The Legal 500 UK 2018

Frequently Asked Questions – Law firms (London and the Regions)

When was the current edition published, and what is the timetable for the next edition?

The current (2017) edition was published in September 2017. The deadlines for editorial submissions and referees spreadsheets for the 2018 edition is 2 February 2018 and 2 March 2018, for the regional and London sections respectively. See the editorial submission guidelines for details of the timeframes for the follow-up research.

When do you publish the details of the researchers for the next edition?

We publish details of which researcher is covering which area, along with contact details, shortly after the relevant submission deadline has passed. They will be posted on The Legal 500 website (at legal500.com/assets/pages/about-us/get-involved.html).

Our firm is not currently recommended in the editorial of The Legal 500, but we believe we warrant a recommendation. What should we do next?

The editorial research is based on firms' written editorial submissions, and follow-up research with firms and their referees. The first step is therefore to provide us with a written editorial submission. If the submission deadline has passed, see question below relating to late submissions.

Please refer to the editorial submission guidelines for details of the information we ask for. You should provide a separate submission for each sub-practice area for which you believe your firm warrants a recommendation. The submission guidelines contain a list of all main and sub-practice areas.

What is the difference between editorial and sales?

The task of the editorial team is to research the legal market by practice area; to assign rankings to firms' practices; and to write accompanying editorial. There is no cost associated with making an editorial submission or being involved in the research process.

The sales side of The Legal 500 relates to the paid-for firm profiles. The profiles are written by the firms, not by The Legal 500.

The editorial and sales sides operate independently. Some firms pay for profiles but are not recommended in the editorial. Others are recommended but choose not take profiles.

If you have any queries regarding sales, you should contact James Crombie: james.crombie@legal500.com

Does a practice have to be a certain size before it is eligible to be editorially recommended?

No, although the size of the team, and its strength in depth, are among the factors which the editorial researcher will take into account when assessing a practice against its competitors. Others include the quality and sophistication of work handled, the calibre of clients, referee feedback, and the expertise and profile of individual practitioners.

If we send a firm profile, do we also need to send an editorial submission?

Yes. Editorial researchers do not see the profiles provided by firms. The editorial research is independent of the sales process.

Do you have a pro forma/model editorial submission?

Submissions should contain the information requested in the editorial submission guidelines, but we do not currently publish a pro forma submission.

We are currently recommended in The Legal 500. Do we need to continue to provide editorial submissions in order to retain our ranking?

Yes. We do take into account a firm's recent track record in a particular area, but the editorial research is conducted afresh each year.

We are not going to be able to meet the editorial submission deadline. Do you accept late submissions?

The Legal 500 series receives thousands of submissions every year, and researchers are under tight deadlines to research practice areas. The deadlines for submissions, for both the regions and London, are later than they have been in previous years, but the follow-up research will be starting shortly after the deadlines. It is in firms' best interests for their submissions (including feedback on the current rankings) to have been fully reviewed by the researchers as part of their preparation for their follow-up research. Our overriding aim is to produce editorial which is as accurate as possible, but firms should be aware that, save in exceptional circumstances, late submissions will not be considered.

Do the researchers interview all firms who provide a submission for a particular practice area? Do we need to do anything to ensure a follow-up interview?

We do our best to present a fair and accurate picture of the market, but we do not undertake to speak to all firms across all sub-practice areas for which they have provided a submission. In some cases the researcher will have sufficient information from the written submission and references. If not, the researcher will make contact with the firm to arrange a follow-up interview. If you feel strongly that you want a follow-up interview, then you should (once the submission deadline has passed) contact the relevant researcher to request one. The names and contact details of researchers will be published on The Legal 500 website shortly before the research stage.

How can I be sure that a submission has been received?

All submissions received by email will receive an auto-reply confirming receipt. If you have any queries, please contact Rahel Yibrish (rahel.yibrish@legal500.com).

What form does your research with referees take?

In the first instance we send a standard email to referees. This identifies the firm which has provided the contact as a referee, and the relevant sub-practice area, and requests feedback on the referee's experience of that practice. The referee is also invited to provide feedback on other law firms. The email may be followed by a telephone discussion. All feedback is given on a confidential, non-attributable basis. A referee may be a client, an introducer or referrer of work, or counsel. Firms are asked to specify the category into which each of their referees falls, to enable us to tailor our reference requests appropriately.

What questions do you ask client referees?

We ask five standard questions to all referees:

1) How long have you used the firm in this area, and on what type/value of work do you instruct it?

2) How would you assess the overall level of service? (Factors may include response times, business acumen/ industry knowledge, appropriateness of advice, strength-in-depth of team, and value for money).

3) Which individual lawyers would you single out as being particularly good? What do you see as their strengths and qualities?

4) How does the firm compare to any others of which you have experience in this area? Would you recommend any other firms/lawyers?

5) Do you have any other comments?

Do you accept updates to submissions?

The researchers are primarily looking to update the editorial based on an annual review of the practice; for the 2018 guide, this is the calendar year 2017. However, so that the editorial is as accurate as possible, firms are encouraged to update major developments (mergers and partner/team moves in particular) occurring outside 2017.

There is a factual error in The Legal 500 UK. Can you amend the error in the online version?

We will amend any factual errors online. If you are aware of a factual error, please contact editorial@legal500.com.

We have an active practice in an area that is not currently a Legal 500 category. Should we provide a submission for it anyway?

No. The list of sections has been finalised for the 2018 edition, and no additional sections will be added without notifying all firms potentially affected. Firms are advised to look at the published list of categories, and include the information as part of a submission for the category which closest fits the practice concerned.

We think you should introduce a new editorial category. Do you accept suggestions, and if so who should we contact?

We aim to structure the editorial in a way that reflects the market, and do keep the editorial categories under review. The list of sections has been finalised for the 2018 edition, but if you have suggestions for editions thereafter you should contact Alexander Boyes at editorial@legal500.com; the list of sections for the 2019 edition will be finalised by November 2018.

Are firms outside London eligible for inclusion in the London sections?

Yes. The London rankings seek to reflect firms' national capability. Firms outside London, and firms with London and other UK offices, should include information on their capabilities and resources outside London to the extent they believe they are relevant in competing against the London-only firms ranked.

What work should be included in a submission for the regions?

The regional chapters take account of all work handled in the relevant region, be it local, national, or international work.

Who should I contact for more information?

Please email editorial@legal500.com, and the appropriate member of the team will be happy to assist you.