

Complaints Regulation

1. Definitions

Complaint

Any statement, communicated orally or in writing, which can be reasonably regarded as expressing dissatisfaction with the services provided by the lawyer, expressed by or on behalf of the client.

Complainant

The client or his representative who expresses a complaint.

Complaints Procedure

The Partnership's procedure for handling complaints.

Complaints Regulation

This document contains the written description of the Partnership's complaints procedure.

Complaints Officer

The person, not being the lawyer against whom the complaint has been lodged, to who is assigned the handling of the complaint.

Complaints Registration Form

A form to be used internally for the implementation of the Complaints Procedure as laid down in the Complaints Regulation

2. Aims

The Complaints Procedure has the following aims:

1. to establish a procedure that will deal with client complaints in a constructive manner and within a reasonable time;
2. to establish a procedure that will determine the causes of the complaints from clients;
3. to preserve and improve existing relationships by means of an effective complaint handling mechanism;
4. to train staff in responding to complaints in a client-oriented manner;
5. to improve the quality of service through the proper handling of complaints and through complaints analysis.

3. Informing the client

The lawyer will inform the client that the Partnership has a Complaints Regulation.

4. The internal complaints procedure

1. When a client has contacted the Partnership in any way with a complaint, this will be brought to the attention of the lawyer in question.
2. The lawyer in question will work with the client in an attempt to find a satisfactory solution, if necessary after consultation with the Complaints Officer.
3. The lawyer or the Complaints Officer shall ensure the proper handling of the complaint as set out in the Complaints Regulation.
4. Confidentiality must be guaranteed in all circumstances.
5. The decision on the complaint will be communicated to the client.
6. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the client, the client may refer the matter to the Dean of the *Haagse Orde van Advocaten* (The Hague Bar Association) or the authorised judge.

5. Registration and classification of the complaint

1. All complaints will be recorded in accordance with the Complaints Registration Form.
2. The Complaints Officer will register and classify the complaint.

3. The complaint will be classified
 - by way of initial communication
 - a. oral
 - b. written
 - and by the nature of the complaint according to the following categories
 - I. complaints on the method of working of /treatment by the lawyer
 - II. complaints concerning the legal content of the service
 - III complaints about the financial aspects of the service
 - IV. complaints about business conduct in general
4. A complaint can be classified in more than one category
5. When the complaint has been dealt with in a satisfactory manner, the lawyer in question and the Complaints Officer sign the Complaints Registration Form.

6. Responsibilities

1. The lawyer in question, and thereafter the Complaints Officer, are responsible for the handling and settling of the complaints.
2. The Complaint Officer is responsible for the completion of the Complaints Registration Form.
3. The lawyer in question will keep the Complaints Officer informed about the further handling of the complaint.
4. The Partnership is required to deal with a given complaint in writing within four weeks of receipt.
5. The Complaints Officer is responsible for responding to the Complainant.
6. The Complaints Officer will maintain a complaints file.

7. Complaints analysis

1. The Complaints Officer will collect the Complaints Registration Forms after a complaint has been dealt with.
2. The Complaints Officer will periodically report on complaints dealt with.
3. The Complaints Officer will process the information and will communicate his findings in a report on an annual basis.
4. The Complaints Officer will also provide recommendations so as to improve procedures and avoid future complaints..

8. Internal discussion

1. Once a year the complaints data will be discussed internally, based on a report.
2. Improvement measures will be prepared and planned.
3. The Complaints Officer is responsible for preparing this meeting and for preparing an associated report.

For the convenience of foreign clients this Complaints Regulation has been translated from Dutch to English. The Dutch text will be binding in case of difference of opinion about the content and/or purport of this Complaints Regulation.