

## Office complaints procedure

### Article 1 definitions

In our office complaints procedure, the following terms are defined as stated below:

- complaint: every written manifestation of dissatisfaction from or on behalf of the client against the lawyer or those working under his responsibility, about the formation and performance of a letter of engagement, the quality of the service provision or the extent of the invoice, not being a complaint within the meaning of subsection 4 of the Counsel Act [Advocatenwet];
- complainant: the client or his/her representative who submits a complaint;
- complaints officer: the lawyer instructed to deal with the complaint.

### Article 2 scope

1. This office complaints procedure applies to every letter of engagement between Van Veen Advocaten and the client.
2. (Every lawyer of) Van Veen Advocaten ensures that complaints are processed in accordance with the office complaints procedure.

### Article 3 objectives

This office complaints procedure serves:

- a. to document a procedure of processing complaints from clients constructively, within a reasonable period of time;
- b. to document a procedure to establish the cause of the client's complaint;
- c. to preserve and improve existing relationships by means of correct complaints handling;
- d. to train employees to respond to complaints with the client in mind;
- e. to improve the quality of the service provision by means of complaints handling and complaints analyses.

### Article 4 information upon start of the service

1. This office complaints procedure has been published. Before concluding a letter of engagement, the lawyer makes the client aware of the fact that the firm uses an office complaints procedure and that this applies to the service.
2. In the General Terms and Conditions, Van Veen Advocaten stipulates which independent party or organisation a complaint can be submitted to when the former has been unable to resolve the issue, after which the latter can issue a binding opinion, all of which is announced upon the confirmation of instruction.
3. Complaints within the meaning of Article 1 of this office complaints procedure which are not resolved after handling will be submitted to the Midden-Nederland court (Central Netherlands) or, in the case of consumers, to the court in their place of residence.

#### **Article 5 internal complaints procedure**

1. If a client has contacted the firm with a complaint, the complaint is forwarded to the office manager, who will act as a complaints officer.
2. The complaints officer notifies the person against whom a complaint has been made of the complaint and gives the complainant and the person against whom a complaint has been made the opportunity to provide an explanation to the complaint.
3. The person against whom the complaint has been made will try to reach a solution with the client, whether or not after intervention from the complaints officer.
4. The complaints officer processes the complaint within four weeks of receiving it or, when this rule is deviated from, notifies the complainant thereof, stating the reasons and giving a new term within which an opinion about the complaint will be given.
5. The complaints officer notifies the complainant and the person against whom a complaint has been made in writing of the opinion about the validity of the complaint, along with recommendations if applicable.
6. If the complaint is dealt with satisfactorily, the complainant, the complaints officer and the person against whom a complaint has been made sign the opinion about the validity of the complaint.

#### **Article 6 confidentiality and free complaints handling**

1. The complaints officer and the person against whom a complaint has been made observe confidentiality during the complaints handling process.
2. The complainant does not owe anything for the costs of complaint handling.

#### **Article 7 responsibilities**

1. The complaints officer is responsible for the prompt processing of the complaint.
2. The person against whom a complaint has been made keeps the complaints officer updated about any contact and a possible solution.
3. The complaints officer keeps the complainant updated about the processing of the complaint.
4. The complaints officer keeps the complaints file updated.

#### **Article 8 complaints registration**

1. The complaints officer logs the complaint and the corresponding subject.
2. A complaint can be classed under several subjects.
3. The complaints officer regularly reports about the complaints processing and makes recommendations in order to prevent new complaints, as well as to improve procedures.
4. The reports and recommendations are discussed at the firm and submitted for a decision at least once a year.