



SCHEDULE E

# ISCO Disputes Resolution Protocol

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## Table of Contents

E.1.0 ISCO Commitment.....	2
E.2.0 Purpose of this Schedule.....	2
E.3.0 Responsibilities of Complainants.....	2
E.4.0 Confidentiality.....	3
E.5.0 General Complaints.....	3
E.6.0 ISCO Professional Membership Third Party Complaints Procedure.....	4
E.7.0 Complaints or Appeals Relating to Assessments for Professional Membership.....	5

### E.1.0 ISCO Commitment

- 1.1. ISCO is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect amongst Members.
- 1.2. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve ISCO is by listening and responding to the views of our Members and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by rectifying mistakes and shortcomings.
- 1.3. ISCO aims to ensure that:
  - Making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible. All complaints are treated as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
  - Complaints are dealt with promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
  - Responses are appropriate.
  - The ISCO management team and all Members learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

### E.2.0 Purpose of this Schedule

- 2.1. This Schedule sets out the steps that ISCO Members should follow in order to lodge complaints or to have disputes resolved.
- 2.2. Any Member is unhappy with any ISCO practice, decision of an ISCO officer or Sub-committee, or behaviour of another ISCO Member they can make a complaint under this Protocol and can seek redress.
- 2.3. ISCO recognises that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:
  - Resolve informal concerns quickly.
  - Enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.
  - Reach a satisfactory resolution.

### E.3.0 Responsibilities of Complainants

- 3.1. A complainant's responsibility is to:
  - Bring their complaint, in writing, to the attention of ISCOs officers This should be done within 30 days of the issue arising;
  - Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.

- Allow ISCO a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond ISCO's control.

### E.4.0 Confidentiality

- 4.1. Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and ISCO maintain confidentiality.
- 4.2. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

### E.5.0 General Complaints

- 5.1. If you are unhappy with the behaviour another ISCO Member it is best to tell them directly.
- 5.2. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then the matter can be reported to your ISCO Council Representative who will take the matter up on your behalf.
- 5.3. If you determine that the matter is too serious for local resolution, or feel uncomfortable referring the matter to your ISCO Council Representative you can make complaint to the relevant member of the Secretariat (see below).
- 5.4. Initial complaints can be verbal or in writing (e-mail). Subsequent details should be provided in writing (see Attachment E.1)
- 5.5. For complaints pertaining to the behaviour of an ISCO Member this should be sent to the VP Membership.
- 5.6. Complaints relating to the contents of the Newsletter or online content should be sent to the VP Newsletter.
- 5.7. All other complaints should be sent to the ISCO Secretary General who may refer the matter to the appropriate ISCO officer.
- 5.8. All complaints will be logged and complainants will receive a written acknowledgement within five working days.
- 5.9. The responsible ISCO officer will investigate your complaint and give you a reply within fourteen working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.
- 5.10. Major complaints will be referred to a Complaints Resolution Sub-committee who will fully investigate the matter and take appropriate action.
- 5.11. All complaints are treated in confidence and only those involved as parties to the complaint, or as parties to arbitration and resolution, will have access to the names or complainant or respondent.

### E.6.0 ISCO Professional Membership Third Party Complaints Procedure

- 6.1. The procedures in this Section of the Schedule are applicable in situations where a member of the public, a client or customer submits a complaint to ISCO in regard to the behaviour or any act or omission made by a Professional Member of ISCO.
- 6.2. It should be noted that Professional Members have agreed to comply with ISCO's Code of Professional Conduct (Section 3 of Schedule C).
- 6.3. If a third party believes an ISCO Member has breached one or more of the provisions of the or ISCO Bye-laws (Schedule A), Code of Conduct (Schedule C) or Inclusiveness and Equal Opportunity Policy (Schedule D), they can complain to the ISCO Secretary-General (or other member of the Secretariat) who will investigate the potential breaches of rules or standards.
- 6.4. ISCO can only investigate and act upon complaints relating to matters covered in its Bye-laws (Schedule A), Code of Conduct (Schedule C) or Inclusiveness and Equal Opportunity Policy (Schedule D) and associated Code of Professional Conduct. ISCO cannot address complaints of a commercial nature or illegal activities.
- 6.5. Under no circumstances can ISCO become involved in any legal proceedings or disputes relating to complaints received.
- 6.6. In order to deal with complaints, the ISCO Executive Committee shall convene a Disputes Resolution Sub-committee to review and decide the outcome of complaints. For disputes involving breaches of Professional Standards a Professional Standards Sub-committee will be convened.
- 6.7. Complaints will be dealt with in confidence, with information about each case being revealed only to parties that are directly involved (members of the Professional Standards Sub-committee, ISCO staff and the individual who is the subject of the complaint).
- 6.8. In order for it to be considered any complaint must be received in writing in the form of a letter or email communication.
- 6.9. Persons making a complaint should include their contact details, details of their relationship/dealings with the Member, whether they have complained directly to the Member, details of any fees paid to the Member, and other information that will be necessary for the proper investigation of the complaint.
- 6.10. ISCO will normally acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 5 working days and under most circumstances ISCO will expect to be able to inform the complainant and the Member of a final decision within 4 weeks. Information provided will include details of actions being taken and a report giving reasons for decisions taken.
- 6.11. During the period of investigations the Professional Standards Sub-committee shall have discretion to suspend the Professional Membership status of the Member. Other options may include dismissing the complaint, placing the complaint on hold pending any criminal or civil proceedings if appropriate (and reconsidering it once a court decision has been made), withdrawing the membership of the Member with immediate effect, or downgrading the Member's grade of membership.

- 6.12. In all such cases the Member will be contacted for further information, will be informed of the complaint and any decisions taken or pending, and will be entitled to submit evidence in defence, and may appeal any decisions in accordance with ISCO's Appeal Procedures.
- 6.13. The Professional Standards Sub-committee also has discretion to give the Member an opportunity to rectify its compliance with ISCO Bye-laws, and Code of Conduct and to take remedial action to prevent their membership being revoked, suspended or downgraded. If this discretion is exercised the Professional Standards Sub-committee will determine and advise a time frame for completion of remedial action.
- 6.14. In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint made or the way in which the complaints process was handled, the complainant may raise the matter by writing to the President of ISCO as Chairman of the Executive Committee.
- 6.15. The Executive Committee will decide on what, if any, further action should be taken and advise the complainant accordingly. Further re-consideration of the complaint may be instructed by the Executive Committee particularly if significant additional evidence can be provided in support of the complaint.

### **E.7.0 Complaints or Appeals Relating to Assessments for Professional Membership**

- 7.1. In the event that an applicant for Professional Membership is not satisfied with the assessment by the Professional Standards Sub-committee they can lodge an appeal with ISCO Secretary-General.
- 7.2. The Appellant should lodge this in writing setting out the grounds for the appeal and including supporting evidence.
- 7.3. The Secretary-General will decide on what, if any, further action should be taken and advise the Appellant accordingly.
- 7.4. If still not satisfied the Appellant can appeal to the ISCO President.
- 7.5. The Secretary-General, or ISCO President may convene another Professional Standards Sub-committee to reassess the application.