Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Initial Legal Consultation and Needs Assessment

This SOP details the process for conducting an **initial legal consultation and needs assessment**, including client intake procedures, identification of legal issues, gathering relevant information and documents, assessing client objectives and priorities, providing preliminary legal advice, determining service scope, and outlining next steps. The purpose is to establish a clear understanding of the client's legal needs and to create a tailored plan for effective legal representation or support.

Procedure Steps

1. **Client Intake Procedure**
    - Receive initial inquiry via phone, web, or in-person visit.
    - Collect basic information: name, contact details, preferred communication method.
    - Confirm conflict of interest check is performed and documented.
2. **Identification of Legal Issues**
    - Ask client to briefly describe their situation.
    - Identify the primary and secondary legal issues involved.
3. **Gathering Relevant Information and Documents**
    - Request relevant documents from client (e.g. contracts, correspondence, court papers).
    - Document all information and save copies securely.
4. **Assessment of Client Objectives and Priorities**
    - Engage with client to determine goals, priorities, and desired outcomes.
    - Clarify any areas of uncertainty.
5. **Provision of Preliminary Legal Advice**
    - Provide a general overview of applicable laws and procedures.
    - Communicate initial impressions, without making binding commitments.
6. **Determination of Service Scope**
    - Discuss possible representation or support options.
    - Outline the services provided, limitations, timelines, and estimated fees.
7. **Outline Next Steps**
    - Summarize agreed actions, responsibilities, and deadlines.
    - Schedule follow-up consultation or further steps, as appropriate.
    - Document and provide client with an engagement letter, if proceeding.

Documentation and Recordkeeping

- Maintain records of all consultations, communications, and received documents per confidentiality and data protection policies.
- Securely store client intake forms, notes, and conflict checks.

Review and Approval

- This SOP should be reviewed annually or as required by changes to legal practice standards or regulatory requirements.
- Approval and amendments must be documented and communicated to all relevant staff.

Note: This SOP is a general template and should be tailored to organizational needs and jurisdictional requirements.