

Instructions for application for admission to the Swedish Bar Association

1. Introduction

1.1 Basic requirements for admission to the Swedish Bar Association

Rules regarding admission of members are contained in the Code of Judicial Procedure (Chapter 8, section 2) and in the Charter of the Swedish Bar Association (section 3). In summary, the Charter states that the applicant must:

1. be domiciled in Sweden or another state within the EU or the EEA or in Switzerland;
2. have passed the proficiency exams prescribed for qualification to serve in the judiciary (law degree or equivalent older degree, see Judicial Qualifications (Proficiency Exams) Regulation (2007:386);
3. have successfully completed the Bar Association's training course for the bar exam;
4. have engaged in qualified legal practice in a satisfactory manner for a period of not less than three years after passing the above-mentioned proficiency exams, in which context they have, in their professional capacity, been dedicated to assisting the general public in legal matters, either as an employee of a member or as self-employed;
5. have become known for their integrity; and
6. be otherwise deemed suitable to practise law as a member of the Bar Association.

The full text of section 3 of the Charter of the Swedish Bar Association can be found below (see [section 6, Statutory Provisions](#), in this document).

The Board of the Swedish Bar Association may grant exemptions from these requirements in certain cases. Special provisions apply to applicants from other EU and EEA countries or Switzerland who are already lawyers or who meet all requirements to become a lawyer in those countries.

1.2 When and how do I submit my application?

An application for admission is considered by the Board of the Swedish Bar Association. The Board meets approximately once a month, with the exception of summer breaks.

The Board's schedule of meetings is available on [the Bar Association's website](#).

In general, an application is considered at the first board meeting that is held three months after the application was received by the Bar Association's secretariat, *unless* the application needs to be supplemented. If the application must be supplemented in any respect – with the exception of the bar exam and the professional contacts appendix – the application is instead considered at the first Board that is held three months after the date



on which the application was complete. You do not need to have fulfilled the requirement of three years of qualified legal practice before submitting your application (see [section 2, Requirement of qualified legal practice](#), in this document regarding the three-year requirement).

Application documents are available on [the Bar Association's website](#). The original of the application is to be sent by post to the Swedish Bar Association, Box 27321, SE-102 54 Stockholm, Sweden. Appendices to the application need not be originals but must be submitted together with the application.

Supplemental information, if any, can be sent by e-mail. Documents in the matter are not returned to the applicant.

1.3 If your information changes after you have submitted your application

In your application you declare, on your honour, that the information contained in the application and its appendices and any supplements submitted in connection with the application is complete and correct. If your information changes after the application has been submitted, you must supplement your application as soon as possible. You are not obligated to provide information about new additional professional contacts.

2. Requirement of qualified legal practice

The main rule is that the applicant, for a period of not less than three years after graduating law school, has engaged in qualified legal practice by, in their professional capacity, assisting the general public in legal matters, either as an employee of a member or as self-employed, and also does so at the time of the application (“three-year requirement”).

You can receive credit for time worked beginning when you graduated law school (see [section 3.2, Examination appendices](#), in this document). When calculating time, a year is 12 months and one month is regarded as 30 days. The practice must be full-time and with full-time activity. Absence and employment by a person other than a member may affect the calculation of time. You can accumulate time worked up to and including the date when the Board meets.

With regard to absences, the following applies:

- (a) absences due to normal holidays need not be deducted from time worked;
- (b) absences due to illness or parental leave must be deducted and declared if the total is one month or more;
- (c) other absences, such as a leave of absence, must always be declared and deducted;
- (d) absences due to illness or parental leave while the Board is considering the application are not *per se* an obstacle to consideration of your application if you met the three-year requirement before the absence.

Example: If you have worked full-time with full-time activity for two years and then part-time at 75% with full activity for one year, you are considered to have completed two years and nine months of the three-year requirement.



2.1 Work as an associate in a law firm

For employment as an associate with a member of the Bar Association, you must submit a special certificate of employment (known as a “2.1-certificate”). Certificates must be issued for all employments by members and must include the following:

- (a) information regarding the length of employment;
- (b) whether the employment was full-time or part-time (if part-time, indicate the extent) and any absences;
- (c) information regarding the extent to which you have had full-time activity;
- (d) a report of the type of matters you worked on and the legal areas you have worked with;
- (e) a declaration that the activities were carried out under appropriate supervision by a named member who has carried out the supervision;
- (f) a declaration that you possess satisfactory knowledge of professional ethics and professional conduct;
- (g) a statement that you are of good character and otherwise fit for the legal profession; and
- (h) *if* your average monthly salary during the time of the three-year requirement has not been at least equal to the starting salary for court clerks at the time of application, state the reasons.

If, in the course of your employment at the law firm, you worked for a client company by way of secondment, the time worked can, in some cases, be fully credited as work as an associate in a law firm (see [circular no. 15/2013](#)). If the nature of the employment is such that such work can be credited, this can be done up to a maximum of six months of time worked. However, you may not count the work at the client company as employment at a law firm if you apply for a waiver of one of the three years of the three-year requirement and the work at the client company is needed to fulfil two of the three years of employment at a law firm (for more information about waivers, see [section 2.3, Application for waiver of the three-year requirement](#), in this document).

A member must issue a 2.1-certificate upon request. If the member is unable to certify a required piece of information, this must be stated and the reasons given. Information in a 2.1-certificate can affect the calculation of time.

2.2 Working in your own legal practice

Certificates and information for applications by self-employed applicants

If you have conducted your own legal practice, you must provide some documentation to prove that you have engaged in qualified legal practice by professionally assisting the general public in legal matters. As an applicant you must, for example, demonstrate familiarity with operating your business in respect of financial, organisational and administrative management. The business must have been carried out primarily for your own benefit and at your own risk. The business must, both in fact and in its outward appearance to the general public, clients, courts, and law enforcement authorities, be carried out by an independent professional in the sense that it has been independent and autonomous (see, *inter alia*, NJA 2016 p. 841).



When submitting your application, you must therefore attach the following certificates:

- (a) certificate of incorporation for the company;
- (b) auditor's certificate from an approved or authorised auditor, showing that all accounts of the business have been kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The auditor's certificate for the preceding year must also include information as to whether the accounts comply with the accounting regulations of the Swedish Bar Association;
- (c) copies of accounting documents for all years (income statements and balance sheets);
- (d) information regarding lawyers employed in the business and, if there are such lawyers, the turnover attributable to you as the applicant and relevant financial years. Information regarding the turnover attributable to you must be verified by an approved or authorised auditor.

During the processing of your application, the secretary of the Department Board of the Department where your practice is located will visit your office. The purpose of the visit is to assess the office's suitability for practising law as a member of the Bar Association. Areas to be checked include general office organisation, equipment, handling of client funds, and procedures for records and archives. Further examples of what may be reviewed during the visit can be found on the Bar Association's website.

Time calculation in connection with self-employment

For the purposes of calculating the time spent in self-employed legal practice, in addition to what was mentioned in the introduction regarding the scope of employment and absences, the following applies.

The primary basis for assessing the scope of the practice is the net turnover of your practice. If the practice has or has had more employees than you alone, this must be indicated, and you must calculate the time based on the turnover attributable to you personally.

The following applies to qualification time accrued after 1 January 2002. In order for your practice to be regarded as having been run professionally on a full-time basis, you must be able to show that net turnover per calendar year is equivalent to at least 1,000 hours multiplied by the applicable hourly rate in effect for legal aid excluding VAT (see table below).

If the net turnover does not reach this level, credit may be given at $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year. Thus, if the turnover in a given year is 60% of 1,000 hours multiplied by the standard hourly rate, $\frac{1}{2}$ of one year of professional activities may be counted. If the turnover is less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the specified level, no qualification time is credited. Even if the net turnover exceeds 1,000 hours, you cannot be credited with more than one year.

Example (all excluding VAT): If the net turnover for 2020 is SEK950,000 (approx. 67% of SEK1,404,000), six months of activity are credited for 2020.



Year	Turnover requirements (excl. VAT)	Year	Turnover requirements (excl. VAT)
2024	SEK1,531,000	2016	SEK1,323,000
2023	SEK1,476,000	2015	SEK1,302,000
2022	SEK1,442,000	2014	SEK1,276,000
2021	SEK1,425,000	2013	SEK1,242,000
2020	SEK1,404,000	2012	SEK1,205,000
2019	SEK1,380,000	2011	SEK1,166,000
2018	SEK1,359,000	2010	SEK1,134,000
2017	SEK1,342,000		

For qualification time which accrued prior to 1 January 2002, you must be able to show income for the years of the qualification period equivalent to at least 1,000 chargeable hours at $\frac{2}{3}$ of the applicable standard hourly rate for legal aid.

2.3 Application for waiver of the three-year requirement

Eligible work

In some cases, the Board may grant a waiver of the three-year requirement in view of *special circumstances*. In order to be granted a waiver, you must have experience of other practical, qualified, legal work (eligible work). Examples of eligible work are employment in the judicial career path, as a prosecutor, or as a company lawyer. Since experience as a law clerk is a valuable and appreciated qualification for associates, employment as a law clerk may also be eligible. Work at a court or a public authority in cases other than those stated above is, as a general rule, not eligible unless the employment involved qualified decision-making or litigation. The question of whether the position constitutes eligible work is considered by the Board on the basis of the information contained in the proofs of employment that you submit with your application.

Waivers due to special circumstances may be granted for a maximum of one year of the three-year requirement. You may be granted a waiver for up to one-third of the time actually worked.

Example for the calculation of eligible time: You have worked as a public prosecutor for one year. If there are special circumstances, the Board can grant you a waiver for a maximum of four months (one-third of one year). In such case, you must have worked full-time and with full-time activity as an associate in a law firm for at least two years and eight months at the time of the Board's assessment.

Special circumstances

A waiver from the three-year requirement for up to one year requires *special circumstances*. The mere existence of eligible employment is not in itself sufficient to constitute special circumstances for a waiver. In the application, you will be asked to state the special circumstances that you are relying on for a waiver. In connection with assessing whether special circumstances exist, consideration will be taken of, for example, the length



of the waiver period, the type of employment relied on as a basis for the waiver, and the content of the suitability report obtained in the matter. When determining whether special circumstances exist and whether a waiver should be granted, an overall assessment is made of all of the circumstances related to the matter, which means that the mere existence of an eligible service is not sufficient in itself.

3. Appendices regarding personal knowledge, law school graduation and bar exam, and other information on employment, financial circumstances, possible offences and cases, etc.

3.1 Personal information appendices

You will need to provide supporting documents to prove the requirements regarding residence, no guardianship and no bankruptcy. The documentation must be dated and not more than two months old as of the date when the Swedish Bar Association receives the application.

If you are resident in Sweden, you must submit the following certificates.

- (a) Proof of residence and proof of change of name after graduation from law school, if you changed your name after law school (Swedish Tax Agency)
- (b) Certificate that no guardianship is in place, Chapter 11, section 7 of the Parental Code (Chief Guardian).
- (c) Extract from the debt register containing personal identification number and information that a search has been made in the Swedish Enforcement Authority's enforcement and collection database (the Swedish Enforcement Authority).
- (d) Certificate of no bankruptcy (Swedish Companies Registration Office)

If you are domiciled in another EU or EEA country or Switzerland, corresponding documentation must be provided based on the circumstances in that country.

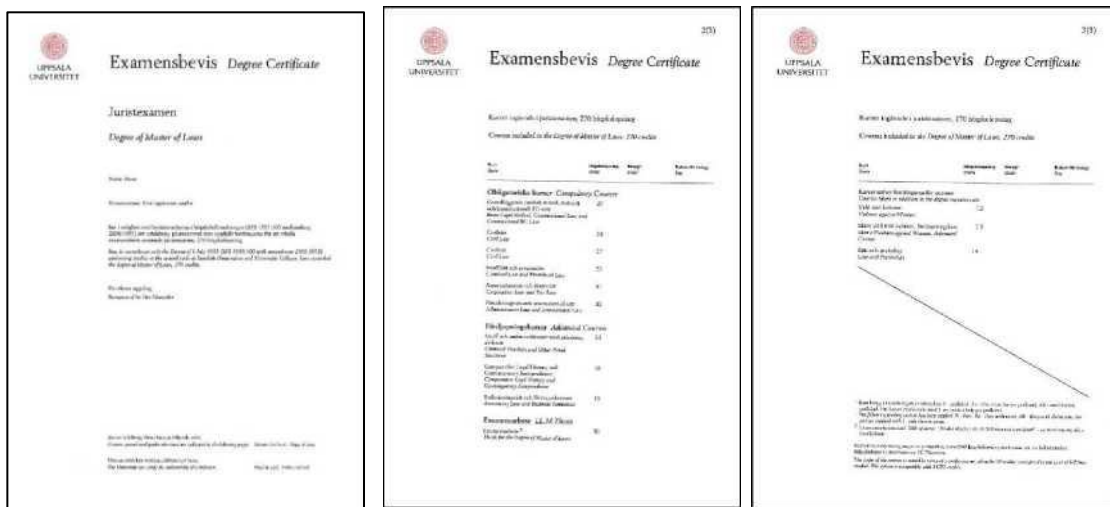
3.2 Examination appendices

Qualification as a judge

In order to be admitted, you are required to have passed the examination required for qualification as a judge pursuant to the Proficiency Examination for Qualification as a Judge Ordinance (2007:386). You must attach your complete law degree certificate which was issued by a competent university. It must clearly indicate the date of graduation, the courses included in the degree, and the course grades. Transcripts from, for example, LADOK or other university databases are not sufficient.



Example of a law degree certificate from Uppsala University:



Bar exam

You must also attach a certificate that you have passed the bar exam. The bar exam is preceded by a training course consisting of three sessions of approximately three days each, the third of which includes a constitutional law test. If you have not passed the entire bar exam when you submit your application, the application must be supplemented as soon as possible. You must be scheduled for the exam when you submit your application. The Board cannot consider your application until you have passed the bar exam. There is no time limit on the validity of a passed bar exam.

3.3 Proof of employment from other employment and details of other activities

You must attach proof of employment from all employment after graduation from law school (see [section 2, Requirement of qualified legal practice](#), in this document regarding separate certificate of employment by a member and own legal practice). If you have had other activity, for example studies, you must enclose relevant certificates/grades. If you had a break in activity of more than three months, you must explain this (e.g. longer leave of absence or job search).

3.4 Other information regarding financial circumstances and possible violations of law

You must provide information about your financial circumstances and certain personal circumstances. Income from the last three years must be declared. Income from the most recently closed calendar year may be estimated if there is no final tax decision from the Swedish Tax Agency.

Assets and liabilities that are significant in amount must be listed (e.g. real property, tenant-owned apartment, securities, home loans and student debt). Assets must be stated at their estimated current market value. If you have surety or guarantee obligations, these



should be specified and details provided regarding the principal debtor and the size of the surety or guarantee amount.

You must also report on any arrears with the Swedish Enforcement Authority and any offences listed in the criminal record.

3.5 The Bar Association can add documents in the matter on its own initiative

If there are previous admission matters, decisions from the disciplinary committee, or other matters concerning you, the Bar Association may add these to your application matter on its own initiative.

4. List of professional contacts

4.1 Information regarding the disclosure of professional contacts

In order to be admitted to the Swedish Bar Association, you must prove your suitability to practise law as a member of the Bar Association. In order for the Bar Association to assess your suitability, you must provide information about all of the members of bar associations (Swedish and foreign), courts and other authorities you have had contact with in your role as a lawyer at a law firm/self-employed. If you have had minimal contacts with members, courts and authorities in the course of your practice, it is possible to add other professional contacts who are not members, such as company lawyers, negotiators for interest groups, members of disciplinary boards and others who may be able to comment on your suitability. If you have had professional contact with an associate who has since been admitted to the Swedish Bar Association, this professional contact may be relied on as a member.

You must list the professional contacts with whom you have had actual contact and who are likely to be in a position to comment on your suitability for the legal profession. Failing to specify a member or other person whom you know or have reason to believe may give a critical statement is itself a negative factor when the Board is considering suitability.

In the appendix of professional contacts who are members of the Bar Association, please indicate the member's current contact details, the period during which you had contact, and the parties or project name. This is so that the member can easily identify you. If, for any reason, you do not want to name the parties, you must state this and you should make it easier for the member to remember you in some other way, for example through direct contact with the member.

When listing your professional contacts with public authorities and courts, you must indicate the matter number or case number with the authority, as well as the judge/official with whom you had contact in the case or matter in question.

If you know that you are well-known to the court or public authority, it is sufficient to indicate this. You should only indicate that you are well-known if you are certain that the



court/public authority does not need to conduct any investigation to give an opinion on your suitability (e.g. in connection with longstanding activity in smaller judicial districts/against smaller public prosecutor offices). It is your responsibility to ensure that the reference person has the opportunity to comment and, if you are unsure, you should, as a general rule, state your name and the case/matter number.

4.2 Information regarding the possibility of selecting a sample

For persons who have had a large number of professional contacts, there is a possibility to select a sample. A large number of professional contacts means more than 50 (a member is a professional contact, a court/public authority is considered one professional contact even if you indicate multiple judges/officials). If you select a sample, you should clearly state (i) that you have selected a sample and (ii) how the sample was selected.

If you choose to select a sample, you should consider which professional contacts are in the best position to comment on your suitability, the extent of the contact, and when the contact took place.

However, if you select a sample, you may *not*, under any circumstances, exclude professional contacts that you know or have reason to believe may be critical. Failing to specify a member or other person whom you know or have reason to believe may give a critical statement is itself a negative factor when the Board is considering suitability.

4.3 The Bar Association's written contact with the professional contacts

The Bar Association's secretariat will write to the professional contacts you have indicated. The Bar Association's secretariat only writes to professional contacts once and does not send reminders for non-responses. If you wish to review the opinions that have been received, you can notify the Bar Association's secretariat after the written contact has been made and the deadline for reply has expired. The deadline for reply is normally two weeks, but is slightly longer during holidays and summer. Comments or criticisms will be sent to you as soon as possible, even if you do not contact the Bar Association.

5. Decision in your matter

5.1 Decisions of the Department Board and the Board of the Swedish Bar Association

After written contact has taken place in your matter, your application documents will be sent for comment to the Department Board of the department for the area where you work. If the department rejects your application, you will be informed by the department and you will have the opportunity to submit further documentation for the decision of the Board of the Swedish Bar Association. The Board of the Swedish Bar Association always makes an independent assessment of the application at the time of the board meeting and is not bound by the decision of the Department Board.



The Bar Association's secretariat publishes a circular with the names of the persons admitted as members on the same day as the Board's meeting.

You can also contact the Bar Association's secretariat during the afternoon of the day of the Board's meeting in order to find out the Board's decision.

5.2 If your application is rejected

If your application is rejected, you can reapply at a later date when you, for example, can produce additional professional contacts who can verify your suitability or when you no longer need a waiver of the three-year requirement. If you reapply for admission after your application was rejected, the main rule is that the professional contacts in your previous matter are not written to again and you do not need to state them again in your new application. However, you must indicate previous professional contacts if you have had renewed contact with them and new professional contacts not written to in the previous matter.

If you submit a new application, you need not submit the certificates for the law degree and the bar exam. You also do not need to submit proofs of employment from concluded employment that the Swedish Bar Association's secretariat has already reviewed in the previous application.

If your application is rejected, you may also appeal the decision to the Swedish Supreme Court in accordance with the instructions that you receive together with the Board's written decision.

6. Statutory provisions

Provisions regarding admission to the Swedish Bar Association are contained in Chapter 8 of the Code of Judicial Procedure and section 3 of the Charter of the Swedish Bar Association.

Section 3 of the Charter of the Swedish Bar Association

A person may be admitted as a member of the Bar Association only if that person:

1. is domiciled in Sweden or another state within the European Union or the European Economic Area or in Switzerland;
2. has passed all proficiency exams required for qualification to serve in the judiciary;
3. for a period of not less than three years after passing the above-mentioned proficiency exams, has engaged in qualified legal practice, in which context they have, in their professional capacity, been dedicated to assisting the general public in legal matters, either as an employee of a member or as self-employed;
4. at the time that the application is considered, is, in their professional capacity, assisting the general public in the manner referred to in item 3;
5. has attained a passing grade following the special training course arranged by the Bar Association;
6. has become known for their integrity; and



7. is otherwise considered suitable to practise law as a member of the Bar Association.

The Board of the Bar Association may, taking into consideration special circumstances, grant exemptions from items 1, 3, 4 and 5 of the first paragraph. The same applies as to item 2 of the first paragraph concerning a person who is qualified as a lawyer in another state in accordance with regulations in force there. A waiver of the three-year requirement under item 3 of the first paragraph may not be granted for more than one year. Additional exemptions may be granted only where exceptional reasons exist.

A person who has undergone an educational programme that is required to become a lawyer in another state within the European Union or the European Economic Area or in Switzerland and who has undergone a test in Sweden showing that they have sufficient knowledge of the Swedish legal system will be deemed to fulfil the requirements of items 2, 3 and 5 of the first paragraph. The test should be adjusted to the applicant's education and professional experience. A person registered under section 4a who has subsequently actually and continuously practised law in Sweden as a member of a bar association for a period of at least three years, provided either that the practice has primarily involved Swedish law or, if the practice has not primarily involved Swedish law, that the registered person has, in some other manner, acquired sufficient proficiency and experience to be admitted as a member of the Bar Association, will also be deemed to fulfil the requirements of items 2, 3 and 5 of the first paragraph.

A person qualified as a lawyer in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway in accordance with regulations in force there and who has subsequently served as an associate at a law firm (*advokatbyrå*) in Sweden in a satisfactory manner for at least three years will be deemed to fulfil the requirements of items 2–7 of the first paragraph.

A person who has been declared bankrupt or for whom a trustee has been appointed under Chapter 11, section 7 of the Swedish Parental Code may not be admitted as a member. In addition, a person who is prohibited from providing legal or financial services under section 3 of the Prohibition against Providing Legal or Financial Services in Certain Cases Act (1985:354) may not be admitted as a member.

A judge or other official at a court, a public prosecutor or an enforcement officer may not be admitted as a member.

A person employed by the state or a municipality in a position other than those mentioned in the preceding paragraph, or by a private person other than a member, may not be admitted as a member unless the Board grants an exemption. This provision does not apply to employees of a member of an organisation of lawyers within the European Union or European Economic Area or in Switzerland.

Specific information regarding the GDPR follows on the next page.



Processing of personal data – information pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EC)

The Swedish Bar Association, reg. no. 262000-0675, Box 27321, SE-102 54 Stockholm, Sweden, is the data controller for the personal data you provide in your application, specifically your name, personal ID number, e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers, date of graduation from law school, employment after graduation, proof of residence, certificate that no guardianship is in place, certificate of no bankruptcy, diploma, proof of employment, certificate of employment, bar exam certificate, information regarding financial circumstances, and criminal offences, if any.

The Swedish Bar Association's processing of personal data also includes the assessments that references and other persons provide about you in connection with the application.

The personal data in your application will be processed in the Bar Association's matter register. The personal data in your application will also be made available to the local Department in which you are active. The data is processed for the purpose of administering and considering your application for admission, contacting reference persons, auditors and public authorities and administering statements from them, and for the purpose of obtaining a referral from the local Department in which you are active regarding your suitability to practise law in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of the Swedish Bar Association. [Contact details for each local Department can be found here](#). The data is also processed, where appropriate, for the purposes of handling disciplinary matters, applications for readmission, and proactive supervision in accordance with the Swedish Bar Association's accounting regulations, etc. Finally, the data is processed for research and statistical purposes related to the activities of the Bar Association and the legal profession.

Providing the information is voluntary. However, the consequence of not providing information is that the application cannot be considered.

Legal basis for processing

The legal basis for the Bar Association's processing is that the processing is necessary as part of the exercise of official authority delegated to the Bar Association [see Article 6(e) of the GDPR].

Personal data is processed confidentially

The Bar Association processes your application and your personal data in confidence, which means that only you and the members and administrators who handle and assess the admission matter have access to the application file. When circulars with new applications for admission are sent out, the Swedish Bar Association publishes that you have applied for admission in order to give any other reference persons the opportunity to comment on your suitability as a member of the Bar Association.

The data is stored for as long as it is necessary for the exercise of the Bar Association's authority

The Bar Association saves your data for as long as it is necessary to enable the Bar Association to perform the official tasks entrusted to it, including checking that application documents are correct and processing disciplinary matters and applications for readmission. The data is also stored in the Bar Association's archives to enable future research and statistical processing and is therefore not culled.

The data may be submitted to the Swedish Supreme Court

If your application for admission is rejected and you appeal, the Bar Association forwards the entire file to the Supreme Court.

We safeguard your rights to your personal data

If you would like to know more about your rights regarding your personal data and its use by the Bar Association, you can contact the Bar Association at info@advokatsamfundet.se or read more in [the Swedish Bar Association's privacy policy](#).

If you are dissatisfied with the Bar Association's processing, you can file a complaint with a supervisory authority, which in Sweden is [the Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection](#) (imy.se).