

**2025**

Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report

January 1, 2025–
December 31, 2025

This report reviews the many functions of the ICF Ethics and Compliance Department and offers details and data around the complaints received through our Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) and Accreditation Complaint processes; a high-level review of the ICF Ethics Assist Line; and a review of brand compliance initiatives brought before ICF.

Standards and Compliance

ICF invests significant resources in refining and maintaining its complaint processes and brand compliance initiatives. These processes not only protect clients but also strengthen the coaching profession, fostering a culture of trust, accountability, and ethical excellence that drives meaningful impact and growth for everyone involved.

It is our goal to support ICF members and credential-holders in better understanding these processes as well as their value to the industry. We hope that by providing information about the complaints that come before the ICF, we will enhance awareness and promote greater ethical behavior.

This report will review the kinds of complaints received, as well as more detailed information on the specific standards of the ICF Code of Ethics named in ethical complaints, high-level details on which complaints were found in breach, trends we are seeing and areas in which coaches need to be particularly mindful.

Further, by sharing some statistical information regarding the number of trademark disputes managed, we can enhance ICF members' and ICF credential-holders' understanding of our efforts to ensure 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, credential-holders, accredited providers, 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.



Overview: ICF Ethics Assist Line

The ICF Ethics Assist Line exists for coaches to ask questions about the ICF Code of Ethics, Ethical Conduct Review process, the Accreditation Complaint process, or any ICF Ethics resource. The Ethics Assist Line is accessible via email (ethics@coachingfederation.org) and by telephone (+1.859.226.4245).

Major Themes in order of most asked:



Kinds of questions received through the ICF Ethics Assist Line:

As an internal coach, what do I do when the organization I work for wants to know what my clients have been working on?

My client is asking me to testify in court, what do I do?

Can I coach a teenager, family member, friend, etc?

Can I speak at a conference that my client is in charge of or would that be a conflict of interest?

Can my coaching notes be subpoenaed?

How do I submit a complaint about a coach?

This coach says they are ICF credentialed, can you verify?

Is it ethical for my coach to end the coaching relationship in the middle of our agreement?



Overview: Brand Compliance

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: 206

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: 62

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: 13

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.



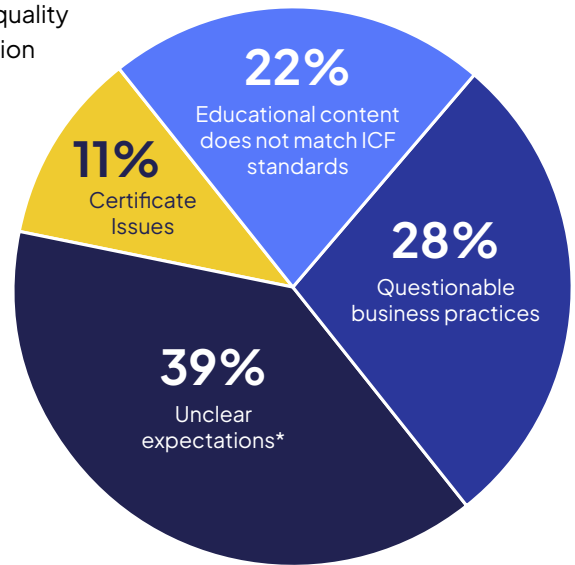
Overview: Accreditation Complaints

The ICF Accreditation Complaint Process is essential for maintaining the quality and integrity of coaching education. All ICF-accredited coaching education providers are obligated to operate in compliance with the stringent ICF Accreditation Code of Conduct. If there is a perceived violation, this confidential, structured procedure allows individuals to report concerns or complaints related to ICF-accredited coaching education providers.

Complaints: 18

In 2025, no ICF-accredited providers lost their accreditation status.

Themes of Concern:



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

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



Overview: Ethics Complaints

The Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process is a framework for a peer review whereby an individual may file a formal complaint in response to alleged unethical practice(s) by an ICF professional (ICF member and/or an ICF credential-holder).

Independent Review Board 2025

The Independent Review Board (IRB) is an integral part of the 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 is done through the Ethical Conduct Review (ECR) process.

Chair: Carrie Doubts, PCC (USA)

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

Vice Chair of Operations: Cecilia Engquist, MCC (USA)

Members:

Jürgen Bache (Germany)

Evguenia (Jenny) Barkan,
ACC (Canada)

Thomas Chen, MCC (Malaysia)

Jayaveni (Lola) Chetti, MCC (USA)

José Manuel Estrada, PCC
(Argentina)

Franda Graves, PCC (UAE)

Anita Gupta, MCC (India)

Lynn Harrison, MCC (Canada)

Sahaila (Laly) Irazabal, ACC
(Venezuela)

Laura Licato, PCC (Italy)

Decimar (Daisy) Ogutu (Kenya)

*Gürkan Sarioğlu, PCC (Turkey)

Janine Schindler, MCC (USA)

Linda Schnabel, PCC (Canada)

Mukesh Sharma, PCC (India)

Sandra Stewart, MCC (USA)

Svea van der Hoorn, MCC
(South Africa)

Karl van Hoey, ACTC, MCC
(Belgium)

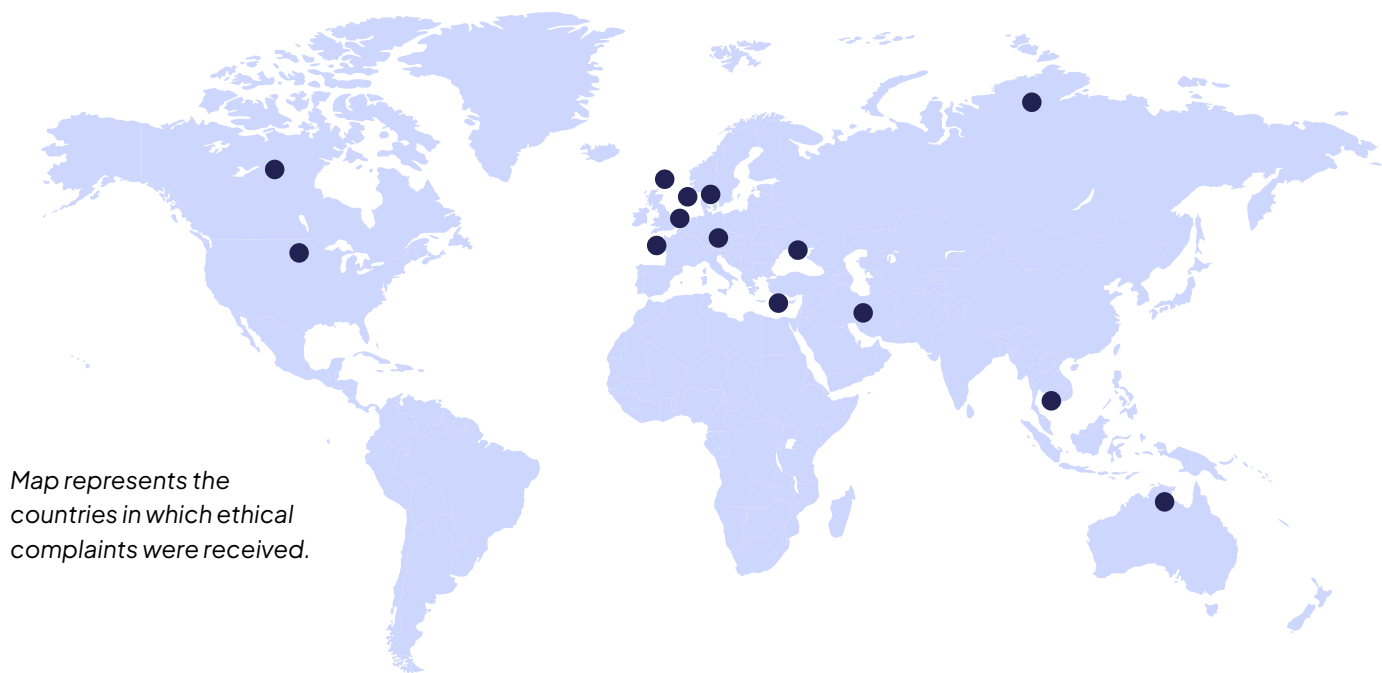
ICF Global Staff

Chief Operating Officer: Todd Hamilton

Director of Ethics, Compliance and Culture: Kristin Kelly

Assistant Director of Ethics and Compliance: Elissa Johns

*Gürkan Sarioğlu retired
from the IRB in May 2025.



39 Total ECR Complaints Filed

26 complaints deemed not eligible for Initial Review

These refer to complaints that fall outside the scope of the ECR process. Examples include: complaints filed against non-ICF affiliated personnel, business disputes, chapter issues or complaints under outside legal review.

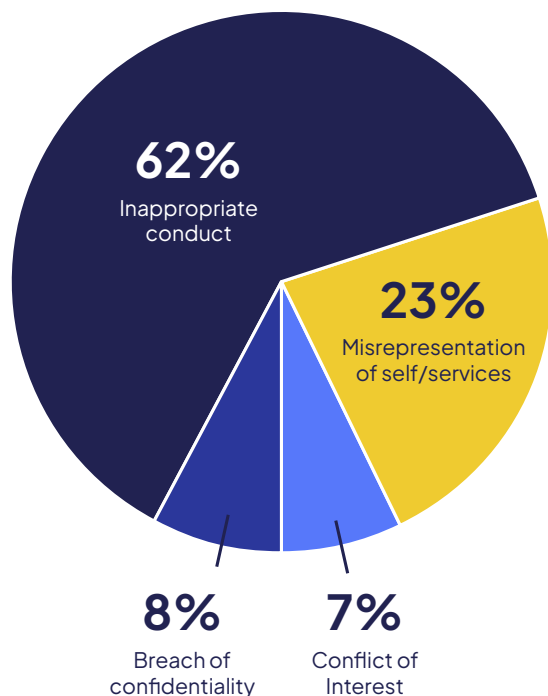
13 complaints met the requirements for Initial Review

These complaints were deemed complete and eligible for Initial Review. Of these, eight complaints were ultimately accepted into the ECR process. The five 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.

8 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:



Details of ECR Complaints Received in 2025

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 did not provide a trusting judgment-free coaching environment and was unwilling to accept an early end to the coaching relationship.

Standards named in complaint: 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 23*

Outcome: The ICF Professional was not found in breach of the 2020 ICF Code of Ethics.

Complaint 2

Situation: The ICF Professional was allegedly unclear about their role and didn't provide a clear agreement.

Standards named in complaint: 1, 2, 11*

Outcome: The ICF Professional was found in breach of standards 1 and 11 of the 2020 ICF Code of Ethics. At the time of this writing, the ICF Professional is working on their Learning Plan.

Complaint 3

Situation: The ICF Professional was allegedly offering MCC mentoring as a PCC.

Standards named in complaint: 1, 17, 21*

Outcome: While this complaint was originally accepted into the ECR process, it was placed on pause early in the investigation. The complaint was ultimately removed from the ECR complaint process because of a larger situation involving a coach education provider and was handled directly by ICF Coaching Education.

Complaint 4

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly created an unsafe environment through their behavior and language.

Standards named in complaint: 3.4, 4.2, 4.3, 5.3**

Outcome: While this complaint was originally accepted into the ECR process, it was placed on pause early in the investigation. The complaint was ultimately removed from the ECR complaint process because of a larger situation involving a coach education provider and was handled directly by ICF Coaching Education.

Complaint 5

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly was unclear about the status of the coaching relationship.

Standards named in complaint: 3.3, 3.5, 4.3, 5.2, 5.3**

Outcome: The ICF Professional was not found in breach of the 2025 ICF Code of Ethics.

Complaint 6

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly did not follow through with having a conversation about adding additional members to a group coaching session before inviting others to join.

Standards named in complaint: 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1**

Outcome: The ICF Professional was found in breach of Standards 1.1 and 4.1 of the 2025 ICF Code of Ethics by the IRB. At the time of this writing, the ICF Professional is working on their approved Learning Plan.

Complaint 7

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly did not fulfill what was promised to the client.

Standards allegedly in breach: 1, 2, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21*

Outcome: The ICF Professional was not found in breach of the 2020 ICF Code of Ethics.

Complaint 8

Situation: The ICF Professional allegedly introduced a conflict of interest in the engagement.

Standards named in complaint: 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 18, 23, 24*

Outcome: The ICF Professional was not found in breach of the 2020 ICF Code of Ethics.

**Standards of the 2020 ICF Code of Ethics.*

***Standards of the 2025 ICF Code of Ethics.*

2024 ICF Ethical Complaints

Follow-up on complaints that were initiated in 2024 and concluded in 2025.

Below is a final reporting of those ethical complaints first noted in the 2024 Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report that were still under review when the report was being written.

Complaint 1

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

Standards named in complaint: 1, 2, 3*

Outcome: When the 2024 Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report was written, this complaint was still under investigation. The IRB did ask that standards 2 and 3 be added to the complaint. In 2025, the IRB found the ICF Professional to be in breach of standards 1 and 2. The ICF Professional completed a Learning Plan and the case is now closed.

Complaint 2

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

Standards named in complaint: 1, 2, 8, 11, 14, 17, 28*

Outcome: When the 2024 Ethical Conduct and Compliance Report was written, this complaint was still under investigation. In 2025, the IRB added standards 8, 11 and 28 and did find the ICF Professional to be in breach of standards 1, 2, 8, and 11. The ICF Professional did not respond to the findings and their ICF membership expired during the process. If the former ICF Professional were to ever return to ICF, they would be required to complete an approved Learning Plan.

**Standards of the 2020 ICF Code of Ethics.*