

Professional Infrastructure Elements and Objectives

The cornerstones of the self-assessment are the 8 "Professional Infrastructure Elements" (the "Elements"), which represent core areas of professional, ethical firm practice. These Elements are designed to be sufficiently high-level to be adapted to different forms of practice, yet concrete enough to establish clear, basic standards for firm conduct.

Each Element is paired with an "Objective", which is a statement of the specific outcome that firms will strive to achieve in addressing the Element. The Law Society believes that prudent law firms should have appropriate policies and processes in place to ensure that legal services are provided in accordance with these Objectives.

Element 1: DEVELOPING COMPETENT PRACTICES AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Objective: Ensure the delivery of quality and timely legal services by persons with appropriate skills and competence

Element 2: SUSTAINING EFFECTIVE AND RESPECTFUL CLIENT RELATIONS

Objective: Provide clear, timely and courteous communications with clients in the delivery of legal services so that clients understand the status of their matter through the duration of the retainer and are in a position to make informed choices

Element 3: PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY

Objective: Ensure client information, documents and communications are kept confidential and free from access, use, disclosure or disposal unless the client consents or it is required or permitted by law and that solicitor-client privilege is appropriately safeguarded

Element 4: AVOIDING AND ADDRESSING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Objective: Ensure conflicts of interest are avoided from the outset, and where not avoided, they are resolved in a timely fashion

Element 5: MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE FILE AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Objective: Provide appropriate file and records management systems to ensure that issues and tasks on file are handled in an appropriate and timely manner and that client information and documents are safeguarded

Element 6: CHARGING APPROPRIATE FEES AND DISBURSEMENTS

Objective: Ensure clients are charged fees and disbursements that are transparent and reasonable and are disclosed in a timely fashion

Element 7: ENSURING RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Objective: Establish mechanisms to minimize the risk of fraud and procedures that ensure compliance with Law Society accounting rules

Element 8: EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Objective: Observe the laws protecting human rights, and the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and in all aspects of the provision of legal services.