



COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK

Complaints, investigation, sanctions, appeals and procedural governance

APPROVED PROFESSIONAL STANDARD

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PART A | STATUS, PURPOSE AND INTERPRETATION

1. This Code sets out the ethical principles, professional standards, membership conditions and procedural requirements applicable to members of the International Federation of Reflexologists (IFR).
2. Compliance with this Code is a condition of membership. A member must also comply with all applicable legislation, regulatory requirements, local licensing provisions and the requirements of any other professional body to which the member belongs.
3. Where this Code imposes a higher professional standard than the minimum required by law, members are expected to comply with the higher standard so far as it is lawful and reasonable to do so.
4. For the purposes of this Code:
 - 4.1. 'client' means any person receiving, considering or enquiring about a reflexology service;
 - 4.2. 'member' means any person admitted to a current category of IFR membership;
 - 4.3. 'professional practice' includes in-person, mobile, remote administrative and promotional activity connected with the provision of reflexology; and
 - 4.4. 'informed consent' means a voluntary agreement given by a person with capacity and authority after receiving information sufficient to understand the nature, purpose, material risks, expected effects and reasonable alternatives;
 - 4.5. 'safeguarding concern' means information suggesting that a child or adult at risk is experiencing, or may be at risk of, abuse, neglect, exploitation or avoidable harm;
 - 4.6. 'fitness to practise' means the member's ability to practise safely, competently, ethically and without an unmanaged health, conduct or capability concern;
 - 4.7. 'conflict of interest' means any personal, professional, financial or other interest that could improperly influence, or reasonably be perceived to influence, professional judgement;
 - 4.8. 'working day' means a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday applicable to the IFR office handling the matter; and
 - 4.9. 'must' denotes a mandatory requirement; 'should' denotes expected good practice from which departure requires a sound and recorded professional reason.

PART B | COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A fair, accessible and proportionate route for raising and resolving concerns.

5. A complaint should be submitted to IFR in writing or in another accessible form agreed by IFR. It should ordinarily be made as soon as reasonably practicable and preferably within three months of the matter complained of. IFR may accept a later complaint where there is a good reason or a public-interest concern.



6. The complaint should include, so far as known and relevant:
 - 6.1. the complainant's name and contact details;
 - 6.2. the member's name and, where relevant, practice details;
 - 6.3. the date, location and clear description of the events;
 - 6.4. the names and contact details of any witnesses;
 - 6.5. copies of relevant documents or communications; and
 - 6.6. the outcome the complainant is seeking.
7. IFR should acknowledge receipt normally within ten working days and explain the next stage, any further information required and the anticipated timetable.
8. IFR may conduct an initial assessment to determine whether the matter falls within its remit, whether informal resolution is appropriate, whether immediate protective action should be considered, or whether the matter should proceed to formal investigation.
9. The member must be given sufficient details of the complaint to understand and answer it, subject to lawful restrictions necessary to protect a person, confidential information or the integrity of an investigation.
10. The complainant and member must each have a reasonable opportunity to provide relevant information. IFR may seek clarification, documents, witness accounts or professional advice.
11. A person involved in handling the complaint must act impartially and disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest. A conflicted person must take no part unless the conflict is immaterial and transparently managed.
12. IFR may invite the parties or witnesses to a meeting or hearing. A person attending may be accompanied by a friend, supporter or adviser, subject to reasonable procedural directions.
13. IFR will aim to provide an initial outcome within eight weeks, a hearing outcome within twelve weeks and an appeal outcome within eighteen weeks of receipt. These are targets, not guarantees; the parties must be informed of material delay and the reason for it.
14. A complaint may be dismissed where it is outside IFR's remit, manifestly unfounded, incapable of fair investigation, resolved by agreement, withdrawn without an overriding public-interest concern, or otherwise inappropriate to pursue. Reasons should be recorded.
15. Where a complaint is made by or against a member, IFR may provide procedural guidance but does not act as legal representative for either party.
16. A complainant may request a procedural review of a decision not to investigate or to discontinue a complaint where they identify a material procedural error, relevant new information that could not reasonably have been provided earlier, or a failure to apply the published criteria. A review is not a rehearing merely because the complainant disagrees with the outcome.
17. IFR may consider information received anonymously or a complaint that has been withdrawn where there is sufficiently reliable evidence and an overriding concern about safety, professional standards or public confidence.



- 18.** IFR may issue proportionate directions to manage repetitive, abusive, threatening or otherwise unreasonable communications while preserving fair access to the complaints process.
- 19.** A complaint may concern conduct occurring while a person was an IFR member even if membership later lapses or ends. IFR's power to determine the matter and impose an outcome is subject to its governing documents and applicable law.

PART C | DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Procedural fairness, public confidence and proportionate decision-making.

- 20.** The objectives of the disciplinary procedure are to protect the public, maintain professional standards, uphold confidence in IFR and deal fairly with the complainant and member.
- 21.** Disciplinary action may be considered in relation to:
- 21.1.** a breach of this Code or another applicable IFR requirement;
 - 21.2.** conduct that presents a material risk to clients or the public;
 - 21.3.** dishonest, fraudulent or materially misleading information supplied to IFR;
 - 21.4.** a relevant criminal conviction, caution, regulatory finding or professional sanction;
 - 21.5.** serious or repeated conduct likely to undermine confidence in the member's professional integrity; or
 - 21.6.** failure to cooperate with a lawful and reasonable IFR investigation or requirement.
- 22.** Where external legal, regulatory, safeguarding or criminal proceedings concern substantially the same facts, IFR may pause, continue or limit its own process after considering fairness, public protection and the risk of prejudicing those proceedings.
- 23.** A disciplinary panel must be appointed by or under the authority of IFR's governing body. It should comprise at least three persons and include an appropriately independent lay chair. Its members must collectively have the competence necessary to determine the matter fairly.
- 24.** No person may sit on a panel or determine an appeal if they have investigated the matter, have a material conflict of interest or may reasonably be perceived as biased.
- 25.** The panel may regulate its own procedure consistently with this Code, the rules of natural justice and any procedural policy adopted by IFR.
- 26.** The member must receive written notice of the allegations, the material evidence, the possible outcomes and the date by which a response is required. Normally at least twenty-one days should be allowed for a written response unless urgency or fairness requires otherwise.
- 27.** If a hearing is required, the member must receive reasonable notice of its date, format and procedure. The complainant and member may be heard together or separately where the panel considers this fair and appropriate.
- 28.** The panel may proceed in a party's absence where satisfied that reasonable notice was given and that it is fair to do so. Reasons must be recorded.



- 29.** The civil standard of proof applies: an allegation is established where the panel considers it more likely than not to be true, having regard to the seriousness and quality of the evidence.
- 30.** The panel must provide a reasoned written decision identifying the findings made, the evidence relied upon, any sanction imposed and the right and time limit for appeal.

PART D | INTERIM MEASURES AND SANCTIONS

- 31.** IFR may impose an interim restriction or suspension only where it is necessary and proportionate to protect clients, preserve the integrity of an investigation or maintain public confidence pending a final decision.
- 32.** An interim measure must be confirmed in writing, state its reasons and duration, and be reviewed at reasonable intervals. The member must have an early opportunity to make representations.
- 33.** Where an allegation is proved, the available outcomes may include:
 - 33.1.** no further action;
 - 33.2.** advice, guidance or a formal warning;
 - 33.3.** a written undertaking;
 - 33.4.** education, supervision, audit, health or practice conditions;
 - 33.5.** temporary restriction or suspension of membership;
 - 33.6.** termination or expulsion from membership; and
 - 33.7.** any other lawful and proportionate action within IFR's governing powers.
- 34.** In determining sanction, the decision-maker must consider the seriousness and duration of the conduct, actual or potential harm, insight, remediation, previous history, aggravating and mitigating factors, consistency with comparable cases and the least restrictive measure sufficient to meet the objectives of the Code.
- 35.** IFR may notify another professional, regulatory, safeguarding or law-enforcement body where disclosure is lawful, necessary and proportionate. The reasons and legal basis for disclosure must be recorded.
- 36.** IFR may publish a disciplinary finding or sanction only in accordance with a published decision-publication policy that addresses public interest, proportionality, accuracy, privacy, duration, review and removal. Publication must not exceed what is reasonably necessary to achieve the stated purpose.
- 37.** A suspended or former member seeking restoration must satisfy any applicable eligibility, remediation, competence, health, insurance and public-protection requirements. The decision must be reasoned and made by persons who can act impartially.
- 38.** Each party is responsible for their own costs unless IFR's governing documents expressly provide otherwise.



PART E | APPEALS

39. A member may appeal a disciplinary decision by giving written notice within twenty-eight days of the date on which the decision was sent, unless an extension is granted in the interests of justice.
40. An appeal must identify the decision challenged and the grounds relied upon. Grounds may include a material procedural irregularity, an error of fact or principle, new evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier, or a sanction that is plainly disproportionate.
41. An appeal panel must be independent of the original investigation and decision. It should include an appropriate balance of professional and lay members and must not include any person materially involved in the earlier proceedings.
42. The appeal panel may dismiss or allow the appeal, confirm or vary findings, substitute a proportionate sanction, or remit the matter for reconsideration by a differently constituted panel.
43. A sanction will normally be stayed pending appeal unless IFR determines that an immediate restriction remains necessary for public protection or another compelling reason. Any such determination must be reasoned and reviewed promptly.
44. The appeal decision is final within IFR's internal process and must be communicated in writing with reasons.

PART F | CONFIDENTIALITY, RECORDS AND GOVERNANCE

45. Information relating to complaints and disciplinary matters must be handled confidentially and shared only where there is a lawful and legitimate need. Confidentiality does not prevent disclosures required by law or justified by safeguarding, public-protection or procedural-fairness obligations.
46. Complaint and disciplinary records must be secured, retained and disposed of in accordance with applicable data protection law, IFR's retention policy and any legal hold or reporting obligation.
47. Members must maintain and follow a documented retention schedule that reflects the purpose of each record, applicable limitation periods, insurance requirements, the age of the client and the law of the relevant jurisdiction. No record may be retained indefinitely merely because it might later be useful.
48. An actual or suspected loss, unauthorised disclosure, alteration or destruction of personal information must be contained, assessed, documented and reported to the relevant controller, authority, insurer, client or IFR where required.
49. Official communications should be issued through an authorised IFR channel and an adequate record must be retained of material correspondence, evidence, meetings, decisions and reasons.



50. IFR's governing body is responsible for approving this Code, monitoring its operation and arranging periodic review. Material amendments should be dated, version-controlled and communicated to members before taking effect.

51. If any provision is found to be unlawful or unenforceable, it should be read down or severed to the minimum extent necessary without affecting the remaining provisions.

SCHEDULE 1 | INFORMATION TO SUPPORT A COMPLAINT

PRACTICAL CHECKLIST A complainant need not use legal language. Clear facts, dates and relevant documents are more helpful than lengthy argument.

- Your full name, preferred contact details and any accessibility requirements.
- The member's name and practice details, if known.
- A chronological account of what happened, including dates and locations.
- What you understood had been agreed and how the events differed from that understanding.
- Copies of relevant correspondence, advertisements, receipts, consent forms or records in your possession.
- Names of witnesses and a brief explanation of what they may be able to confirm.
- Any immediate safety, safeguarding or ongoing-practice concern.
- The outcome you consider fair or helpful.



International Federation of Reflexologists

Professional community since 1983

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