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What's New for Chambers USA in 2017?

RankingsForLawyers®

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On April 22, Chambers and Partners released the 2017 USA research schedule, and a collective groan was heard throughout law firm hallways everywhere. Everyone agrees that being recognized by Chambers is a major accomplishment and worth the time and effort of completing the submission. Everyone also agrees that the process of crafting a compelling legal ranking submission is daunting. Fortunately, there are several steps you can take now to streamline the process.

What Changed for 2017?

While most submission deadlines remain the same, there have been a few key changes in health care for Florida, Texas and nationwide, and mediators for nationwide. Now is the time to familiarize yourself with the schedule for your practice areas and prepare a project plan.

Additionally, Chambers has added a few a new sections in:

- Alabama Health Care
- California Native American Law
- Texas Litigation: White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations
- Upstate New York Real Estate

After you have checked the submission deadlines, make sure you download a copy of the submission template and referee template. Both documents have been revised this year. The major change to both is that Chambers will now accept up to 20 matters and 20 referees.

Another key change in the submission template is that it has been divided into "Publishable" and "Confidential" sections, both for matters and clients.

Check the Schedule Frequently

Familiarize yourself with the schedule. At this time, researchers have not yet been assigned to practice areas. Check back at least once a week to see if there have been any revisions. In past years Chambers has offered some flexibility in submission deadlines, this year they encourage firms to submit by the deadline. They noted, while late submission files will be accepted, they cannot guarantee those arriving after the deadline will receive the same level of attention as those arriving by the deadline. When submissions are received, the information will be incorporated into the research process as time allows.

Also, save yourself the headache later in the process by making sure you can log into your account and that Chambers has your contact information.

Assemble the team

It is key to identify who will oversee the Chambers submission project, who will provide content and who needs to approve the final submission. We have found that it is best to have one person who is responsible for managing internal deadlines while also coordinating the content and the approval process. By establishing who is responsible for final approval, you avoid the 11th-hour panic and the possibility of being overwhelmed with feedback from too many sources. The best submissions generally have input from four to five key attorneys in the practice area.

Simplify, Simplify, Simplify

At LMA's annual conference, Laura Mills shared an example of a good matter write-up. The key point was to be succinct. In fewer than 100 words, the recap highlighted what the law firm did, why it was important and the outcome. Keep in mind that researchers read hundreds of these ranking submissions. As a legal marketer, you are in the position of knowing the ins and outs of your law firm. To aid the process, draft a recap of the matters you think should be included, then meet with the attorneys to discuss the details and significant litigation highlights to include. And don't forget to keep it simple!

For additional tips on completing the Chambers submission process, you can read 6 Tips to Improve Your Chambers Rankings Submission Process. If you have any questions regarding the Chambers schedule or submission process – or want help organizing and preparing submissions – please contact rankings@jaffepr.com.