

Office complaints procedure

(pertaining to Article 6.28 of the Legal Profession Regulation (*Verordening op de advocatuur*))

Article 1 definitions

In this office complaints procedure, the following terms have the following meaning:

- *complaint*: every written statement of dissatisfaction expressed by or on behalf of the client against the lawyer concerned or the persons working under the lawyer's responsibility regarding the formation and the performance of a letter of engagement, the quality of the services provided or the amount of the fee note, not being a complaint as referred to in Section 4 of the Dutch Counsel Act (*Advocatenwet*);
- *complainant*: the client or his representative who makes a complaint known;
- *complaints official*: the lawyer who is charged with handling the complaint;

Article 2 scope of application

1. This office complaints procedure applies to every letter of engagement between Habraken Rutten Advocaten B.V. and the client.
2. The complaints official of Habraken Rutten Advocaten B.V. ensures that complaints are handled in conformity with the office complaints procedure.

Article 3 objectives

This office complaints procedure serves to:

1. establish a procedure to handle complaints of clients within a reasonable term and in a constructive manner;
2. establish a procedure to determine the causes of clients' complaints;
3. preserve and improve existing relationships by means of proper complaints handling;
4. train employees in responding to complaints in a client-focussed manner;
5. improve the quality of the services provided based on the handling and analysis of complaints.

Article 4 information upon commencement service provision

1. In its general terms and conditions for the letter of engagement, Habraken Rutten Advocaten B.V. informs the client of independent party or body to which a complaint that has been handled, but left unresolved, can be submitted in order to obtain a binding decision on the complaint.
2. Complaints as referred to in Article 1 of this office complaints procedure that are left unresolved after being handled are to be submitted to the District Court of Rotterdam.

Article 5 internal complaints procedure

1. If a client approaches the office with a complaint, the complaint will be forwarded to Mr Peter Habraken or Mr Sjoerd Rutten, who will therefore act as complaints official.
2. The complaints official will notify the person complained about of the fact that the complaint was lodged and will give the complainant and the person complained about the opportunity to explain the complaint.
3. The person complained about will attempt to resolve the complaint with the client, possibly following mediation by the complaints official.
4. The complaints official will handle the complaint within four weeks after receipt of the complaint or inform the complainant about a deviation of this term, stating reasons and stating the term within which an opinion on the complaint can be given.
5. The complaints official will inform the complainant and the person complained about of the opinion on the validity of the complaint, possibly giving recommendations as well.
6. If the complaint is resolved satisfactorily, the complainant, the complaints official and the person complained about will sign the opinion on the validity of the complaint.

Article 6 confidentiality and the handling of complaints free of charge

1. The complaints official and the person complained about will observe confidentiality during the handling of the complaint.
2. The complainant is not liable for the costs of handling the complaint.

Article 7 responsibilities

1. The complaints official is responsible for the timely handling of the complaint.
2. The person complained about will keep the complaints official informed about possible contact and a possible solution.
3. The complaints official will keep the complainant informed about the handling of the complaint.
4. The complaints official will keep a complaint file.

Article 8 complaints registration

1. The complaints official will register the complaint and the subject of the complaint using the complaints registration form.
2. A complaint can be classified into several subjects.
3. The complaints officer will periodically report on the handling of the complaints to all partners and make recommendations to prevent new complaints and improve procedures.
4. At least once a year, the reports and recommendations will be discussed internally and the recommendations will be submitted for adoption.