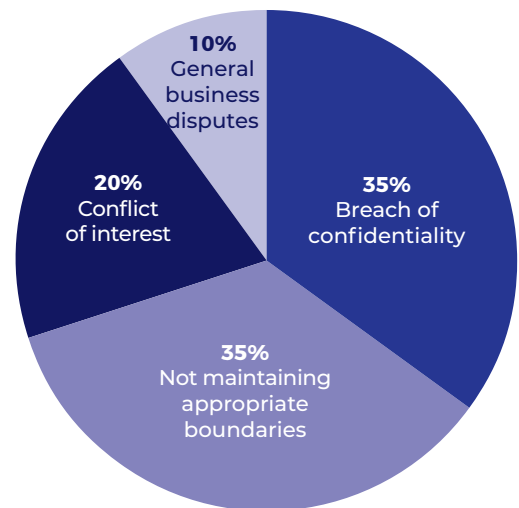
- 32 Total Formal Complaints Filed**
- 7 Complaints moved to Coach Training from the Program Review Process**
- 17 Complaints met the Requirements for Initial Review**
- 8 Cases Administered by the IRB**

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: 34

#### TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

- A non-ICF Member using the ICF logo on marketing materials (or referring to themselves as an ICF Coach)
- 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
- An individual with an expired membership or credential still referring to themselves as such

### Organizational Issues: 17

#### 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

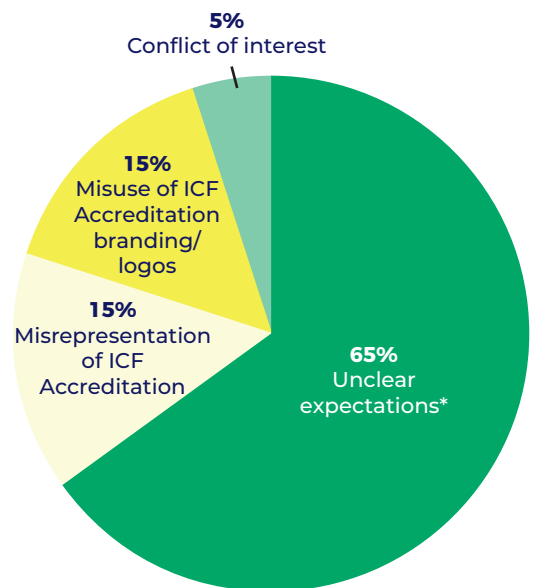
### Unauthorized Database Usage Issues: 6

#### 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.

## Do you have an ethics question?

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

## 2020 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

**Situation:** Unclear contracting, unclear expectations.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 1, 2, 8, 9, 13, 18, 20, 28

**Outcome:** While not found in breach, the IRB did provide some possible paths forward for the coach's consideration.

### \*Complaint 2

**Situation:** Unclear contracting, breach of confidentiality, false advertising of services.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 1, 2, 3, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23

**Outcome:** The coach was not found in breach of the Code.

### Complaint 3

**Situation:** Use of positional power to push an opinion.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 21 and 28

**Outcome:** The coach was not found in breach of the Code.

### Complaint 4

**Situation:** Unclear contracting, breach of confidentiality, discrimination.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 1-28

**Outcome:** After many months of investigation, the complainant ultimately withdrew the complaint.

### Complaint 5

**Situation:** Racially biased, unprofessional, and harmful behavior by the coach.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 23, 25

**Outcome:** This coach was found in breach of the Code. A stringent learning plan was co-created with the coach.

### \*Complaint 6

**Situation:** Breach of confidentiality and trust.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 14, 16, 17

**Outcome:** At the time of this printing, the complaint is still being reviewed by the IRB.

### Complaint 7

**Situation:** Intellectual property infringement, confusing and potentially misleading the public via promotional means

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 6, 10, 14, 20, 21, 26, 27

**Outcome:** While not found in breach, the IRB did provide significant learning opportunities for the coach in question around how to properly advertise their services.

### Complaint 8

**Situation:** Intellectual property infringement.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 20, 26

**Outcome:** Not found in breach. The IRB determined that the complaint was not bound by the ECR Process until proof of infringement of IP by a legal court is supplied.

*\*For those complaints where the alleged breach of the ICF Code of Ethics occurred prior to January 1, 2020, the previous version of the ICF Code of Ethics (2015) was used.*

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