

STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMPLIANCE

The Standing Committee on Compliance oversees The Law Society's administrative and regulatory functions, these responsibilities having been delegated to it by the Council.

There are 16 members of the Standing Committee, eight of whom are Council Members. The Standing Committee met 11 times during the year and considered 195 agenda items (compared to 206 agenda items in 2010).

The Compliance Department (Conduct and Registration Sections) of the Secretariat supports the work of the Standing Committee on Compliance.

Members of the Standing Committee and their attendances at meetings during the year:

Stephen W.S. HUNG (<i>Vice-Chairman up to June and Chairman from July</i>)	9 / 11	Andrew Y.B. LEE (<i>joined in July</i>)	5 / 5
Thomas S.T. SO (<i>Chairman up to June</i>)	6 / 6	Jason C.K. LI (<i>joined in July</i>)	3 / 5
Angela W.Y. LEE (<i>Vice-Chairman from July</i>)	8 / 11	Teresa S.Y. LIU (<i>resigned in June</i>)	5 / 6
Denis G. BROCK (<i>joined in February</i>)	4 / 10	Peter C.L. LO	8 / 11
Anna May M.L. CHAN (<i>resigned in June</i>)	4 / 6	Billy W.Y. MA	3 / 11
Alfred K.H. CHAN (<i>joined in July</i>)	5 / 5	Catherine L.M. MUN	8 / 11
Charles C.C. CHAU (<i>joined in July</i>)	1 / 5	Gavin P. NESBITT	7 / 11
Dennis H.F. HIE (<i>resigned in June</i>)	3 / 6	Kenneth S.Y. NG	4 / 11
LAI Kwok Kwong	5 / 11	Hanifa RAMJAHN (<i>joined in July</i>)	2 / 5
Henson LAM (<i>joined in April</i>)	7 / 8	Annie P.Y. WONG (<i>joined in April</i>)	8 / 8
		Brian K.K. TSE (<i>resigned in June</i>)	4 / 6

Secretary: Director of Compliance

Conduct Section

The Conduct Section of the Compliance Department is mainly responsible for investigating allegations of professional misconduct against solicitors, foreign lawyers, trainee solicitors and employees of solicitors and foreign lawyers. In 2011, it handled 1,176 complaints (992 in 2010), of which 498 complaints were lodged or referred by members of the public and government organisations (543 in 2010) and 115 complaints were made by solicitors (126 in 2010).

1,134 files were closed during the year. About 44% of these files were closed without seeking explanation as the complaints did not identify any issues of professional misconduct.

There were movements amongst the staff members of the Conduct Section. Two Monitoring Accountants and the In-House Prosecutor left the employment of the Law Society. The three posts were quickly filled.

Staff members took courses relating to the *Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, Cap. 486*; the *Solicitors' Accounts Rules, Cap. 159F* and anti-money laundering legislation as part of their continuing professional education.

Inspections and visits

Under Section 8AA of the *Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap. 159*, the Council is empowered to appoint inspectors to verify compliance with the provisions of the *Ordinance* or any Practice Direction issued by The Law Society, and to determine whether the conduct of those against whom an inspection was made should be inquired into or investigated. Section 8AA stipulates the powers of an inspector in making such enquiries and investigations.

In 2011, the Council made one resolution under Section 8AA and one law firm was inspected as a result. For this case, all professional staff of the Conduct Section participated in the operation which involved seizure and inspection of many files and accounting documents of the firm. The investigation of this firm is still on-going. In addition, 15 visits were made by Investigation Counsel to 13 other law firms. One visit was made to check an entity purporting to be a law firm.

During this year, three court inspections were conducted by inspectors at magistrates' courts at Kwun Tong, Kowloon City and Tsuen Wan. The Council appointed inspectors to verify compliance with rule 5D of the *Solicitors' Practice Rules, Cap. 159H* and to monitor the proper completion of court attendance forms.

The Monitoring Accountants paid visits to law firms to provide assistance in their accounting procedures/systems and to inspect their books and accounts to ensure compliance with the accounting rules. 101 visits were made to 49 solicitors' firms and foreign law firms; some firms required more than one visit (81 visits to 57 firms in 2010).

INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

Investigation Committees are ad-hoc sub-committees of the Standing Committee on Compliance. Three members of the Standing Committee on Compliance are appointed to each Investigation Committee to consider reports prepared by the Conduct Section and to adjudicate on complaints.

Investigation Committees may recommend to the Standing Committee on Compliance to issue letters of good practice, regret, or disapproval (or any other sanction authorised by the Council from time to time), and to submit matters to the Tribunal Convenor of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel. Reviews of the decisions of the Investigation Committees are conducted by the Standing Committee on Compliance.

Investigation Committees considered 289 complaints by circulation of 289 agenda. (In 2010, 265 complaints were considered by circulation of 265 agenda.) In 2011, the Standing Committee on Compliance reviewed 12 decisions of the Investigation Committees and consequently, seven decisions were upheld, three were varied and two decisions were reversed. (In 2010, six decisions were reviewed, with five upheld and one reversed.)

Determination of Complaints in 2011

Figure 1: Subject matter of complaints

	2011	2010	2009
Administrative/regulatory	28.91%	26.31%	26.82%
Civil litigation	23.21%	21.57%	18.47%
Conveyancing (H.K.)	14.63%	23.49%	20.14%
Company/commercial	7.14%	2.02%	3.14%
Criminal	6.46%	4.74%	6.19%
Miscellaneous	4.25%	3.02%	5.11%
Matrimonial	3.32%	3.43%	4.13%
Owners'/incorporated owners' disputes	3.23%	3.23%	3.54%
Reports of purported law firms	2.98%	4.03%	4.72%
Probate	2.13%	3.53%	3.14%
Court inspections	1.19%	0.71%	—
Bankruptcy	0.68%	0.60%	—
Contract	0.68%	0.50%	1.18%
Election	0.51%	—	—
Landlord & tenant	0.26%	0.81%	0.98%
Civil Celebrant	0.17%	0.81%	0.88%
Conveyancing (other than H.K.)	0.17%	0.30%	0.49%
Media/promotion	0.09%	0.50%	0.39%
Recovery agent	—	0.20%	0.59%
Legal visit	—	0.20%	0.10%

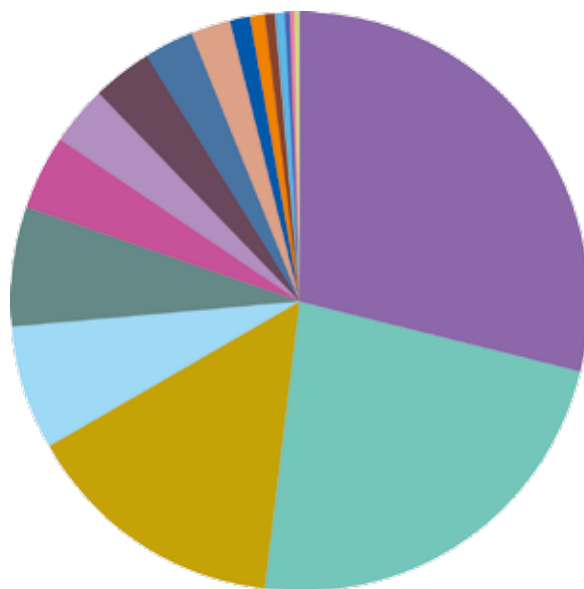


Figure 2: Nature of professional misconduct

	2011	2010	2009
Breach of <i>Conduct Guide Principles</i>	33.33%	37.40%	35.56%
Breach of <i>Solicitors' Practice Rules</i>	23.89%	15.32%	13.75%
Late submission of accountant's reports	5.95%	5.04%	3.73%
Breach of <i>Solicitors' Accounts Rules</i>	5.19%	0.30%	3.05%
Miscellaneous	4.08%	2.12%	3.34%
Unqualified persons acting or pretending to be a solicitor (ss.45—48 of the LPO)	3.06%	4.03%	4.52%
Overcharging	2.98%	4.84%	4.72%
Breach of undertaking	2.89%	6.55%	5.01%
Breach of <i>Continuing Professional Development Rules</i>	2.55%	1.81%	4.13%
Circular no. 01-142(COM) (Court attendance form)	2.30%	1.92%	3.83%
Delay	1.87%	2.22%	2.85%
Breach of <i>Foreign Lawyers Registration Rules</i>	1.79%	—	1.47%
Breach of <i>Practice Directions</i>	1.53%	0.10%	0.29%
Negligence	1.45%	1.61%	1.87%
Breach of <i>Solicitors (Professional Indemnity) Rules (r.8)</i>	1.28%	0.60%	0.10%
Misbehaviour	1.02%	2.02%	2.36%
Dishonesty	0.85%	0.60%	0.69%
Non-payment of barristers' fees	0.77%	1.41%	1.18%
Breach of <i>Foreign Lawyers Practice Rules</i>	0.77%	1.01%	0.49%
Inadequate service	0.68%	3.23%	1.28%
Conflict of interest	0.60%	0.81%	0.49%
Practising without a practising certificate	0.34%	—	0.10%
Breach of <i>Risk Management Education Rules</i>	0.26%	3.02%	3.93%
Failure to reply to letters on behalf of a client or to inquiries from The Law Society	0.26%	0.40%	0.10%
Breach of <i>Solicitors' Practice Promotion Code</i>	0.17%	0.50%	1.18%
Offences in relation to foreign lawyers, etc. (s.50B of the LPO)	0.09%	0.20%	—
Touting	0.09%	—	—
Commission taking	—	2.22%	—
Breach of <i>Trainee Solicitors Rules</i>	—	0.40%	—
Breach of <i>Solicitors (Professional Indemnity) Rules (general)</i>	—	0.20%	—
Property fraud	—	0.10%	—

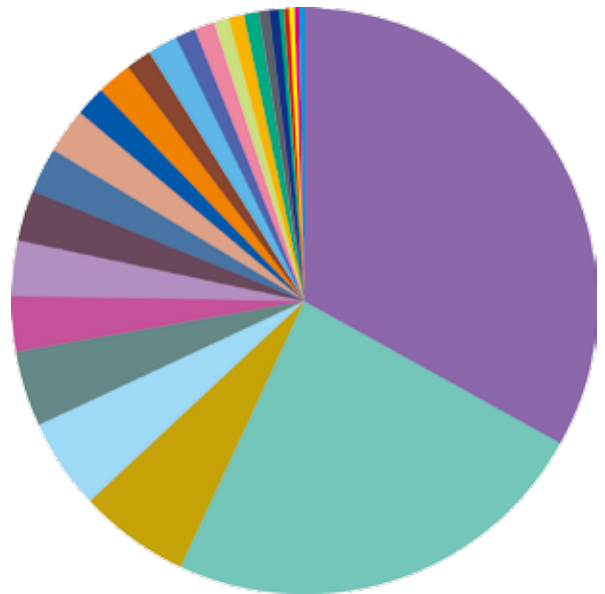
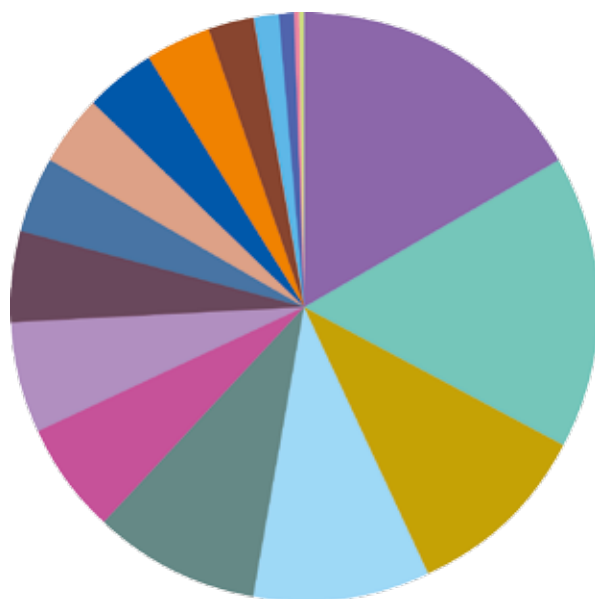


Figure 3: Analysis of closed files

	2011	2010	2009
No further action	16.67%	12.51%	13.56%
Letter of regret	16.14%	13.13%	17.83%
Letter of disapproval	10.49%	7.81%	8.63%
Referred – Independent legal advice (including District Office)	9.70%	13.49%	12.08%
Unpursuable	8.99%	9.32%	8.46%
Letter of good practice	6.26%	7.99%	9.20%
Unsubstantiated/No professional misconduct	6.17%	5.86%	7.15%
Pending	4.85%	6.30%	2.55%
Referred – relevant authorities	4.14%	3.64%	2.88%
Resolved amicably	4.06%	8.25%	7.48%
Withdrawn	3.88%	3.64%	1.48%
Referred – enforcement agencies	3.44%	4.17%	3.62%
Referred – Tribunal Convenor	2.65%	2.40%	2.38%
Referred – other departments of the Society	1.32%	—	0.25%
Referred – taxation	0.88%	1.15%	1.31%
Referred – others (including intervention agents)	0.18%	0.18%	0.74%
Summary disposal	0.09%	0.09%	—
Referred – Joint Tribunal	0.09%	—	0.08%
Referred – panel of prosecutors (for advice)	—	0.09%	0.16%
Circular issued	—	—	0.08%
Referred – inspection by the Monitoring Accountants	—	—	0.08%



Interventions

The Council's power of intervention is exercised for the protection of the public and occurs when clients' interests are at risk. Through the intervention agents, The Law Society first takes control of the office and clients' monies of the intervened firms and takes possession of the intervened firms' documents. It then effects transfers of documents in its possession to the intervened firms' former clients or their newly-appointed solicitors. The process of distributing clients' money of the intervened firm may involve court proceedings and claimants must produce supporting documents to verify their claims. Subject to any Court order for the payment of costs, any costs incurred by the Council in the intervention shall be paid by the solicitor or the foreign lawyer whose practice is intervened.

The Council appoints a monitoring committee (usually consisting of three Council Members) to oversee the progress of each intervention exercise; the Conduct Section and the intervention agent work closely in every intervention.

In April, the Council resolved to intervene in the practice of a sole practitioner under Section 26A and Schedule 2 to the *Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap.159* on the basis that the solicitor had failed to comply with the *Solicitors' Accounts Rules, Cap. 159F*.

Authorised solicitors' clerks

The Standing Committee on Compliance oversees the work of the Conduct Section in administering the Authorised Solicitors' Clerks scheme and has delegated its power to the Consents Committee to consider applications.

As of the end of December, there were 960 authorised solicitors' clerks (968 in 2010).

Notes: The Consents Committee considered that solicitors' firms should only nominate staff who are experienced, have integrity, and who have working knowledge in criminal litigation as authorised solicitors' clerks given that they are permitted to visit clients held in places of detention without the supervision of solicitors and they perform the important duty of taking instructions from the clients. In principle, staff with less than one year's working experience in criminal litigation will not be considered.

INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

The Investigation Committee on Disciplinary Matters is the only Investigation Committee with a fixed membership drawn from senior members of the Standing Committee on Compliance. The Committee's work includes monitoring the progress of disciplinary proceedings, appeals and court proceedings (including bankruptcy petitions), giving instructions to prosecutors and The Law Society's legal representatives, and authorising the payments of fees incurred in disciplinary proceedings, appeals and court proceedings.

The Committee considered 228 matters by circulation of 68 agenda. (In 2010, 212 matters were considered by circulation of 68 agenda.) The Law Society filed bankruptcy petitions against one solicitor and one solicitors' clerk in 2011.

Disciplinary proceedings, appeals, summary disposals and judicial review

The Standing Committee on Compliance resolved to submit 13 matters to the Tribunal Convenor of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel concerning the conduct of 11 solicitors and seven clerks. Of these matters, one solicitor was the subject of two resolutions; further, two out of these matters were resolved to be submitted to the Tribunal Convenor for her to dispose of on a summary basis. Additionally, the Council resolved to refer three matters involving two solicitors to the Tribunal Convenor. By December, 16 matters had been submitted to the Tribunal Convenor (15 in 2010).

During the year, the Standing Committee had referred one case to counsel for advice.

A Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal is a statutory tribunal established by the *Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap.159*. It is independent of The Law Society which is the prosecuting body. Members of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel are appointed by the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice also appoints the Tribunal Convenor and the Deputy Convenors of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel who have the responsibility to appoint a panel of three or four members to sit as a Tribunal to determine applications, and who have the power to dispose of certain classes of complaints on a summary basis.

15 disciplinary proceedings were determined by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunals in 2011 (compared to 13 in 2010) which resulted in the following Orders being made:

Respondent	Position	Charge(s)	Penalty	Fines (HK\$)
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abandonment of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struck off from the Roll of Solicitors • ordered to pay fixed costs of HK\$166,000 	—
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of rule 11 of the SAR and rule 5B of the SPR • 1 count of Practice Direction D7, rule 8(2) of the ARR and ss.8(1) and (2) of the LPO • 1 count of rule 2(a) and (d) of the SPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struck off from the Roll of Solicitors • ordered to pay fixed costs of HK\$283,886.57 	—
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of Principle 4.01 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> • 1 count of Principle 4.16 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> and s.64 of the LPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay Clerk's costs and 57% of the Applicant's costs 	305,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 counts of rule 10(1) of the SAR • 1 count of rule 10(1) and 10(2) of the SAR • 1 count of Principle 4.10 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> and rule 2(e) of the SPR • 2 counts of s.8(1) of the LPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay fixed costs of HK\$187,000 	75,000
3	solicitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of s.8 of the LPO, rule 8 of the ARR and Principle 2.03 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> • 1 count of rule 2(d) and (e) of the SPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay costs 	60,000 (each)
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of rule 10 of the SAR • 1 count of rule 11 of the SAR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suspended from practice for three years • subject to conditional practice for three years after resuming practice in that he could not practise as a sole-proprietor or partner of any solicitors' firm and could only practise as an employed solicitor under the supervision of a solicitor of no less than 10 years' active post-qualification experience • ordered to pay 50% costs 	50,000

Respondent	Position	Charge(s)	Penalty	Fines (HK\$)
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of Principle 14.02 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> • 3 counts of Principles 14.02 and 14.08 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay costs 	50,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of s.8(1) of the <i>LPO</i> • 1 count of Principle 6.04 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ordered to pay costs 	50,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of s.8(1) of the <i>LPO</i> • 1 count of Principle 6.04 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ordered to pay 50% costs 	50,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of rule 2(d) and (e) of the <i>SPR</i> • 1 count of rule 2(f) of the <i>SPR</i> • 1 count of rule 2(d) and (f) of the <i>SPR</i> • 1 count of rule 2(d) of the <i>SPR</i> and Principles 5.12 and 5.17 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay fixed costs of HK\$126,628 	40,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 counts of Principle 14.02 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay fixed costs of HK\$114,978.18 	30,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle 14.02 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • with effect from 2/7/2011, subject to conditional practice for 2 years in that he (1) could not practise as a sole proprietor or partner of a solicitors' firm and (2) his practice as a solicitor be subject to the supervision of a full time solicitor of no less than 15 years' standing and also of good standing • ordered to pay costs 	20,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 count of Principle 4.16 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> • 1 count of rule 2(d) of the <i>SPR</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay costs 	10,000
1	solicitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rule 2(d) of the <i>SPR</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • censured • ordered to pay costs 	3,000
1	clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct disgraceful, dishonourable and discreditable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prohibited from employment by any solicitors' firm for 30 years • ordered to pay costs 	—

Notes: "LPO" = *Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap.159*

"SAR" = *Solicitors' Accounts Rules, Cap.159F*

"SPR" = *Solicitors' Practice Rules, Cap.159H*

"ARR" = *Accountant's Report Rules, Cap.159A*

"Conduct Guide" = *The Hong Kong Solicitors' Guide to Professional Conduct (Volume 1, 2nd edition)*

In addition, the Tribunal Convenor summarily disposed of two matters by making orders requiring each of the two solicitors concerned to pay a fixed fine of HK\$10,000 and fixed costs of HK\$15,000.

There was no appeal hearing related to disciplinary proceedings.

CONSENTS COMMITTEE

The Consents Committee is a sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Compliance. There are 13 members, of whom six are Council Members.

The Consents Committee considers applications for registration, consent and waivers filed by solicitors, foreign lawyers and trainee solicitors under the *Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap.159* and *Practice Directions*. It also determines applications for registration of foreign law firms and foreign lawyers and the applications for certifications of law costs draftsmen. Reviews of the decisions of the Consents Committees are conducted by the Standing Committee on Compliance.

The workload of the Consents Committee had increased in 2011; 20 meetings were held where 543 agenda items were considered; this was in addition to the 66 matters which were dealt with by circulation of six agenda. (In 2010, there were 21 meetings and 531 agenda items were considered; 27 matters were considered by circulation of six agenda.)

To illustrate, the Consents Committee had considered 30 more applications this year than last year on applications filed under Section 6(6A) of the *Legal Practitioners Ordinance* by solicitors who wished to remove the conditions on their practising certificates which had prevented them from practising on their own account or in partnership. Typically, these solicitors had not completed at least two years of bona fide employment in the practice of a solicitor in Hong Kong but had acquired experience previously either as overseas lawyers from common law jurisdictions or as in-house solicitors in Hong Kong. The Consents Committee could reject an application or grant the eligible applicant a waiver of the two-year employment requirement or a reduction in the period of two years to a period it considered appropriate depending on the substantiality of experience acquired by the applicant.

Members of the Committee:

IP Shing Hing (*Chairman*)

Kenneth S.Y. NG (*Vice-Chairman*)

Junius K.Y. HO

Raymond M.S. KWOK

Henry H.W. LAI

Billy Y.C. LAM

Henson LAM

William C.W. LAM

Billy W.Y. MA

Paul K.Y. NG

Melissa K. PANG

Kelly Y.H. WONG

Dieter L.T. YIH

Secretary: Director of Compliance

Registration Section

The Registration Section of the Compliance Department processes applications and handles applications considered by the Consents Committee.

There were staff movements in the Registration Section during the year; three staff members left and the vacancies created were filled.

In 2011, the number of applications processed by the Registration Section on admission of solicitors continued to rise. This was due to an increase in the number of persons seeking admission on the bases of completion of traineeship and passing of the Overseas Lawyers Qualification Examination.

In 2011, the Registration Section processed a very significant number of certificates of good standing issued by the Law Society to solicitors in support of their applications for renewal of their status as Civil Celebrants of Marriage and appointment as China Appointed Attesting Officers. The Registration Section also undertook the role of maintaining the database of all counsellors in the Reverse Mortgage Programme launched by the Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited.

The Registration Section in conjunction with the Conduct Section reviewed and processed the “employees’ returns” submitted by all solicitors’ firms and foreign law firms in January of each year, and the Notification of Changes to a Practice on firms’ particulars submitted by solicitors’ firms and foreign law firms throughout the year.

The Law Society is in the process of restructuring its membership database and website. The Registration Section and the Conduct Section as major users of the database play an active role in the restructuring process.

Nature of applications

Applications considered by the Consents Committee and those processed by the Registration Section during the year included:

	2011	2010	2009
Admissions	569	457	420
Certificates of eligibility for admission	454	525	454
Practising certificates: English	7,149	6,782	6,465
Chinese	3,005	2,770	—
Practising certificates – removal of conditions under s.6(6) LPO (solicitors)	159	146	120
Membership	8,448	7,986	7,507
First registration as a foreign law firm	11	10	11
First registration as a foreign lawyer	415	349	261
Renewal of registration as a foreign lawyer	1,136	1,007	1,069
Removal of conditions on certificates of registration (foreign lawyers)	56	69	32
Registration as an Association	6	10	10
Removal of name from the roll of solicitors	5	5	2
Restoration of name to the roll of solicitors	1	1	1
Admission of English barristers	1	3	1
Qualifications for admission s.4(1A) LPO	157	135	92
Employment of staff: s.53(1) LPO	—	2	1
s.53(3) LPO	2	7	4
Practising certificates – removal of conditions under s.6(6A) LPO	67	37	22
Practising certificates – Special Conditions	18	33	21
Registration of first trainee solicitor contracts	431	429	288
Registration of subsequent trainee solicitor contracts	61	71	36
Special leave to employ trainee solicitors	9	13	10
Other trainee solicitor matters	180	188	140
Law costs draftsmen	1	0	0
Accountant's report – solicitors' firms	747	724	703
Accountant's report – foreign law firms	74	71	74
Firm name and letterhead	8	12	7
Waiver applications – general	6*	1	4
Waiver applications – <i>Practice Directions</i>	6	1	5
Registration as an associate member	2	3	2
Certificates of standing	1,652	618	611
Letters of No Objection [#]	1,000	915	578
Authorised Solicitors' Clerks	42	85	42

* Applications were under the Solicitors' Practice Rules, Cap. 159H; Foreign Lawyers Registration Rules, Cap.159S; and Foreign Lawyers Practice Rules, Cap.159R.

[#] "No Objection" letters are issued to applicants for work visas.

⁺ "LPO"=Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap.159.

Figure 4: Admission of solicitors 2002—2011

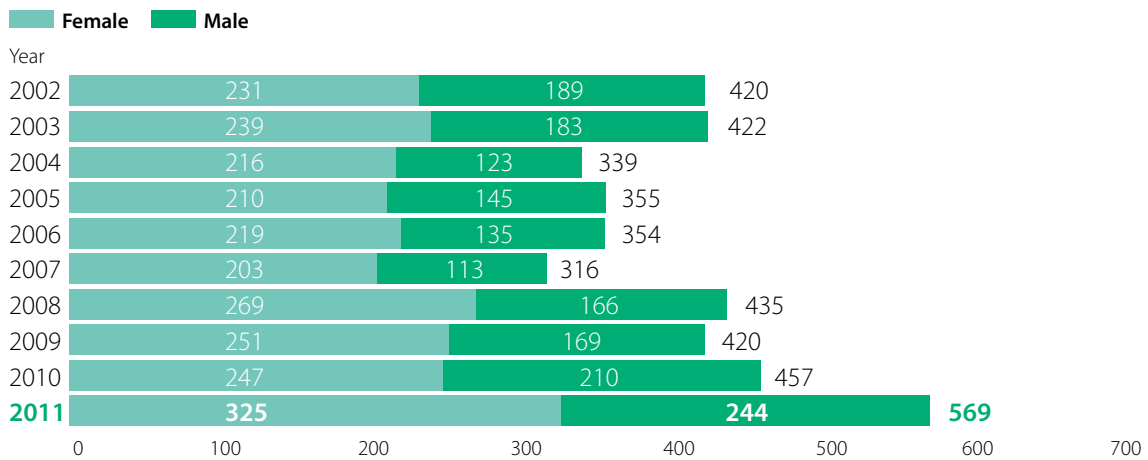


Figure 5: Practising Certificates issued 2002—2011

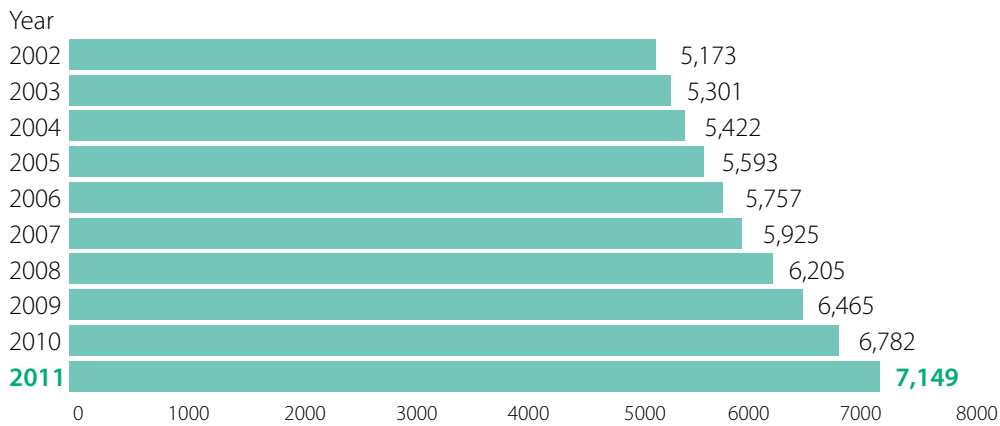


Figure 6: Years of admission of solicitors holding a 2011 practising certificate

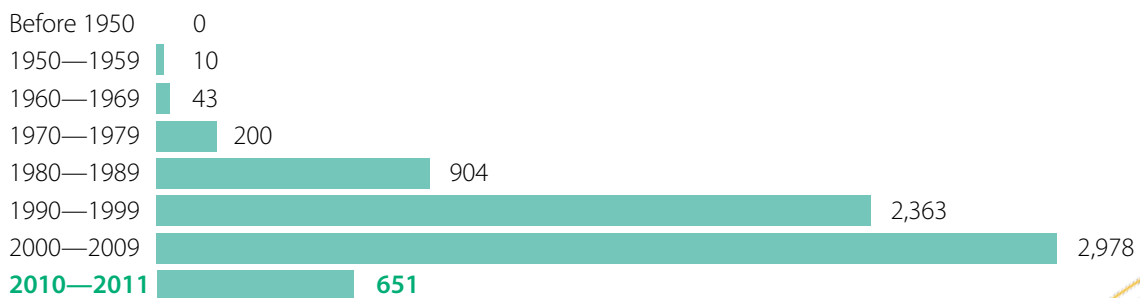


Figure 7a: Gender ratio – Solicitors holding a practising certificate



Figure 7b: Gender ratio – Trainee solicitors

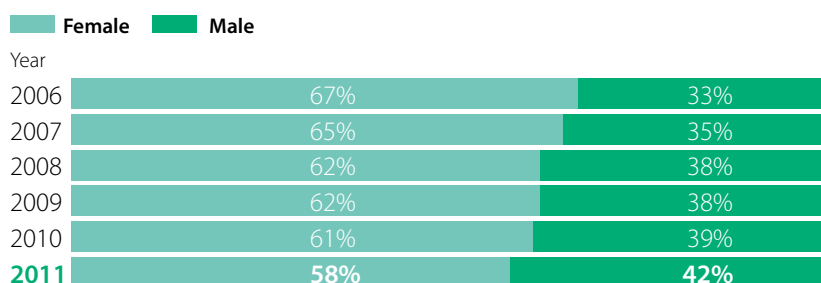


Figure 7c: Gender ratio – Partners

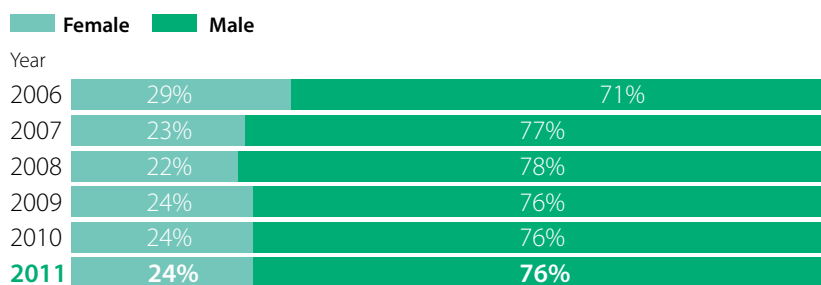


Figure 8: Size of solicitors' firms and number of trainee solicitors in 2011

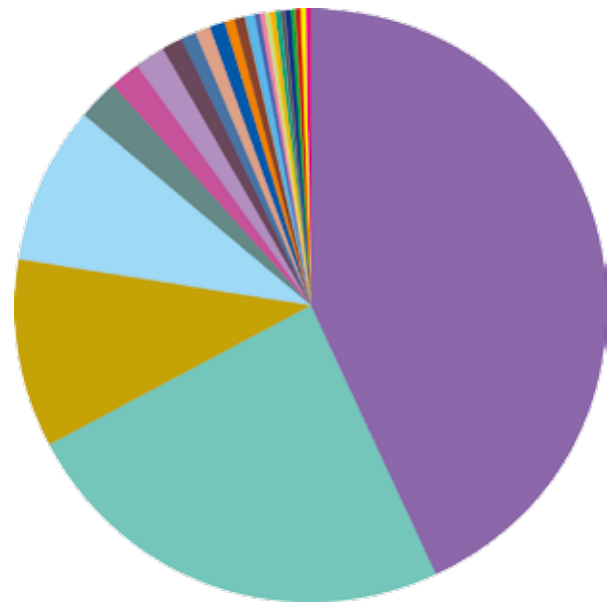
Size of firm	No. of firms		No. of trainee solicitors	
	2011	2010	2011	2010
Sole practitioners	355	347	46	40
2—5 partners	353	344	217	157
6—10 partners	44	44	150	158
11—20 partners	24	22	211	181
Over 20 partners	8	7	137	131
Total	784	764	761*	667#

*excluding 14 in government and 2 working "in-house"

#excluding 12 in government and 4 working "in-house"

Figure 9: Home jurisdictions of registered foreign lawyers in both foreign law firms and solicitors' firms

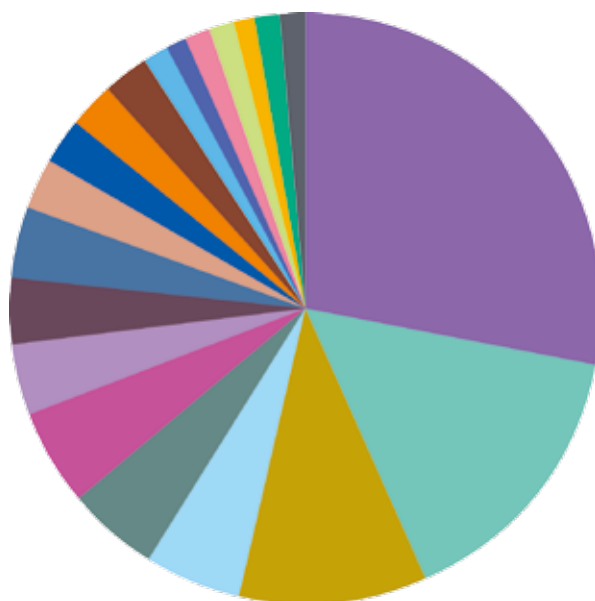
	Number	%
USA	592	43.18%
England and Wales	333	24.29%
Mainland China	139	10.14%
Australia	118	8.61%
Bermuda	29	2.12%
Singapore	25	1.82%
New Zealand	22	1.60%
France	15	1.09%
Germany	13	0.95%
Canada	12	0.88%
British Virgin Islands	11	0.80%
Italy	8	0.58%
The Philippines	7	0.51%
Sweden	6	0.44%
Cayman Islands	5	0.36%
Japan	5	0.36%
Malaysia	5	0.36%
The Netherlands	5	0.36%
Luxembourg	4	0.29%
India	3	0.22%
Belgium	2	0.15%
Guernsey	2	0.15%
Republic of Korea	2	0.15%
Scotland	2	0.15%
Switzerland	2	0.15%
Thailand	2	0.15%
Ireland	1	0.07%
Vietnam	1	0.07%



Notes: Of the 1,371 registered foreign lawyers, 327 worked in foreign law firms and 900 in solicitors' firms.

Figure 10: Home jurisdictions of foreign law firms

	Number	%
USA	22	28.21
Mainland China	12	15.38
England and Wales	8	10.26
Cayman Islands	4	5.13
France	4	5.13
Sweden	4	5.13
British Virgin Islands	3	3.85
Canada	3	3.85
Germany	3	3.85
Australia	2	2.56
Bermuda	2	2.56
The Philippines	2	2.56
Guernsey	2	2.56
Italy	1	1.28
Japan	1	1.28
Luxembourg	1	1.28
Malaysia	1	1.28
The Netherlands	1	1.28
Ireland	1	1.28
Switzerland	1	1.28



Notes: There were 73 foreign law firms in Hong Kong, of which one was registered to practice the laws of both Cayman Islands and BVI, one was registered to practice the laws of Cayman Islands and Guernsey, one was registered to practice the laws of Bermuda and BVI, one was registered to practice the laws of the USA and Malaysia, and one was registered to practice the laws of England and Wales and the USA. (In 2010, there were 72 foreign law firms, of which three were registered to practice the law of more than one jurisdiction.)

There were 30 Associations registered between foreign law firms and solicitors' firms (30 in 2010). 11 new foreign law firms commenced practice (8 in 2010). 10 foreign law firms were closed, eight of which established local practices. (In 2010, six were closed, five of which established local practices.)

There were 14,609 unqualified staff members employed by solicitors' firms at the end of the year (14,137 at the end of 2010). In addition, there were 446 unqualified staff members employed by foreign law firms at the end of 2011 (489 in 2010).

The Law Society continued to waive subscription for student members in 2011. By the end of the year, there were 306 student members registered with The Law Society (476 in 2010).

As of the end of December, there were 38 Law Society Approved Law Costs Draftsmen.

Compliance Department

