

AUDIT CHECKLIST

Practice Group:

Practitioner Name:

Supervising Principal:

File Name and Number:

Status of File (open / closed):

Date of Review:

Name of Reviewer:

Have any significant issues been identified?

PLEASE SIGN OFF AS FOLLOWS ONCE THE AUDIT HAS BEEN COMPLETED

Auditee Signature & Date:

Auditor Signature & Date:

Risk Management Coordinator Signature & Date:

A. Client Engagement

Client / Matter Screening				Comments
1	Is the matter in an area of law in which the firm / practitioner currently practices?	Yes	No	
2	Is the client clearly identified?	Yes	No	
3	If multiple parties, have they all been identified?	Yes	No	N/A
4	Is there evidence a conflicts check has been completed?	Yes	No	
5	Has the managing partner or board approved acceptance of the client?	Yes	No	N/A
6	Has a full analysis been completed regarding possible outcomes and alternatives?	Yes	No	
Retainer Set-up				
7	Is there a written retainer on file?	Yes	No	
8	Does the retainer contain the following?			
	• Confirmation as to who is the client	Yes	No	
	• Scope of specific work	Yes	No	
	• Client responsibilities	Yes	No	
	• Identity of legal team and supervising partner	Yes	No	
	• If retainer is limited, does it identify risks associated with such limitation?	Yes	No	N/A
	• Costs disclosure provided	Yes	No	
	• Relevant time frames	Yes	No	
	• Critical time limitations applicable	Yes	No	
	• Basis upon which retainer can be terminated	Yes	No	
9	Is client's acceptance of the terms of the retainer evidenced?	Yes	No	

Variation of Retainer

Comments

10	Is there timely communication with the client about changes to terms of retainer?	Yes	No	N/A
11	Is client's acceptance of any changes confirmed?	Yes	No	N/A

Billing

12	Have costs been rendered and if so are they consistent with retainer?	Yes	No	
13	Are costs exceeding original estimate and if so, has client been informed and consented to additional costs?	Yes	No	N/A
14	Have bills been paid in full and on time?	Yes	No	

Termination of Retainer

15	On completion or termination has the solicitor completed the following?	Yes	No	N/A
	• Confirmation to client confirming matter concluded or retainer terminated	Yes	No	N/A
	• Render final accounts and account for monies in Trust	Yes	No	N/A
	• Communicate outstanding issues requiring attention including advice on applicable time limits and consequences	Yes	No	N/A
	• Return all original documents to the client	Yes	No	N/A
16	If the retainer was terminated prematurely was appropriate consideration give in respect of the following:			
	• Professional liability assessment	Yes	No	N/A
	• Notice to client / Court	Yes	No	N/A
	• Payment of costs	Yes	No	N/A
	• Timely release of file to another firm	Yes	No	N/A
	• Reiterate critical dates if file transferred	Yes	No	N/A

End of Client Engagement Section

B. Matter Management

Delegation and Supervision

Comments

17	Is there evidence of appropriate partner supervision?			
	• At outset of matter	Yes	No	N/A
	• At critical junctures	Yes	No	N/A
	• Throughout the entire matter	Yes	No	N/A

18	If the file is transferred within firm, were the following steps undertaken?			
	• Handover file note dealing with strategy, unresolved issues, critical dates and next steps	Yes	No	N/A
	• File organised and up to date at time of transfer	Yes	No	N/A
	• Client involved and consulted in approving and meeting new lawyers	Yes	No	N/A
	• Cost implications discussed with client (ie no duplication)	Yes	No	N/A

19	Is there compliance with firm policy and procedures for quality assurance (ie partner sign off, file review etc)	Yes	No	
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File and Time Management

20	Is the file well organised? (Chronological, divided into separate sections / instructions and amendments, advices/ client discussions/ copies of letters sent received/emails on file)	Yes	No	
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21	Is there evidence documents were cross checked or proof read before being presented to client for execution?	Yes	No	N/A
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22	Has the file been proactively managed with regular reviews?	Yes	No	
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23	Is a monitoring system in place for deadlines and critical dates? (personal diary / central / identified on file / management of court dates)	Yes	No	
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24	Is a monitoring system in place as reminder of steps to be taken on file?	Yes	No	
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Communication and Record Keeping

Comments

25	Are client instructions clearly documented?	Yes	No	
26	Are any changes or updates to instructions clearly documented?	Yes	No	N/A
27	Are instructions (ie such as settlement instructions), obtained and confirmed in writing?	Yes	No	N/A
28	Does it appear the owner makes file notes of all attendance by phone and in person with no apparent gaps in communication?	Yes	No	
29	Do file notes bear the following characteristics			
	• Dated, including year	Yes	No	
	• Full identity of the author	Yes	No	
	• Legible	Yes	No	
	• Considered note to file (meaningful to others) not note to self (meaningless to others)	Yes	No	
	• Do they confirm basis of discussion and agreed actions to be taken	Yes	No	
30	Are there letters of advice / progress reports to the client?	Yes	No	
31	Are any changes in legal strategy fully communicated in writing and agreed by the client?	Yes	No	N/A
32	Has there been good response times to:			
	• Telephone calls	Yes	No	
	• Face to face requests	Yes	No	
	• Correspondence	Yes	No	
	• Emails	Yes	No	
33	Does the file contain copies of all communications?	Yes	No	
34	Are drafts clearly marked, changes verified and in numerical order?	Yes	No	N/A
35	Does it appear any client dissatisfaction was dealt with in accordance with the firm policy?	Yes	No	N/A

End of Matter Management Section

Reviewing Results

Overall is **Retainer Management** satisfactory?

If not please comment on concerns

Overall is **Matter Management** satisfactory?

If not please comment on concerns

Is the file otherwise satisfactory?

If not please comment on concerns

Were any substantial errors in procedure detected?

If so please advise

Do you have any recommendation of areas for improvement?

Any other comments on practices that would be useful to be implemented across firm?