The Legal 500 United States 2018

Referees explained

Firms can provide as many referees per practice area as required. Firms are encouraged to provide multiple referees from the same company to increase the feedback about each practice area. Referees are not compulsory, and firms will not be excluded from the rankings on the basis that referees have not been provided. However feedback is an essential element of the information considered by the editorial researchers in assessing rankings and writing accompanying editorial.

Spreadsheets

All referees should now be provided in spreadsheets in the prescribed form. At **legal500.com/assets/pages/about-us/get-involved.html**, you will find dedicated editorial submission guidelines and dedicated referee spreadsheets for all areas of the United States research.

Completing the spreadsheet

Some of the information requested in the spreadsheet is compulsory, while other information is optional.

REFEREE TITLE (MR, MRS): compulsory

REFEREE FIRST NAME: compulsory

REFEREE SURNAME: compulsory

REFEREE JOB TITLE: optional, although it allows us to tailor our distribution

REFEREE COMPANY NAME: compulsory

REFEREE COMPANY – INDUSTRY/SECTOR: optional, although when The Legal 500 US is launched, where possible we would like to inform clients of the editorial and rankings, tailored to their industry

We send out many complimentary copies of the book to referees. For a chance for your referees to receive a copy of the book, please supply accurate postal address details

REFEREE ADDRESS – LINE 1: optional

REFEREE ADDRESS – LINE 2: optional

REFEREE ADDRESS – CITY/TOWN: optional

REFEREE ADDRESS – POSTCODE: optional

REFEREE ADDRESS – COUNTRY: optional

REFEREE EMAIL ADDRESS: compulsory. We will only contact referees where an initial email address for us to contact is provided

REFEREE TELEPHONE NUMBER: optional

LEGAL 500 PRACTICE AREA: compulsory. We ask referees about the practice, rather than the firm generally. The practice areas are embedded into the spreadsheet (and are also listed in the relevant editorial guidelines). Please enter them in the spreadsheet exactly as we have written them, by selecting from the drop-down box. Doing so allows us to automatically process the data.

LAW FIRM NAME: compulsory

COUNTRY: compulsory. As with the Legal 500 Practice Area column, the countries are embedded in the document, and must be selected from the drop-down box

REFEREE CATEGORY: compulsory. Firms are asked to specify (by selecting from the drop-down box) whether the referee is a client; a referrer; or counsel. This will enable us to tailor our reference requests appropriately. Our definition of a referrer is a law firm/attorney who directly refers work to you, due to client conflict; cross-border capability; the firm doesn't have a US office: or doesn't have the practice capability. A Counsel is someone who does not refer work to the firm and is not a client, but is a law firm/attorney who can attest to the quality of work that the firm provides. (e.g. a colleague on a legislative working party; a colleague on a collective defence council; a colleague representing the client's consortium partners; etc)

Points to note

All referees are contacted by email in the first instance, so it is essential that you provide a valid email address for each referee.

Please do not provide referees in any format other than the template spreadsheet. If you do, your referees will not be taken up.

Please do not delete ANY of the columns. If you do, we may not be able to process the spreadsheet, and your referees may not be taken up.

Please do not insert ANY information (for example headings or explanatory notes) that is not asked for.

Please do not fill out the spreadsheet in capital letters.

What happens next?

The data contained in the spreadsheets is extracted and used to generate an automatic email from the relevant researcher to the client.

We sent around 300,000 client emails in the course of the research for The Legal 500 in the past year, and we are expecting to handle even more in 2018. Our aim is to send client referee emails in early January 2018.

Frequently asked questions

Q. We would like to include a referee who instructs our real estate, M&A and tax practices. How do we fill in the spreadsheet?

A. Add the referee three times. Our extraction process allows us to deduplicate, by firm. The referee will receive one email, asking them about all three practice areas.

Q. How does your deduplication system work?

A. We will deduplicate all of the practice area spreadsheets together if they are sent by the deadline. So if a referee is supplied in relation to three practice areas by the same firm, they will receive one single email asking about all three. If the same referee has been put forward as a reference by various firms and practice areas covered by the same researcher, they will also receive one email, noting each of the firms that have used them as a referee. If the same referee is put forward by areas covered by 3 or more researchers, the referee will receive an email from our Referee Manager, to check that they are prepared to receive multiple emails in relation to specified areas, and offering them the alternative of replying with information relating to those areas for the referee manager to distribute as relevant. We cannot guarantee to contact clients sent after the deadlines. If a referee has been contacted in our first round of emails (ie sent in before the deadline), they will receive no more emails from The Legal 500, so submitting referees late will limit the number of referees we contact for late submitters.

Q. What questions do you ask clients?

A. 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 describe the firm's key strengths and 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?

Q. Can you copy the firm in on emails?
A. No. The referee process is confidential.

Q. Can you contact us before you contact the referees?
A. No. Please only include referees in the spreadsheet whom we are authorized to contact.

Q. I've made a mistake, can I submit an amended spreadsheet?
A. If you submit an amended spreadsheet, referees included on both may be contacted twice, depending on the timing. Rather than resubmitting, you should contact Stephanie Ezimako in the first instance, email stephanie.ezimako@legal500.com, tel +44 20 7396 5682

Q. Can I send more than one spreadsheet, as some of our practices have not yet signed off on their referees?
A. Yes. But please ensure that the subsequent lists do not repeat referee details already supplied, and be aware that we will not deduplicate against spreadsheets already processed.

Q. How should I name the spreadsheet?
A. US_[practice area]_[firm].xls

Q. How do I contact the Legal 500 if I have questions?
A. Please contact us at either editorial@legal500.com, or email Stephanie Ezimako, stephanie.ezimako@legal500.com, tel +44 20 7396 5682.