

Standing Committee on Compliance

The Standing Committee 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 nine times during the year and considered 170 agenda items (compared to 195 agenda items in 2011).

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 meeting attendances during the year:

| | | | |
|--|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Stephen W.S. HUNG (<i>Chairman</i>) | 8/9 | Jason C.K. LI | 9/9 |
| Angela W.Y. LEE (<i>Vice-Chairman</i>) | 8/9 | Peter C.L. LO | 7/9 |
| Denis G. BROCK | 6/9 | Billy W.Y. MA | 3/9 |
| Alfred K.H. CHAN | 9/9 | Catherine L.M. MUN | 6/9 |
| Charles C.C. CHAU | 7/9 | Gavin P. NESBITT | 8/9 |
| LAI Kwok Kwong | 3/9 | Kenneth S.Y. NG | 4/9 |
| Henson LAM | 7/9 | Hanifa RAMJAHN | 8/9 |
| Andrew Y.B. LEE | 8/9 | Annie P.Y. WONG | 9/9 |

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 2012, it handled 976 complaints (1,176 in 2011), of which 458 complaints were lodged or referred by members of the public and government organisations (498 in 2011) and 68 complaints were made by solicitors (115 in 2011). 1,022 files were closed during the year; of the 1,022 files closed, 574 were closed without seeking an explanation.

A new Investigation Counsel and a new Monitoring Accountant were employed to replace the outgoing Investigation Counsel and Monitoring Accountant.

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

INVESTIGATION COMMITTEES

Investigation Committees are ad-hoc Sub-Committees of the Standing Committee on Compliance. Three members of the Standing Committee 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.

Standing Committee on Compliance

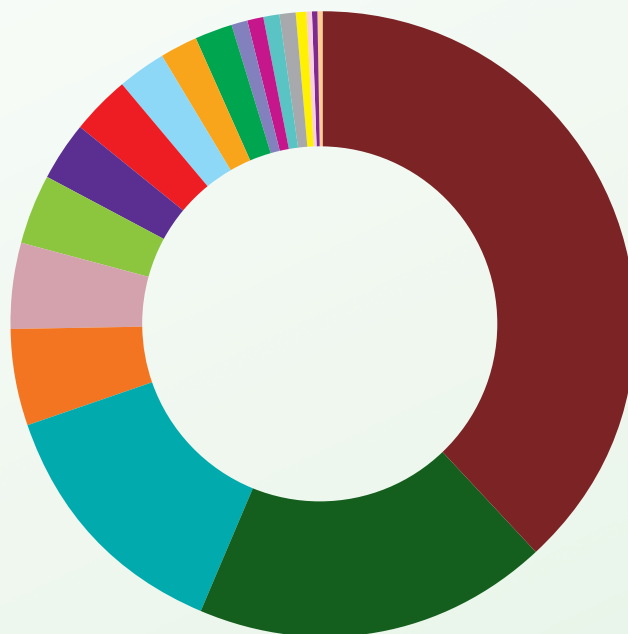
Investigation Committees considered 188 complaints by circulation of 188 agenda. (In 2011, 289 complaints were considered by circulation of 289 agenda.)

The Standing Committee on Compliance reviewed 22 decisions of the Investigation Committees and consequently, one new decision was resolved, 17 decisions were upheld, one was varied, three decisions were reversed. (In 2011, 12 decisions were reviewed, with seven upheld, three varied and two reversed.)

Determination of Complaints in 2012

Figure 1: Subject matter of complaints

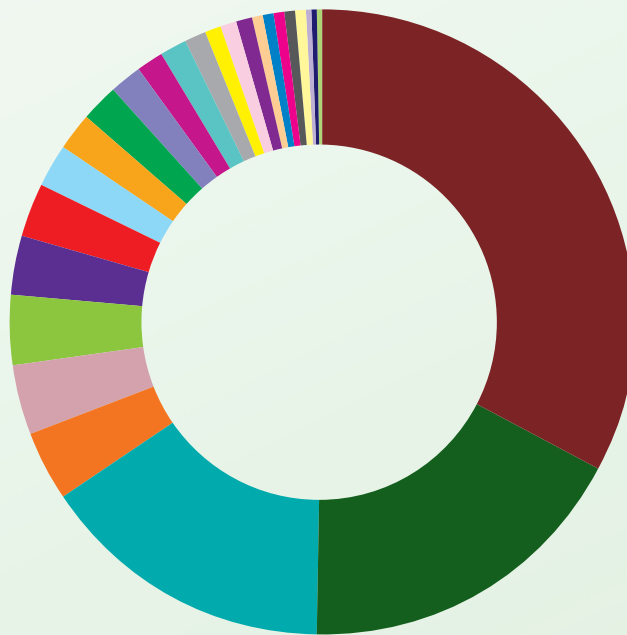
| | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Administrative/regulatory | 38.11% | 28.91% | 26.31% |
| Civil litigation | 18.34% | 23.21% | 21.57% |
| Conveyancing (H.K.) | 13.52% | 14.63% | 23.49% |
| Criminal | 4.92% | 6.46% | 4.74% |
| Matrimonial | 4.41% | 3.32% | 3.43% |
| Reports of purported law firms | 3.59% | 2.98% | 4.03% |
| Miscellaneous | 3.07% | 4.25% | 3.02% |
| Probate | 2.97% | 2.13% | 3.53% |
| Court inspections | 2.46% | 1.19% | 0.71% |
| Owners'/incorporated owners' disputes | 2.05% | 3.23% | 3.23% |
| Company/commercial | 1.84% | 7.14% | 2.02% |
| Bankruptcy | 0.92% | 0.68% | 0.60% |
| Landlord & tenant | 0.92% | 0.26% | 0.81% |
| Contract | 0.82% | 0.68% | 0.50% |
| Civil Celebrant | 0.82% | 0.17% | 0.81% |
| Inspections | 0.51% | — | — |
| Conveyancing (other than H.K.) | 0.31% | 0.17% | 0.30% |
| Media/promotion | 0.31% | 0.09% | 0.50% |
| Mediation | 0.10% | — | — |
| Election | — | 0.51% | — |
| Recovery agent | — | — | 0.20% |
| Legal visit | — | — | 0.20% |



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Figure 2: Nature of professional misconduct

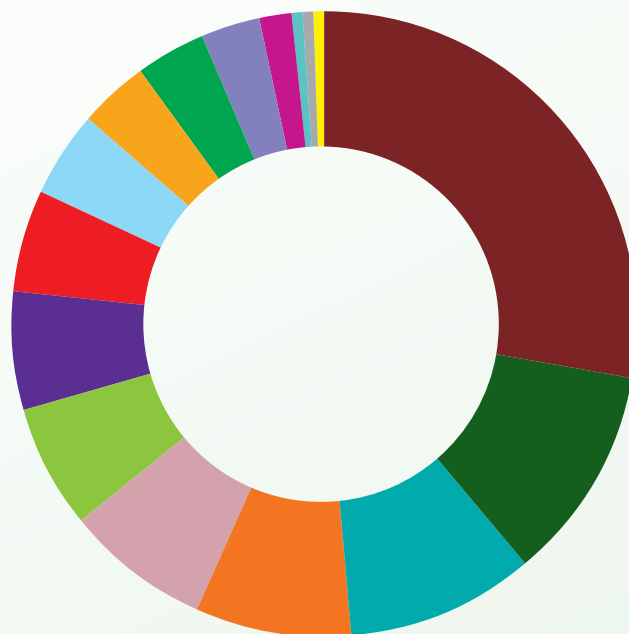
| | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| Breach of <i>Conduct Guide</i> Principles | 32.99% | 33.33% | 37.40% |
| Breach of <i>SPR</i> | 17.42% | 23.89% | 15.32% |
| Breach of <i>Solicitors' Accounts Rules</i> | 15.16% | 5.19% | 0.30% |
| Miscellaneous | 3.69% | 4.08% | 2.12% |
| Unqualified persons acting or pretending to be a solicitor (ss.45–48 of the <i>LPO</i>) | 3.59% | 3.06% | 4.03% |
| Circular no. 01-142 (COM) (Court attendance form) | 3.59% | 2.30% | 1.92% |
| Late submission of Accountant's Reports | 3.07% | 5.95% | 5.04% |
| Breach of <i>Foreign Lawyers Registration Rules</i> | 2.77% | 1.79% | — |
| Overcharging | 2.36% | 2.98% | 4.84% |
| Breach of undertaking | 1.95% | 2.89% | 6.55% |
| Breach of <i>Continuing Professional Development Rules</i> | 1.95% | 2.55% | 1.81% |
| Delay | 1.64% | 1.87% | 2.22% |
| Negligence | 1.33% | 1.45% | 1.61% |
| Dishonesty | 1.33% | 0.85% | 0.60% |
| Breach of <i>Foreign Lawyers Practice Rules</i> | 1.13% | 0.77% | 1.01% |
| Non-payment of barristers' fees | 1.02% | 0.77% | 1.41% |
| Misbehaviour | 0.72% | 1.02% | 2.02% |
| Conflict of interest | 0.72% | 0.60% | 0.81% |
| Breach of <i>Practice Directions</i> | 0.61% | 1.53% | 0.10% |
| Breach of <i>Solicitors (Professional Indemnity) Rules</i> (r.8) | 0.61% | 1.28% | 0.60% |
| Inadequate service | 0.61% | 0.68% | 3.23% |
| Breach of <i>Solicitors' Practice Promotion Code</i> | 0.61% | 0.17% | 0.50% |
| Failure to reply to letters on behalf of a client or to inquiries from The Law Society | 0.51% | 0.26% | 0.40% |
| Property fraud | 0.31% | — | 0.10% |
| Breach of <i>Risk Management Education Rules</i> | 0.10% | 0.26% | 3.02% |
| Touting | 0.10% | 0.09% | — |
| Commission taking | 0.10% | — | 2.22% |
| Practising without a practising certificate | — | 0.34% | — |
| Offences in relation to foreign lawyers, etc. (s.50B of the <i>LPO</i>) | — | 0.09% | 0.20% |
| Breach of <i>Trainee Solicitors Rules</i> | — | — | 0.40% |
| Breach of <i>Solicitors (Professional Indemnity) Rules</i> (general) | — | — | 0.20% |



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Figure 3: Analysis of closed files

| | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| No further action | 27.98% | 16.67% | 12.51% |
| Referred — Independent legal advice (including District Office) | 11.06% | 9.70% | 13.49% |
| Letter of regret | 9.88% | 16.14% | 13.13% |
| Letter of disapproval | 8.02% | 10.49% | 7.81% |
| Unpursuable | 7.53% | 8.99% | 9.32% |
| Unsubstantiated/ No professional misconduct | 6.56% | 6.17% | 5.86% |
| Pending | 6.16% | 4.85% | 6.30% |
| Letter of good practice | 5.19% | 6.26% | 7.99% |
| Withdrawn | 4.31% | 3.88% | 3.64% |
| Referred — relevant authorities | 3.72% | 4.14% | 3.64% |
| Referred — enforcement agencies | 3.62% | 3.44% | 4.17% |
| Resolved amicably | 3.13% | 4.06% | 8.25% |
| Referred — Tribunal Convenor | 1.66% | 2.65% | 2.40% |
| Referred — taxation | 0.49% | 0.88% | 1.15% |
| Referred — other departments of the Society | 0.39% | 1.32% | — |
| Referred — Joint Tribunal | 0.29% | 0.09% | — |
| Referred — others (including intervention agents) | — | 0.18% | 0.18% |
| Summary disposal | — | 0.09% | 0.09% |
| Referred — panel of prosecutors (for advice) | — | — | 0.09% |



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Inspections and visits

Under Section 8AA of the *Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap. 159* ("LPO"), the Council is empowered to appoint inspectors to verify compliance with the provisions of the LPO 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 2012, the Council made two resolutions under Section 8AA and one law firm was inspected six times as a result. In addition, 12 visits were made by Investigation Counsel to eight other law firms.

During the year, three court inspections were conducted by inspectors at magistrates' courts. For these court inspections, the Council appointed inspectors to verify compliance with rule 5D of the *Solicitors' Practice Rules ("SPR"), 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. 178 visits were made to 71 solicitors' firms and foreign law firms; some firms required more than one visit (101 visits to 49 firms in 2011).

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. If necessary, The Law Society may commence court applications to implement the Council's resolution to intervene. The intervention agents return documents to clients who have specifically requested their return or forward clients' documents to other firms of solicitors on the instructions of clients. 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 powers vested in the Council on the exercise of an intervention under Sections 26A, 26B or 26C of the LPO, are set out in Schedule 2 to the LPO.

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 2012, the Council resolved to intervene in the practice of four sole practitioners. The circumstances leading to the interventions varied; an individual acted as a solicitor at a time when he did not have a current practising certificate, two solicitors failed to comply with the *Solicitors' Accounts Rules, Cap. 159F* and a solicitor had become bankrupt.

During the year, The Law Society was also involved in several court proceedings arising from or related to interventions including bankruptcy proceedings against a solicitor who had failed to pay costs incurred in an intervention.

Standing Committee on Compliance

INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

The Investigation Committee (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 163 matters by circulation of 63 agenda. (In 2011, 228 matters were considered by circulation of 68 agenda.) The Law Society filed a bankruptcy petition against one solicitor after he had failed to pay costs incurred in disciplinary proceedings.

Disciplinary proceedings, appeals, summary disposals and judicial review

The Standing Committee on Compliance resolved to submit eight matters to the Tribunal Convenor of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel concerning the conduct of four solicitors and four clerks. Of these eight matters, one matter was resolved to be submitted to the Tribunal Convenor for him to dispose of on a summary basis. By December, six matters had been submitted to the Tribunal Convenor (16 in 2011).

A Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal is a statutory tribunal established by the *LPO*. 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 complaint on a summary basis.

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Nine disciplinary proceedings were determined by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunals in 2012 (compared to 15 in 2011) which resulted in the following Orders being made:

| Respondent | Position | Charge(s) | Penalty | Fine (HK\$) |
|------------|-----------|---|--|-------------|
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of rule 2(a), (c), (d) and (e) of the SPR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struck off Ordered to pay costs | |
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of rule 2(a) and (d) of the SPR and Principle 1.02 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struck off Ordered to pay costs | |
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 counts of Principles 12.04 and 12.05 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 4 counts of Principle 6.04 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 3 counts of rule 5(3) of the SPR 1 count of rule 2(d) and (e) of the SPR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspended from practice for 12 months Ordered to pay costs | |
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of Principle 14.02 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> 1 count of rule 2(e) of the SPR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject to conditional practice for 12 months from 1/5/2012 ordered to pay fixed costs of HK\$224,000 | 350,000 |
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of Principles 12.04 and 12.05 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Censured ordered to pay costs | 100,000 |
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 counts of Principles 5.12 and 6.01 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> and rule 2(c), (d) and (e) of the SPR 2 counts of Principle 2.03 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> and rule 2(c), (d) and (e) of the SPR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Censured Ordered to pay fixed costs of The Law Society and the Clerk and 70% of the costs of the Prosecutor | 50,000 |
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of Principle 6.04 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ordered to pay a fixed costs of HK\$450,000 | 25,000 |
| 1 | Solicitor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of rules 2 and 4 of the SPR and Principle 4.15 of the <i>Conduct Guide</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> censured ordered to pay 60% costs | 50,000 |
| 1 | Clerk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of disgraceful, dishonourable or discreditable conduct within the meaning of s.2(2) of the LPO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> censured ordered to pay ¼ of the 40% costs | 20,000 |
| 1 | Clerk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of disgraceful, dishonourable or discreditable conduct within the meaning of s.2(2) of the LPO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> censured ordered to pay ¼ of the 40% costs | 20,000 |
| 1 | Clerk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of disgraceful, dishonourable or discreditable conduct within the meaning of s.2(2) of the LPO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> censured ordered to pay ¼ of the 40% costs | 20,000 |
| 1 | Clerk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of disgraceful, dishonourable or discreditable conduct within the meaning of s.2(2) of the LPO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> censured ordered to pay ¼ of the 40% costs | 20,000 |
| 1 | Clerk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 count of disgraceful, dishonourable or discreditable conduct within the meaning of s.2(2) of the LPO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibited from employment with any solicitor or solicitors' firm or any foreign lawyer or foreign firm in Hong Kong for 50 years Ordered to pay fixed costs of HK\$56,522.41 | |

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

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

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

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In August, a respondent filed a notice of appeal against the findings and orders of a Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

In November, a complainant applied for judicial review against The Law Society.

In December, the Court of Appeal (“CA”) heard an appeal by a respondent against the findings and orders of a Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. The CA dismissed the appeal. The respondent then gave notice of his intention to apply to the CA for leave to appeal to the Court of Final Appeal.

CONSENTS COMMITTEE

The Consents Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Compliance. There are 12 members, of whom five are Council members.

The Consents Committee decides on applications made under the *LPO*, its subsidiary legislation and *The Law Society's Practice Directions* for registration by solicitors, registration as a trainee solicitor, registration as a foreign lawyer, registration as a foreign law firm, and consent and waiver. Reviews of the decisions of the Consents Committee are conducted by the Standing Committee on Compliance.

The Committee met 20 times during the year and considered 521 items while there were 20 meetings during last year when 477 items were considered. A further 54 matters were dealt with by circulation of five agenda; in 2011, 66 matters were considered by circulation of six agenda.

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 (*resigned in July*)

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 and one new officer post was created to manage the increasing workload resulting from the increase in membership of The Law Society.

In conjunction with the Conduct Section, the Registration Section reviewed, processed and filed 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 Registration Section and the Conduct Section continued to participate actively in The Law Society’s redevelopment and restructuring of its membership database and website.

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Nature of applications

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

| | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Admissions | 508 | 569 | 457 |
| Certificates of eligibility for admission | 557 | 454 | 525 |
| Practising certificates: English | 7,483 | 7,149 | 6,782 |
| Chinese | 3,440 | 3,005 | 2,770 |
| Practising certificates — removal of conditions under s.6(6) LPO (solicitors) | 197 | 159 | 146 |
| Membership | 8,562 | 8,448 | 7,986 |
| First registration as a foreign law firm | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| First registration as a foreign lawyer | 323 | 415 | 349 |
| Renewal of registration as a foreign lawyer | 1,235 | 1,136 | 1,007 |
| Removal of conditions on certificates of registration (foreign lawyers) | 69 | 56 | 69 |
| Registration as an Association | 13 | 6 | 10 |
| Removal of name from the roll of solicitors | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| Restoration of name to the roll of solicitors | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Admission of English barristers | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Qualifications for admission s.4(1A) LPO | 156 | 157 | 135 |
| Employment of staff: s.53(1) LPO | 1 | — | 2 |
| s.53(3) LPO | 7 | 2 | 7 |
| Practising certificates — removal of conditions under s.6(6A) LPO | 65 | 67 | 37 |
| Practising certificates — Special Conditions | 27 | 18 | 33 |
| Registration of first trainee solicitor contracts | 562 | 431 | 429 |
| Registration of subsequent trainee solicitor contracts | 122 | 61 | 71 |
| Special leave to employ trainee solicitors | 14 | 9 | 13 |
| Other trainee solicitor matters | 165 | 180 | 188 |
| Law costs draftsmen | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Accountant's report — solicitors' firms | 792 | 747 | 724 |
| Accountant's report — foreign law firms | 83 | 74 | 71 |
| Firm name and letterhead | 10 | 8 | 12 |
| Waiver applications — general | 17* | 6* | 1 |
| Waiver applications — <i>Practice Directions</i> | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Registration as an associate member | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Certificates of standing | 583 | 1,652 | 618 |
| Letters of no objection [#] | 815 | 1,000 | 915 |
| Authorised solicitors' clerks | 35 | 42 | 85 |

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

* Applications were under the *SPR, Cap. 159H*; the *Accountant's Report Rules, Cap. 159A*; *Foreign Lawyers Registration Rules, Cap. 159S*; and *Foreign Lawyers Practice Rules, Cap. 159R*.

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

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Figure 4: Admission of solicitors 2003–2012

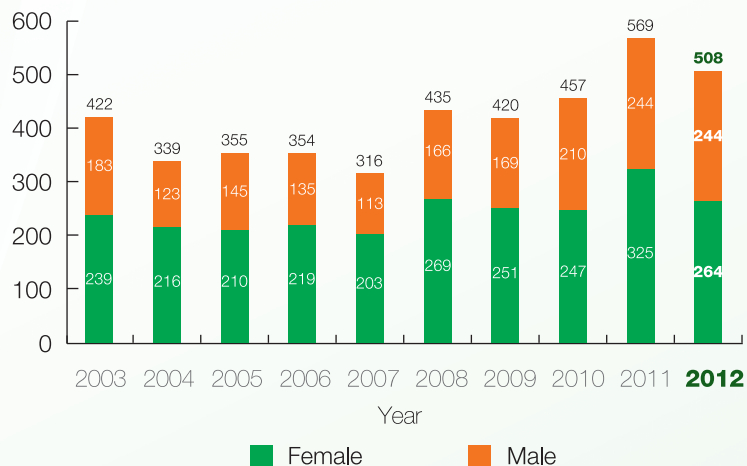


Figure 5: Practising Certificates issued 2003–2012

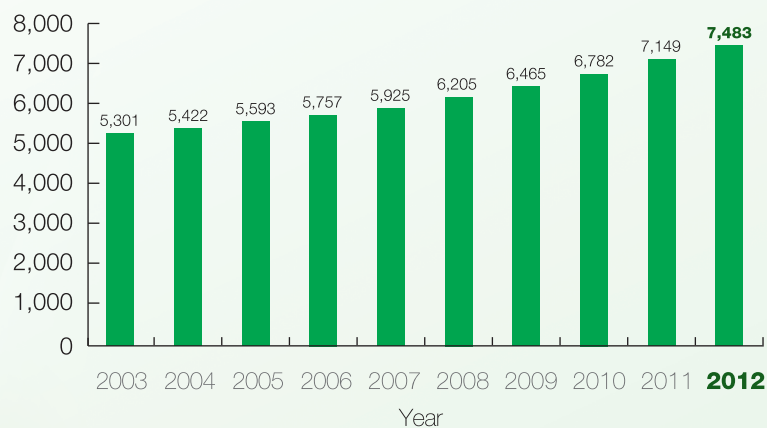
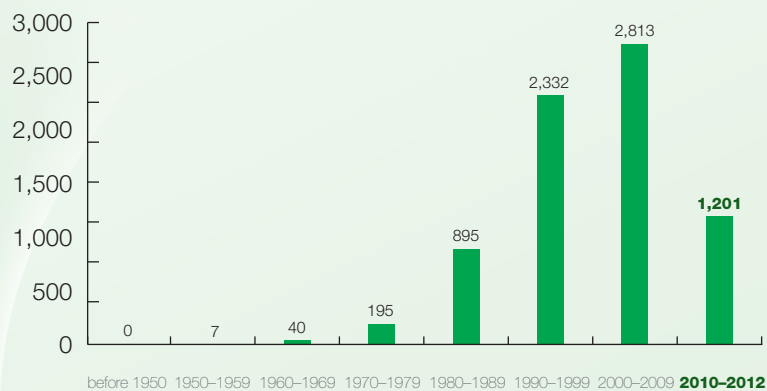


Figure 6: Years of admission of solicitors holding a 2012 practising certificate



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

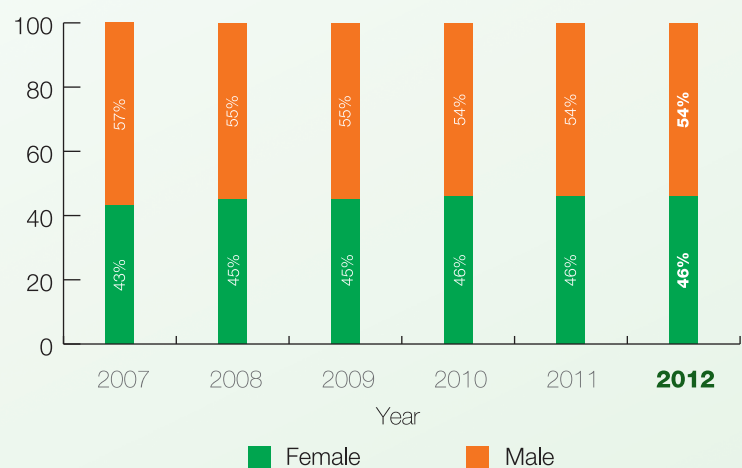


Figure 7b: Gender ratio — Trainee solicitors

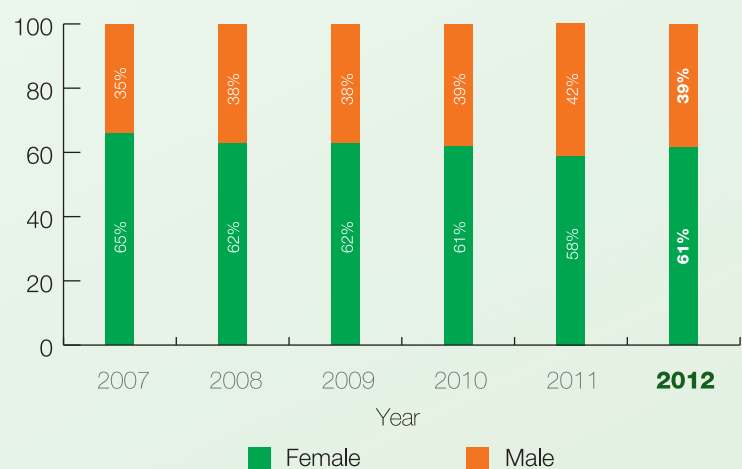
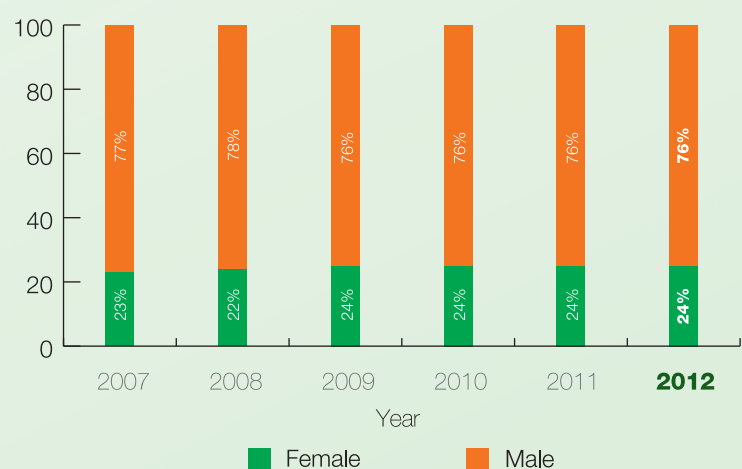


Figure 7c: Gender ratio — Partners



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Figure 8: Size of solicitors' firms and number of trainee solicitors in 2012

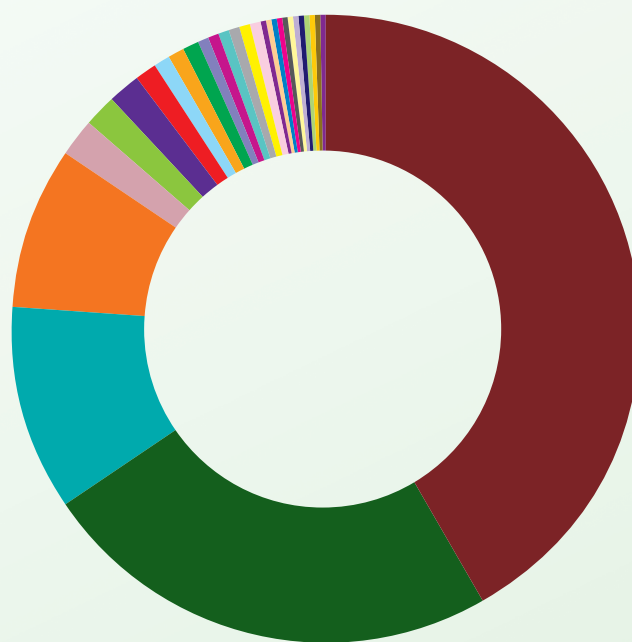
| Size of firm | No. of firms | | No. of trainee solicitors | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 |
| Sole practitioners | 364 | 355 | 54 | 46 |
| 2–5 partners | 356 | 353 | 271 | 217 |
| 6–10 partners | 49 | 44 | 210 | 150 |
| 11–20 partners | 28 | 24 | 228 | 211 |
| Over 20 partners | 9 | 8 | 159 | 137 |
| Total | 806 | 784 | 922* | 761[#] |

* excluding 15 in government and 3 working "in-house"

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

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

| | Number | % |
|------------------------|--------|-------|
| USA | 584 | 42.47 |
| England and Wales | 332 | 24.15 |
| Mainland China | 148 | 10.76 |
| Australia | 117 | 8.51 |
| Bermuda | 28 | 2.04 |
| Singapore | 23 | 1.67 |
| New Zealand | 21 | 1.53 |
| British Virgin Islands | 14 | 1.02 |
| Canada | 14 | 1.02 |
| France | 11 | 0.80 |
| Italy | 9 | 0.65 |
| Cayman Islands | 8 | 0.58 |
| Germany | 8 | 0.58 |
| Japan | 7 | 0.51 |
| The Philippines | 7 | 0.51 |
| Luxembourg | 6 | 0.44 |
| The Netherlands | 6 | 0.44 |
| Sweden | 5 | 0.36 |
| Belgium | 4 | 0.29 |
| India | 4 | 0.29 |
| Malaysia | 4 | 0.29 |
| Republic of Korea | 3 | 0.22 |
| Switzerland | 3 | 0.22 |
| Guernsey | 2 | 0.15 |
| Ireland | 2 | 0.15 |
| Thailand | 2 | 0.15 |
| The Isle of Man | 1 | 0.07 |
| Scotland | 1 | 0.07 |
| Vietnam | 1 | 0.07 |

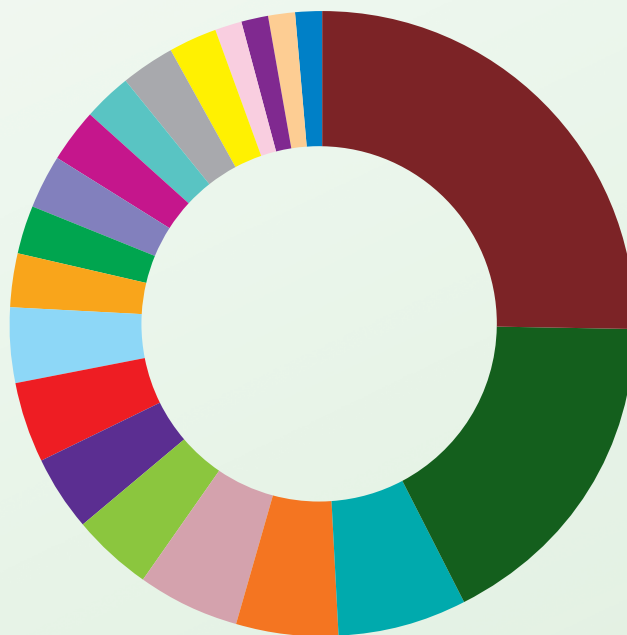


Notes: Of the 1,375 registered foreign lawyers, 322 worked in foreign law firms and 922 in solicitors' firms.

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Figure 10: Home jurisdictions of foreign law firms

| | Number | % |
|------------------------|--------|-------|
| USA | 19 | 25.33 |
| Mainland China | 13 | 17.33 |
| England and Wales | 5 | 6.67 |
| Cayman Islands | 4 | 5.33 |
| France | 4 | 5.33 |
| British Virgin Islands | 3 | 4.00 |
| Canada | 3 | 4.00 |
| Germany | 3 | 4.00 |
| Sweden | 3 | 4.00 |
| Belgium | 2 | 2.67 |
| Bermuda | 2 | 2.67 |
| Guernsey | 2 | 2.67 |
| Italy | 2 | 2.67 |
| Luxembourg | 2 | 2.67 |
| The Philippines | 2 | 2.67 |
| Switzerland | 2 | 2.67 |
| Australia | 1 | 1.33 |
| Ireland | 1 | 1.33 |
| Japan | 1 | 1.33 |
| Malaysia | 1 | 1.33 |



Notes: There were 70 foreign law firms in Hong Kong, of which one was registered to practise the laws of both Cayman Islands and BVI, one was registered to practise the laws of Cayman Islands and Guernsey, one was registered to practise the laws of Bermuda and BVI, one was registered to practise the laws of the USA and Malaysia, and one was registered to practise the laws of England and Wales and the USA. (In 2011, there were 73 foreign law firms, of which five were registered to practise the law of more than one jurisdiction.)

There were 32 Associations registered between foreign law firms and solicitors' firms (30 in 2011). 11 new foreign law firms commenced practice (11 in 2011). 14 foreign law firms were closed, nine of which established local practices. (In 2011, 10 were closed, eight of which established local practices.)

There were 14,874 unqualified staff members employed by solicitors' firms at the end of the year (14,609 at the end of 2011). In addition, there were 450 unqualified staff members employed by foreign law firms at the end of 2012 (446 in 2011).

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. By December, there were 965 authorised solicitors' clerks (960 in 2011).

The Law Society continued to waive subscription fees for student members in 2012. By the end of the year, there were 260 student members registered with The Law Society (306 in 2011).

At the end of December, the number of Law Society Approved Law Costs Draftsmen was 37.

Standing Committee on Compliance



Compliance Department