



Policy and Procedure

Complaints

Version: 7

Summary:	This document sets out how a complaint can be submitted and outlines the steps and timeline the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) will adhere to on receipt.	
Target Audience:	All members, staff and Council	
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1. Introduction

The Institute is committed to providing high standards of service to all individuals with whom it engages and upholding its strong reputation as a professional body. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear procedure for individuals or organisations who may wish to make a complaint about either the Institute itself or anyone associated with it. This policy is enacted under the By-Laws of the Institute.

2. Scope

This policy applies to individuals or organisations who wish to make a complaint about the Institute, or someone who is associated with it.

It covers a wide range of concerns, including but not limited to:

- Service Quality
- Member Conduct
- Miscommunication or Information Errors
- Training and Certification
- Event or CPD Sessions
- Billing and Financial
- Data Protection and Privacy Concerns
- IFSM accredited training courses

Other policies that should be read in conjunction with the policy are:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Membership Policy
- Ethics Policy
- Digital and Social Media Policy
- Council & Institute Officials Policy
- Conflicts of Interest (Training Centre) Policy
- Equal Opportunities, Fair Access & Diversity Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy

3. Complaints and Conduct Director (CCD)

The Complaints and Conduct Director (CCD) is a director-level role to which a suitable person will be appointed. The appointed individual will serve a minimum term of 12 months.

A director will also be appointed to deputise during periods of absence and to provide advice or support, including ratification when required.

The CCD will act as the primary point of liaison between Council and the Business Manager on all formal complaints received by the Institute.

The responsibilities of the CCD include:

- 3.1.** Reviewing all formal complaints received and, in consultation with the Business Manager, agreeing whether a full investigation should proceed.
- 3.2.** Monitoring trends and patterns in complaints or concerns to identify any recurring issues that may require review or wider action.
- 3.3.** Considering and taking appropriate action on concerns brought to their attention through informal or non-formal complaint channels, where such matters may indicate a potential breach of the Institute's Code of Conduct or reputational risk.
- 3.4.** Referring cases to the deputy, Council or a committee for collective discussion and agreement where the CCD is uncertain about the most appropriate course of action.

The CCD shall not personally conduct investigations. Where an investigation is deemed necessary, the CCD will nominate one or more Council members to carry out the investigation on behalf of the Institute. The CCD will then review and ratify the outcome of that investigation, or, where further clarification or consensus is required, refer the matter to the deputy, Council for full agreement or an appropriate wider body.

4. Enquiries, Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

4.1. Enquiries - Before submitting a formal complaint, the Institute encourages those who believe they have a complaint to firstly address any issues or misunderstandings through an initial informal enquiry. Often, discussing the matter informally can clarify concerns and lead to a resolution more quickly and efficiently. If the matter remains unresolved then the complainant can proceed with a formal complaint.

4.2. Feedback - In instances where no specific resolution is needed and issues are minor, leaving constructive feedback in the Institute's feedback surveys or by email to info@ifsm.org.uk may be an alternative method of communicating. All feedback is logged and reviewed by the management team to identify areas for improvement.

4.3. Appeals – If your complaint relates to a decision or outcome, you should first check whether an appeals process applies. In such cases, please refer to the relevant policy, including the Institute’s Appeals Policy where applicable.

4.4. Complaints - Relate to a specific circumstance where conduct or a level of service or product provided is considered unsatisfactory or unacceptable. A complaint should be submitted where the issues do not fall under alternative Institute policies, e.g. Appeals policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Harassment Policy

5. Formal Complaints about the Institute

Formal complaints concerning the Institute’s services or governance processes may only be submitted by current members, as these matters relate directly to membership rights and obligations. However, the Institute recognises its wider responsibility to the public and will accept formal complaints from non-members where the issue concerns a potential breach of public law or statutory duty.

Those who wish to file a complaint about the Institute should follow these steps:

5.1. Submit a Complaint: Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint should complete a complaints form providing all information requested in full. The form is available online to download or by email upon request. The completed form and accompanying evidence should be emailed to complaints@ifsm.org.uk a copy of which will be shared automatically with at least two members of the management team to guard against any potential conflicts of interest. Enquiries and follow up communication can be emailed to complaints@ifsm.org.uk, however, the formal complaint process will only start on receipt of a completed form. Alternatively, information can be posted by surface mail to The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG with full supporting evidence. Depending on the stage of the investigation evidence submitted after the initial submission may not be able to be considered.

5.2. Acknowledgement: On receipt of the submission of a formal complaint form, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within five working days.

5.3. Stage One

- **Preliminary Review:** The Business Manager and CCD may request additional information and / or evidence if required as without all relevant details it may not be possible to process a complaint.

In the first instance, the Business Manager and CCD will look into the reasons for the submission of the complaint and determine whether it can be dealt with as an enquiry where the provision of further clarification or information will resolve the issue.

It will also be considered in relation to the Appeals policy to ascertain whether the issue would be better addressed within the confines of that policy i.e., where it cannot be resolved as an enquiry but before it is considered to be a complaint.

Where it is not possible to resolve the issue under this initial process, then it should be submitted under stage two. This initial phase of the complaint procedure should be within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.

5.4. Stage two:

- **Nomination:** The Complaints and Conduct Director (CCD) will nominate one or more council members to investigate the complaint. Consideration will be made when selecting council members to ensure there will be no actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- **Full Investigation:** The nominated council member(s) will start to investigate the complaint. This will normally involve the following steps: -
 - a) Investigate the complaint within 20 working days of the request and prepare a report for the CCD including their findings, recommendations and any suggested resolutions to the complaint.
 - b) Prior to submission to CCD, the Investigating council member(s) will ask the Business Manager to notify the submitting individual of the outcome of the investigation and to provide them with the right to reply.
 - c) The Investigating council member(s) will not reconsider their recommendations in light of any further information submitted but will add this to the report so it can be considered by the CCD in their decision making.
 - d) The investigating council member(s) will present their findings to the CCD for ratification, who will examine all aspects of the report, and the information provided. If necessary, the CCD may ask for further clarification. This may take up to a further 10 working days to complete.
 - e) Where agreement cannot be reached, the CCD will refer the matter to the deputy, a wider deciding body, or, in cases of serious or high-impact concern, to full

Council for consideration. All council members must declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest prior to discussion. Any member who declares a conflict will be excluded from the decision-making process for that case. Council will then review the recommendations presented and determine the outcome by majority vote.

f) Within 5 working days of this, the investigating council member will ask the Business Manager to send a written communication by e-mail to the complainant to confirm what decisions were taken and any resolutions that have been agreed.

- **Timeline Changes:** Should any adjustments to timelines occur, the Business Manager will notify the complainant and provide reasons for the changes.
- **Recording:** The complaint will be logged in a register and supporting information kept on file for future reference. All information will be kept securely with limited access. (See section 9)

5.5. Appeal: Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome may refer to the Appeals Policy for further steps.

6. Escalation to Third Party:

If, after completing Stage Two, including any applicable appeals, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the complaint to a relevant third-party regulator, where applicable.

For complaints regarding:

FireQual Qualifications <https://www.firequal.com/qualifications>
Quality Management (ISO 9001) <https://www.british-assessment.co.uk/>

7. Complaints about Members of the Institute

The Institute is committed to maintaining high professional standards among its members, ensuring compliance with its membership rules and ethical code of conduct. Complaints must relate specifically to potential violations of the membership rules or ethical code of conduct. Only complaints supported by clear solid evidence will be considered. Hearsay, general claims, employment disputes, contract disputes or unsupported allegations cannot be accepted as the basis for a formal complaint. Valid complaints should be submitted with all available evidence including specific examples, documentation, or other solid evidence that supports the claim.

Please note that the Institute will not progress complaints that are:

- Alleging a criminal offence, this must be reported to an enforcement body
- The subject of ongoing or pending legal proceedings, or
- Currently under investigation by another statutory, regulatory, or enforcement body with greater powers of disclosure or sanction.
- Submitted by a complainant who is currently in dispute with the Institute

The potential outcome of complaints will be disciplinary only. The IFSM is not empowered to:

- Award or order compensation
- Arbitrate or mediate in disputes
- Direct or compel an IFSM member to take specific action
- Consider cases of professional negligence or associated civil claims
- Investigate matters of a statutory or criminal nature

Once such proceedings or investigations are concluded, the Institute may review whether any further internal action is appropriate under its disciplinary or governance procedures.

Where there are grounds to do so it may issue a pre investigation suspension (see section 7.4.2).

Complaints determined to be vexatious, malicious or spurious will not be further considered, and may result in disciplinary action against the complainant under the Membership Rules or Code of Ethics (if an IFSM member).

Instances where the professional competency of a member is in question will not be dealt with under the complaint procedures. In such circumstances, where there may be a cause for concern regarding their membership level or place on the Institute's National Fire Risk Assessors Register, a review will be carried out separate from the complaint procedure. Any necessary action or feedback will be provided to the member confidentially.

Those who wish to file a complaint about a member of the Institute should follow these steps:

7.1. Submit a Complaint: Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint about a member of the Institute should download a complaint form available on the website or by request. The completed form and all supporting evidence should be emailed to complaints@ifsm.org.uk. The form will be submitted to the Complaints & Conduct Director (CCD) and at least two members of the management team to guard against any potential conflicts of interest. Enquiries and follow up communication can be emailed to complaints@ifsm.org.uk. However, the formal complaint process will only start on receipt of a completed form.

There may also be instances when the Institute comes to learn through other channels (e.g. news, social media) that a member may have brought the Institute, the fire safety profession or industry into disrepute, whether through business or personal actions. These instances will be passed to the CCD and where they deem necessary, information may be investigated formally. However, it should not be assumed that tagging the Institute into posts notifies them of information formally. All information must be submitted using the online formal complaints form.

7.2. Acknowledgement: On receipt of the submission of a formal complaint form, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within 5 working days.

7.3. Stage One

- **Preliminary Review:** The Business Manager or CCD may request additional information and/or evidence if required, as without all relevant details it may not be possible to process a complaint.

In the first instance the Business Manager together with the CCD will look to understand the reasons for the submission of the complaint and check to evaluate:

- There is solid evidence to be able to support a complaint
- It relates to a potential breach directly under the rules of membership outlined in the Membership Policy, or
- It is a potential breach under the code of conduct outlined in the Institute's Ethical Policy.
- The impact the alleged breach has on public safety
- The impact the alleged breach has on the Institute's reputation

Some instances will be dealt with through normal office procedures, however if they cannot be resolved they will be forwarded on to the CCD for ratification of a disciplinary outcome. Such incidences may include but are not limited to:

- Incorrect use of the IFSM logo, where it is thought that this has been done by oversight rather than deception
- A member found to be carrying out fire risk assessments but not on a register
- Failure to maintain continued professional development (CPD)

A complaint assessed as low in impact or seriousness and does not warrant a full investigation. In such cases, the member concerned will be notified that a concern has been raised, and the information will be retained on file in case of any future or repeated breaches.

Please view appendix 4 for further details on how complaints are assessed.

Where agreement cannot be reached, the CCD will refer the matter to a wider deciding body.

This initial phase of the complaint's procedure should happen within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.

7.4. Stage Two

7.4.1. Nomination

The Complaints and Conduct Chair (CCD) will nominate either:

- One or more council members to investigate the complaint for a potential breach directly under the rules of membership.
- An Ethics Committee to jointly investigate the complaint for a potential breach in the code of conduct for members.

Consideration will be given when nominating council members to ensure there are no actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The CCD will not take part in the Investigation.

7.4.2. Pre-Investigation Suspension

If the Complaints and Conduct Director (CCD) or the nominated committee considers that a matter is of sufficient seriousness to potentially affect the governance or integrity of the Institute, or poses an immediate and significant risk to public safety, they may decide to place the member under Pre-Investigation Suspension pending the outcome of an investigation.

Grounds for suspension may include, but are not limited to, the need to protect:

- Public safety
- Council officials and staff
- Institute members
- The integrity of the Institute
- The governance of the Institute

The suspension will remain in effect until a disciplinary outcome has been determined or until the circumstances that led to the suspension have materially changed.

Suspension is a temporary measure and is not a form of punishment nor an indication of guilt.

The member will be notified in writing of the suspension and the reasons for it. During the suspension:

- The member must not use the IFSM logo or post-nominals
- Access to all IFSM services will be temporarily suspended
- The member is required to communicate solely with their designated IFSM contact and must refrain from contacting the office, other staff members, or Institute officials. The Institute's Zero Tolerance policy, available on the IFSM website, applies in all such matters.

Decision-making and ratification:

- If the recommendation to suspend originates from the CCD, it must be ratified by the deputy or nominated committee.
- If the recommendation originates from the nominated committee, it must be ratified by the CCD.
- In urgent situations, or in the absence of the CCD, the Chair of Council may make the suspension decision and will seek support from the wider Council at the earliest opportunity.

The Institute accepts no liability for any loss of employment, contracts, reputational damage, or other personal or professional consequences resulting from a Pre-Investigation Suspension. This measure is taken in accordance with the Institute's duty to protect public safety and uphold professional standards, and does not imply any finding of misconduct. Members are not entitled to compensation or reimbursement for any costs or losses incurred as a result of the suspension.

7.4.3. **Disciplinary Investigation:**

As a matter of transparency, balance and justice, the member will be informed of the receipt of the formal complaint about them, to let them know the reasons for the complaint, the name of the person or organisation making the complaint, and the evidence presented. Anonymity of the complainant may be requested but please note that anonymity may limit the ability to fully investigate the matter and could compromise the effectiveness of the process.

The member may be invited to submit a letter of defence, be interviewed by a member of the committee or in more serious cases asked to appear before the whole committee. They can be accompanied by a friend or advisor save that the advisor may not address the committee directly unless the Chair of the Committee agrees to this. At least five working days' notice will be given to the member to prepare, however with mutual agreement this may be reduced or extended as necessary.

The investigation committee will endeavour to complete this stage of the process within 20 working days however in more serious or complicated circumstances this may take longer.

If a member resigns or chooses not to renew their membership while an investigation is ongoing, the investigation will be discontinued. A record will, however, be retained noting that the member was under investigation. Should the individual wish to reapply for membership at a later date, they must make full disclosure of this matter.

7.4.4. **Timeline Changes**

Should any adjustments to timelines occur, the Business Manager or CCD will notify those involved, providing reasons for the changes.

7.4.5. **Disciplinary Outcome**

Having considered all the details and evidence of the matter, the Council member or committee will recommend, that the member should:

- a. Be struck off the Roll of Members of the Institute, and members of the Institute and others informed accordingly (see section 8)
- b. Be suspended from being a member of the Institute for such time as may be determined by the committee (not exceeding two years)
- c. Receive a reprimand, with a warning that any further breach or non-compliance may result in a more severe penalty for such period as may be determined by the committee (not exceeding two years).
- d. Be informed that there is no case to answer/no further action to be taken.

7.4.6. **Recording**

The committee will produce a report using appendix 5 as guidance. The report will be passed on to the CCD for ratification. Once an outcome decision has been reached the report will be shared with the member. The complainant will not be shown the report.

The complaint will be logged in a register and supporting information kept on file for future reference. All information will be kept securely with limited access (see section 9)

7.4.7. Appeal

Please refer to the Appeals Policy for further steps. Should the Council of the Institute consider that there are grounds for hearing an appeal the Chair of the Council, The President or one of the Vice Presidents and one other Council member shall convene to hear the appeal.

8. Information sharing following a complaint about a member.

Details of the disciplinary process and outcome will remain confidential and the complainant will only receive notification to confirm the complaint has been dealt with. However, the Institute regards the maintenance of the highest professional standards as its most important function and considers that protection of the public good to be an objective for which it shall strive.

It follows that, when a member is judged to have failed to maintain such standards, it may be in the public interest for this judgement to be promulgated widely.

The following information applies to any announcement under the disciplinary process of the Institute concerning the affairs of a member, whether the member is named in the announcement or not.

In order to comply with the rules of the Institute, any public announcement about a disciplinary process: -

- 8.4. Must be confined to the consideration of the relevant Committee of the Institute of either any matter relating to or connected with the carrying out by the Institute of functions assumed by it or of any complaint about a member or company employing a member or a company managed or directed by a member, and
- 8.5. Must relate to a matter of public concern.

What amounts to a matter of public concern is largely subjective and a matter for judgement at that time, but the following will usually be a matter of public concern: -

- 8.5.1. The collapse, with substantial loss of funds, of a listed or other public interest company or public body.
- 8.5.2. Where unlawful activity by a member, determined by a court of law, or which has come to public notice following judicial process, whether in the United Kingdom or overseas.

- 8.5.3. Any other matter in which the conduct of a member is the subject of criticism from an official body or gives rise to widespread critical comment.
 - 8.5.4. Except where it is insubstantial, unsupported by evidence or manifestly unsound, any complaint in which a member of the Council of the Institute or any of its committees is personally concerned, or any complaint that the Institute or any of its officers, committees or officials has acted corruptly, improperly or negligently.
 - 8.5.5. The failure by a member or company owned or operated by a member to exercise due diligence and proper professional standards which results in material risk of loss of life or major damage following a fire.
- 8.6. No announcement will name or otherwise identify a member unless this is necessary or desirable in order to maintain public confidence in the Institute, its members or the fire safety discipline. It may be necessary or desirable to name a member or the name of a member's company or employer: -
- 8.6.1. Where failure to do so would defeat the purpose of the announcement (for example, because it would not be possible to relate the announcement to the subject of the public concern); or
 - 8.6.2. Where the name is already a matter of public knowledge.
 - 8.6.3. Save where urgent action is desirable to maintain confidence in the profession or the Institute or its members, any member to be named in an announcement will be given, not less than 48 hours before the promulgation of the announcement, a copy of the proposed announcement.
- 8.7. Any announcement or other statement promulgated by the Institute will be accompanied by and include a section briefly describing the membership rules or code of ethics and / or the disciplinary arrangements of the Institute.
- 8.8. Once an announcement has been made, no further statement will be made prior to the conclusion of any investigation, save: -
- 8.8.1. In explanation of the procedures of the Institute following a finding of not proved; or
 - 8.8.2. When an appeal against a finding is upheld; or
 - 8.8.3. Circumstances change in such a way as to make the original announcement incorrect or misleading.

9. Information Retention

When complaints or concerns are received, the IFSM records and retains relevant information to help identify any recurring themes, behaviours, or risks that could indicate broader or ongoing issues. This enables the Institute to take proportionate and informed action should similar matters arise over time.

The processing and retention of such information are carried out under the Institute's legitimate interests, as defined in Article 6(1)(f) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). These interests include maintaining high professional standards, protecting the reputation and integrity of the Institute, and ensuring the safety and confidence of members and the wider public.

Records relating to complaints and concerns are generally retained for the duration of an individual's membership and for up to 25 years following its cessation. Longer retention periods may apply where there remains an identified risk to public safety, professional standards, or the Institute's reputation.

Access to complaint-related information is strictly controlled, and it is used only when necessary to support transparent, fair, and proportionate decision-making.

Appendix 1 – Glossary

Appeals Policy – A policy outlining the process for requesting a review of a decision made by the Institute, including those related to complaints and disciplinary actions.

Business Manager – The individual responsible for overseeing administrative processes within the Institute, including complaint handling and disciplinary procedures.

By-Laws – The governing rules that outline the structure, roles, and responsibilities of the Institute.

Code of Conduct – A set of ethical and professional standards that members of the Institute are expected to follow.

Complainant – The individual or organisation submitting a complaint to the Institute.

Complaints and Conduct Director (CCD) – The director appointed to oversee and manage complaints and conduct-related matters in accordance with its policies and procedures.

Conflicts of Interest – Situations where a person’s professional or personal interests may compromise their impartiality in handling a complaint or making a decision.

Council – The governing body of the Institute responsible for decision-making on complaints, appeals, and disciplinary actions.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development) – Training and learning activities that professionals undertake to maintain and enhance their skills and knowledge.

Data Protection – The legal and regulatory measures in place to protect individuals' personal and sensitive information.

Disciplinary Investigation – The process of examining a complaint about a member to determine whether there has been a breach of the Institute’s rules or ethical standards.

Ethics Committee – A committee formed to review and investigate complaints related to breaches of the Institute’s ethical code of conduct.

FireQual – An organisation responsible for accrediting fire-related qualifications.

IFSM (Institute of Fire Safety Managers) – The professional body whose policies set standards for fire safety management, and which provides training, accreditation, and professional development for its members.

Logo Misuse – The improper use of the Institute’s logo by a member, which may lead to disciplinary action if done deceptively.

Membership Policy – A policy outlining the requirements, obligations, and expectations for Institute members.

Preliminary Review – An initial assessment of a complaint to determine its validity and whether it should proceed to full investigation.

Solid Evidence – Clear, credible, and verifiable information that supports a complaint or allegation. It must be factual, objective, and substantiated, rather than based on assumptions, opinions, or hearsay.

IFSM’s National Fire Assessors Register – A structured system used by the Institute to classify members based on their fire assessment qualifications and experience.

Vexatious Complaint – A complaint that is made maliciously, without sufficient evidence, or intended to cause disruption rather than raise a legitimate concern.

Whistleblowing Policy – A policy that allows individuals to report unethical or unlawful conduct within the Institute or its members, ensuring protection for whistleblowers.

Appendix 2: Compliant form about the Institute

Institute of Fire Safety Managers

Formal Complaint Submission Form

Please complete this form if you wish to make a formal complaint about the Institute, its Council Officials, employees or its products and services.

Formal complaints concerning the Institute's products, services, or governance processes may only be submitted by **current members**, as these matters relate directly to membership rights and obligations.

The Institute will accept formal complaints from **non-members** where the issue concerns a potential breach of public law or statutory duty.

Section 1: Complainant Details

Name: _____

Organisation (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

I am a current IFSM member

I am not a member

Section 2: Nature of the Complaint

Please indicate the main area(s) your complaint relates to (tick all that apply):

- Service Quality
- Miscommunication or Information Errors
- Training and Certification
- Event or CPD Sessions
- Billing and Financial

- Data Protection and Privacy Concerns
 - IFSM Accredited Training Courses
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

Section 3: Details of the Complaint

Please provide full details of your complaint, including key dates, individuals or departments involved, and any supporting facts or evidence.

(Attach additional pages or documents if necessary.)

Have you already discussed or attempted to resolve this issue informally?

- Yes No

If yes, please provide details of who you spoke with and the outcome:

Section 4: Evidence

Please list or attach any supporting documents, correspondence, or other evidence relevant to your complaint:

Section 5: Desired Outcome

Please outline what resolution or outcome you are seeking:

Section 6: Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this complaint is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I understand this form will be reviewed in accordance with the Institute's Complaints Procedure. I understand that in the interest of fairness and transparency, the subject of my complaint may be informed of the details and evidence provided.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 – Complaint form about the Member

Raise a complaint about an IFSM Member

Before You Start

Please familiarise yourself with the IFSM Complaint Policy, Membership Policy and Code of Ethics

IFSM can only accept complaints about IFSM members.

Your details		
Surname		
First name(s)		
Position		
Title <i>Mr/Miss/Mrs/Dr etc.</i>		
Home address		
Town / city		
Postcode	Country	
E-mail		

Concern raised about (IFSM member details)	
Name	
Membership Number if known	
Company name	
Address	
Relationship to complainant e.g. Client/contractor/other	
E-mail	
Telephone	

Have you raised the concern directly with the IFSM member?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, what was the IFSM member's response?	

Have you approached anyone else about your concerns: e.g. the FRS, a solicitor, the courts?		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Move on to next section
If yes, who have you approached?		
If yes has this concluded?		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	what was the result?	
No <input type="checkbox"/>	Please note: Should legal proceedings or proceedings with an enhanced authority to IFSM be initiated, the Institute would only take action once those proceedings have concluded as it would not be appropriate for the Institute to intervene or duplicate that process.	

COMPLAINT DETAILS	
Alleged IFSM Code of Conduct Breach(es) *please tick all that apply and detail evidence supplied explaining how it supports your concern. Please note: We are unable to investigate complaints where there is no clear evidence of a breach.	
Uphold the good name and standing of the Institute and the fire safety profession.	<input type="checkbox"/>
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Observe the Institute's governing documents and supporting rules and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Uphold integrity, honesty, fairness, truthfulness, impartiality and objectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Ensure all actions are lawful, in the public interest, and avoid any potential risk to public or personal safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Ensure clarity, transparency and understanding. Avoiding jargon that may confuse or allow misinterpretation of advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Carry out professional duties with skill, care, diligence and expedition, always upholding technical and professional standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Show courtesy and consideration towards all with whom they come into contact during the course of performing their work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Ensure level of competence to perform services with reasonable care and diligence.	<input type="checkbox"/>

How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Declare all real or perceived conflicts of interest, avoiding them if they cannot be properly managed. <input type="checkbox"/>	
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Reframe from derogatory remarks or unfavourable comparisons with other Institute members or their employers. <input type="checkbox"/>	
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Maintain confidentiality in accordance with the client's given consents and in adherence with any legal controls and constraints. <input type="checkbox"/>	
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Hold suitable professional indemnity insurance or an alternative composite protection insurance, where required <input type="checkbox"/>	
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	
Other (please state): <input type="checkbox"/>	
How was this breached?	
How is this evidenced?	

Statement (250-500 WORDS):	
What happened? (Brief, clear description of the event)	
When and where did it happen?	e.g. If your concern refers to a specific building, please include the full address. If your concern relates to a specific incident, please provide the date and time of the incident.
Who was involved?	
What was the result or impact?	

Notes on submitting evidence to the IFSM:

- Please ensure that you submit all relevant evidence alongside this form.
- Please ensure that redactions are made where unnecessary personal information does not need to be included.
- It is often more effective and compliant to share a ‘screen snip’ of an email with non-relevant data redacted. See below example; necessary data remains.
- It is the person raising the concern’s responsibility to ensure that they have the legal right to share information with us. This may be under legitimate interest.
- In the interests of GDPR: Please do not share unnecessary data and/or documents with us.

EVIDENCE			
Please include a chronological timeline of events in relation to your concern. You might find it helpful to precede any document names with a letter, i.e. a. Evidence of breach, b. Evidence of breach etc.	Date	Event	Evidence Document Title

Please note:

The potential outcome of complaints will be disciplinary only. The IFSM is not empowered to:

- Award or order compensation
- Arbitrate or mediate in disputes
- Direct or compel an IFSM member to take specific action
- Consider cases of professional negligence or associated civil claims
- Investigate matters of a statutory or criminal nature

What Happens Next?

Once we have completed the preliminary review, we will contact you to advise whether it will move to stage two of the process. Where ever possible the Institute will work within the recommended time line, if this is not possible you will be notified.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)			
The Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) takes your privacy seriously and treats all personal information in accordance with EU/UK data protection legislation. When completing this form, the IFSM requests the minimum information necessary to process your complaint. The information you provide in this form will be used by the IFSM and its representatives for administrative purposes or as required by law. Please view our Privacy Policy for more information.			
Legitimate Interests (Article 6(1)(f)): where data processing is necessary (evidence, complaint form) for IFSM’s legitimate interests in maintaining ethical standards and the integrity of the profession, the legitimate interest must be balanced against the rights and freedoms of the individuals whose data we are processing.			
In this case, the legitimate interest of ensuring fair progression of complaints outweighs the need for redaction of the person who raised the complaint’s and member’s details that the complaint is made against.			
The IFSM will minimise privacy risks by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring that the data is only accessible to those involved in the investigation.• Implementing security measures to protect sensitive information.• Considering anonymisation or pseudonymisation if full identification is not essential for the investigation.			
SIGNATURE		DATE	

Please return the completed form (by email) along with all supporting documents to: complaints@ifsm.org.uk

Appendix 4 – Assessing the Nature and Seriousness of Complaints

It is recognised that it can be difficult to define precisely what constitutes a low or high-impact complaint, as perceptions of seriousness can be subjective and may vary from person to person. To ensure consistency and fairness, the Institute applies internally agreed guidelines to assess and score the nature and impact of each complaint. These guidelines are reviewed periodically in line with the Institute's internal procedures.

While the guidelines provide a structured approach, a degree of interpretation will always be required, as each case is unique and must be considered on its individual merits. The detailed scoring criteria are not publicly available, to prevent complainants from tailoring submissions in a way that might influence or manipulate the assessment process.

The following examples and factors are provided to assist in understanding what may constitute a complaint and how the Institute determines whether a matter will be investigated.

Examples of complaints

- Breach of confidentiality
- Misuse of social media (see IFSM Social Media Guidance)
- Unprofessional or inappropriate behaviour
- Criminal conviction or found liable in a civil case
- Bringing the Institute or the fire safety profession into disrepute
- Failure to uphold the principles of the IFSM Code of Ethics, including integrity, honesty, accountability, and respect for others

Indicators of complaints likely to not be investigated

- Insufficient evidence or lack of verifiable information
- The matter appears to be a one-off, minor incident with no ongoing concern
- The issue poses no risk of harm to the public (physical, financial, emotional, or reputational)
- The issue poses no risk of reputational damage to the Institute or the wider profession
- The complaint relates to an individual who is not an IFSM member or registrant
- The matter falls outside the scope of the IFSM Membership Rules, Code of Ethics or Disciplinary Procedures
- Vexatious or Malicious Complaints

Indicators of complaints likely to be investigated

- Evidence suggests a clear breach of the IFSM Membership Rules or Code of Ethics
- Persistent failure to meet the standards of professionalism or conduct expected of IFSM members

- An issue presents a potential or actual risk of harm to members of the public (physical, financial, emotional, or reputational)
- There is potential for reputational damage to the Institute or the wider fire safety profession
- The member has acted dishonestly or without integrity
- The matter raises questions about a member's fitness to hold membership

Appendix 5 – Disciplinary Investigation Report Template

Disciplinary Report to Include

Header Information

- Name of the member or company
- Membership number and grade
- Date of report and reference number
- Names of investigator(s) and/or committee panel members

Background and Context

- Summary of how the complaint arose (e.g., formal complaint, referral, concern raised)
- Dates of key events leading up to the investigation
- Any previous related complaints or concerns (if relevant)

Allegations

- Clear statement of each allegation or breach
- Relevant clauses or standards referenced

Investigation Process

- Description of how the investigation was conducted (e.g., interviews, evidence reviewed)
- Timeline of investigative steps taken
- Confirmation that due process and fairness were followed

Evidence Summary

- Outline of the evidence gathered (documents, witness statements, correspondence, etc.)
- Summary of evidence supporting and refuting each allegation
- Assessment of reliability and relevance of evidence

Findings

- Objective findings of fact for each allegation
- Explanation of how findings were reached based on the evidence
- Any mitigating or aggravating factors considered

Conclusions

- Determination as to whether each allegation is: Upheld, Partially Upheld, or Not Upheld
- Rationale for each conclusion

Recommendations

- Proposed sanction (as per section 7.4.5) including time periods where applicable.

Decision and Outcome (to be completed by CCD)

The recommendations given above are ratified by (name) on (date).

The recommendations above are NOT ratified and will be passed on to _____ for further consideration.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
09/03/22	H Hilton	5	ALL	Updated to house style, BSM changed to BM, updated address
04/11/2025	H Hilton	6	ALL	More detail added explaining Enquiries, Feedback, Appeals and Complaints. More detail regarding Preliminary Review. Also includes complaints about individuals. Conflicts considered. Information sharing and outcomes transferred from Ethical Policy. Role of CCD and appendices added. Doc number changed from PF005.
26/05/26	H Hilton	7	6, 7 & 12	Timeline extended from 10 to 20 days for investigation phase, from 2 to 5 days for written confirmation. Complaints@ email sent to at least two members of management team rather than all.

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date
H Hilton	Business Manager	V5 – 09/03/22
HH, RK, DW, MS, RD	Executive Management Team	V6 – 30/10/2025