

Elements of ICF's Accreditation Complaint Process

Introduction

To ensure the integrity of ICF-accredited organizations and protect consumers of coaching, ICF has an Accreditation Complaint Process. ICF-accredited coaching education organizations are obligated to operate in compliance with a stringent [Global Accreditation Code of Conduct](#). Through the Accreditation Complaint Process, ICF reviews, investigates, and responds to alleged breaches/violations of the Code of Conduct applicable to ICF-accredited providers, as well as to concerns regarding the integrity of an ICF-accredited organization.

The first step in the Accreditation Complaint process is the filing of a complaint. The Accreditation Complaint Process applies to complaints submitted to the ICF and directed at ICF-accredited organizations who, by virtue of their ICF accreditation have pledged to participate in the process. The process includes provisions for investigation of the allegations of the complaint by ICF staff, in which both the organization and person filing the complaint (complainant) may provide information and related documentation to ICF staff.

If there is a determination that a standard of the Code of Conduct has been breached, the organization will be instructed to make some changes in their processes. If warranted by the circumstances of the breach, ICF may impose sanctions that remove ICF accreditation from that organization.

The ICF Accreditation Complaint Process does not have the authority of a court of law to award money for damages or to issue an injunction against any one organization. Prior to and throughout the complaint process, the complainant and organization are encouraged to resolve their differences, work on the issues involved, learn from the situation, and come to an amicable resolution.

The ICF Accreditation Complaint Process is intended to be confidential in nature. It is the intent of the ICF that specific information about accreditation complaints filed and the parties named in the complaints are not disclosed to third parties, except to authorized ICF staff who need to access the complaint file information/documents, the named parties and witnesses identified in the complaint.

Some facts and information derived from the complaint and investigation may be disseminated and used by the ICF for educational and training purposes only. Such use will only be made where the ICF has undertaken reasonable and good faith efforts to protect the identities of the parties and to remove references that may identify or be used to identify the parties to the complaint, as well as any confidential information contained in the complaint file records.

To provide a diligent and fair review, completion times vary and could take up to four months. Every reasonable effort will be made to complete the process as promptly as possible.

If you believe you have an accreditation complaint against an ICF-accredited organization, we invite you to complete the [online complaint form](#) available at coachingfederation.org. Should you have any questions about your complaint, the complaint form, or the process, please email the ICF Ethics and Compliance department at ethics@coachingfederation.org.

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1. **Determine if you should submit a complaint or not.** Please note that ICF will not handle the following:
 - a. Workplace disputes that do not fall within the specific provisions of the Code of Conduct.
 - b. Copyright infringement or intellectual property claims.
 - c. Issues based on dissatisfaction with an ICF-accredited organization or the provider's price, fees, refunds or refund policies.
 - d. Strictly contractual or business-related disputes involving an ICF-accredited organization that do not fall within the specific provisions or intent of the Code of Conduct.
2. **Complaints against ICF-accredited providers may only be filed by ICF members, ICF credential-holders, or individuals currently or previously affiliated with the ICF-accredited organization named in the complaint.**
3. **Filing and Review of Complaint**
 - a. The complaint must be filed with ICF within one (1) year of the date of the conduct complaint. The one (1) year limitation is in place to stress the importance of timely reporting of complaints and to better ensure the likelihood of accurate recollections of fact and the preservation of relevant documentation by the parties to the complaint.
 - b. To initiate a complaint under the ICF Accreditation Complaint Process, a complainant must use the specified online [ICF Accreditation Complaint form](#). At a minimum, the complaint must be signed by the complainant; must specify by number, one or more standards of the Code of Conduct that has allegedly been violated by the organization named in the complaint; and must state the facts pertaining to the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.
 - c. When ICF staff receives the complaint, it will be verified that the organization named is currently ICF-accredited.
 - d. If the ICF staff determines that the organization named in the complaint is not currently ICF-accredited, ICF staff will notify the complainant of such and advise that ICF has no authority to act.
 - e. If it is determined that the organization named in the complaint is currently ICF-accredited and that the complaint is within ICF's jurisdiction, the ICF staff will move forward with the complaint.
 - f. ICF staff will notify the organization named in the complaint and provide the organization with a copy of the complaint and any related materials submitted by the complainant and request that the organization submits a complete written response to the complaint. This response is then shared with the complainant.

4. Investigation

- a. ICF staff will collect additional information if necessary and hold interviews with both the organization and the complainant.
- b. A factual written report of the findings will be prepared and will conclude the investigation.

5. Final Review

- a. Based on the evidence submitted by both parties, ICF staff will then determine if a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred.
- b. If it is determined that no breach has occurred, then the case is closed, and the complainant and the organization named in the complaint are so advised in writing by ICF staff.
- c. If it is determined that a breach has occurred, the organization is informed. Sanctions are determined based upon the severity of the breach; a sanction could be anything between a written warning to the stripping of their ICF accreditation. The complainant is notified in writing that a breach was found, and which standard(s) of the Code of Conduct were included.