

The Bar (London, Regional and Scottish)

Our referee process is the same across the Legal 500 series. Firms supply details of referees in spreadsheets, separate from their editorial submissions. We then process and deduplicate the data, and make initial contact with referees by email. We endeavour to contact all referees provided on time and in the correct format.

As a guideline, chambers should provide three referees per barrister per practice area, but may send fewer or more if felt appropriate. Referees are not compulsory, and a set/individual will not be excluded from a ranking 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. Referees will in most cases be instructing solicitors, but may also be other barristers (for example QCs who can provide feedback in relation to juniors) or direct clients.

Referee spreadsheets

All referees should now be provided in spreadsheets in the prescribed form. At www.legal500.com/pages/uk_research, you will find dedicated editorial submission guidelines and dedicated client referee spreadsheets for all areas of the UK research (including London, Regional and Scottish Bar). 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. The reference requested is for the individual barrister, not the set, and it is therefore vital that the 'BARRISTER NAME' field is completed.

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/FIRM NAME: compulsory

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

REFEREE ADDRESS – LINE 1: optional

REFEREE ADDRESS – LINE 2: 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. 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

CHAMBERS NAME: compulsory. Please put the name of the Chambers the referees in your spreadsheet are being submitted for (i.e. only the name of your Chambers)

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

BARRISTER NAME: compulsory. The reference requested is for the individual barrister, not the set, and it is therefore vital that the field is completed.

REFEREE CATEGORY: compulsory. Chambers are asked, for the first time this year, to specify (by selecting from the drop-down box) the category into which each referee falls (Instructing solicitor; or Other). This will enable us to tailor our reference requests appropriately..

Points to note

Please do not provide referees in any format other than this template. 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 that is not asked for.

Please do not fill out the spreadsheet in capital letters.

What happens next?

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

We sent around 75,000 referee emails in the course of the research for the 2013 edition, and we are expecting to handle a similar number for the 2014 edition. Our aim is to send the emails relating to the Bar shortly after the editorial submission deadline.

Frequently asked questions

Q. To what extent do you deduplicate referee spreadsheets?

A. We do our best to ensure that referees are not unduly burdened with requests for feedback, and recognise that a significant majority of referees provided are instructing solicitors with experience of a range of barristers at different sets. We will send any referee provided more than once a single email, inviting feedback about all specified barristers across all specified practice areas. This applies to any referee provided for a single barrister in relation to multiple practice areas; multiple barristers (whether at the same set or different sets) in relation to a single practice area; and multiple barristers (whether at the same set or different sets) in relation to multiple practice areas.

Q. What questions do you ask referees?

A. The email identifies each individual barrister to whom the reference request relates, and the relevant practice area, and requests feedback on the referee's experience of that barrister in that area, including as to the quality of advice/advocacy delivered and the referee's overall appraisal of the barrister's work. The referee is also invited to give feedback on any other barristers of whom they have experience, not specified in the email. All feedback is given on a confidential, non-attributable basis.

Q. Can you copy chambers 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, tel 020 7396 5682.

Q. Can I send more than one spreadsheet, as some of our barristers have yet not 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. Please name your spreadsheet in the following way:

UK_[London Bar/Regional Bar/Scottish Bar]_[Chambers name].xls

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

A. Please email editorial@legal500.com, or contact Stephanie Ezimako, stephanie.ezimako@legal500.com, tel 020 7396 5682.