The Legal 500 EMEA 2018

Referees explained

Please note that referees are due in by 4 August 2017.

We have recently made significant changes to our referee research process, across all books in The Legal 500 Series. These changes have been made to increase efficiency, and to enable us to take up far greater numbers of references.

Under the current system, we make initial contact with referees by email, as we did before; the difference is in the way firms supply referees' details (in a separate spreadsheet), and how the data is then processed (automatically rather than manually).

There is NO LIMIT to the number of referees that a firm can provide. If referees are sent by the deadline, then all referees will be contacted for feedback.

Providing referees is not compulsory, and a firm will not be excluded from a ranking on the basis that referees have not been provided. However feedback – from clients, introducers/referrers of work, and counsel – is an essential element of the information considered by the editorial researchers in assessing rankings and writing accompanying editorial.

Referee spreadsheets

All referees should 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 each EMEA jurisdiction. Right click to select the relevant spreadsheet.

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 EMEA is launched, where possible we would like to inform referees 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

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. For the first time this year, firms are asked to specify (by selecting from the drop-down box) whether the referee is a client; a referrer or introducer of work; or counsel. This will enable us to tailor our reference requests appropriately.

Points to note

Please do not provide referees in any format other than the template spreadsheet. If you do, we may not be able to process the spreadsheet, and your referees may not be contacted.

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 contacted.

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 spreadsheets is extracted and used to generate an automatic email from the relevant researcher to the referee.

We sent around 300,000 referee emails globally in the course of our 2017 research, and we are expecting to handle a similar number for the 2018 editions. We must then prepare the data and will be sending out referee emails in mid to late September (note: Israel referees will be timed to avoid coinciding with the Jewish holiday season). Law firms will be notified before clients are contacted.

Frequently asked questions

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

A. Add the client three times. Our extraction process allows us to deduplicate, by firm.

Q. How does your deduplication system work?

A. The deduplication system works differently for the regional and London research.

We will deduplicate all of the country spreadsheets together if they are sent by the deadline. So if a referee is supplied in relation to three practice areas in the same country, they will receive a single email asking about all three. If a referee is supplied in relation to more than one country, they will receive an email for each separate country. We cannot guarantee to deduplicate spreadsheets sent after the deadline.

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 partners would you single out as being particularly good? What do you see as their strengths and qualities?

4) Which associates or lawyers at pre-partner level would you single out as being particularly good? What do you see as their strengths and qualities?

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

6) 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 authorised 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

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. Spreadsheets should be named:

EMEA_[Country]_[Firm name]_[Business Practice Area].xls

Q. How do I contact the Legal 500 if I have questions?

A. Please contact us at editorial@legal500.com, or email Stephanie Ezimako, stephanie.ezimako@legal500.com.