

2024 ETHICAL CONDUCT AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

January 1, 2024-December 31, 2024

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 complaints received via the Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) and Accreditation Complaint processes. Further, this overview includes a review of trademark and compliance matters brought before ICF during this time frame.



Standards and Compliance Overview

ICF invests significant resources in refining and maintaining the complaint processes. 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 complaints that come before the ICF, 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 2024

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Sandra Stewart, MCC (USA)

Svea van der Hoorn, MCC
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Karl van Hoey, MCC (Belgium)

ICF Global Staff

Chief Operating Officer: Todd Hamilton

Director of Ethics, Compliance and Culture: Kristin Kelly

Assistant Director of Ethics and Compliance: Elissa Johns

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: 285

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.
- An individual saying that they are in the process of holding an ICF credential. Even if someone has applied for an ICF credential, they should not say they hold a credential until it has been officially approved by ICF.

Organizational Issues: 71

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.
- ICF approved organizations using the expired ACSTH or ACPT logos instead of Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 logos.

Unauthorized Database Usage Issues: 11

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.

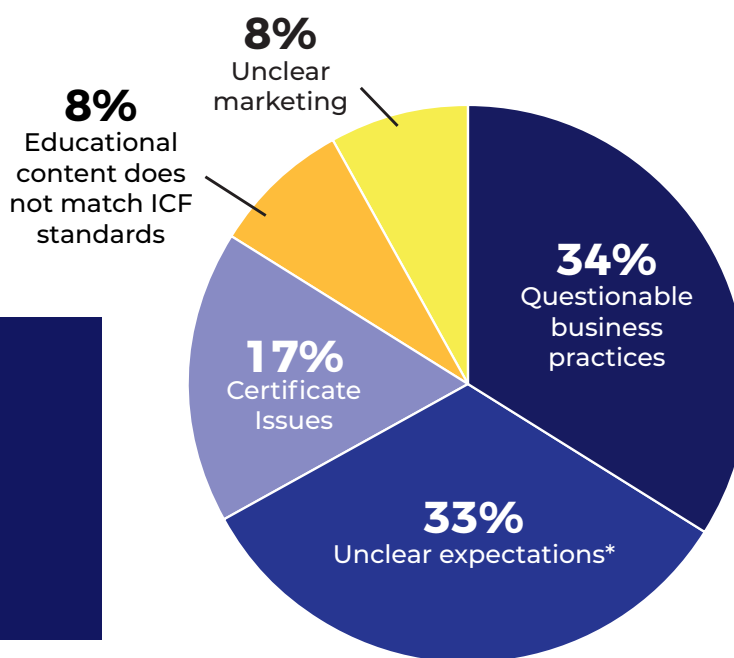
ICF-Accredited Providers (Accreditation Complaint Process)

Complaints: 21

In 2024, no ICF-accredited 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.*

2024 Ethical Complaint Summary Fact Sheet



Map represents the countries in which complaints were received.

18 Total Formal Complaints Filed

6 complaints deemed not eligible for Initial Review

Complaints were filed against non-ICF affiliated personnel and thus outside the scope of the ECR process.

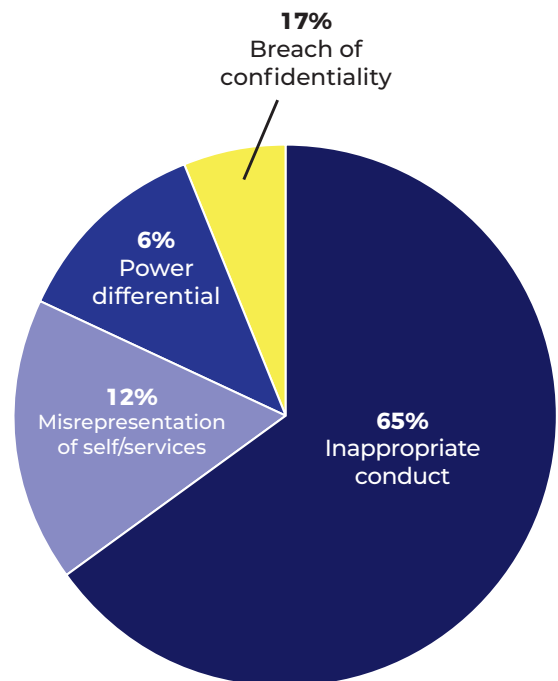
12 complaints met the requirements for Initial Review

These complaints were deemed complete and eligible for Initial Review. Of these, five complaints were ultimately accepted into the ECR process. The seven 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 or the complainant did not have a relationship with the ICF Professional.

5 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.

THEMES OF CONCERN:



2024 ICF Ethical 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: The ICF Professional allegedly addressed a colleague publicly in an unprofessional manner.

Standards allegedly in breach: 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28

Outcome: The ICF Professional was found in breach of Standard 28. They refused to accept the findings of the IRB, which ultimately led to the removal of their ICF Membership and ICF Credential.

Complaint 2

Situation: The ICF Professional was allegedly dishonest and did not follow the agreement in place.

Standards allegedly in breach: 2, 6, 28

Outcome: The IRB determined that Standards 2 and 6 were not relevant to the case, so only Standard 28 was under review. The ICF Professional was found in breach of Standard 28 and the Pledge of Ethics of the ICF Professional. They refused to accept the findings of the IRB, which ultimately led to the removal of their ICF Membership and ICF Credential.

Complaint 3

Situation: The ICF Professional was allegedly manipulative and had an unclear contract.

Standards allegedly in breach: 11, 13, 16, 21, 23

Outcome: The ICF Professional was found in breach of Standard 10 by the IRB. At the time of this writing, the ICF Professional is working on their approved Learning Plan, and it was determined by the IRB early on that Standards 13 and 16 were not relevant to the case.

Complaint 4

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly shared inappropriate and confidential information.

Standards allegedly in breach: 1

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

Complaint 5

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly did not provide an agreement and did not show up for sessions.

Standards allegedly in breach: 1, 2, 14, 17

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

2023 ICF Ethical Complaints

Follow-up on complaints that were initiated in 2023 and concluded in 2024

Below is a final reporting of those ethical complaints first noted in the 2023 Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report that were still under review when the report was being written.

Complaint 3

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly shared personal information and inaccurately marketed themselves.

Standards allegedly in breach: 3, 20

Outcome: When the 2023 Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report was written, this complaint was under Reconsideration. (The ICF Professional was originally found in breach of Standards 3 and 20. The Reconsideration examined overlooked and new evidence and ultimately determined that the ICF Professional was only in breach of Standard 20.) The ICF Professional is currently working on their approved Learning Plan.

Complaint 5

Situation: The ICF Professional was allegedly disrespectful and ignored requests from the complainant.

Standards allegedly in breach: 25

Outcome: When the 2023 Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report was written, this complaint was still under investigation. In 2024, the IRB did find the ICF Professional to be in breach of Standard 25. The ICF Professional is currently working on their approved Learning Plan.

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