

Complaints Procedure HDK Advocaten

Article 1 Definitions

The terms used in this Complaints Procedure are defined as set out below:

- *Complaint*: any written expression of dissatisfaction by or on behalf of the client towards the lawyer, or the individuals employed subject to his/her responsibility, in relation to the formation and performance of a letter of engagement, the quality of services or the amount of the fee note, submitted following an unsatisfactory discussion of the matter at hand with the lawyer assigned to the case, which Complaint will not be a Complaint as referred to in Subsection 4 of the Counsel Act (Advocatenwet);
- *Complainant*: the client, or his/her/its representative, that notifies HDK Advocaten of a Complaint;
- *Complaints Officer*: the lawyer who is responsible for handling a Complaint.

Article 2 Scope of application

1. This Complaints Procedure will apply to each letter of engagement for the services of a lawyer that is entered into between HDK Advocaten and the client as the party issuing the engagement.
2. Each lawyer at HDK Advocaten will ensure that Complaints are handled in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.

Article 3 Information upon the commencement of service provision

1. This Complaints Procedure has been brought into the public domain. Before entering into a letter of engagement, the lawyer will inform the client that HDK Advocaten operates a Complaints Procedure and that this procedure applies to its services.
2. Complaints as referred to in Article 1 of this Complaints Procedure that have not been resolved after completing the Complaints Procedure will solely be submitted to the competent Dutch civil court.

Article 4 Internal Complaints Procedure

1. The Complaint that a client or his/her/its representative submits to the office will be passed on to Juliette Huyzer who is responsible for the implementation of this internal Complaints Procedure, acting in her capacity as the Complaints Officer.
2. The Complaints Officer will notify the individual about whom a Complaint has been made of the Complaint submitted and will give the Complainant and the individual against whom the Complaint has been made the opportunity to explain the nature of the Complaint.
3. The individual about whom a Complaint has been made will endeavor to work with the Complainant to achieve a solution, whether or not with the mediation of the Complaints Officer.
4. The Complaints Officer will handle a Complaint within one month of the date on which the Complaint is received or will provide the Complainant with a reasoned notification of any deviation from this period of time, stating the period of time in which a decision will be made on the Complaint.
5. The Complaints Officer will notify the Complainant and the individual against whom a Complaint has been made in writing of his/her opinion on the merits of the Complaint (or the lack thereof), whether or not accompanied by recommendations.

Article 5 Confidentiality and Complaint handling free of charge

1. The Complaints Officer, any individual or individuals that the Complaints Officer involves in the handling of a Complaint and the individual against whom the Complaint has been made will maintain confidentiality.
2. The Complainant will not be required to pay any costs for the handling of his/her/its Complaint.

Article 6 Responsibilities

1. The Complaints Officer will be responsible for the prompt handling of a Complaint.
2. The individual against whom a Complaint has been made will keep the Complaints Officer up-to-date on any contacts and any possible solution.
3. The Complaints Officer will keep the Complainant up to date on the handling of the Complaint.
4. The Complaints Officer will keep the file of the Complaint.

Article 7 Complaint Registration

1. The Complaints Officer will registries the Complaint and will also include the subject of each Complaint.
2. The Complaint can be broken down into a number of subjects.
3. The Complaints Officer will report on the handling of Complaints and make recommendations designed to avoid new Complaints and improve procedures.
4. At least once a year the reports and recommendations will be discussed within the office and submitted for decision.