



## NATIONAL DISCIPLINE STANDARDS

(Approved June 2016)

### Timeliness

1. **Telephone inquiries:**  
75% of telephone inquiries are acknowledged within one business day and 100% within two business days.
2. **Written complaints:**  
100% of written complaints are acknowledged in writing within three business days.
3. **Timeline to resolve or refer complaint:**
  - (a) 80% of all complaints are resolved or referred for a disciplinary or remedial response within 12 months.  
  
90% of all complaints are resolved or referred for a disciplinary or remedial response within 18 months.
  - (b) Where a complaint is resolved and the complainant initiates an internal review or internal appeal process:  
80% of all internal reviews or internal appeals are decided within 90 days.  
  
90% of all internal reviews or internal appeals are decided within 120 days.
  - (c) Where a complaint has been referred back to the investigation stage from an internal review or internal appeal process:  
80% of those matters are resolved or referred for a disciplinary or remedial response within a further 12 months.  
  
90% of those matters are resolved or referred for a disciplinary or remedial response within a further 18 months.
4. **Contact with complainant**  
For 90% of open complaints there is contact with the complainant at least once every 90 days during the investigation stage.
5. **Contact with lawyer or Québec notary:**  
For 90% of open complaints there is contact with the lawyer or Québec notary at least once every 90 days during the investigation stage.

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### **Hearings**

6. 75% of citations or notices of hearings are issued and served upon the lawyer or Québec notary within 60 days of authorization.  
  
95% of citations or notices of hearings are issued and served upon the lawyer or Québec notary within 90 days of authorization.
7. 75% of all hearings commence within 9 months of authorization.  
90% of all hearings commence within 12 months of authorization.
8. Reasons for 90% of all decisions are rendered within 90 days from the last date the panel receives submissions.
9. Each law society will report annually to its governing body on the status of the standards.

### **Public Participation**

10. There is public participation at every stage of discipline; e.g. on all hearing panels of three or more; at least one public representative; on the charging committee, at least one public representative.
11. There is a complaints review process in which there is public participation for complaints that are disposed of without going to a charging committee.

### **Transparency**

12. Hearings are open to the public.
13. Reasons are provided for any decision to close hearings.
14. Notices of charge or citation are published promptly after a date for the hearing has been set.
15. Notices of hearing dates are published at least 60 days prior to the hearing, or such shorter time as the pre-hearing process allows.
16. There is an ability to share information about a lawyer or Québec notary who is a member of another law society with that other law society when an investigation is underway in a manner that protects solicitor-client privilege, or there is an obligation on the lawyer or Québec notary to disclose to all law societies of which he/she is a member that there is an investigation underway.
17. There is an ability to report to police about criminal activity in a manner that protects solicitor/client privilege.

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**Accessibility**

18. A complaint help form is available to complainants.
19. There is a directory available with status information on each lawyer or Québec notary, including easily accessible information on discipline history.

**Qualification of Adjudicators and Volunteers**

20. There is ongoing mandatory training for all adjudicators, including training on decision writing, with refresher training no less often than once a year and the curriculum for mandatory training will comply with the national curriculum if and when it is available.
21. There is mandatory orientation for all volunteers involved in conducting investigations or in the charging process to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to do the job.