

## Unit 328 Administer legal files

### Unit Summary

Open, maintain, close and retrieve legal files

### Skills

You will apply the following skills:

- Planning
- Researching
- Organising
- Decision making
- Reading
- Writing
- Using number
- Problem solving
- Quality checking
- Communicating
- Using technology

### Performance indicators

You will:

#### Open a file

1. Receive instructions from the fee earner and arrange a conflict of interest search
2. Report on the outcome of a conflict of interest search to the fee earner
3. Generate matter reference
4. Record matter information and open file
5. Carry out routine checks as appropriate and report on outcomes to the fee earner
6. Confirm all necessary details with the client by creating and issuing a "terms of engagement" notification

#### Maintain and administer a current file

7. Produce and amend correspondence and appropriate documents as instructed, following house-style and organisational requirements
8. Carry out research as instructed and report back to fee earner
9. Make sure all costs and disbursements are charged to the correct matter reference
10. Make sure all file management activities conform to house-style and organisational requirements
11. Make sure all time spent on the matter is correctly recorded
12. Generate bills as requested in accordance with instructions

**Prepare a file for closure**

13. Receive instructions to close a file
14. Review the file and identify any outstanding issues and unbilled disbursements
15. Report outstanding issues to the fee earner for resolution
16. Where necessary, deal with reimbursements
17. Check with the fee earner whether any documents, knowledge or data needs to be added to the firm's precedent, knowledge or data bank
18. Ensure the file is complete for preparation of the final bill
19. If appropriate, prepare the final bill

**Close a file and prepare it for archiving**

20. Complete file closing documentation and check that the account shows a nil balance
21. Notify relevant people that the file is closing
22. Sort the file, to clear it of unnecessary material, and check with the fee earner on the appropriate distribution of documents
23. Make sure that hard copies of electronic communications are in the file
24. Prepare a schedule of the file contents so that they can be readily retrieved
25. Correctly label files for storage with all the required information, and amend records to show that the file is closed
26. Make arrangements for the file to be archived
27. Where necessary, provide accurate and timely information to retrieve files from archives

### **Knowledge**

You will know:

- The administrative services that you are responsible for
- Your organisation's policies, procedures and constraints that affect administrative services in your area of responsibility
- The duty of confidentiality that applies when you are dealing with client's information
- The specialist software used by your organisation for the recording and processing of legal cases
- The importance of accuracy and attention to detail when dealing with information in a legal context
- The type of transaction that your department is involved in (for example, conveyance, family law, commercial, litigation)
- The particular legal terminology that is associated with different types of transactions
- Your organisation's procedures for opening files, and allocating references to matters
- Who needs to be informed of the opening of a new file, and why this is important
- How to open files in a range of formats
- How to open files for new clients and new matters on files for existing clients
- How to carry out searches and why these are needed
- How and with what organisations to carry out routine checks, and why these are needed
- Understand the contents and purpose of a "terms of engagement" notification and how to prepare one
- How time spent on a matter is monitored and recorded in your organisation
- The range of activity and documentation that needs to be noted within a client's file
- Your organisation's house-style for the presentation of a file
- How and when to generate bills from the information in a client's file
- What is meant by "precedent" and "know-how", how to identify them and record them for later use by your organisation and why this is important
- Who you should refer matters beyond your authority to
- How to prioritise your work and work to other people's priorities