



General Terms and Conditions of Rechtswinkel Heerlen

1. These General Terms and Conditions apply to each legal advice seeker who is part of the target group and who appeals to the Rechtswinkel Heerlen's ('Heerlen Legal Advice Desk') legal advice service.
2. Rechtswinkel Heerlen, with its registered office at Maanplein 88, 6412 AZ Heerlen, the Netherlands, is part of the Faculty of Law of the Open Universiteit, a legal entity under public law, with its place of business at Valkenburgerweg 117, 6419 AT Heerlen, the Netherlands, registered in the Chamber of Commerce's Trade Register under number 14128608. Rechtswinkel Heerlen's field of activity is the provision of free legal advice.
3. Rechtswinkel Heerlen helps only those people whom it considers part of its target group.¹ This may be a person on a low income or a person who is unable to live independently. A legal advice seeker may occasionally be required to submit evidence (such as a payslip) of belonging to this target group. If a legal advice seeker is unable to provide such evidence or provide it in time, Rechtswinkel Heerlen may decide to close their case.
4. Rechtswinkel Heerlen's legal advice is provided by students from a faculty of law or law school at a university of applied sciences. Their work at Rechtswinkel Heerlen forms part of their training. Two legally trained team leaders and a legally trained coordinator (the 'professional staff') support the students and supervise the students' service delivery.
5. Rechtswinkel Heerlen's working languages are English and Dutch. If a legal advice seeker is unable to adequately understand or express themselves in English or Dutch, they must arrange an interpreter themselves.
6. A case is handled by a student. The student works part-time on the case. As a result, it may not always be possible to contact the student handling a case or to receive an immediate answer to a question. The student and the legal advice seeker agree on how often the student updates the legal advice seeker on their case.
7. The student and the professional staff at Rechtswinkel Heerlen do their utmost to help the legal advice seeker as well as possible with their case. This is known as a 'best-efforts obligation'. Rechtswinkel Heerlen provides no guarantee of the progress or outcome of a case. At the earliest possible moment, the legal advice seeker must disclose to the student handling their case all information and documentation relevant to their case. This is key to providing the legal advice seeker with effective support. If a legal advice seeker is unable to provide such evidence or provide evidence in time, Rechtswinkel Heerlen may decide to close their case.
8. Rechtswinkel Heerlen is not obliged to take on a case. Rechtswinkel Heerlen takes on cases at its discretion on the basis of its policy and an equal consideration of interests.
9. Rechtswinkel Heerlen operates a walk-in session and scheduled appointment model. Rechtswinkel Heerlen endeavours to provide advice at these times. If this is not possible, Rechtswinkel Heerlen provides advice in writing at a later point in time. Unless agreed otherwise, this advice is provided within two weeks of the walk-in session or scheduled appointment.
10. The legal advice seeker should be aware that the information and advice they receive is given by a student. Rechtswinkel Heerlen's professional staff check all information and advice given.
11. Rechtswinkel Heerlen is entitled to close a case at any time. Rechtswinkel Heerlen must always provide a reason for doing so. If possible, and if the legal advice seeker so desires, Rechtswinkel Heerlen may refer the legal advice seeker to a third party or organisation with which Rechtswinkel Heerlen collaborates.
12. Rechtswinkel Heerlen's services are free of charge. However, the legal advice seeker may be liable to pay certain costs. If Rechtswinkel Heerlen must incur costs, it will always consult with the legal advice seeker in advance of incurring these costs and request the legal advice seeker's explicit consent.

¹ Rechtswinkel Heerlen's target group is comprised of people on a low income, people in problem debt, people who earn just above the threshold to access free legal advice, senior citizens (65 years of age and above), children and youth (up to 23 years of age), students, and people who are vulnerable in other ways.



13. If legal proceedings are started with the district court or another body, the legal advice seeker is liable to pay any associated costs, such as court fees. Rechtswinkel Heerlen discusses this with the legal advice seeker in advance. The legal advice seeker makes the ultimate decision whether or not to start legal proceedings.
14. Rechtswinkel Heerlen has a zero-tolerance policy on aggression towards its employees. A student is obliged to report a case of aggression to their team leader or the coordinator. If a legal advice seeker is aggressive, Rechtswinkel Heerlen may close their case immediately, report them to the police and may also choose to take other action.
15. The owner of the building in which Rechtswinkel Heerlen has its registered office has fitted CCTV and taken other security measures to ensure the safety of legal advice seekers, other visitors, the service users of the Municipality of Heerlen (Gemeente Heerlen) and the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV), and all employees of these organisations.
16. Rechtswinkel Heerlen handles a legal advice seeker's personal data with care and in observation of data protection laws and regulations. For more information, please see Rechtswinkel Heerlen's additional privacy policy on its website (www.rechtswinkelheerlen.nl). This additional privacy policy describes how long Rechtswinkel Heerlen keeps a case file and what action a legal advice seeker can take if they object this. A legal advice seeker may request a paper copy of the additional privacy policy.
17. A legal advice seeker's case file may be used for internal evaluation or consultation purposes. A case file may also be used as the basis of an article (e.g. in a scientific journal), to gather data for research purposes, or for social media. If a case file is used in this way, it will be fully anonymised at all times.
18. Once a case is completed, Rechtswinkel Heerlen will retain the case file in its digital archive. Rechtswinkel Heerlen's additional privacy policy applies during the retention period of the file and governs the handling of the personal data stored in the file.
19. As an organisation, Rechtswinkel Heerlen appoints law students as student helpers. The students, professional staff and Rechtswinkel Heerlen are not personally or otherwise liable for the contents of advice given, nor for the consequences of implementing advice.
20. If Rechtswinkel Heerlen is liable for an error in a case, the amount of Rechtswinkel Heerlen's liability is limited to the financial value of the case and is never higher than €5,000 per case file. The limitation or exclusion of liability in this article does not apply in so far as the loss results directly from recklessness or intention on the part of Rechtswinkel Heerlen.
21. Rechtswinkel Heerlen is not liable for loss caused by the use of its website, the information contained on the website, or if the website or the information contained on it are unusable.
22. If a legal advice seeker receives compensation for the cost of legal advice fees (such as a lawyer's or attorney's fees or costs of proceedings) or if the legal advice seeker receives compensation for the cost of collecting the amount to which the legal advice seeker is entitled (such as collection costs), this compensation is owed to Rechtswinkel Heerlen, as Rechtswinkel Heerlen has incurred those fees.
23. If Rechtswinkel Heerlen believes that its service is being used for an unlawful purpose, a purpose that it finds undesirable or a purpose that breaches these General Terms and Conditions, Rechtswinkel Heerlen has the option to deprive the legal advice seeker of their right to continue to access its services.
24. If the legal advice seeker is dissatisfied or has a complaint, they must first discuss this with the student handling their case. If this does not lead to a suitable solution, the legal advice seeker can refer their complaint to the coordinator of Rechtswinkel Heerlen. If the legal advice seeker believes that they have suffered from loss as a result of the incorrect handling of their case and that Rechtswinkel Heerlen is liable for this loss, the coordinator will contact the legal advice seeker and subsequently forward the complaint to the Dean of the Open Universiteit's Faculty of Law for an opinion. The Dean will reach a decision on the complaint within six weeks.
25. Rechtswinkel Heerlen has the right to unilaterally amend one or more articles of these General Terms and Conditions. If a provision of these General Terms and Conditions is found to be invalid, this does not affect the validity of the other provisions of the General Terms and Conditions.

Adopted by the Dean of the Open Universiteit's Faculty of Law on 2 September 2024.