

2021 ETHICAL CONDUCT AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

April 1, 2021–March 31, 2022

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) 2022 via the Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process. It includes an overview of the complaints received in FY 2022. 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 2021

Chair: Sue McMahon, PCC (USA)

Vice Chair of Development: João Luiz Pasqual, MCC (Brazil)

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

Members:

Jürgen Bache (Germany)	Anita Gupta, MCC (India)	Gürkan Sarioğlu, PCC (Turkey)
Thomas Chen, PCC (Malaysia)	Sahaila Irazabal, ACC (Venezuela)	Janine Schindler, MCC (USA)
Jayaveni Lola Chetti, MCC (Hong Kong)	Laura Licato, PCC (USA)	Mukesh Sharma, PCC (India)
Carrie Doubts, PCC (USA)	Michael Marx, PCC (USA)	Sandra Stewart, MCC (USA)
Cecilia Engquist, PCC (USA)	Decimar Daisy Ogutu, ACC (Kenya)	Svea van der Hoorn, MCC (South Africa)
José Manuel Estrada, PCC (Argentina)	David Ribott, MCC (UAE)	

Growing the IRB

Two new members were added to the IRB in FY2022: Sahaila Irazabal and Laura Licato.

ICF Global Staff

Chief Operating Officer: Todd Hamilton

Director of Ethics, Compliance and Culture: Kristin Kelly

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: 31

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.

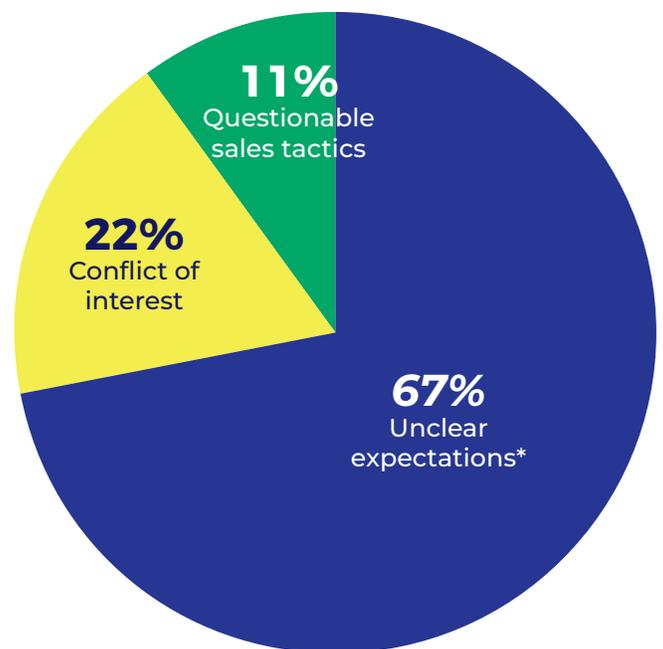
ICF-Accredited Providers (Accreditation Complaint Process)

Complaints: 9

ICF takes all complaints very seriously. In FY21, no ICF-accredited coaching education/training providers lost their accreditation status.

Learn more about ICF's industry leadership in the areas of ethics, standards, and self-regulation at coachingfederation.org/ethics.

THEMES OF CONCERN:



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

2021 Ethical Complaint Summary Fact Sheet



Map represents the countries in which complaints were received.

29 Total Formal Complaints Filed

3 complaints moved to ICF Coaching Education for the Accreditation Complaint Process

These were complaints that were more in line with our Accreditation Complaint Process, not ethical complaints against individual coaches.

1 complaint handled outside the ECR process

This complaint was able to be handled outside of the ECR process.

12 complaints deemed not eligible for Initial Review

Of these, 8 complaints were filed against non-ICF affiliated personnel and thus outside the scope of the ECR process. The other 4 complaints did not have enough evidence to show a potential breach of the ICF Code of Ethics occurred.

13 complaints met the requirements for Initial Review

These complaints were deemed complete and eligible for Initial Review. Of these, 11 complaints were ultimately accepted into the ECR process. The two complaints that did not make it past the Initial Review did not show enough evidence to point toward a potential breach of the ICF Code of Ethics.

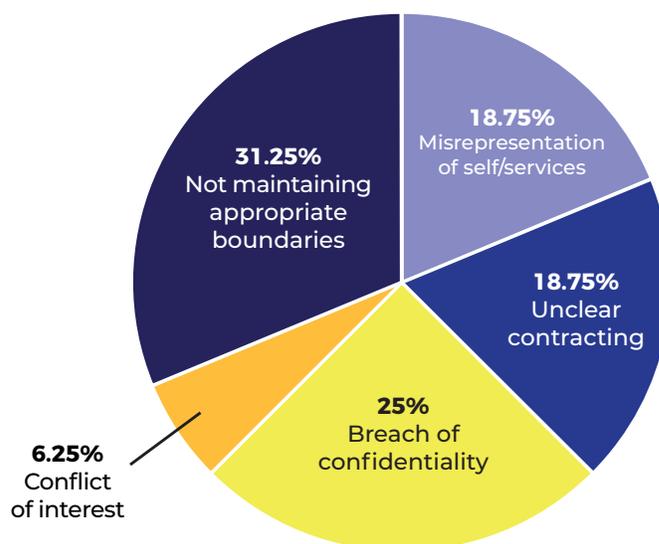
11 complaints administered by the IRB

These refer to the complaints that were accepted into the ECR process. The ECR Process includes an investigation and final review by our IRB.

2 complaints withdrawn by complainant

These complaints were accepted into the ECR process but were withdrawn at some point during the process prior to completion.

THEMES OF CONCERN:



4 complaints dismissed

These complaints were accepted into the ECR process but were ultimately dismissed prior to completion. Of these, 3 were dismissed due to legal proceedings between parties, and 1 because the coach in question was determined not to be a member nor Credential-holder at time of alleged breach.

2021 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: No agreement in place between parties; complainant expressed an unclear understanding of roles + expectations and confidentiality.

Standards allegedly in breach: 2, 5, 7

Outcome: The complainant requested to withdraw the complaint during the investigation.

Complaint 2

Situation: Unclear contracting between parties; complainant felt the ICF Professional breached confidentiality and was in conflict of interest as a result of multiple contracts with same client and/or sponsor.

Standards allegedly in breach: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 18, 20, 21, 22

Outcome: This complaint had to be closed prematurely during the investigation phase as it was determined that the ICF Professional was not a member of ICF nor an ICF Credential-holder at the time of the alleged breach, thus outside ICF jurisdiction.

Complaint 3

Situation: The complainant felt the ICF Professional breached confidentiality.

Standards allegedly in breach: 14

Outcome: This complaint was ultimately dismissed due to ongoing legal proceedings between ICF Professional and complainant. Once the legal proceedings are complete, the complainant may re-refile the complaint should they choose to do so.

Complaint 4

Situation: The complainant felt an ICF Professional in an educational setting offered feedback in harmful way.

Standards allegedly in breach: 11, 17, 23, 28

Outcome: The complainant requested to withdraw the complaint during the investigation.

Complaint 5

Situation: The complainant felt that the ICF Professional used their status as a manipulation tool and misrepresented their qualifications.

Standards allegedly in breach: 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Outcome: This complaint was ultimately dismissed due to ongoing legal proceedings between ICF Professional and complainant. Once the legal proceedings are complete, the complainant may re-refile the complaint should they choose to do so.

Complaint 6

Situation: Misrepresentation of a coach training program run by the ICF Professional.

Standards allegedly in breach: 20, 21

Outcome: This complaint was managed in two ways: the compliance matters were handled outside the ECR process by ICF Legal Counsel, and the alleged ethical breaches were reviewed through the ECR process. At the time of this printing, this complaint is still being reviewed by the IRB.

Complaint 7

Situation: Complainant felt the ICF Professional was not clear in financial aspect of contract.

Standards allegedly in breach: 3, 5, 12, 13, 17

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

Complaint 8

Situation: Complainant felt pressured to disclose personal information and ultimately breached confidentiality.

Standards allegedly in breach: 3, 8, 9, 11, 17, 21, 23

Outcome: The IRB found the ICF Professional to be in breach of standards 8, 9 and 11. The IRB is working with the ICF Professional to co-create a learning plan.

Complaint 9

Situation: Complainant felt the ICF Professional used status as a manipulation tool, as well as felt a shift in value of the coaching.

Standards allegedly in breach: 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 21, 27

Outcome: Prior to the investigation beginning, it was learned that the ICF Professional and complainant were involved in legal proceedings, so the IRB decided to dismiss the complaint. Once the legal proceedings are complete, the complainant may re-refile the complaint should they choose to do so.

Complaint 10

Situation: Unclear boundaries between ICF Professional and client.

Standards allegedly in breach: 23, 24

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

Complaint 11

Situation: Unclear boundaries between ICF Professional and minor client (and parental sponsors); complainant felt the ICF Professional blurred the lines between coaching and therapy.

Standards allegedly in breach: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 16, 27, 28

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

Learn more about ICF's industry leadership in the areas of ethics, standards, and self-regulation at coachingfederation.org/ethics.