

# 2022 ETHICAL CONDUCT AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

*January 1, 2022–December 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 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 2022

**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, MCC (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)	

*\*David Ribott stepped down from the IRB in 2022.*

## Growing the IRB

With the immense growth of the ICF Ecosystem and the complexity of complaints filed over the last few years, the IRB determined that new seats would be added to the team in early 2023.

## ICF Global Staff

**Chief Operating Officer:** Todd Hamilton

**Director of Ethics, Compliance and Culture:** Kristin Kelly

In mid-2022, the ICF Global Board approved a new position in the Ethics and Compliance department to better serve the entire organization. This new position will oversee the Accreditation Complaint Process as it moves back to the oversight of ICF Ethics from ICF Coaching Education in early 2023, as well as give the department more bandwidth for brand compliance initiatives, build new ethics resources for all stakeholders, and give space for the department to support policy and ethical matters across the system. Elissa Johns, from ICF Coaching Education, started in January 2023 as the Assistant Director of Ethics and Compliance.

# 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: 18

### 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: 4

### 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: 9

### 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.

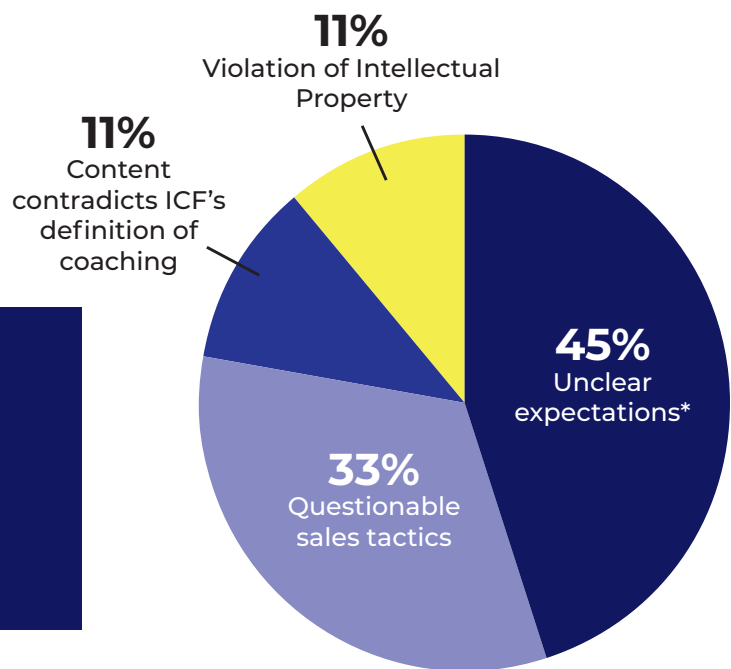
# ICF-Accredited Providers (Accreditation Complaint Process)

## Complaints: 13

ICF takes all complaints very seriously. In 2022, 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](https://www.coachingfederation.org/ethics).

### THEMES OF CONCERN:



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

# 2022 Ethical Complaint Summary Fact Sheet



Map represents the countries in which complaints were received.

## 21 Total Formal Complaints Filed

### 2 complaints handled outside the ECR process

These complaints were able to be handled outside of the ECR process.

### 4 complaints deemed not eligible for Initial Review

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

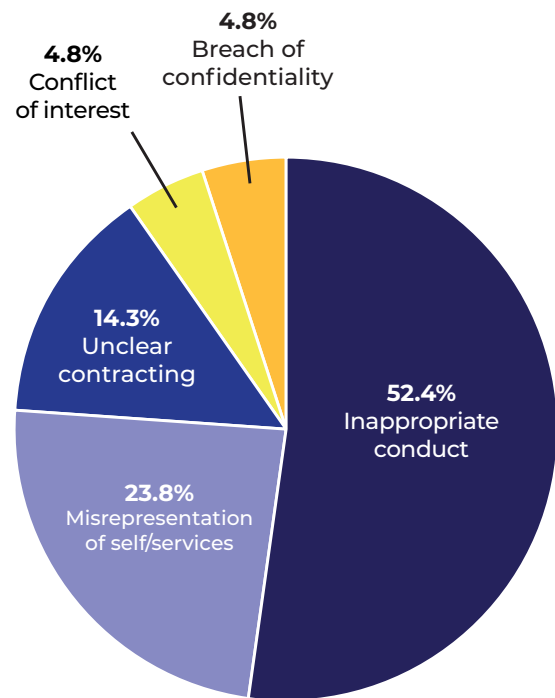
### 15 complaints met the requirements for Initial Review

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

### 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:



# 2022 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 had an intimate relationship with a supervision client.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 23, 24

**Outcome:** The ICF Professional was found in breach of standard 24 by the IRB. The ICF Professional and the Final Review Panel co-created a Learning Plan to help the ICF Professional in their learning of this breach. At the time of this writing, the ICF Professional is actively working on their Learning Plan.

## Complaint 2

**Situation:** The complainant felt there was a misleading of a minor by the ICF Professional and a conflict of interest.

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

**Outcome:** The IRB found the ICF Professional in breach of standard 10. The Final Review Panel and the ICF Professional co-created a Learning Plan to address concerns and growth areas, and at the time of this writing, the ICF Professional is actively working through their Learning Plan.

## Complaint 3

**Situation:** The complainant alleged the ICF Professional was inconsistent and discriminatory.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 3, 4, 5, 13, 16, 25, 26, 28

**Outcome:** The IRB did not find the ICF Professional to be in breach of the ICF Code of Ethics.

## Complaint 4

**Situation:** The complainant felt that the ICF Professional misrepresented their qualifications, was inconsistent and did not stick to their coaching agreement.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25

**Outcome:** The IRB found the ICF Professional to be in breach of standards 1, 10, 17, 21 and 23. The Final Review Panel and the ICF Professional will be co-creating a Learning Plan to address concerns and growth areas.

## Complaint 5

**Situation:** The complainant felt the ICF Professional breached confidentiality, lacked professionalism, and there was no partnership between the coach and client.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 3, 21, 25, 28

**Outcome:** The Investigation Team uncovered some elements of the complaint that should have been filed through the ICF Accreditation Complaint Process. As such, this complaint was handled in two ways: the complainant was told to file an ICF Accreditation Complaint around the purely accreditation matters, and the alleged ethical breaches were reviewed through the ECR process. At the time of this writing the complaint is still being reviewed.

## Complaint 6

**Situation:** The ICF Professional allegedly misrepresented themselves on their website and in person.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 1, 3, 8, 11, 20, 21, 23, 27

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

### **Complaint 7**

**Situation:** The complainant allegedly tried to terminate the coaching agreement but was charged for services not rendered.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 8, 9, 10, 11

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

### **Complaint 8**

**Situation:** The ICF Professional had an alleged intimate relationship with the complainant.

**Standards allegedly in breach:** 8, 11, 17, 23, 24

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

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