
LawPracticeZA Documentation

Andrew Spagnoletti, Nicholas Spagnoletti, Edward van Kuik

Aug 11, 2021

CONTENTS:

1	Overview	2
1.1	Matter Management and Billing	2
1.2	Legal accounting basics with LawPracticeZA	2
1.3	User Guides and Help with LawPracticeZA	4
1.4	How to use this manual	4
1.5	Additional aids for learning and using LawPracticeZA	5
2	Log in and out and passwords	6
3	Registering your firm on LawPracticeZA	7
4	Exploring LawPracticeZA	8
5	Setting Up LawPracticeZA for your firm	9
5.1	Delete Sample Data	9
5.2	Update firm details	9
5.3	Set Sequence Numbers and Prefixes	10
5.4	Add Departments	10
5.5	Create More User(s)	10
5.6	Import Tariff Bundles	10
5.7	Import Matters	10
5.8	Import Suppliers	10
5.9	Import Draft Invoice Items (WIP)	11
5.10	Import General Ledger	11
5.11	Create your Business & Trust Bank(s) and Receipt Methods	11
5.12	Investment / Section 86(4) [78(2A)] institutions	11
6	Fee Earner: Getting Started	12
6.1	Receive a new instruction from client	12
6.1.1	If a new client, add the client	12
6.1.2	Add the Matter	12
6.2	Receive payment from client	12
6.2.1	If payment for work done	13
6.2.2	If deposit for work to be done	13
6.3	Capture a fee or disbursement	13
6.4	Invoice client	13
6.5	Consult with Advocate or other third party on behalf of your client	14
6.5.1	Process Suppliers invoice	15
6.5.2	Pay Supplier	15
6.6	Pay 3rd party on behalf of client (from trust)	15
6.7	Menu and dashboard options	15
6.7.1	System Settings and logging off	15
6.7.2	Dashboard	16
6.7.3	The Fee Earner Menu and menu filter	16
6.7.4	Fee Earner options	17

7	Fee Earner User Guide	19
7.1	Understanding Fee Earner and Matter access	19
7.2	The Dashboard (when you login)	19
7.2.1	Pie chart (diarised matters)	19
7.2.2	Fees recorded for ...	19
7.2.3	Held in Trust / Clearing	20
7.2.4	Unsent Invoices	20
7.2.5	Draft Invoice items	20
7.2.6	Clear sample data	20
7.2.7	Clients to receive statements	20
7.2.8	Timers	20
7.2.9	Suppliers to be reviewed	20
7.2.10	Documentation and user guidance cards	21
7.2.11	Recent Updates from the Developers	21
7.3	Fee Earner menu options	21
7.3.1	Dashboard	21
7.3.2	Calendar	21
7.3.3	Time Sheet	21
7.3.4	Percentage fees (e.g. Postage and Petties)	22
7.3.5	Recurring Billing	22
7.3.6	Matter Receipts	23
7.3.7	Tariff bundles	24
7.3.8	Documentation Automation	24
7.3.9	Import WIP / Invoices	25
7.4	Adding a new client	25
7.4.1	FICA	26
7.5	Adding a new Matter	26
7.6	Finding a Matter / searching for a Matter	27
7.7	Client and Matter details	28
7.7.1	Diarise a Matter	28
7.7.2	Associated matters	28
7.7.3	Document Automation (including Cost Estimates)	28
7.8	Capture a fee or disbursement against a Matter	28
7.9	Transactions: includes options for generating invoices, etc.	29
7.9.1	Transaction groups with balances	30
7.10	When you select an invoice	31
8	Bookkeeper User Guide	32
8.1	An Overview	32
8.2	Recording accounting transactions	32
8.2.1	Receiving monies from client's	33
8.2.2	Payments to or on behalf of client's	34
8.2.3	Posting suppliers invoices	34
8.2.4	Posting suppliers payments	35
8.2.5	Posting business receipts	35
8.2.6	Posting business payments	35
8.2.7	Section 86(4) Investments / Withdrawals	36
8.2.8	Section 86(4) Interest / Charges	36
8.2.9	Trust Transfers	36
8.2.10	Bank Transfers	37
8.2.11	Bank Reconciliation (from printed bank statement)	37
8.2.12	Journal entries	38
8.2.13	List by type	39
8.3	Maintain Master files	40
8.3.1	General Ledger accounts	40
8.3.2	GL Account Categories	40
8.3.3	Suppliers	40
8.3.4	Departments	40

8.3.5	Posting codes	41
8.3.6	Clients	41
8.3.7	Matters	41
8.3.8	Bank accounts	42
8.3.9	Receipt Methods	42
8.4	Bank Reconzilla	42
8.4.1	Importing a bank statement	42
8.4.2	Previously imported bank statements	43
8.4.3	Automatic Bank Feeds via Banking APIs	43
8.4.4	Processing a bank statement	43
8.5	Reports	43
8.5.1	Statement of (General Ledger) accounts	44
8.5.2	Audit Trail	44
8.5.3	Bank Recon report	44
8.5.4	Client Statements	45
8.5.5	Matter Movement	45
8.5.6	Detailed Matter Movement	45
8.5.7	Supplier Transaction Movement Report	45
8.5.8	Account Enquiry	45
8.5.9	Trust Transfers report	46
8.5.10	Trust Investments / commitments	46
8.5.11	Clients (Debtors) Age Analysis	46
8.5.12	Suppliers (Creditors) Age Analysis	47
8.5.13	Target Report	47
8.5.14	Unbilled Fees and Disbursements	47
8.5.15	Invoiced Fees and Disbursements	47
8.5.16	Sales Charts	48
8.5.17	VAT Report	48
8.5.18	Bulk PDF invoices	48
8.5.19	Monthly Profitability	48
8.5.20	Financial Reports	48
8.5.21	Analytics	48
8.6	Period-end	49
8.6.1	Send Proformas and/or bulk invoices	49
8.6.2	Send Statements	50
8.6.3	Set period-end	50
9	Payroll	52
10	Integrations	53
10.1	E4 Transfers	53
10.2	Office 365 Outlook Calendar	53
10.3	Google Calendar and Gmail	53
10.3.1	A note of emails	53
10.4	DotNews	54
10.5	Papercut, Print Director and Softlog	54
10.6	Website Integration for Financial	54
11	Administrator Guide	55
11.1	Logins	55
11.2	Fee Earners	56
11.3	Fee levels	56
11.4	Firm Details	57
11.5	Set Sequences	58
11.6	Set temporary freeze date	58
11.7	Currencies	58
11.8	Import data	58
11.8.1	Matters	59
11.8.2	Suppliers	59

11.8.3	General Ledger accounts	60
11.8.4	Posting codes	60
11.8.5	WIP	60
12	Concepts	61
12.1	Trust accounting and trust transfers	61
12.2	Billing a client for work done	62
12.3	Period end (Month and year end)	63
12.3.1	Month end	63
12.3.2	Year end	63
12.4	Take on from legacy system	63
12.5	Reports using Pivot Tables	64
12.6	VAT on the Invoice basis	64
12.7	Auditors	65
13	Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)	67
13.1	Where has my Matter gone? (archived Matters)	67
13.2	How do I correct an incorrect posting?	67
13.2.1	Reversing invoices: generating Credit Notes	67
13.3	Does LawPracticeZA have short-cuts?	68
13.4	Time-based fee calculations appear incorrect. How can this be?	68
13.5	Why is the VAT total of my invoice not exactly a percentage of my ex-VAT amount?	69
13.6	Invoices: can I include my own message at the bottom of an invoice?	69
13.7	Matter Receipts: can I show outstanding invoices when capturing?	69
13.8	How do I print a Matter Receipt?	69
13.9	In the Cash Book, how can I see to which matter the funds are allocated?	70
13.10	Why did LawPracticeZA send a client multiple emails for the same invoice?	70
13.11	How do I account for VAT when I capture an expense with VAT directly into the business cashbook?	70
13.12	Can I integrate LawPracticeZA with some of our other systems?	71
13.13	What if I receive an error message?	71
13.14	If a fee earner leaves, how do I manage his or her Matters?	71
13.15	Can I charge interest on overdue accounts?	72
13.16	Posting disbursements	72
13.17	Reversing an incorrect trust transfer	72
13.18	Receive refund from Law Society	73
13.19	When someone leaves, how do I remove their login?	74
13.20	How do I deal with Third allowances to / from corresponding attorneys?	74
13.21	Generating a credit note / writing off a balance / writing off a bad debt.	75
13.22	To open a trust account when starting out I made a deposit from my private bank. How do I post this?	75
13.23	How do I obtain a list of expired or archived matters with option to restore?	76
13.24	Why are my clients are reporting that our emails or invoices are being delivered to their spam/junk folder	76
14	Security and Reliability of Record Keeping	78
14.1	Data Centre	78
14.2	Security	78
14.3	Redundancy & Backups	78
14.4	Monitoring	78
14.5	Weaknesses	78
14.6	Operating System Security Updates & Firewall	79
14.7	Retention Policy	79
15	API Guide	80
15.1	Some configuration and setup	80
15.2	Guide to the Guide	81
15.3	Create your own API function	81
15.4	Log in to the API	82
15.5	Check Login Status / Retrieve Login Information	82

15.6	Retrieve Firm Details	83
15.7	Create a new Client (debtor)	84
15.8	Create a new Matter	84
15.9	Update existing Matter	85
15.10	Create a new Transfer	85
15.11	Post or update a draft fee to a matter	86
15.12	Delete a captured unbilled fee or disbursement	87
15.13	List all captured unbilled fees or disbursements for a matter	88
15.14	Get current accounting balances for matter	88
15.15	Get statement of business entries for a matter	89
15.16	Get business, trust and investment accounting entries for a matter	90
15.17	Invoice specific unbilled item(s) on a matter	94
15.18	Invoice all unbilled items on a matter	95
15.19	Open a browser to view Sales Invoice	95
15.20	Send Sales Invoice	95
16	Schema	96
16.1	Client	96
16.2	Matter	97
16.3	Draft Fees & Disbursements	97
16.4	Posting Codes	98
16.5	Posting Code Categories	99
16.6	Bank Account	99

Select a section from the menu or press Next to continue.

OVERVIEW

LawPracticeZA is a web-based Matter Management and Billing application with integrated business and trust accounting, designed for South African Law firms.

LawPracticeZA is hosted on our powerful Linux servers, housed in a secure data centre where regular on and off site backups are performed. Users access LawPracticeZA via a browser, which means data is accessible using various devices (computers, laptops, Widows, Apple, iPads, smartphones) at any time, from anywhere (with an internet connection). The responsive software design makes LawPracticeZA practical to use even on a smartphone (for example when at court or waiting for a flight at an airport).

Being a hosted solution also means that software updates are frequent, and help is always on hand. At the bottom of every screen is SUBMIT A SUPPORT REQUEST, which should be used for both queries and reporting bugs: everyone at LawPracticeZA is immediately notified and the issue is logged in our issues management system.

1.1 Matter Management and Billing

LawPracticeZA is based on the concept of Clients, each with one or more Matters. Think of a Matter as an instruction from a client.

Fee Earners (lawyers and candidate attorneys) capture fees and disbursements against Matters as unbilled (WIP) transactions. A non-fee earner (paralegal or secretary), given access to a matter, can also capture fees on behalf of a fee earner. Periodically, unbilled fees can be invoiced: typically on conclusion of a Matter, or at a milestone event for long-running matters. A Fee earner may produce a proforma invoice prior to invoicing, either to check the details or to provide to the client before invoicing (invoicing updates the accounts and consequently has VAT and tax consequences, whereas a proforma invoice does not).

Invoices can be generated by a fee earner individually or in bulk (selectively), and/or by the accounts department.

Invoices (and Statements to Clients) can be emailed directly from within LawPracticeZA, and Clients can access invoices from a hyperlink in the statement that they receive via email. There is also an option to include invoices with the emailed statement.

1.2 Legal accounting basics with LawPracticeZA

An increasing number of law firms, in addition to managing matter and billing clients, are using LawPracticeZA to manage their business and trust accounts. This makes sense as LawPracticeZA has been specifically designed for law firms and is fully integrated, reducing duplication and transcription, saving time and reducing errors.

In addition, many of the rules and controls that are required of a legal accounting system (as opposed to a standard commercial accounting package) have been encapsulated in LawPracticeZA. These rules and controls are based on the knowledge and expertise gained from developing and implementing systems in hundreds of law firms of all sizes throughout South Africa, over many years.

We have found that some staff tasked with the bookkeeping function in law firms do not have bookkeeping and/or legal bookkeeping expertise. This section gives an overview of the fundamentals, to point such a person in the right direction, so they know where to look for the more detailed support documentation provided. We would

nevertheless recommend that, in these circumstances, a law firm considers employing, whether on a part-time or full-time basis, a legal bookkeeper who also has a working knowledge of LawPracticeZA. There are a number of such bookkeepers offering their services in South Africa, and the technology makes their location irrelevant. In our experience, these bookkeepers charge a very reasonable rate and require only a few hours a month for a typical small firm, working remotely.

This section provides a 'mile-high' view. The more detailed documentation can be accessed from the remainder of this manual and the help found via the Dashboard of every LawPracticeZA system.

LawPracticeZA consists of Clients and their linked Matters (a Matter can be thought of as an instruction from a client), with all posting to the Matter, which has separate balances for business, trust and client investments.

Fees and disbursements are recorded as unbilled (WIP) and periodically invoiced to the client, at which time they become accounting transactions, and update the appropriate accounts automatically.

Disbursements consist of both a 'purchase' (e.g. invoice from an Advocate or Sheriff) and a 'sale' (disbursement charged to the client). When posting the invoice from the Supplier (e.g. Advocate), the disbursement charge to the client can be simultaneously posted, OR when capturing the disbursement for the client, the invoice from the Supplier (e.g. Advocate) can be simultaneously posted. In both instances the invoice (scanned copy) can be uploaded, to be attached to the email when sending the clients invoice.

When an invoice is generated, the Matters business balance is debited, the debtors control in the General Ledger debited, and Fees and / or Disbursement Income (and VAT if registered for VAT) in the General Ledger credited.

A credit note, which can also be automatically generated by LawPracticeZA by reversing an invoice, posts transactions in reverse to invoices transactions. There is also an option to 'hide' reversals on a clients statement.

A client may pay a deposit for work to be done, in which case the receipt would be to the trust bank, and consequently credits the Matters trust balance (and debit the Trust bank account).

If a client pays for work already done, the payment received from the client should be received into the Business Bank account, and would update the Matter business balance. If the client pays into trust, this will nevertheless result in a trust transfer.

Periodically a trust transfer is run, where LawPracticeZA identifies matters where there is a trust credit (deposit received) and a business debit (invoiced after receiving the trust deposit). Available trust is then 'transferred', where the total of all transferable amounts are paid from the trust bank to the firm's business bank.

LawPracticeZA includes Reconzilla, which can import bank statements downloaded from the internet. The bookkeeper can then post directly from the imported bank statement, where the entry is also automatically reconciled.

The ability to post investments made on behalf of clients (LPA Section 86(4)) is provided, including interest / charges and withdrawals. LawPracticeZA provides for all the other transactions required in a legal firm.

There are a number of reports (produced as a spreadsheet, e.g. Excel, by default) that provide the information required by a law firm, inter alia: -

1. Trust investment / commitments: a list of all clients Matters that have a trust or investment balance, with separate tabs for trust bank account/s and individual Section 86(4) investments).
2. Statement of Account(s): all General Ledger accounts, with transactions, for the selected period. Use 'Text to Table' in Excel to analyse transactions. This is ideal for the trust audit, where the auditor can be given access to the system and extract the data required directly.
3. Financial reports: includes tabs for Trial Balance, Income and Expense Account and Balance Sheet.
4. Client and Supplier Age Analysis, and numerous other reports.

Trust accounting is the major differentiator between a system for law firms and most other businesses. It is critical to manage and account for trust funds correctly, as the ability of a law firm to continue operating can depend on this. Importantly lawyers, rather than bookkeepers, are ultimately responsible, so blindly accepting that the bookkeeper is 'doing it correctly' is no defense if things go wrong.

LawPracticeZA has a number of unique features, made possible by the powerful technology deployed. There is no traditional month and year end: all data is always retained and LawPracticeZA recalculates balances as required. This is achieved by using a 'freeze' date to mark month and year-ends (i.e. setting the freeze date is the equivalent to running a month or year end and must be done to enable the generation of meaningful financial reports).

Banks have ‘Receipt methods’, to accommodate the various payment types: most commonly EFT, but cheques / cash as well as Credit Cards and even Bitcoin can be accommodated by the design.

All reports have an export to Excel function and importantly, unlike exporting from a report writer, has been optimized for a spreadsheet. Consequently, reports can be quickly and simply converted to Pivot Tables for analysis (e.g. Unbilled Fees and Disbursements and Invoiced Fees and Disbursements). Several reports have Pivot Tables included. The Excel Text to Table can be applied to the General Ledger Account(s) report, which makes it ideal for analysis by the Auditor.

The entire LawPracticeZA can be accessed from anywhere at any time by users with the correct authority and security clearance. Even the firm auditors, for example, can be given access, where they can operate from their own offices. There is no additional cost for auditor access: cost only applies to Fee Earners in the firm.

1.3 User Guides and Help with LawPracticeZA

There are a number of user categories: Fee Earner, Bookkeepers, Administrators and other users (clerks, secretaries).

Note: The trend for web-based applications is ‘self-taught’ or ‘self-learning’. Although legal accounting, and especially trust accounting, can be complex, LawPracticeZA has, together with an intuitive interface, incorporated many controls and automation to make this process as simple and error-free as possible.

This manual is provided to assist with achieving self-sufficiency as quickly and painlessly as possible. Accurate and up-to-date trust accounts are critical, but for a successful practice, Matter Management and Billing with integrated business and trust accounting is extremely important. Good legal bookkeepers are in short supply, and LawPracticeZA is an application that encapsulates much of the expertise required.

LawPracticeZA is your 24/7 expert assistant, helping you to run your law firm efficiently and effectively.

Note: This is a living document that is updated as new features and functionality is added to LawPracticeZA. Visit often.

1.4 How to use this manual

The various sections in the manual are designed to satisfy specific requirements. For example, when a Fee earner is new to LawPracticeZA, the Fee Earner Getting Started section will provide quick and simple help for getting up and running. As more experience is gained and assistance is needed for a specific function, the more in-depth Fee Earner User Guide will be useful.

1. *Fee Earner: Getting Started*: this provides the typical administrative actions that a fee earner would perform using LawPracticeZA in a normal working day, plus other actions that affect the fee earner (but may be the domain of the bookkeeper). Full details of all fee earner functions are provided in the **Fee Earner Guide** (see below).
2. *Fee Earner User Guide* provides details of all Fee Earner functions.
3. *Bookkeeper User Guide* provides details of all Bookkeeper functions.
4. *Administrator Guide* provides details of all Admin functions.
5. *Concepts* provides explanations for issues relating and pertinent to law firms. This is followed by frequently asked questions - with answers (FAQ’s).
6. *API Guide* and *Schema* provide technical information for developers interesting in integrating LawPracticeZA with their applications, or larger firms, with in-house IT expertise, integrating customised systems with LawPracticeZA.

Note: Most sections provide links to load the module under review: you must be logged in to LawPracticeZA for the module to load, and you will need rights to the module. For example, if a 'Fee Earner' and not also a 'Bookkeeper', you will not be able to load a bookkeeping function.

The User Guide sections of the manual mirrors the menu. Different users may have different privileges, so not all options may be available when you login.

The best way of learning is doing: start with *Fee Earner: Getting Started*. Once more familiar with LawPracticeZA, help on all Fee Earners functions is provided for in the *Fee Earner User Guide*. The additional aids (details below) will also help you get up and running quickly.

1.5 Additional aids for learning and using LawPracticeZA

To provide a compact and efficient means to firstly gain a 'mile-high' view of LawPracticeZA, but also to drill-down into the specific function required, we have designed a number of 'Guidance Cards' (PDF documents), which can be printed or viewed on-line.

When viewed on-line, help for a specific topic or function can be accessed by clicking on the relevant info icon.

To load a function (e.g. Matter Receipt or Trust Transfer), click the relevant section in the Card.

Note: You must be logged into LawPracticeZA when clicking most of the links in the PDF (and be in the same browser which your system uses when opening web links from PDFs).

There are several documents; each provides for a different category of user.

1. Single page [Fee Earners](#) Guidance Card summarizes all fee earner functionality, with a flowchart of the most common activities.
2. *Bookkeeper Guide* <<https://lawpracticeza.com/static/LawPracticeZA%20Bookkeeper.pdf>>'
3. [Administrators](#):
4. A chart of [Debits and Credits](#) summarises all the bookkeeping accounting entries in a law firm.
5. A copy of [this manual](#) is also available in pdf format, which can be read off-line and is searchable and can be printed.

LOG IN AND OUT AND PASSWORDS

To **log in**, enter the username and password provided by LawPracticeZA, in the fields provided on the LawPracticeZA website, and SIGN IN.

To **log out**, click your login name (immediately above the Menu Filter).

The **Account Settings** option allows you to change your display name (e.g. on Invoices) and password.

Note: To change your password, you will have to enter your current password, then your new password. You can let the system automatically generate you a new password. You will need to re-enter your password to confirm that it is correct.

REGISTERING YOUR FIRM ON LAWPRACTICEZA

Go to the main [LawPracticeZA](#) website and click “Getting Started”. Think carefully what you want your firm code to be - this will be a short unique code, perhaps abbreviated, of your firm’s name. Use the “check availability” button to ensure that the code is available. This code identifies the data to be used exclusively for your firm.

Fill in your details and importantly make sure your email address is correct as that’s where your initial login details and password will be sent, once you press **Send**.

Note: It takes a few minutes for our systems to spin up your instance. You should receive a couple of emails, one when this process has started and one with your credentials when it has completed.

EXPLORING LAWPRACTICEZA

Once you've registered and logged in, it's time to get a broad sense of what LawPracticeZA covers.

Your LawPracticeZA instance comes pre-loaded with a few fictitious clients, matters and fee earners for you to get a feeling of how things work. Do not be afraid! Explore. Try out capturing draft fees and then billing them. See how the matter calendar and time sheets work. Learn how the header search works (hint: search for "abc"). Notice how the dashboard charts and figures change as you record fees and raise invoices. Explore the various reports under the Reports menu item. Click through the left menu items.

Then move on to either *Setting Up LawPracticeZA for your firm* or *Fee Earner: Getting Started*.

SETTING UP LAWPRACTICEZA FOR YOUR FIRM

Migrating from one system to another is often a traumatic event that can bring a practice to a standstill. Even starting afresh can seem daunting. The good news is that with moving to LawPracticeZA we've separated the migration process into achievable pieces that needn't all be done at once. You can get going with work-in-progress and billing immediately and incrementally work through the rest of the take-on steps when each one is most convenient for you and your colleagues.

Some of the steps may depend on another being done first: for example you'll probably want to set up your fee earners and departments before importing matters. But the order in which you do them is pretty much up to you.

Note: Most of the links that follow will only work once you are successfully signed in to LawPracticeZA (and are opening the links with the same browser you signed in with)

This is a comprehensive manual for LawPracticeZA, which should provide answers to any questions that you may have, but if you have a query or problem, you are encouraged to **SUBMIT A SUPPORT REQUEST** (link at the bottom of every page). This way, everyone at LawPracticeZA is notified, and the submission automatically includes information that enables us to address the issue more effectively.

5.1 Delete Sample Data

Once you've played around with the system and have a feel for how things work, delete the pre-loaded sample data that your instance came with from the widget on the dashboard. This won't delete any matters, clients or suppliers which you created, only the pre-loaded fictitious data. See: *Dashboard -> Delete Sample Data widget*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/>

Note: LawPracticeZA is more than happy to assist with the setting up of your system and importing your legacy data, as described below. Just give us a call and we will explain what information we need from you to do so.

5.2 Update firm details

Upload your logo and set-up your firm name and contact details as you would like them to appear on your invoices and statements to clients. To view the invoice layout: select a Matter with at least one unbilled fee or disbursement and click **Proforma**.

You might want to try logos in a different formats, aspect ratio or background colour - or perhaps play around with line breaks in your firm's postal & street addresses before you're happy with how they look. Menu Option: *Admin -> Firm Details*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/company/update/only>

5.3 Set Sequence Numbers and Prefixes

This is where you can set up your preferred voucher prefixes and next number in their sequence. Default for invoices is to start at INV1001 but you can change this to whatever the next after the last invoice issued by your previous system was, or perhaps start afresh with a new prefix. Menu Option: *Admin -> Set Sequences*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/company/setsequences>

5.4 Add Departments

Do you have different departments or branches such as Conveyancing, Litigation or Commercial? You may, if you like, set up different logos, email addresses and even trading names for these different departments. Where special department-specific settings are not entered then the system falls back to using the firm's details. Menu Option: *Bookkeeper -> Master file Maintenance -> Departments -> Add button*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/department/list>

5.5 Create More User(s)

Create logins for your colleagues. We encourage especially smaller firms to make everyone a user. You can create different types of users with different privileges: see *Zones*.

Note that the "System" user is a special user which you cannot delete and is used for maintenance and scheduled tasks. Menu Option: *Admin -> Logins -> Add button*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/login/list>

5.6 Import Tariff Bundles

LawPracticeZA comes with a set of standard fees which we keep up to date - for instance High Court or Magistrate rates, or LegalWise standard fees. Make sure you have correctly set your VAT flag under Firm Details to ensure the fees are imported with the correct VAT settings. You can import just the ones that apply to your firm. Menu Option: *Fee Earner-> Tariff Bundles*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/product/importbundles>

5.7 Import Matters

Legacy systems nearly always have some way of exporting their matter information into a spreadsheet which you can then import into LawPracticeZA. You can optionally include take-on balances for business, trust and investment for each matter. We are also exploring ways to import data more directly. For example, from AJS we can import from a file dump, which takes only a few seconds. Menu Option: *Admin -> Import Data -> Import Matters*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matter/importfile>

5.8 Import Suppliers

Import your business creditors, optionally with take-on balances. Business Creditors include Advocates, Sheriffs and Expert Witnesses (for disbursements) as well as your business suppliers, such as the stationery store. Menu Option: *Admin -> Import Data -> Import Suppliers*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/supplier/importfile>

5.9 Import Draft Invoice Items (WIP)

If you have unbilled items that you want to bulk load, you can use this tool to import them. Also useful anytime on an ongoing basis if in your firm you generate lots of similar fees for many matters. Menu Option: *Admin -> Import Data -> Import WIP*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matterdraftlineitem/importwip>

5.10 Import General Ledger

Once you are ready to import all your General Ledger accounts then use this facility. Once you have imported all your matters (debtors), suppliers (business creditors) and general ledger accounts then you can create any necessary journal entries to bring the suspense accounts to zero. Alternatively, we can assist with these journals. Menu Option: *Admin -> Import Data -> Import General Ledger*

<https://lawpracticeza.com/account/importfile>

5.11 Create your Business & Trust Bank(s) and Receipt Methods

Create your Trust bank account/s so you can start capturing trust receipts and performing trust transfers. If you took on trust balances from a previous system then you will probably want to create a journal entry to bring the trust balance in your take on suspense account to zero. You need to set up at least one receipt method (typically EFT) for each bank account in order to start capturing receipts. Menu Options: *Master file Maintenance -> Business & Trust Banks* and *Master file Maintenance -> Receipt Methods*

- Banks: <https://lawpracticeza.com/bankaccount/list>
- Receipt Methods: <https://lawpracticeza.com/customerpaymentmethod/list>

5.12 Investment / Section 86(4) [78(2A)] institutions

By default LawPracticeZA assumes that you use only one institution for all your investments - ie all your Section 86(4) investment accounts are at one banking institution. If you use more than one, our system supports this with a quick adjustment which we'll need to make for you - just contact us.

FEE EARNER: GETTING STARTED

Note: This section covers the basic operation of LawPracticeZA for Fee Earners. Once familiar with LawPracticeZA, help on all Fee Earners functions is available in the *Fee Earner User Guide*.

6.1 Receive a new instruction from client

LawPracticeZA is based on the concept of Clients and Matters.

Think of a Matter as an instruction from a client. So for every Matter, there must be a Client.

All fees and disbursements relating to the instruction are captured against the Matter, and when appropriate, invoiced. Payments received from clients are similarly captured against the Matter.

6.1.1 If a new client, add the client

For new Clients, a client record must be added. Matters (instructions) from the client are then linked to the client.

Only a small number of fields are mandatory, marked with an asterisk (*). The other fields can be completed at any time, if required. For details, see the User Guide section of the manual.

6.1.2 Add the Matter

Matter, instructions from the client, are linked to a client, so a client must be opened before you can open a matter.

Only a small number of fields are mandatory, marked with an asterisk (*). The other fields can be completed at any time, if required. For details, see the User Guide section of the manual.

Note: Every Matter has an 'owner': a Fee earner. When a Fee earner logs in, all his or her matters are included in the Diary Pie-chart for selection, in the Fees written chart for the current and previous month and in **Draft Invoice Items**, accessible via the Dashboard.

6.2 Receive payment from client

Payments received from clients are referred to as Matter Receipts in the books of the firm, recorded against the clients Matter, and can be either Trust or Business receipts.

6.2.1 If payment for work done

If the payment received is for *work done and invoiced*, payment should be have been received into the **business** bank account.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customerpayment/capture>

6.2.2 If deposit for work to be done

If the payment received from the client is for work *to be done*, i.e. a deposit, or to *pay a third party*, then the payment must be received into the **trust** bank account.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customerpayment/capture>

6.3 Capture a fee or disbursement

A Fee and/or disbursement is captured against a Matter as unbilled (WIP) and subsequently invoiced, on demand. Unbilled fees and disbursements can be modified or deleted.

Start by selecting a Matter. This can be done in a number of ways, the most common being

1. Using the search. Either press / or click on the magnifying glass, and enter any part of the existing clients name or matters description, and select the Matter.
2. From the Dashboard Pie Chart of Due and Overdue Matters. Click on a segment (e.g. Due) and a list of diarised Matters, with diary note per matter, is displayed. Load a Matters details by clicking on the Matter description.
3. Draft invoice items from the Dashboard, where all WIP for the logged in fee earner is displayed with a summary and total amount per Matter. The trust balance on the Matter is displayed: useful to establish what will be available for transfer if a Matter is invoiced.

Once selected, scroll down to Capture Fees (or press Enter). Select whether time-based (e.g. Consultation) or unitary (e.g. travelling or photocopies) or Disbursements (e.g. Advocates account) and complete the details. The Fee level selected on the Matter determines the default selection, which can be changed.

Accepting the fee will add an entry to Unbilled under **Transactions**. As unbilled, fees and disbursements can be edited or deleted.

Note: Unbilled fees and disbursements are displayed with the most recent entry first, whereas on a proforma invoice and invoice, fees and disbursements are displayed in chronological order. The order within a day can be changed by changing the time that the fee was recorded.

6.4 Invoice client

Scroll down to **Transactions**. To check invoice details before processing, a **proforma invoice** can be selected at any time, as a proforma does not generate any accounting entries or update balances. Before producing a proforma or invoice, line-items can be selected (all selected by default). You can also select only Disbursements or Fees by clicking the appropriate heading. Only selected fees and disbursements will be included in the proforma or invoice (usually all - the default).

Invoicing converts unbilled fees and disbursements on a Matter to an accounting entry, and generates an invoice, which can be emailed to the client directly from the Matter (or proformas and invoices can be emailed in bulk, selectively, in various ways). The email address used is: -

1. The Invoice email on the matter, *if present*.
2. The Invoice email on the Client, *if present*.

3. The email on the Client, *mandatory field* (i.e. if the above are blank, this is the default email address for emailing invoices and proforma invoices to clients).

As an accounting entry, to 'cancel' an invoice, it is necessary to generate a credit note. This is standard accounting practice, as an audit trail is required for all accounting entries, i.e. you cannot simply make an invoice 'disappear' if in error.

If you need to credit (reverse) an invoice,

1. Select the invoice: click on the invoice number under **Accounting Entries**.
2. In the top right corner of the invoice are a number of icons:
 1. The 'Copy to unbilled' icon returns all the invoice line items to their original unbilled state. This is useful where the incorrect client or matter has been billed, a different invoice address is required or where you need to make changes and re-invoice the client. The recovered unbilled entries can be moved to another Matter (see **Move Selected** when **Unbilled** is selected).
 2. The 'Reverse' icon (left-arrow) will generate a credit note, which effectively reverses all the accounting entries and balances, producing a credit note and credit note transaction on the Matter.

The original invoice and reversal (mirror image credit note) can be 'hidden' on the Statement to client: see the Hide Reversals / Show Reversals toggle.

6.5 Consult with Advocate or other third party on behalf of your client

When consulting with an advocate (or other third party), or acquiring a service on behalf of a client (referred to as a disbursement), it is necessary to raise two entries.

1. The 'purchase' of the service from the 3rd party. This is done by posting the suppliers invoice, e.g. the invoice from the Advocate. This is a bookkeeper function.
2. The 'sale' of the service as a disbursement to the client. This is captured as an unbilled disbursement against the Matter (a Fee Earner function), and subsequently invoiced.

Note: Both the 'sale' and 'purchase' can be captured by the fee earner (option to capture expense when capturing disbursement) or by Bookkeeper (option to capture disbursement when capturing Suppliers invoice). Also note that the suppliers (scanned) account can be attached to the transaction, and will be included as an attachment to the invoice sent to the client via LawPracticeZA.

All suppliers (creditors), whether Advocates, Sheriffs, Expert Witnesses or Tracing Agents (typically for disbursements) must have a Supplier account opened. Suppliers are paid out of business after a trust transfer. Suppliers also include business creditors, such as your stationery supplier.

Supplier accounts maintain a list of all associated accounting transactions, with a balance, which can be viewed via the Account Enquiry option. There is also a Suppliers Age Analysis available. Note that for Suppliers, an invoice is a credit and a payment a debit in the books of the firm. Where the expected business balance for a client is a debit balance, for a supplier (creditor), it is a credit balance. This is a universal bookkeeping standard.

The 'sale' is captured as a Disbursement against the Matter, and subsequently invoiced. See Capture a Fee or Disbursement above. If registered for VAT, enter the ex VAT amount, as VAT is calculated and added by LawPracticeZA. There is a debate over whether a firm that is registered for VAT should charge VAT for a disbursement where the supplier (e.g. Advocate) is not registered. To accommodate those with a view that VAT should not be charged, a non-vatable posting code can be created and used to raise the disbursement as non-vatable.

Note: Add suppliers account, if not already open. <https://lawpracticeza.com/supplier/list>

6.5.1 Process Suppliers invoice

When entering the supplier invoice line-item, select the 'Disbursement cost' account for advocates or other 3rd parties providing services on behalf of the client (else the appropriate expense account if not a disbursement). Tip. use the filter to quickly find the account you are looking for (e.g. dis for Disbursement Costs).

If the supplier is registered for VAT, enter the ex VAT amount, as VAT is calculated by LawPracticeZA.

For Disbursements, the suppliers invoice represents the 'purchase'. The Disbursement option, which raises a disbursement on the client, represents the 'sale'

<https://lawpracticeza.com/purchaseinvoice/capture>

6.5.2 Pay Supplier

Record a payment made from the business bank to a supplier (business creditor) using menu option Supplier Payment.

Supplier accounts contains all invoices and payments, with balances that are aged (Supplier Age Analysis).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/supplierpayment/businesspayment>

6.6 Pay 3rd party on behalf of client (from trust)

Where trust is being held on behalf of a client to pay a 3rd party (e.g. SARS in a property transaction), payment is made from the **trust** bank, posted against the Matter.

Note: This is a 'Bookkeeper' function, so not available to a Fee Earner who does not also have bookkeeper rights. This explanation is provided here so that Fee Earners have a more complete understanding of how payments made to clients affect the Matter account. A **Matter Statement** (option available when **Accounting Entries** on a Matter is selected) provides a record of all accounting entries, split between Business, Trust and Investment transaction, and includes invoices and payments, balances owing by the client and amounts held in trust or invested on behalf of the client.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matterpayment/capture>

6.7 Menu and dashboard options

When a fee earner logs in, the following options are available to him or her.

6.7.1 System Settings and logging off

Click the down-arrow opposite your login name to select

- Account settings.
 - Change password. Be sure to remember your new password.
 - Display name: i.e. your name as it appears when displayed. Could be full name, initials, etc.
 - Your email address
- Logout - to exit LawPracticeZA.

6.7.2 Dashboard

When you login, LawPracticeZA presents you with a customized dashboard. The Dashboard enables you to quickly select common options and view important information. Periodically, new options may be added to the dashboard.

Matter Diary Entries: Pie Chart

Contains segments for Matters Due, Overdue and Future due, based on each Matters diary date. Click on a segment to get a list of all Matters in the segment. A list is provided with pertinent information displayed, and the ability to click any Matter in the list to load (and then to view the details of the Matter, diarize, capture a fee or invoice, etc.).

Chart of Fees Captured

A chart of your fees captured (whether invoiced or not) during the past month and the current month to date, shown against a monthly target (if set).

Several coloured info blocks: for example

1. The amount held in trust for your Matters. Note that if you select 'Include Others Matters', all Matters to which you have access will be included.
2. Unsent Invoices: i.e. not sent via LawPracticeZA or marked as sent.
3. Draft Invoices: a list of all your Matters with at least one unbilled fee and/or disbursement (i.e. your WIP), with a summary of all entries and the invoice value. Any trust balance on the matter is also shown, to assist with identifying what matters to invoice to release trust via the trust transfer.

All or Individual Matters can be selected, where you can **Send proforma invoices**, **Raise and send invoices** or **Raise invoices without sending**. The last option is available because clients can access invoices directly from statements they receive via email.

Documentation and User Guidance Cards

1. Full Manual: An on-line link to this manual.
2. PDF: A PDF version of the same manual.
3. Guidance Cards for various categories of users. The cards are colourful and interactive summaries of functions which mirror the menu items.

Recent Updates from the Developers

Details of changes made to the LawPracticeZA program - whether an enhancement or bug fix - are listed by date, with the most recent changes first.

6.7.3 The Fee Earner Menu and menu filter

The menu filter enables you to quickly find a menu item.

This feature is more useful for bookkeepers, who have many more options than Fee earners.

If you also have Bookkeeper access, entering Au, for example, will display the Bookkeeper Reporting option Audit Trail, for selection.

6.7.4 Fee Earner options

Dashboard

This is the 'home page' for all users.

Calendar

The calendar is a graphic representation of diarised Matters, with Matter details displayed in coloured rectangles. The Matter name and diary note are displayed; move the mouse over the diary note to expand.

The default view is monthly, where you can drag n' drop Matters between days. Tick to mark as completed or click again to restore to live. Diary details can also be updated on the Matter screen.

There are options for Weekly and Daily views, which also show times, and an option to view other Fee Earners calendars.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matter/calendar>

The Fee Earner sub menu give access to specific functions that relate to Fee Earners.

Time Sheet

The time sheet is a graphic representation of fees captured, with daily, weekly and monthly views.

You can also view other Fee Earners time sheets.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/salesagent/timesheet>

<https://lawpracticeza.com/salesagent/quickfees>

Percentage fees

Generate a percentage of a Matters Billed and Unbilled fees, Unbilled fees, or Billed fees, for a selected period, raised as a fee, with the description of the selected Posting code as the narration (e.g. Postage & Petties). A maximum amount can be set, and the selection can be limited to a department.

Recurring Billing

Typically used for monthly retainers, where a schedule is created (when to bill) and subscriptions (who and what to bill) are added to schedules.

On the scheduled day, at 3h00, the subscribed matters will be processed and unbilled fees raised.

Tariff bundles

There are a number of tariff bundles; the Standard (generic) tariffs that apply to all Matters (include time-based, unitary and disbursement activities), as well as specific tariff bundles, such as

- High Court Tariffs 11 September 2020
- Conveyancing
- Specialist bundles like Legalwise: Civil Mag Court Gold and Gold plus Nov 2017

Tariffs within the bundles are included for selection when Capturing fees for Matters where the bundle name is selected as the **Matters Department**.

Some tariff items include different amounts (scales), for example Magistrates Court tariffs; this is accommodated by selecting the Fee level on the Matter to the appropriate A, B, C or D (scale). For tariffs without a scale (e.g. High Court) select scale A.

Note: NB! When you import a tariff bundle, the Posting code VAT settings are based on your VAT setting in 'Firm Details' at the time of the import.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/product/importbundles>

Matter Receipts

Receive a payment from a client: see **Matter Receipt** under Bookkeeper -> Postings.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customerpayment/capture>

FEE EARNER USER GUIDE

A Fee Earner overview can be found in the *Fee Earner: Getting Started* section. This section includes more detail information relating to the functionality available to Fee earners.

7.1 Understanding Fee Earner and Matter access

LawPracticeZA is based on the principle of client accounts, each with one or more matters (instruction from a client). Every Matter has an ‘owner’ (a Fee Earner), who may give other users access to the Matter. Users may alternatively be given access to all matter.

When capturing fees, the logged on fee earner is the default fee earner. Other fee earners who have access to a matter are included in the list for selection, and anyone with access to the matter can capture fees on behalf of anyone in the list of fee earners.

7.2 The Dashboard (when you login)

When you login, the dashboard provides a convenient method to quickly access your most common and important functions and information.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/>

7.2.1 Pie chart (diarised matters)

The Pie Chart represents all Matters, grouped by due, overdue or due in the future. Click on the appropriate segment to load a list of Matters (e.g. Due today). From the list, you can select a Matter by clicking on its name.

Note: LawPracticeZA incorporates a ‘dynamic’ diary: i.e. the diary entries are attached to Matters. A Matter can contain multiple diary entries, which can function as tasks. For example, if an attorney is to appear in court on Friday at 10h00, the attorney could also diarise for an assistant to collate documents for court on Thursday. Both entries will appear in the attorneys diary on their respective dates.

7.2.2 Fees recorded for ...

The chart represents all the fees captured for the current and previous month (whether invoiced or not), by day, against target (if set), for the logged in fee earner.

7.2.3 Held in Trust / Clearing

Held in Trust shows the sum of trust balances for all your (the logged in Fee Earner) matters. If you select 'Include Others Matters', their trust balances will also be included. Click to produce a client aged analysis.

Clearing shows the trust transfer clearing balance, which should be zero. If not zero, means the trust transfer update has been run but the payment from trust to business has not been processed.

7.2.4 Unsent Invoices

Invoices that have been produced but not emailed automatically, or marked as having been sent.

Note: Some users of LawPracticeZA elect not to send invoices (which is why there are options to invoice without sending) as a Statement emailed to a client, often at month-end, includes a link to each invoice, whereby the client can click on the invoice number in the statement to view the invoice online, with the option to download in PDF format. Statement also have the option to append all invoices to the statement sent.

7.2.5 Draft Invoice items

Draft Invoice items produces a summary of **all your Matters** that contain **one or more** unbilled fee and/or pending disbursement (i.e. all your WIP), with options to email proforma invoices and/or process and email invoices to all or selected matters displayed (bulk email).

The list of Matters includes the total amount and any trust balance per matter. This provides a useful cash-flow management tool: where there is money in trust and the matter is ready to invoice, funds can be immediately released from trust to business.

Click on an individual Matter to load the Matter (where an invoice can be generated), or select Matter/s (and scroll down) to email.

7.2.6 Clear sample data

If your database still contains sample data from Getting Started, there is an option to clear this sample data. Once cleared, the option disappears.

7.2.7 Clients to receive statements

Clients to receive Statements displays clients who have been marked to receive a statement, but a statement has not been emailed to them during the past month.

7.2.8 Timers

If when capturing fees the timer is used and you exit the matter (with the timer running or paused - for example to attend to a different Matter), an entry showing the Matter and time transpired is displayed on the Dashboard. Click to reload the Matter, or delete the entry (bin).

7.2.9 Suppliers to be reviewed

If a supplier has not been reviewed during the past 30 days, the supplier is added to this list. Click on a supplier, where transactions are displayed with an option to review, and record a note, is presented

Note: Periodically new info blocks, similar to the above, may be added, often for information purposes, They are generally self explanatory.

7.2.10 Documentation and user guidance cards

On-line and PDF manual, and **Guidance Cards** for Fee Earner, Bookkeeper and Administrators. These bold, interactive cards mirror the respective menu's: click on the info icon opposite each entry to load the appropriate section of the on-line manual. Click on the entry to load the option. There is also a card depicting the debit and credit transactions typically found in a law firm.

7.2.11 Recent Updates from the Developers

A record of all updates made to LawPracticeZA, in chronological order. This list includes enhancements as well as bug-fixes.

Note: NB! At the bottom of every page is SUBMIT A SUPPORT REQUEST. Use this to communicate any request or bug report: everyone at LawPracticeZA is immediately notified and we receive the information necessary to enable us to attend to the issue as quickly and efficiently as possible. Please provide as much information as possible, as prompted by the form presented.

7.3 Fee Earner menu options

Click on the menu item on the left to load one of the following.

7.3.1 Dashboard

This is you 'home' screen. Click to return here at any time. If you do so from a screen where you have not completed an entry, you will be warned that leaving the screen will lose the information that you have entered.

7.3.2 Calendar

By default the calendar will show all your Matters diarised for the current month, in the monthly view.

Each Matter is displayed in a coloured box; rest the mouse cursor on the calendar note and the full details are displayed.

You can drag any Matter to a different date.

You can also mark an entry as complete by clicking the check-sign (it becomes a double-check); click again to reactivate the diary entry for the Matter.

To select a Matter, click in the body of the coloured box and the Matter is loaded.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matter/calendar>

7.3.3 Time Sheet

The time sheet reflects all fees captured during the day, for the selected fee earner.

Time-based entries are displayed in the daily calendar at the appropriate time. For example, if you captured a fee at 14h00 with a duration of 90 minutes, the entry will fill the slot 14h00 to 15h30.

Unitary fees (i.e. not time-based) are displayed at the top of the page.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/salesagent/timesheet>

7.3.4 Percentage fees (e.g. Postage and Petties)

Raise a fee per matter based on a percentage of fees and disbursements invoiced and/or captured during a specified period (typically a month) for selected departments. There is an option to cap the fee.

Note: As this function generates fees in bulk, it is important to check the details very carefully before accepting.

Prior to first using the function, it is necessary to create an appropriate posting code. For example, a Fee or Disbursement code could be created with a description of “Postage and Petties” based on 10% of the amount invoiced for the period, to a maximum of R400”.

The fields to be completed are

1. **From and To dates:** the date range for the inclusion of invoices and/or fees captured. For example, if for the month of February 2021, 2021-02-01 to 2021-02-28. If producing Statements on the 25th of every month, would be 2021-01-26 to 2021-02-25.
2. **Generate From:** Billed (Invoiced) and unbilled Fees **or** only Unbilled Fees **or** only invoices.
3. **Percentage:** This is the percentage to apply to the select Matter amounts. For example, if 10, and the amount is R4 560.12, if capped at R400.00 will generate an unbilled fee of R400. If not capped (or a higher cap), will generate a fee of R456.01.
4. **Max Amount:** This is the amount to cap the fee at. See example above.
5. **Posting code:** Start typing the required posting code description (e.g. post) and select the code.
6. **Narration:** The default narration is the posting code description, but can be changed. For example, for the above example, you may change the narration to “Postages and Petties for the month of February 2021”. The narration will appear on the proforma invoice and invoice.
7. **Department:** To select Matters within a Department, tick the Department check box. The sum of all unbilled and/or invoiced amounts will be displayed opposite each matter, with the unbilled fee or disbursement (depending on the posting code) amount to be raised. Before clicking RAISE AS UNBILLED FEES **ensure that you are satisfied that these are the fees that you wish LawPracticeZA to automatically raise**, based on the options selected.
8. **RAISE AS UNBILLED FEES:** When you click this, LawPracticeZA will automatically raise an unbilled fee for each Matter as indicated, based on the options selected. Depending on the number of fees to be raised, this can take a few minutes, so wait until complete.

Note: The fees raised are unbilled, so this process should precede the generation of invoices. When the invoices are generated, they will include the fees raised above.

7.3.5 Recurring Billing

This function is used where a regular, recurring fee is to be raised against one or more Matters, and consists of two components: -

1. Schedules, where the timing of the fee generation is defined, and
2. Subscriptions, where the Matter to raise the fee against is selected, as well as details of the fee.

Schedules

You can create a number of schedules, which determine when the associated subscriptions run. The run time is 4h00 (4 in the morning) on the designated day.

For example, if *on the* is selected with *25 th day* and a month or months checked, on the morning of the 25th on the selected month/s at 4h00 the Matters selected in Subscriptions will have the designated fees automatically raised.

Subscriptions

After creating a Schedule (you can have a number of different schedules) you add subscriptions. A subscription is a Matter with a designated fee. Complete the following

1. **Schedule:** select from the list of schedules that you have created (see above).
2. **Item:** This is the narration you want to appear for the unbilled fee.
3. **Client:** Type part of the client's name and select the client. The clients Matters will be available for selection in the list below.
4. **Matter:** select the clients Matter.
5. **Fee:** Type part of the fee description and select the posting code. The code could be something like "Monthly retainer for legal services".
6. **Quantity.** If a fixed amount: 1, but could be a number of hours, for example, with unit price the hourly rate.
7. **Currency:** Typically South African Rands
8. **Tax Type:** e.g. Not Registered or SG_15 if registered and 15% VAT to be added.
9. **Unit Price:** the fee to be raised (multiplied by the Quantity above).
10. **Total ex VAT:** calculated.
11. **VAT.** The calculated VAT amount, if VAT is applicable.
12. **Total including VAT:** The fee total amount.
13. **Activation date.** This is the first date for the automatic recurring billing to take place.
14. **Fee earner.** Select the fee earner to assign the fees when invoiced.
15. **Expiry Date.** Forever is the default; i.e. until you cancel the subscription. Alternatively, you can assign a date, whereafter the generation of fees will cease.

Note: Click OK to Save but check the details carefully as this is a bulk posting function, which will happen automatically at 4h00 on the designated date, based on the selections that you have made above.

Also note that you can 'Trigger now' from the Schedules option.

7.3.6 Matter Receipts

The option is provided for both Fee earners and Bookkeepers, and is used to record monies received from clients, whether trust or business.

See details in the Bookkeeper User Guide.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customerpayment/capture>

7.3.7 Tariff bundles

LawPracticeZA provides a number of tariff bundles, for example, Magistrates Court Defended - effective 11 September 2020, High Court Tariffs effective 11 September 2020 and LegalWise Labour matters, to name a few.

New bundles may periodically be provided by our clients, and added.

This option enables you to add a set of tariffs to your system.

Importantly, the bundle name corresponds to the Department on the Matter. Once a bundle has been added, the bundle name will appear in the Department drop-list on the Matter. Selecting a department in the Matter will make the tariff items in the bundle available when capturing fees to the Matter.

The Fee level on the Matter must also be selected: A if the tariff has only a single amount (e.g. High court) else A, B, C or D (e.g. Magistrates Court) to set the scale.

Note: If the firm operates on an Attorney Own Client basis, then do not import tariff bundles for tariffs such as High and Magistrates courts.

If you import a tariff bundle, the Posting code VAT settings are based on your VAT setting in 'Firm Details' at the time of the import, so it important that your VAT setting (Firm details) is correctly set prior to importing any Bundles.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/product/importbundles>

7.3.8 Documentation Automation

Consists of two parts: templates and documents. Templates contain the (Word) document content with variables (e.g. clients name and matter description, fee earners and their hourly rates). Document are the result of templates merged with the selected matters variables.

A typical use of Documentation Automation is to generate a **Cost Estimates** for every new Matter opened (instruction from a client) as per the new **LPA requirement**. A typical template name might be "Terms of Engagement and Cost Estimate" or "Cost Estimate ito LPA sec 35 Divorce Action".

Note: Documents are **generated and accessed** directly from the Matter. Templates can also be accessed directly from Matters (as opposed to via the menu option below).

Templates

You can add a new template, or update an existing template (click on the Template name or Update on the menu).

Existing Template have the following menu options (three vertical dots)

1. Detail: full details of the template, including content and variables. Also includes other menu options; Update, delete, plot or generate.
2. Update: Change the content of an existing template.
3. Plot: provides a time-line of when the template has been updated, and by whom.
4. Generate: this will merge the template with the selected Matters variables and create a document, which when saved is attached to the Matter, and can be opened as a pdf document or in the browser for printing.

The template consists of the following components: -

1. A template name. Make it descriptive, so it is easy to identify.
2. Type of template: use Word Document. The other two options are older versions, not recommended, and remain only for older versions.

3. Generate for a Matter or Supplier. Document Automation is a work in progress, so additional options may be added in future. Matter is the most common option: this will enable you to include variables from both clients and matters in the document. The variables available can be found by scrolling down to 'Available Template Tags'.
4. Department, if the template applies to a particular department only. Else leave blank.
5. There is an option to import an existing document as a basis for the template. Browse for the document you wish to import, and the content of the document will be loaded into the template, which you can then change. Alternatively, you can start with a blank template. See notes provided.
6. A template can include text and variables. A list of available variables can be found under **Available Template tags**, contained in twin curly brackets ({{variable}}). Variables with multiple items (e.g. Fee Earners) can be included.
7. Your letterhead can be added to the template by selecting the option provided.
8. The ini file provides the ability to include variables, which includes calculated fields, but does require some programming.

Note: LawPracticeZA can assist you with your first template, which can then be used as a blue print for additional templates that you may wish to produce. Contact us via REQUEST A SUPPORT ISSUE.

7.3.9 Import WIP / Invoices

Bulk WIP can be imported from a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet content has to be in exactly the given format. This function is normally used when taking on LawPracticeZA from a legacy system, but can also be used for bulk fees (usually very similar fees, for example producing and billing for many letters of demands for a large client) are involved.

Importing invoices applies where an invoice to a client has been generated for a client externally to LawPracticeZA. This is again usually when taking on LawPracticeZA from a legacy system (and the invoice is not included in the take on balance).

7.4 Adding a new client

The most common method for adding a client is by clicking the icon (customer outline with +) in the LawPracticeZA header. Clients can also be added by the Bookkeeper.

Every Matter is linked to a client, so a new client must be added before a new Matter for the client can be added. There can be multiple Matters linked to the same client.

Mandatory fields are marked with an *. Important fields are: -

1. Client: the official name of the client. The client's name is shown on Invoices and Statements, so must be the full name.
2. Customer code: automatically generated by LawPracticeZA, derived from the Client name. Matter codes for linked Matters are the Customer code + a suffix. For example, for customer code ABC, the Matter code for the first attached Matter will be ABC-001, the second ABC-002, etc. The primary purpose of the Matter code is to be used as a reference by the client when making payment. For this reason the code generated, although unique, is as short as possible. If, for some reason, the firm elects to use their own Client code, this code can be overwritten, but note that the code entered must be unique.
3. Department: can be 'Default' or select an appropriate department from the list. The Department selected is the default department for all linked Matters, but can be changed on the Matter. The department can also be used in conjunction with Tariff bundles to assign sets of tariffs to a Matter (e.g. High Court tariffs).
4. Email, mandatory field: the default for all linked Matters, is the email address used for automatically emailing Invoices and Statements to clients, **unless** an Invoice or Accounts email is entered. If an email address

is entered on the Matter (Invoice email), this will override any email on the client when emailing Invoices from LawPracticeZA.

5. Postal address: used on invoices and Statements to clients. For separate address lines, press Enter after a line.
6. Tax number: this is the clients VAT registration number, and if present, will print on the Tax Invoice generated by LawPracticeZA that you send to your client.
7. Effective and Expiry dates. By default selected (forever). Do not change.
8. Tax Type: Only used if the default tax is not applicable to this client; for example, an overseas client where VAT is not applicable. Only applies in exceptional circumstances, and is usually left blank.

After completing all fields click OK to save the Client details.

Note: If any mandatory fields (*) have not been completed, the record will not be saved, and the field/s with missing data will be marked in red. Complete and click OK again to save.

7.4.1 FICA

When you add or update a client, a ‘traffic light’ icon indicates the FICA status of the client. Grey indicates nothing yet done, green FICA’ed, amber partially processed and red not compliant.

If you click on the traffic light icon, you are presented with the following options: -

1. Select the type of entity, as this determines what information and documents are required.
2. A unique URL will be generated. Click on the copy icon, open an email to the client and copy this link into the body of the email. When the client clicks on the link, they will be prompted for the appropriate data and to attach copies of the appropriate documents.
3. When the client submits this information, it will appear as an issue (envelope icon with incremental number in the top right corner). Click to display the issue: the data completed by the client, as well as all attached documents, will be displayed. The details and documents will be attached to the client record and accessible when accessing any matter for the client. Peruse the data and documents (e.g to check that appropriate documents are valid), and select the FICA status.

When accessing a Matter, the FICA traffic light icon will indicate the status. Click on the icon to update the status.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customer/insert>

7.5 Adding a new Matter

The most common method for adding a Matter is by clicking the icon (court document folder, right of new client) in the LawPracticeZA header. Matters can also be added by the Bookkeeper.

Every Matter is linked to a client, so a new client must be added before a new Matter for the client can be added. There can be multiple Matters linked to the same client.

Mandatory fields are marked with an *. Important fields are: -

1. Client: start typing any part of the client’s name, and select the client from the list. Even if only one client is displayed, select (click on) the client.
2. Matter description: enter a meaningful description. The description will be shown on the invoice to the client, so should include information that the client might need such as a policy number, company registration number or erf number. A comprehensive description also makes it easier to find the matter you are looking for, as in the search you can enter any part of the client name or matter description.

3. Matter code: automatically generated by LawPracticeZA. The standard method for generating Matter codes is to append the sequential matter number to the Customer code. For example, for customer code ABC, the Matter code for the first attached Matter will be ABC-001, the second ABC-002, etc. **Note:** in some instances, LawPracticeZA uses a 'custom' assignment. For example, where systems have been converted from Ghost Practice, the same method as Ghost Practice can be applied, i.e. assign the next sequential number for clients (CNTn) and Matters (MATn). The main purpose of the Matter code, quoted on invoices, is to easily associate payments received from a client with the Matter (where the client includes the Matter code as a reference when making payment, as requested on the invoice). In Reconzilla this is especially relevant, where the Receipt can be posted with a single click after being imported from the bank statement.
4. Owner: The Fee Earner responsible for this Matter. By default, the person logged in, but can be selected from the drop-list (for example, if the Matter is opened by the secretary on behalf of the Fee Earner).
5. Also give access to: select other Fee earners who should have access to this Matter. Note that some Fee Earners may be given **access to all Matters**. In this instance, it is not necessary to give individual access per Matter.
6. By default, the Matter is diarised for the current date. If a new diary date is not set, the Matter will become overdue (until a new diary date is set).
7. Department: defaults to the Client department, but can be overwritten on the Matter. The department can be used in conjunction with Tariff bundles to assign sets of tariffs to a Matter (e.g. High Court tariffs).
8. Reserve trust: this will reduce the amount of trust available for automatic trust transfer. For example, if a deposit is received for fees **and** to pay a third party, the amount to be paid to the third party can be reserved until the third party has been paid. This will prevent the automatic transfer program from transferring this excess amount if the fees invoiced exceed the portion available for fees. Reserve trust can also be assigned when receiving a trust payment from a client.
9. email: not used for automatically sending invoices or statements, just an additional email reference. Can be left blank.
10. Invoice email: for emailing invoices for this matter. if blank, will use the email address on the client.
11. Fee level: the default used when Capturing fees. If time-based (Standard, High, etc.), will default to Time and the Fee Earners hourly rate as applicable; if A, will default to Unitary. B, C and D also default to unitary and are used to indicate the scale, where applicable (e.g. Magistrates Court and some company tariff structures, such as Legal Wise).
12. Dead file number. If a Matter is to be archived. LawPracticeZA will generate the next available dead file number, which can be changed (i.e. if using a third party such as Metrofile, where the box number would be entered when archiving and dead filing).

After completing all fields click OK to save the Matter details.

Note: If any mandatory fields (*) have not been completed, the record will not be saved, and the field/s with missing data will be marked in red. Complete and click OK again to save.

7.6 Finding a Matter / searching for a Matter

There are several methods for finding a Matter, the most common being the magnifying-glass icon in the LawPracticeZA header. This can be activated by clicking on or tapping the magnifying glass, or pressing the / key. The most recent matters accessed will be displayed in a list.

Type part of the client name or matters description (or matter code) and a list of matters is displayed with matches or near matches, the most likely candidate at the top of the list. If you imported matters from your legacy system and included your legacy file number, this can also be used in the search.

Select (click on or tap) the Matter you are looking for. The selected Matter details are displayed-

7.7 Client and Matter details

Whenever a Matter is selected, details of the client and matter are display, with a number of options available. The sections displayed are

1. Client and matter details, including contact details, department, Fee Earner/s and Associated matters, diary entries, document attachments and Document Automation options.
2. Capture (unbilled) fees and disbursements.
3. Transactions, including options to Invoice, add and view attachments, etc. Unbilled fees are selected as the default, with options to view business, trust and investment transactions.

Note: Documents can either be attached directly to a Matter, or a 'share' link can be entered in the matter (uri) if one of the on-line document storage options is used: e.g. DropBox, Box, Google Drive or Microsoft OneDrive or Sharepoint.

7.7.1 Diarise a Matter

A Matter can include multiple diary entries; a diary entry can be assigned to yourself, or another user.

On a diary date, the Matter will appear as due in the assignee's diary (Pie Chart Due). It will also appear as due in the Assignor's diary.

When a diary entry is made, it must contain a note, which is displayed together with the diary entry.

For example, a lawyer could assign a diary entry to his or her secretary for Wednesday to collate documents for a court appearance on Friday, and a diary entry for him or herself for the court appearance on Friday.

There are various places where a diary entry is highlighted and shown

1. The Pie Chart on the Dashboard shows the number of Matters diarised for 'today' as Due (Matters that are not dealt with on time show as Overdue, Matters still to be dealt with as Future due). Once a Matter's diary entry has been dealt with, the diary entry is deleted or ticked as complete.
2. In the Calendar, diarised Matters are shown as coloured blocks, with the Matter name and diary note (e.g. Jane, please collate documents for Fridays court case A vs B).

7.7.2 Associated matters

Associate Matters: for example, if you have a buyer and seller in a property transaction, by associating them, you can 'flip' between them, having selected one or the other. You can have more than 2 associated matters, and define the association.

7.7.3 Document Automation (including Cost Estimates)

You can view, edit or expire templates. A typical template could be "Terms of Engagement and cost Estimate". A template is a Word document with variable fields, for example clients name or matter description, that are merged from the selected matter to generate a customized document, which is attached to the Matter and can be recalled as a Word document (for further editing) or PDF document (for printing or emailing).

See Document Automation on the Fee Earner menu for more details.

7.8 Capture a fee or disbursement against a Matter

After selecting a Matter, scroll down to Fee Capture (or press Enter) to record an unbilled fee or pending disbursement against a Matter (for subsequent invoicing).

If the Fee Level on the Matter has a time-based setting (e.g. Standard or High) the time-based posting codes will be available for selection and the Fee Earners appropriate hourly rate applied. The number of minutes is entered (or the timer used) and by default, time-based fees are calculated per 6-minutes, i.e. (tenths of an hour) or part thereof (national and international standard for lawyers. See FAQ for more details). The 6-minute default can be changed in Firm details.

If the Fee level on the Matter is set to A (or B, C or D where there is a fee scale), the unitary setting will be the default, with the unitary set of posting codes (which can include default amounts, for example cost per km for travelling or cost per photocopy) available for selection under activity. If the department is set to a tariff bundle, then the tariff entries (e.g. High Court tariffs), with their associated amount, will be included in the selection.

Note: Tip. Where there are many Activities available for selection, the filter will enable you to quickly find the item you are looking for. Simply start typing any part of the Activity description.

To capture a disbursement (e.g. an Advocates account) select Disbursement, and the disbursement posting codes will be presented for selection. There is some debate as to whether a firm that is registered for VAT should charge VAT on a disbursement where the supplier (e.g. an Advocate) is not registered. LawPracticeZA can accommodate this by having two posting codes; one with VAT set to VAT Sales Goods, the other set to Not Registered.

Note: There is the option when capturing the disbursement against the Matter, to simultaneously **Also capture expense** - the suppliers (e.g. Advocate, Sheriff or accommodation) invoice.

1. Select the supplier and enter the suppliers invoice number and date.
2. Select the Expense account (use filter): normally Disbursement Costs.
3. A scanned copy of the suppliers invoice can be attached. This will be sent as an attachment together with the invoice if emailed via LawPracticeZA.
4. If you select "Capture Payment Now", enter the date, select bank account and enter amount. Once saved, all the appropriate accounts will be updated: the Matter, the Supplier and (if paid) the Business Bank.

If the bookkeeper captures the suppliers invoice for a disbursement (the 'purchase' leg of the entry), there is also an option to capture the disbursement against the Client's Matter (the 'sale' leg of the disbursement, normally captured here). The latter is the equivalent of capturing the disbursement as described above. If this option is taken, the Fee Earner will not capture the disbursements.

The selected Activity code becomes the narration default, which can be changed / extended.

Unitary fees and disbursements have a unit and rate. For example

1. An Advocate's account is entered with a unit of 1, with the rate being the the invoiced amount. If the Advocate and the firm are registered for VAT, the ex VAT amount should be entered, as LawPracticeZA will calculate and add VAT.
2. For photocopies or travelling, for example, the unit will be the number (20 pages or 50 km) and the rate the unit cost (from the posting code, e.g. cost per page or per km). LawPracticeZA calculates the total amount by multiplying the two.

If the Matters Department is set to a 'Tariff bundle', the related Posting Codes will be included in the list for selection. If a tariff scale (i.e. A, B, C o D) is applicable, the appropriate tariff will be loaded automatically as the rate.

7.9 Transactions: includes options for generating invoices, etc.

By default, all unbilled fees and disbursements are selected.

7.9.1 Transaction groups with balances

There are balances for the various groups of transactions. Click on a balance to select the group. By default, **ALL UNBILLED** is selected. UNBILLED FEES included only fees, whereas UNBILLED DISBURSEMENTS, only disbursements.

1. **All Unbilled** (WIP): displays unbilled fees and disbursements, which can be edited (pen icon) or deleted (bin icon). There are a number of options available for unbilled fees and pending disbursements.

1. **Invoice Selected:** this will generate an invoice (includes selected items, all by default) and automatically post all the appropriate accounting transactions and update the affected account balances. Generally a proforma invoice is generated prior to invoicing, either to check the invoice details internally, or with the client. When sending the invoice, an option is provided to include a message, with 'tags'. For example,

Dear \$formal (*or could use tag \$firstname for less formal letter*) Herewith this month's invoice. Kind regards

Note: There can be a discrepancy between VAT calculated per line, compared to VAT calculated on the invoice total amount. The method we use is to calculate VAT on each line item, rounded to 2 decimal places. The total VAT for the invoice therefore is the sum of the VAT which was actually charged on all the line items, whether at a rate of 0%, 14% or 15%. If there is a discrepancy between the two VAT amounts due to rounding, this is reflected on the invoice as 'rounding'.

The other option for unbilled fees and disbursements are: -

1. **Proforma** invoice: generates an invoice, without updating any balances or generating accounting transactions.
2. **Unbilled report:** this is a dump of the unbilled fees and disbursements to a spreadsheet.
3. **Delete selected:** if you need to delete more than one entry, select the entries to be deleted and click this button.
4. **Move selected:** move the selected unbilled fees and disbursements to a different Matter.

Note: Can be very useful in the instance where an invoice issued to the incorrect client is credited (click reverse icon with invoice selected to automatically generate a credit note and reverse all entries). All line-items on the invoice can be COPIED TO UNBILLED and the unbilled fees and/or disbursements can then be moved to the correct Matter, and invoiced.

Note that if an invoice is credited by LawPracticeZA in this way, because the credit note is a mirror image of the invoice, the option the **Hide Reversals** will hide both the original invoice and credit note on the client's Statement.

2. **Business and Trust** (Accounting Entries): includes business and trust transactions, in separate columns: e.g. invoices, receipts and payment, and trust transfers.

1. **Generate a Matter Statement:** Display a statement of account for the client's matter, with various options (e.g. to Send - email to client - or produce a PDF statement. The PDF Statements is in the same format that the client receives, with separate sections for business, trust and investment transactions and balances, showing how much the client owes, how much is held in trust for the client, and how much is invested for the client. Sections only show where there are transactions.
2. **Send Matter Statement now:** will email the statement details with the (PDF) statement attached to the client. Note that the statement is summarised in the body of the email with hyperlinks to invoices (so the client can recall any invoices in the statement by clicking on the link). Statements can be sent (emailed) in bulk at (typically) month-end, selectively, where multiple Matters can be included in one client's statement, whereas this option includes only the current Matter. When sending a statement, there is also the option to include invoices with the statement.

3. **Fee Allocation Report:** This option applies when a fee allocation has been defined for a Matter. To define the fee allocation, which must be done prior to reporting, click on the gear icon to the right: this will load a form where you can enter the allocation parameters.
3. **Section 86(4) [old 78(2A)]:** Investment and withdrawal transactions, including interest and charges. Includes the same options as Business and Trust, above.
4. **Gmail:** If Gmail integration is activated, this option will display a list of emails from your Gmail account which match either any email address associated with the client or matter, or where the email contains the matter code.
5. **Notes:** You can add notes, with or without attachments, to the matter, for internal use.

Note: The number of notes (with or without attachments) is displayed. Click to list existing notes and attachments, with option to add a new note with or without an attachment. Existing notes can be deleted. An attachment can be any electronic object, for example, a scanned document, a recorded voice message or even a video clip.

To view existing notes, the list includes a filter; type any word or phrase in the filter, and only matching notes will be displayed.

Accounting transactions displayed under any of the above can be selected by clicking the transactions reference number. The transaction will be loaded, with a number of options available. For example, if an Invoice is loaded, there are options to Send (email), reverse the invoice (generate a credit note), copy the line items back to unbilled, etc.

7.10 When you select an invoice

The invoice details are displayed, with a summary of the account and fee earner allocations, and a number of available options: -

1. **PDF:** Produce a PDF copy of the invoice. This can be printed or saved. The saved PDF can be attached to an email.
2. **XLS:** Generate an Excel spreadsheet of the invoice line-items.
3. **SEND:** Sends email to client (to email address as indicated by the Matter details displayed), with the PDF document attached. If the invoice includes a disbursement and a copy of the disbursement invoice (e.g. Advocates account) was attached when capturing the disbursement, then a copy of the disbursement invoice will also be attached.
4. **COPY TO UNBILLED:** Will restore all the invoice line items to their original state as unbilled fees and disbursements, where they can be edited, deleted, or moved to a different Matter. Usually used in conjunction with 'Reverse' (see below).
5. **MARK AS SENT:** When LawPracticeZA automatically emails an invoice, it is marked as sent. If you manually email the invoice (for example, save the PDF and attach it to a customized email sent to your client), you can mark it as sent, so that it does not appear in the list of unsent invoices on the Dashboard.
6. **REVERSE:** Generates a Credit Note and posts all the accounting entries and updates balances, which are opposite to the invoice. If the Hide Reversals option is set, will not show the original invoice or credit note on the client's statement.
7. **CHANGE DATE:** There may be occasions where you wish to change the date, for example if the invoice is generated on the first day of a month but you want it to reflect in the previous month, and be included in the previous month's income and expense report. The invoice date can only be changed if
 1. The invoice has not been sent.
 2. The date falls within the accounting period; i.e. cannot be changed to a date prior to the last 'freeze' date.

BOOKKEEPER USER GUIDE

All the functionality necessary for a law firm to maintain accurate and up to date business and trust accounts is provided by LawPracticeZA. There are sections dealing with posting transactions, maintain files necessary for the accounting system, administration and management reports and a section for period-end procedures.

Certain accounting entries are generated automatically by LawPracticeZA. For example, when an invoice is generated (from unbilled fees and disbursements),

1. The Clients Matter business balance is debited with the invoice total and an invoice transaction generated.
2. The debtors control account in the General Ledger is debited with the invoice total.
3. The Income account is credited with the sum of fees invoiced, ex VAT (if VAT applies).
4. The Disbursement income account in the General Ledger is credited with the sum of disbursements invoiced, ex VAT (if VAT applies).
5. The VAT account in the General Ledger is credited with the VAT amount, if VAT applies.

This section covers the modules available to bookkeepers for recording all other accounting entries, maintaining necessary files and extracting appropriate reports.

8.1 An Overview

LawPracticeZA provides several posting modules to make it easy to capture the various types of transactions that apply to South African law firm's.

Transactions captured are a record of the physical transaction: for example, receiving money from a client into trust, where the payment received from the client has been paid into the trust bank account, whether via EFT or a cheque received and deposited.

LawPracticeZA automatically debits and credits the appropriate accounts, reducing posting errors.

Note: The only time a bookkeeper is prompted for the account to debit and credit is when posting journals. Based on the transaction type, LawPracticeZA determines what to debit and credit from the type of transaction and the Matter or account selected.

The table of contents (left pane) for this section mirror's the LawPracticeZA menu, making it easy to find the instruction and explanation you are looking for. Main items can be expanded to expose the sub-sections, much in the same way as the menu in LawPracticeZA.

8.2 Recording accounting transactions

This section explains the various modules available in LawPracticeZA for capturing transactions.

8.2.1 Receiving monies from client's

Note: In the books of the law firm, a payment received from a client is considered a **receipt**, and posted as a **Matter Receipt**. A receipt can be posted to a single matter (the default), to a client's Matters, or various client's matters (split receipt). There is also an option to import receipts, in bulk, from a spreadsheet. This would typically be used in the case of a corporate client, which could also involve several separate entities for a group of companies (where different companies within the group are separate clients) and the head office submits all payments (Receipts) in a spreadsheet.

When receiving a payment from a client, the receipt can be deposited into either the **business** or **trust** bank account, updating the Matters business or trust balance accordingly.

Note: To record the *receipt* of a trust transfer payment from trust into the Business Bank, post a Matter Receipt, Business, against the **Trust Transfer Clearing Matter**. The amount should be informed by the trust transfer report. The *payment* from trust is posted as a Matter Payment, Trust, also against the **Trust Transfer Clearing Matter**

Where a client is paying for work already done and invoiced, the payment should be paid into the firm's business bank account. If paid into trust, the funds will be transferred when the next automatic trust transfer is run. In all other cases the payment **must be receipted into the trust bank**, and posted accordingly.

Whether the payment received is in the form of a Cheque or Cash, via a Credit Card or EFT, will influence how it is processed. See Banks and Receipt Methods for a full explanation of this.

The narration entered will appear on the client's statement.

Receipts to multiple matters / split receipts

A client may make a single payment in respect of multiple matters. Select Multiple (the default is single). You will then be asked to select the client, and the client's matters will be displayed, together with business or trust balance.

For business receipts, as you check a box for a Matter, the balance, up to and including the receipt total, is automatically selected, but can be changed.

For trust receipts, the amount must be entered against each selected Matter and the box checked.

In both instances, the sum of the amounts receipted to each individual matter must equal the total amount of the receipt entered.

There are also options for a single receipt to be split to different clients and the option to import receipts in bulk from a spreadsheet.

For trust receipts, a reserve amount can be entered; i.e. how much of this receipt, if any, must be added to the reserve trust on this matter? (Single matter receipts only). Reserve trust is subtracted from trust to provide the trust amount available for transfer when running the Trust Transfer program. Reserve trust is the portion of monies held in trust that is not available for transfer: typically reserved to pay a third party on behalf of the client.

Note: Reconzilla provides for importing downloaded bank statements and capturing all transactions types (Receipts, Payment, Interest, Bank charges). Using Reconzilla makes capturing transactions more efficient and accurate, and automatically reconciles all entries captured.

Note: Firm setting *Notify on Receipt*: if set, the owner of the matter will receive an email whenever a receipt is posted with client, matter and receipt details.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customerpayment/capture>

8.2.2 Payments to or on behalf of client's

Where trust monies are paid to a third party on behalf of the client, a trust payment is posted against the matter.

The client's matter must contain a credit trust balance equal to or greater than the payment; if not, this will cause the client's Matter to go into a trust debit and a negative transfer to take place (unless the error is rectified prior to transfer).

Note: To record the *payment* of a trust transfer from the trust Bank, post a Matter Payment, trust, against the **Trust Transfer Clearing Matter**. The payment should be informed by the trust transfer report's amount available for transfer.

There are rare occasions where a firm will make a business payment on behalf of a client, for example, in a property transaction where rates must be paid urgently and the money has not been received from the client.

Payments to multiple matters / split payments

In the situation where you wish to make a single payment but reflect the payment on more than one of a client's matters, a split payment can be made.

Select the client and all matters, with their balances, are displayed.

Enter the amount to be reflected against each matter and check the box. The sum of the individual amounts entered must be the same as the full payment amount entered.

The bank from which the payment is made must be selected from the drop-list.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matterpayment/capture>

8.2.3 Posting suppliers invoices

Suppliers providing a service submit an invoice, which is processed via the Suppliers Invoice module. Suppliers can include

1. Advocates, Sheriff's and Expert witnesses: **Disbursements**
2. The landlord, phone company, the Bank (bank charges) and stationary store: **Business Expenses**.
3. Furniture and Office Equipment suppliers: **Assets**

Multiple lines per invoice can be captured, to accommodate different VAT settings and/or expense allocations. If all line items are of the same type (VAT and expense category), one line item can be entered for the entire invoice. **Disbursement** is not selected by default. If selected (i.e. to record the disbursement cost against the client), select the Matter and the Posting Code (which can be a vatable or non vatable code) and enter the narration to appear on the client's invoice.

Until the supplier is paid, the amount of the invoice will reflect as a credit on the suppliers account, included in creditors control in the General Ledger, and shown under the appropriate age period on the Suppliers Age Analysis.

As VAT is derived from invoices, it is important to accurately record suppliers invoices where VAT is involved (where the law firm is registered for VAT). This includes supplies such as telephone accounts and rent, even bank charges, where traditionally these might be posted directly from the bank / cash book. LawPracticeZA accommodates this type of transaction by including an option 'Paid immediately' on the suppliers invoice posting, so that the correct transactions are posted, (i.e. the invoice updating the supplier and expense account (and VAT if applicable) and the payment updating the bank and supplier) without requiring additional data capture. A 'Cash or COD Creditor' can be used for these type of transactions.

Note: Reconzilla includes 'Quick bank charges' which generates the appropriate entries with a single click, for business bank charges. This requires a supplier for bank charges to be created and assigned to the bank (usually

done by LawPracticeZA during system set up). The trust bank should not include bank charges - these should be raised on the firm's business bank, but if raised on the trust bank account, should be posted as a Matter payment against the Law Society Matter.

Also note that invoices from Advocates and others that are disbursed, are a 'purchase' as well as a 'sale', so must be captured as a suppliers invoice, as well as be posted against the client as a disbursement. There is an option to raise the disbursement 'sale' on the client at the same time as posting the disbursement 'purchase' against the supplier. The 'purchase' can also be captured at the same time as capturing the 'sale': i.e. when posting the disbursement.

There is some controversy as to whether a VAT registered law firm should charge a client VAT for a disbursement from a non registered supplier (e.g. an Advocate). Where a firm is registered for VAT, and a disbursement service is provided where the supplier (e.g. Advocate) is not registered for VAT, the 'sale' can be recorded using a non vatable posting code, and no VAT will be raised on the invoice to the client.

Paid: by default not Paid (i.e. immediately), but can 'Capture payment now'. This option requires selection of the bank, and the amount of the payment.

Once you have completed capturing all line item/s, click cancel to return to the invoice, then scroll down for the **Paid option** and click OK to accept the entry.

Note: If a client pays a deposit that includes an amount to cover disbursements, and the disbursement is captured and subsequently invoiced, the disbursement amount will form part of a trust transfer, and the supplier is paid from the business bank.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/purchaseinvoice/capture>

8.2.4 Posting suppliers payments

Supplier invoices increase the amount owed to suppliers, whereas a payment to the supplier reduces the outstanding amount owing.

Note: As with all bank-related transactions, Reconzilla is the most efficient method for capturing payments to suppliers. See Reconzilla for more details.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/supplierpayment/businesspayment>

8.2.5 Posting business receipts

Business receipts are used to post receipts into the business bank where the account affected is a general ledger account.

An example is where a partner pays money into the firm, affecting his or her capital account.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/businessreceipt/insert>

8.2.6 Posting business payments

Business payments are for payments from the Business Bank account where a supplier is not involved; for example, paying SARS for VAT or Tax, or a partner a share of profit (Capital account)

<https://lawpracticeza.com/businesspayment/insert>

8.2.7 Section 86(4) Investments / Withdrawals

When an investment is made on behalf of a client, the client's trust funds are withdrawn and deposited into an individual Section 86(4) account, in their name. LawPracticeZA automatically creates a separate Section 86(4) account for the client's Matter, linked to the investment banking institution.

Note: It is assumed that all investments are with a single investment banking institution but if there are multiple institutions, let us know and we will set them up for you.

The information required when posting is the Matter and the trust bank from which the funds to invest are to be withdrawn.

LawPracticeZA automatically

1. Debits the Matter in Trust and Credits the Matter in Investment
2. Credits the Trust bank and debits the client's Section 86(4) investment for the Matter (the investment account in LawPracticeZA is automatically created).

When an investment is withdrawn, the opposite posting occurs (the Section 86(4) account for the Matter obviously exists and is not created).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/section782biga/capture>

8.2.8 Section 86(4) Interest / Charges

When interest is earned on a client's Section 86(4) investment, the bank notifies the law firm and the interest is posted, automatically updating the investment account and the client's investment balance.

For bank charges, post a negative amount (e.g. enter -35.60) and the same accounts are updated, in reverse.

This option can also be used for payments made directly from the investment bank (e.g. guarantees), where the funds are not first withdrawn to trust. Enter a negative amount (e.g. -60000) with an appropriate narration. Only the investment account and the client's investment balance will be updated.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/section782biga/capturecharges>

8.2.9 Trust Transfers

All Matters in the firm are processed and a list of trust transfers, per Matter, is produced where: -

1. trust funds available; i.e. trust credit less reserve trust, **and** a debit business balance; i.e. the client has been invoiced for work done and/or for a disbursement.
2. a Matter has either a trust debit balance or a business credit balance. This will result in a a reverse transfer.

By default all transfers are selected. As a negative transfer could be the result of a posting error, a Matter can be deselected (click of the check-box to clear) and it will not be included in the transfer. The Matter can then be view to establish and correct the error, if applicable.

If a negative amount is included in the transfer, it will result in a negative transfer, i.e. reduce the amount available for transfer and moving the trust debit to a trust credit on the Matter.

Note: The transferable amount for a Matter is the lessor of the available trust and the business balance. For example, if R500 in trust (credit) and R300 in business (debit) R300 will be transferred, leaving a R200 trust credit balance.

When **Processed**, the program updates each Matters business balance (credited) and trust balance (debited) with the transferable amount, simultaneously updating the system-generated **Trust Transfer Clearing** Matter (debit business and credit trust). The Trust Transfer report (see under reports) informs what is to be transferred, i.e. the

sum of all individual transferable amounts, less any reverse transfers (if applicable). This is the amount to be paid from the trust bank and deposited into the business bank

Note: Recording the payment from the trust bank and receipt into the business bank are **two separate postings:** a Matter Payment - Trust, and a Matter Receipt - Business, **both posted against the system-generated Trust Transfer Clearing Matter.**

<https://lawpracticeza.com/trusttransfer/report>

8.2.10 Bank Transfers

Where the payment method for receipts is EFT / direct deposits, the bank is updated immediately, so there is no need for a bank transfer, as is necessary for Cheques and Cash or Credit Cards.

When cheques and cash are received, they are first stored in the office before being deposited at the bank. The deposit on the bank statement reflects as one amount: i.e. the total deposited, which is the amount transferred from the in-house bank to the bank.

Note: The Bank transfer is also used to record the transfer of cash from the Business Bank to Petty Cash. Petty Cash is considered a 'Bank' in LawPracticeZA (and can be reconciled like any other bank).

When credit card payments are received, they are not immediately reflected in the Bank account, but only reflected when periodically posted in bulk by the bank. For this reason, these type of receipts are posted to the Trust or Business Merchant Bank, and when transferred by the bank, the total is posted to the appropriate bank by a Bank Transfer, from the Merchant Bank (clearing the Merchant Bank) to the Bank account.

Note: The Merchant Bank is not set up by default. To set up a Merchant Bank (or in-house Bank for cheques and cash)

1. Add the bank under menu option Business & Trust Banks. This will automatically also add the Bank account in the General Ledger
 2. Add a Receipt Method for the Bank.
-

8.2.11 Bank Reconciliation (from printed bank statement)

Since the introduction of Reconzilla some time ago, this (manual) option is seldom used.

Select a Bank and a period, then one of the following: -

1. Show unreconciled entries only,
2. All Rows, i.e. unreconciled (red) and reconciled (green), or
3. Export all rows to Excel

Remember to **Apply** selection or changes, and scroll down to view entries.

Click to toggle between unreconciled and reconciled; i.e. you can change an item marked as unreconciled (red) to reconciled (green), or visa versa.

Note: If you import downloaded bank statements in Reconzilla, you can post transactions directly from the imported transactions, and the entries are automatically reconciled.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/bankaccount/offlinebankrecon>

<https://lawpracticeza.com/bankxfer/capture>

8.2.12 Journal entries

By default, journal entries are between Matters and Matters, Suppliers and Suppliers or General Ledger and General Ledger accounts.

For Matters, journal entries are between Business and Business, Trust and Trust or Investment and Investment.

General Ledger can be posted between business and business - all normal General Ledger accounts - or between Trust and Trust, typically Trust Bank accounts.

Note: An example of a General Ledger journal entry is posting depreciation of an asset (e.g. office furniture and equipment that the firm has purchased): Debit the expense account Depreciation and credit the (contra) asset account Accumulated Depreciation.

Auditors year-end adjustments are typically journals between assets and liabilities (Balance Sheet accounts) There is a special 'Auditors' setting (need Auditors privileges to set) which allows posting to a previous period.

Multi-line journals allow you to capture journals between sub-ledgers, where LawPracticeZA will automatically update the appropriate control account.

You can also **upload from spreadsheet**: a screen will prompt you for the spreadsheet format and details required. It is possible to upload a complicated journal entry from a spreadsheet. For example, this spreadsheet:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Example Spreadsheet for Rows=DR Cols=CR						
2	It has two lines for the heading, so we should skip the first two rows.						
3		Narration	Salaries	PAYE	UIF	UIFEXPENSE	BANK_EVILBANK
4	Narration		Salaries	PAYE	UIF Explooyee	UIF Owners	Payout
5	Staff1	December	-10000	553.5	100		9346.5
6	Staff2	December	-20000	2580.83	148.72		17270.45
7	SARS	PAYE & UIF		-3134.33	-248.72	-248.72	3631.77
8							

Would result in the following journal entry:

Account Code	Amount
BANK_EVILBANK	-R9,346.50
BANK_EVILBANK	-R17,270.45
BANK_EVILBANK	-R3,631.77
PAYE	-R553.50
PAYE	-R2,580.83
PAYE	R3,134.33
SALARIES	R10,000.00
SALARIES	R20,000.00
SARS	-R3,134.33
SARS	-R248.72
SARS	-R248.72
SARS	R3,631.77
STAFF1	-R10,000.00
STAFF1	R553.50
STAFF1	R100.00
STAFF1	R9,346.50
STAFF2	-R20,000.00
STAFF2	R2,580.83
STAFF2	R148.72
STAFF2	R17,270.45
UIF	-R100.00
UIF	-R148.72
UIF	R248.72
UIFEXPENSE	R248.72
	R0.00

Note: The 'Narration' column or row is special. Hopefully you don't have an account called 'Narration'.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/journalentry/capture>

8.2.13 List by type

Provides the option to list different types of transactions, e.g. Trust Receipts, Matter Payments, etc. The list can then be filtered to find a transaction that you may be looking for.

Special note on FOREX

A separate set of books is kept for each currency. In certain reports, these currencies can be expressed all as the same home currency. This just means that the foreign amount is converted to the home currency as at the appropriate date. (A history of currency conversion rates is recorded over time. One value for the entire day)

So each account can hold different currencies. So a client may owe you R100, €100 and £100 at the same time.

For example: A client is billed in a foreign currency, and the money arrived as the home currency in the account. (Common case) This will result in a one account having an amount due €5 but was paid by, say, R100. The account will be in debit of €5 and credit R100.

A forex transaction can then be created to settle the account, which will result in the following postings. (The forex transaction can be easily created from the customer statement. When multiple currencies are found on the balance, an option to create a forex transaction is presented (if possible)).

1. CR the €5 owing. (EUR balance will now be zero)
2. DR €5 to "FOREX" account.
3. CR R100 to "FOREX" account.

4. DR the R100 credit. (ZAR balance will now be zero)

So now, the client account is zero for both ZAR and EUR, but there exists R100 CR and €5 DR in the FOREX account.

Since R100 was accepted as settlement of the €5 (at the time, say, it was R20=€1), but the EUR is now R17.22. When expressed as the home currency (as at a date) the €5 will be converted to Rands as at the time of the report (say, R18=€1). The Forex account will show a slight profit of R10.

All of the above applies to suppliers too. . .

8.3 Maintain Master files

Master files are files required by LawPracticeZA to maintain accounting as well as Client and Matter records.

8.3.1 General Ledger accounts

Provides a list of all General Ledger accounts, with the option to add a new account, or update an existing account.

Note: Although trust banks are not part of the firm's General Ledger, they are included here to enable maintenance, but as trust, do not appear in the firm's financial account (but do in the trial balance).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/account/list>

8.3.2 GL Account Categories

General Ledger accounts can belong to a number of categories.

This option allows you to view and add categories, as well as arrange GL accounts according to categories.

There are main categories such as Assets and Liabilities, which can contain sub-categories, such as Current Assets. A sub-category is a 'child' of a 'parent' category. There can be multiple levels of subcategories.

The ARRANGE option enables you to assign General Ledger accounts within a category or sub category. The tool provided includes instructions on how to do so.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/accountcategory/list>

8.3.3 Suppliers

Suppliers are Advocates, Sheriffs and Expert witnesses (disbursements) as well as office suppliers, such as Walton's.

You can also create a Cash / COD supplier for immediate payments, such as the telephone accounts (where a suppliers invoice is still required to be posted if VAT applies, but where immediate payment can be recorded at the time of posting the suppliers invoice).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/supplier/list>

8.3.4 Departments

Department can be used to assign Matters to a department, or assign expenses to a department. Examples of a Matters department are Conveyancing, Litigation, Commercial.

Note: If a Department on a Matter is set to a 'tariff bundle' (e.g. 'Conveyancing' or 'Mag Court 11 September 2020 Defended'), when capturing a Unitary Fee for the Matter (set Fee level on the Matter to A - D depending on the scale), the posting codes included in the tariff bundle will be available for selection under Activity, and the appropriate tariff loaded as the rate.

Note: The Debtors Age Analysis, Excel Pivot, includes an option to filter by Department (as well as by Matter owner).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/department/list>

8.3.5 Posting codes

Posting codes are used when Capturing Fees and/or Disbursements against a Matter, under 'Activities'.

Posting codes can be time-based (fee / time), Unitary (fee / qty) or Disbursements (disbursement / qty).

When capturing fees or disbursements, selecting Fee, Unitary or Disbursement will provide a list of the corresponding posting codes for selection.

If the Fee level on the Matter is set to Standard, High, Low or Subsidized, Fee Capture will default to time, else Unitary (A, B, C or D).

Generic codes are posting codes without a department.

Generic codes are included in all lists of posting codes, including where a tariff bundle has been selected for the matter under department.

Tariff bundles are groups of tariffs that are common to a specific type of matter; e.g. a Conveyancing, Magistrates or High Court or LegalWise Civil or Labour (separate bundles).

A posting code can also be assigned to a specific Fee level or Fee Earner (Fee pricing).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/product/list>

8.3.6 Clients

Produces a list of client's, which can be filtered.

Options to Add a new Client or update an existing client: click the three vertical arrows next to the client and Update. If a client has no linked Matters, you can also delete a client.

View Expired for a list of client's that have been deleted.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customer/list>

8.3.7 Matters

Produces a list of Matters, which can be filtered.

Options to Add a new Matter or update an existing Matter: click the three vertical arrows next to the Matter and Update.

View Expired for a list of archived Matters. Note that to archive a Matter, click on the Matter and once loaded, click the archive icon (top right on Matter).

To restore a Matter from archived, View Expired, click on the Matter and the Unarchive Matter icon in the top right corner.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matter/list>

8.3.8 Bank accounts

Creating a Bank (Business or Trust) will automatically create a linked account in the General Ledger.

Apart from the regular bank accounts, an In-house Business and an In-house Trust account is used to store business and trust cheques and cash, respectively, before being deposited. Once deposited, the transaction is recorded by transferring the amount deposited from the in-house bank (reducing it to zero) to the Bank account. This is the amount that also appears on the Statement from the bank.

Receipt methods (e.g. EFT or Cheques / Cash) link to bank accounts, and are displayed for selection (Business or Trust) when posting Receipts, etc.

Note: Cheques and cash are not processed by many law firms, in which case there is no need to create a corresponding 'Receipt Method': i.e. only EFT is required, and a Merchant account for Credit Cards, if accepted.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/bankaccount/list>

8.3.9 Receipt Methods

Receipt methods include Cheques and Cash, EFT and Credit Cards.

Receipt Methods, in conjunction with Banks, allow for the various methods of managing different types of payment received; whether directly into the bank (EFT), stored in-house prior to deposit (Cheques and Cash) or recorded prior to transfer by the bank into the bank account (Credit Card receipts). The Bank Transfer module is used in conjunction with the latter (i.e. all except EFT, which are immediately debited to the bank); i.e. to transfer from the 'holding bank' to the bank proper.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customerpaymentmethod/list>

8.4 Bank Reconzilla

With Reconzilla you can import and process bank statements, and generate a bank recon report.

Note: See Edwards video below for an overview of the operation of Reconzilla.

When importing a bank statement, typically from an internet download of a csv file from your on-line bank, is important to take into account previously imported statements: i.e. if the previous import was up to and including say the 5th, the import should be from the 6th, so that the closing balance equals the opening balance.

As different banks have different formats, various bank formats are provided. There can be different formats even for the same bank; for different account types, regions or languages. Banks randomly change formats, so if you find that your bank statement does not import (or suddenly stops importing), please SUBMIT A SUPPORT REQUEST from the screen where you are attempting to import the bank statement, and the appropriate format will be added..

Currently supports formats are (the preference is always csv):

- ABSA Transaction History CSV
- ABSA Transaction History PDF [poor]
- ABSA Transaction History OFX
- ABSA Statement Enquiry PDF
- Capitec Statement PDF
- Capitec Statement OFX
- Capitec Transaction History CSV

- Fingo CSV
- FNB CSV
- FNB PDF (non-verified only: the verification stamp causes issues)
- FNB Transaction History CSV
- FNB Transaction History PDF
- FNB Trust PDF
- FNB Statement OFX
- Generic Excel (XLS)
- Investec CSV
- Investec Direct API [Bankfeeds]
- Mercantile Bank Transaction History
- Millennium BCP (XLS)
- Nedbank CSV
- Nedbank CSV (Statement Enquiry)
- Nedbank CSV (Statement Enquiry) [new: 2020-09]
- SnapScan CSV
- Standard Bank (BizLaunch) PDF
- Standard Bank PDF (various versions)
- Standard Bank Transaction History CSV
- Standard Bank TXT
- Standard Bank OFX
- TransferWise Statement CSV
- Generic OFX

Note: Ideally, download your bank statement / transactions using the csv format (provided by all Internet banks download applications). Do not open the file in Excel and save as a csv file: browse to the csv file that you downloaded from the bank.

8.4.1 Importing a bank statement

To import a new bank statement, select IMPORT BANK STATEMENT. You will be prompted to browse for the file that you downloaded; i.e. the bank statement that you downloaded from your banking application, or received via email and saved.

There are various options, each with a detailed explanation and instructions. If importing a PDF statement, you will need to enter the closing balance so that LawPracticeZA can verify the data as being correct (as a PDF has to be OCR'ed, which is why the csv file format is preferred).

Once you Accept (OK), wait for the bank statement to be processed.

8.4.2 Previously imported bank statements

Each Bank name is displayed under IMPORT: click to select a Bank. The Bank details are displayed. Any inconsistencies or errors are highlighted by Reconzilla. The main function provided is to **process the bank**

statement. You can also delete a previously imported bank statement, or click on the thumbnail to view the original statement.

8.4.3 Automatic Bank Feeds via Banking APIs

This is a new feature currently being rolled out (2020-10-28). Currently only the following banks are supported:

- Investec [since 2020-10-28] Ask your Private Banker to enable “Programmable Banking”. Then generate a ClientID and Secret from the OpenAPI section. Save these details into Business & Trust Banks. It will have Read-Only access. A how-to get the ClientID & Secret is available here:

<https://community.offerzen.com/t/how-to-generate-api-keys-for-programmable-banking/58>

8.4.4 Processing a bank statement

After importing a bank statement, there are various options

1. Auto Suggest. This provides a list of all bank transactions imported, which have not yet been reconciled, with ‘Match’ details for posting displayed (if this can be established), with the most likely match first. If the bookkeeper considers the posting details correct, click SAVE to post and reconcile the entry. If the posting cannot be identified by Auto Suggest, capture via Side-by-side (see below). NOTE: If the client includes the reference on the invoice in the payment, Reconzilla can accurately identify the posting required (for example, if the trust bank, will generate a Matter Receipt, Trust, for the Matter and update the Trust Bank, reconciling the entry at the same time).
2. Side by Side. This will present the imported bank statement transactions in a window opposite the Law-PracticeZA transactions for the same bank. By default, only unreconciled transactions are shown. This option is used to either reconcile entries (Auto Reconcile will automatically reconcile any transactions that are a definite match, whereas manually reconciled entries are first matched by clicking the relevant entries in each window. Alternatively, transactions from the Bank Statement can be posted by selecting the transaction, then the appropriate transaction . The corresponding program will be loaded (e.g. Matter Payment) with the details from the bank statement loaded. The bookkeeper completes the posting and the transaction is reconciled.

Note: Reconzilla includes ‘Quick bank charges’ which generates the appropriate entries with a single click, for business bank charges. This requires a supplier for bank charges to be created and assigned to the bank (usually done by LawPracticeZA during system set up). The trust bank should not include bank charges - these should be raised on the firm’s business bank, but if raised on the trust bank account, should be posted as a Matter payment against the Law Society Matter.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/bankstatement/reconzilla>

8.5 Reports

To provide for flexibility, all reports can be exported to a spreadsheet (e.g. Excel or the open source LibreOffice), optimized for pivot tables. There is also an option to generate reports as a PDF document. Where Pivot tables are appropriate, there is an option Excel Pivot, which includes several Pivot tables with the report, but additional, customized Pivot tables can be easily and quickly generated.

Apart from the standard reports such as Trust Investment / Commitment, Financial reports and Age Analysis, there are reports (spreadsheets) which are

1. Best analysed via a Pivot Table. For example, using a Pivot Table, Unbilled Fees and Disbursements and Invoiced Fees and Disbursements can provide details and totals per Client and Matter, Fee Earner and Period, by Department, in detail or summarised. Pivot Tables include Charts, which are an idea way of presenting summarized data that is easy to consume.

2. Best analyzed via Tables (in Excel Text to Table, in LibreOffice, Filter), where every column automatically includes a drop-down filter and sort option. For example, for Statement of Accounts, from a complete list of General Ledger accounts with transactions for a selected period, a specific account can be selected, or only a particular type of transaction, for a selected period, presented is a designated sequence.

Note: There are many short YouTube videos that explain how to use Pivot Tables and Tables, which are tools that make it quick and easy to analyse all types of data.

8.5.1 Statement of (General Ledger) accounts

Produces a list of all General Ledger accounts, with transactions, for the selected period.

Any transactions prior to the 'from' date in the selection are reflected as a Brought Forward balance.

The report can be exported to a PDF document or a Spreadsheet (e.g. Excel).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/account/listalltransactionsbyaccount>

8.5.2 Audit Trail

Everything posted to LawPracticeZA, whether automatically (accounting transactions when generating an invoice) or manually (a receipt or journal entry) is recorded in the audit trail.

The audit trail can be generated for a selected period, the default being from the 1st of the current month to the current date.

All transactions posted in LawPracticeZA are double-sided, so the running balance always returns to zero.

Various types of transactions can be viewed; by default, all accounting transactions are displayed.

A filter (search) option allows you to find transactions based on matches in the transactions, whether amount or type of transaction, or even a matter name.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/report/audittrail>

8.5.3 Bank Recon report

The bank recon report shows the selected LawPracticeZA Bank balance and unreconciled (to the bank statement) transactions. The calculated result should be the same (reconciled) as the bank statement for the selected period.

Note: Reconzilla automates the process of not only reconciling the banks, but capturing transactions directly from the imported bank statement, making this option redundant when Reconzilla is used.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/bankrecon/report>

8.5.4 Client Statements

Clients Statements produce a financial statement for the selected client where there is a balance or movement for the selected period, for all, or a selected Matter. The default 'to' date is the current date.

A summary of the statement is shown, with options to Send (email as PDF attachment to Clients email address), or create a PDF (with or without page breaks between Matters). If 'Hide reversals' is set, any reversals (mirror image copies) of the original and reversed transaction will not be shown: for example, if an invoice has been reversed, neither the invoice or credit note will be included in the statement, as the credit note cancels the invoice.

Statements show transactions in **three sections**; Business, Trust and Section 86(4). This makes it clear for client's to see the movement and **what they owe**, what is **held in trust** on their behalf and what is **invested** on their behalf.

The release of trust funds for work done (transfers) is also reflected in the business and trust sections. Each section is only shown if there are transactions that apply to the section.

The rule that applies to statement transactions is:

1. Always show the last 30 days of transactions.
2. **Then go back until when the account was last zero (defined as less than 2c),**
 1. for a maximum of 500 rows, with preceding transactions reflecting as an opening balance.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customer/client'sstatement>

8.5.5 Matter Movement

Produces a list of all Clients Matters transactions, for the selected period.

The output can be in the form of a report, with options to export to a PDF document or a Spreadsheet (Excel).

A second option is to produce a single PDF document, which included all Statements for client's matters with transactions during the elected period, emailed to the email address entered.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customer/mattermovement>

8.5.6 Detailed Matter Movement

Provides opening balances and transactions for the selected period, currency and separately for Business, Trust and Investment balances and transactions.

8.5.7 Supplier Transaction Movement Report

Provides a report of all transactions for the selected period by supplier.

8.5.8 Account Enquiry

Provides a report of all transactions for the selected **Matter, Supplier or General Ledger account**, for the selected period, with the sum of transactions preceding the 'from' date shown as Brought Forward, and a graph of the movement and balances over the selected period.

For Matters: Business, Trust and Investment transactions for the selected period are shown separately.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/account/statement>

8.5.9 Trust Transfers report

For every trust transfer processed, a report is generated.

All reports are listed in chronological order, with the most recent first.

Click on the three vertical arrows to select PDF; the report can then be viewed, printed or emailed.

The totals on the report per bank are the amounts that are to be paid from trust to business, with both the **Matter Payment** (trust) and **Mater Receipt** (business) posted against the system '**Trust Transfer Clearing**' matter. Mixed banks means that the trust amount transferred for a Matter was made up of trust receipts from different trust banks.

Note: If there is one or more 'reverse transfer' included in the report, and the sum of reverse transfers exceeds the sum of transfers (or there are no transfers other than reverse transfers), the total represents a negative transfer, meaning that a payment must be made from *business to trust*, rather than the usual *trust to business*.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/trusttransfer/list>

8.5.10 Trust Investments / commitments

The most important report for the trust audit, to confirm that the sum of trust creditors is reflected in the trust bank account/s, and that Section 86(4) investments are individually held on behalf of client's. This report can be produced either a PDF or Spreadsheet with three tabs.

1. **Matters:** includes a list of all Clients with Matters with either a Trust and/or Investment balance, with totals.
2. **Trust Banks:** a list of Trust banks with balances and a total. The total equals the total of the trust column in the first tab; i.e. client's matters trust.
3. **Investments:** list of each, individual Section 86(4) investment. The total equals the total of the investment column in the first tab.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/report/trustinvestments>

8.5.11 Clients (Debtors) Age Analysis

Provides a list of all client's matters business balances, aged from current to 120 days. Trust and investment balances are also shown for reference purposes.

Click on a client name (hyper-link) to load the client's Statement, with option to send (email).

At the bottom of the screen is an option to send statements for all selected Clients. There are various other options in LawPracticeZA for sending statements to client's, whether individually or in bulk.

There is also an option to charge interest (raise a non-vatable journal), calculated per matter with debit balances greater than the selected period, based on the selection below.

1. Enter the **monthly** percentage; e.g. 2 for 2% per month, equivalent to 24% p.a. (i.e. annual percentage divided by 12).
2. Select the general Ledger account to which the opposite entry should be posted (e.g. Interest Earned).
3. Select the date on which the interest must be raised, typically the current date.

Note: Interest is typically raised immediately before processing and sending Statements to client's.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customer/ageanalysisall>

8.5.12 Suppliers (Creditors) Age Analysis

A list of all suppliers with balances, aged from current to 120 days.

Click on the Supplier name and the statement details are loaded.

1. To launch the Supplier Payment module, with all details completed (which can be changed - e.g. the amount, if paying multiple invoices), click on the icon opposite the red button.
2. The red button under PD can be clicked to indicate that this invoice has been paid; the button turns green
3. By default, the statement shows at least 1 row in the statement and/or the last 30 days, then back until it was zero or a maximum of 30 rows. To show from the beginning, click on Opening Balance.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/supplier/ageanalysisall>

8.5.13 Target Report

List all fee earners with fees written for the selected period.

Where a fee earner has a monthly target, a comparison between the target and actual is made, with the difference shown as an amount and percentage.

For the current month, The MTD is calculated as the number of working days in the month and fraction of hours in the working day (used as a proportion of the month to calculate the proportional target for comparison).

Click on a Fee earner to drill down into the detail of their fees written, including what has been invoiced and credited.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/salesagent/targetreport>

8.5.14 Unbilled Fees and Disbursements

Produces a report of ALL unbilled fees and disbursements (i.e. all the firms WIP), which can be exported to a PDF report or spreadsheet.

The spreadsheet export has been optimised for producing Pivot tables, to enable a firm to analyse their WIP in various ways; by fees outstanding by Fee Earners, by month, by Client, by Matter, etc. - with drag and drop. Several pivot tables have been included, for the most common views, but additional, customized pivot tables can be added.

Note: See Pivot Tables under Concepts for more details. Also applies to Invoiced Fees and Disbursements.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/report/unbilled>

8.5.15 Invoiced Fees and Disbursements

Produces a report of invoiced fees and disbursements for the selected period, which can be exported to a PDF report or spreadsheet. The report can also optionally be restricted to a particular Client, Matter and/or Department (else all invoices and credit notes for the selected period).

The spreadsheet export has been optimized for producing Pivot tables, to enable a firm to analyse their invoices in various ways; by fees invoiced by Fee Earners, by month (if more than one month has been selected), by Client, by Matter, etc. - with drag and drop. Several pivot tables have been included, for the most common views, but additional, customized pivot tables can be added.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/report/invoicedreport>

8.5.16 Sales Charts

Produces a bar chart of all income ex VAT, per department, dating back since LawPracticeZA was installed.

8.5.17 VAT Report

Produces a VAT 201 report for the selected period (based on the firm settings of Odd. Even or every month), with all figures completed.

The download option generates a spreadsheet with all the detailed VAT transactions (In and Out), categorized and with totals that correspond with the 201 report.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/vat/vat201>

8.5.18 Bulk PDF invoices

Create a zip file of all pdf invoices for a selected period.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/salesinvoice/bulkpdfinvoices>

8.5.19 Monthly Profitability

Show monthly income less expenses and profit per month since LawPracticeZA was first implemented. Fees (income) with and without disbursements are shown, as are expenses and profit.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/report/profitability>

8.5.20 Financial Reports

Generates a spreadsheet from General Ledger accounts with three tabs; Trial Balance, Income and Expense and Balance sheet.

Each General Ledger account is assigned a category. An example of a main category is Assets, whereas a sub-category could be Current Assets. Categories are customisable and hierarchical. Until an account is assigned a category, it is registered as Uncategorized.

1. The **Trial Balance** lists every General Ledger account, including Debtors Control, which is a system account representing the Matter balances (business, trust and investment separately). Creditors control is a system account representing all suppliers balances. The report has separate columns for Business, Trust and Investments, with totals for each column zero.
2. The **Income and Expense Report** shows all income and expenses for the year and month to date, determined by the period-end settings. The net profit or loss, the difference between income and expense accounts, is carried forward to the balance sheet.
3. The **Balance Sheet** lists all assets and liabilities, including the profit or loss carried forward from the Income and Expense Report.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/account/financialreports>

8.5.21 Analytics

This option provides a number of reports and charts, which are added to over time. An explanation of each report or chart is presented when this option is selected. Some examples are

1. **Account Movement report:** Shows the financial movement per account per month in a table for a given financial period, with options for Business, Trust or Investments, all or a selected Department and a selection of Account Categories (all by default).
2. **Debits vs Credits:** All debits vs credits for a one-month period as a horizontal bar chart. Displays the current month, with an option to view previous months.
3. **Matter activity by type:** a summary by transaction type for the selected fee earner for the selected period.
4. **All Disbursements charged:** A list of all disbursements charged to client's Matters for the selected period.
5. **Fee Allocation Report:** where fees have been allocated using the fee allocation on a Matter, this provides a report on the allocation based on the parameters set.
6. **Matter with no Activity:** Matters with no activity since a specified date, with option to archive.
7. **Fee Earner Time Report.** Time for all time-based attendances per fee earner for the period specified.
8. **Debtor Days:** Debtor days is the average number of days that it takes a client to pay their bill. It is calculated for a client each time a customer receipt is captured, and it looks at the previous history for each client for all time. The value can be affected by journal entries or credit notes (as this might skew the data), but in general it is quite accurate. It looks how long each amount of money was outstanding when an amount is

paid, and takes the weighted average of that. (Weighted according to the value of the amount paid - foreign currencies are converted into ZAR on the date of transaction). Current amounts outstanding are excluded.

9. **Section 86(4) Report:** shows all investment account transactions, for a given period.

Note: Fees earner allocation: can be allocated per Matter: click the fee allocation gear under Accounting entries on the Matter for the following options: -

1. Assign a levy percentage: to be deducted from all income before further allocation.
 2. Add line items to allocate the remaining percentage of the income for this Matter. Each line can be assigned to either no one, a selected fee earner, or shared pro rata based on fee earners billing. Option are Project Management, Delivery, Rain-Making, etc.
-

8.6 Period-end

The period end includes a number of options that are traditionally run at month or year end. These options are nevertheless available at any time.

8.6.1 Send Proformas and/or bulk invoices

Produces a list of all client's Matters where there are one or more unbilled fee and/or disbursement.

Clients and their Matters are marked as selected where the option on the client 'Send Statement' has been selected.

Selections can be changed: if changed on the client, will change all the client's matters. Alternatively, matters can have their selection changed.

The invoice date defaults to the current date, but can be changed: for example, if the first or second day of a new month, can be changed to the last day of the previous month - so that fees fall into the previous month's income for the financial reports.

You can add a note to appear on every invoice sent.

Click SEND PROFORMA to email proforma invoices as PDF attachments for all selected Matters (fees and disbursements will remain unbilled), or SEND INVOICES to generate and email invoices as PDF attachments for all selected Matters. The option RAISE INVOICES WITHOUT SENDING is provided because when sending statements to clients, there is the option to include all invoices.

Note: The default email address used is the email address on the Client. If an Invoice email address exists on the client, this is used, unless an Invoice email address exists on the Matter. This allows for the email to be directed exactly where required.

A copy of each email with invoice sent will be saved in the Firms email backup account (if a backup email has been set on Firm details). The invoice is marked as sent. If there is no valid email address, *Accounts Email Not Set* will appear in the email address column.

Note that if an email has been generated during the month, it will not appear here, as this is a list of all unbilled fees, still to be invoiced.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matter/bulkinvoicing>

8.6.2 Send Statements

This option produces a list of all client's Matters with a balance, or transactions recorded during the month.

Clients and their Matters are selected where the option on the client 'Send Statement' has been selected.

Selections can be changed: if changed on the client, will change all the client's matters. Alternatively, matters can have their selection changed.

A Start date can be set: for example, the first day of the month, if you want only the current months transactions included in the statement, with any prior transactions represented as an opening balance.

Click SEND STATEMENTS to email selected Statements as PDF attachments to clients. To include a summary page for matters and all invoices referenced in the statement, click SEND STATEMENTS WITH SUMMARY PAGE & REFERENCED INVOICES.

Note: In the body of the email sent is a summary of the statement, with hyper-links to invoices and receipts, which enable the client to load the PDF invoice or receipt direct from the email.

The default email address used is the email address on the Client. If an Accounts email address is present on the client, this is used.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/customer/sendstatements>

8.6.3 Set period-end

LawPracticeZA does not roll balance (as in most traditional systems) but retains all transactions posted, forever. Balances are calculated as required; period ends are achieved by simply setting a 'freeze' date, which takes a second. There are options to set the new period for the month and year end.

The month-end freeze date would generally be set once all postings for the previous month have been concluded. The effect of this is to restrict further postings into a previous period (there is an 'Auditors' exception: see **Set temporary freeze date** in the *Administrator Guide*). Until the freeze date is set, you can post into the current or previous period.

The year end applies to a new financial year.

There are a number of significant advantages to this approach, made possible by a combination of the powerful Linux servers on which LawPracticeZA operate, and the significant increase in disk capacity over the past several years: -

1. no month-end delay. Fee Earners proceed as usual, while the bookkeeper can post transactions in the new month that relate to both the current and previous month (e.g. from the bank statement).
2. no month-end backups, as both regular on and off-site backups are maintained by the professional staff in the data center.
3. reports can be extracted for any period, without having to first restore previous data backups.

Note: It is important that the month-end and year-ends are set, otherwise financial reports will not render correctly. The currently set period can be seen above the filter menu, to the right. If the date is in red, this means a temporary freeze date has been set.

When setting the financial year-end, first set the month-end for the same date (1st day of the new period, e.g. 2021-03-01 for a February 2021 year-end).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/freezedate/capture>

PAYROLL

LawPracticeZA includes a basic payroll application, which would generally only be used by small firm's. The payroll includes the following: -

1. Staff. Add new staff details, or update existing details.
2. Staff Payments. A record of payments made to staff.
3. Payslips. Period, salary and deductions, leave, etc.
4. Report. Payslip report.

There are many affordable payroll packages available in the market that offer greater functionality and may prove more appropriate. The LawPracticeZA payroll, for example, does not automatically calculate tax (directs you to a website where you can calculate the PAYE, and enter the amount in LawPracticeZA) or an IRP5 at the end of the tax year.

INTEGRATIONS

LawPracticeZA currently provides integration with the following third party products.

Note: All integrations rely on the continued cooperation with the relevant third-party providers and therefore we cannot guarantee that any integration will continue to work in the future.

10.1 E4 Transfers

If you use E4 in your conveyancing department for property transfers, this integration allows you to automatically open Clients and Matters and post fees from E4 into LawPracticeZA. Additional options are included in E4 once the integration is set up.

10.2 Office 365 Outlook Calendar

When you select this option for the first time, you will be asked for your Office 365 Outlook Calendar details, and permission for LawPracticeZA to access your Calendar. There is also the option to Save all Diary entries. This option will update your Office 365 Outlook Calendar with all your LawPracticeZA diarised matters. Thereafter, whenever you diarise a matter in LawPracticeZA, it will be automatically diarised in your Office 365 Outlook Calendar.

10.3 Google Calendar and Gmail

When you select this option for the first time, you will be asked for your Google Calendar details, and permission for LawPracticeZA to access your Calendar. There is also the option to Save all Diary entries. This option will update your Google Calendar with all your LawPracticeZA diarised matters. Thereafter, whenever you diarise a matter in LawPracticeZA, it will be automatically diarised in your Google Calendar.

For Gmail you will also be asked for permission for LawPracticeZA to access your emails. With Gmail selected, an option to display associated emails will be available under transactions when selecting a Matter.

10.3.1 A note of emails

When accessing a Matter the gmail button will display all emails where a list of search results from the user's gmail account matches on either any email address associated with client or matter, or where the email contains the matter code.

There is a filter that allows you to quickly find any email by entering a word or phrase, much like you would in a Google search.

10.4 DotNews

If you use DotNews to generate your newsletters to client's, this integration enables you to automatically add client's from LawPracticeZA to your DotNews subscriber list.

10.5 Papercut, Print Director and Softlog

These are popular cost-recovery tools for assigning printing and scanning costs to matters. To get this integration up and running we will need to install a small Windows service on your MFU server.

The above cost-recovery tools all work in much the same way: records photocopies, printing and scanning to Matters and the service raises the appropriate unbilled fees in LawPracticeZA, which are subsequently invoiced to the client.

If your firm makes use of the one of the above products, please contact us to arrange for the implementation of the integration service, at no extra charge.

10.6 Website Integration for Financial

Provides code to enable you to integrate the FICA form into your website, for your client to complete.

ADMINISTRATOR GUIDE

Administrators require special rights; usually there is only one administrator in a firm, as the administrator can add or delete user's, change passwords, etc.

11.1 Logins

Every user needs a login name, code and password, together with settings that establish what the user can and cannot access (zones).

The login name is for display purposes, and can be the users full name.

The login code must contain alphanumeric characters with no spaces, and excluding special characters (including . and @). For example, *andrew* or *spjohnson* or even *aj*. The name must be unique.

Note: The user logs in with a combination of login code, followed by a period or an @ sign, followed by the firm code. This combination comprises the username. For example, *andrew.orangelegal* or *spjohnson@acmelaw*.

It is important to enter the correct email address for each user. If a user SUNMITS A SUPPORT REQUEST, this is the email address that LawPracticeZA uses to communicate with the user.

The password generator creates a unique, strong password. Once the login has been saved, this is the password that is required by the user to login. The password is saved in encrypted format for security reasons.

Users can belong to different 'Zones' (Roles and Permissions). Everyone has General Access, whereas users can in addition belong to one or more of the following zones: -

1. **Fee Earners** (lawyers and candidate attorneys) can see and access the Fee earner menu options, and are included in the list of Fee Earners available for selection when capturing fees (which will default to the logged in user, if a fee earner). The fee earners settings (hourly rate/s, target, etc.) are updated in the separate **Fee Earners** menu.
2. **Access any Matter** gives the user access to any matter without requiring the matter owner to explicitly give access (in Matter **Also give access to ...**).
3. **Raise Invoice** enables the user to generate an invoice for a selected Matters. If not selected, this option will be disabled for the user.
4. **Bookkeeper** gives limited access to the bookkeeper menu options: more specifically, no access to the firms financial records.
5. **Senior Bookkeeper** has full access to all Bookkeeper options.
6. The **Administrator** has access to all administration functions, as explained in this section of the manual.
7. **Auditor** rights give the ability to lift the freeze date (i.e. to post adjusting journals into a previous period). This lifting last for 1 hour, to prevent it inadvertently being left set, with potential problems arising. If an hour is insufficient, can be set for another hour.
8. **Payroll:** can access the payroll menu, with all associated functionality.

Note: A user can be disabled - prevented from accessing the system - by deleting the General zone. If this method is used, to reinstate the user, simply add back the General zone.

When 'Fee Earner' is selected from Roles and Permissions, the following additional information relating to the Fee Earner must be completed

- Fee earner name (which will appear on invoices under cost center).
 - Monthly Fee Target (displayed in the **Fees Recorded for ...** chart on the users Dashboard, and in the **Target Report**).
 - Hourly rates to be used when calculating time-based fees. Each fee earner can have one or more hourly rates (e.g. Standard, High, SME rate, etc.), where the rate description is set in Fee level. A Fee level can be set on a Matter: all time-based fees captured against the matter will have the fee Earners fee level rate applied as the default.
-

Note: LawPracticeZA calculates time-based fees on the number of minutes in 6-minute blocks (tenths of an hour) by default, based on the hourly rate selected. The 6-minute default is the national and international standard for lawyers (see FAQ) but can be changed in Firm details.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/login/list>

11.2 Fee Earners

Provides a list off all existing Fee Earners, with the ability to update a fee earners details (click on three vertical dots for menu options).

A fee earner is created when creating a user's login, and Zone 'Fee Earner' is selected.

Specific rates for both time-based and unitary fees can be added for fee earners, based on **Fee levels**.

A Fee Earner can be 'Expired'. This removes the fee earner from the system but existing transactions remain. A replacement fee earner must be selected, who will become the owner of the expired fee earners Matters and any outstanding unbilled fees and/or disbursements. The Fee Earners login can simultaneously be disabled: typically when a Fee Earner leaves the firm. Expired Fee Earners can be viewed.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/salesagent/list>

11.3 Fee levels

The fee levels are generally setup with the system, but can be expanded or modified here.

Time-based fee levels (Default unit: time) are typically Standard, High, Low, Subsidized (hourly rates).

Unitary fee levels (Default unit: qty) are typically A (single tariff e.g. High Court) or A, B, C and D (tariff scale - e.g. Magistrates Court).

The sequence determines the order in which they are presented for selection in the Matter Fee level drop-list.

Fee levels are used when capturing fees, to determine the appropriate rate or tariff to use.

Note: The Fee Level selected on a Matter will determine the default setting when capturing fees for the Matter; i.e. whether Standard or High hourly rate for time-based fees or A, B, C or D for Unitary fees (including tariff items).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/feelevel/list>

11.4 Firm Details

Contains firm details, such as address, logo and other contact details, typically used on Invoices and Statements. The more important fields explained below.

Note: Once your firm details have been loaded, the easiest way to verify that they are correct is to produce a proforma invoice. The proforma does not update anything so can be run as many times as required.

1. Company code: use your firm's code (from login).
2. Default department: normally left as Default
3. Firm Name is the name that will appear on Invoices and Statements, so should be the official firm name.
4. The postal address is required, so if only one address (e.g. a street address), enter here.
5. The logo will also appear on invoices and statements: browse to select a png or jpeg image of your logo. You can adjust the positioning and size.
6. Notify email address is used when emailing client's invoices and statements automatically.
7. Backup email is for saving a copy of the emails sent. It is recommended a separate email address is created for the backup email, as all invoices and statements sent are automatically stored in this email address. The backup email address can be left blank.
8. The VAT flag (Not Registered, Odd months, Even months, Every month) determines VAT reporting. If Registered, the VAT Registration number must be entered.
9. Cost Centre fields: the default is productcategory_name,salesagent_name, which will show the Fee Earners name or initials (depending how the fee earner name is set up) and whether a Fee or Disbursement in the Cost Centre column on the invoice.
10. Cost Centre Label: enter the heading to appear as column header on invoices. The default is Cost Centre.
11. 'Invoice show minutes' provides the option to show fractions of an hour for time based attendances, as opposed to the default, minutes (e.g. 0.2 rather than 8 minutes). Note that LawPracticeZA applies the standard for law firms; calculating time based on 6-minute (tenths of an hour), so 3 minutes and 6 minutes will both be 0.1, with a calculated charge of R150 for an hourly rate of R1,500. It is recommended that this is explained in a firm's letter of engagement with their client's, together with fee rates and other terms and conditions.
12. Size of minutes block: although 6 is the default, and recommended, can be changed: e.g. to 1 or 15 minutes.
13. Banking details will appear at the bottom of the invoice generated. Additional details can be entered following the Banking details (press Enter for a new line) such as payment terms, etc.
14. QR code. QR code for bank detail verification if using a service such as SkyBolt, who would provide the QR code image that is loaded here, and which is then shown on the invoice, used to verify your bank details.
15. SMTP settings. Use only if you wish to use your own SMTP server to send emails. Leave blank to allow our servers to send emails on your behalf.
16. Hide Reversals. This sets the *default*, which can be toggled (Show Reversals) in LawPracticeZA. If set, when an entry is reversed (which creates a mirror-image of the original transaction(s)), both the original and reversal are not shown when viewing an account's transactions, and most importantly when accounting to the client (Statement of account).
17. Notify on Receipt: Notify, by email, the owner of the matter when a receipt is captured.
18. Show Zero Invoice Items as Addendum: If not selected, zero invoice items will appear amongst the other items in the invoice, in chronological order. If set, all items with a zero amount will be included as an addendum to the invoice, on a separate page (i.e. as notes).

<https://lawpracticeza.com/company/update/only>

11.5 Set Sequences

This option allows you to change the next number in the sequence for automatically generated reference numbers for the various transaction types.

11.6 Set temporary freeze date

This option is only available to a user with 'Auditor' privileges.

When the final set of accounts is signed off by the auditor, often months after the financial year end, he or she will generally provide a number of journal adjustments to Balance Sheet accounts.

This option allows the temporary lifting of the 'freeze date' for an hour, i.e. to allow transactions to be posted into a previous financial period (which is normally not possible). If an hour proves insufficient, it can be reset. The reason for the 1 hour limitation is to prevent the freeze date from accidentally being left unset.

The current freeze date is displayed below the user name, opposite Hide / Show reversals.

Note: Although the freeze date can be set to enable the capture of transactions into a previous financial period, this must be done with extreme caution. For example, if used to backdate an invoice or credit note to a previous period where VAT had already been submitted, this would render the VAT report invalid, with the VAT effectively excluded.

11.7 Currencies

If the firm bills in foreign currency in addition to SA rands, the following procedure applies.

Once-off Setup

This menu option allows one or more currency to be added to LP. Select the currency from the list and click the left arrow. To remove a currency, click the selected currency and the right arrow.

Add a **Fee level**, for example 'Billing in Euros'.

Fee Earner: add new Fee Pricing - select a fee level (e.g. Billing in Euros) and enter the Price (hourly rate) in the foreign currency, and select the currency (e.g. Euros).

For each client to bill in foreign currency

1. On the Client, select the Currency and the Tax Type as Zero rated (Outside South Africa).
2. On the Matter, select the Fee level (e.g. Billing in Euros).

When capturing fees for foreign currency a client

will default to the set currency with Fee Earners hourly rate in that currency. The proforma and invoice will be in the foreign currency.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/freezedate/settempfreezedate>

11.8 Import data

When converting to LawPracticeZA from a previous system, existing data can be imported.

If using a computerized system prior to converting to LawPracticeZA, the data can usually be exported to a spreadsheet, where it can be rearranged in the format required by LawPracticeZA. Alternatively, the information required can be captured in a spreadsheet (template provided) or entered directly into LawPracticeZA.

The data can be imported in the following categories: -

1. Clients and Matter, with the option to import Business, Trust and Investment balances.
2. Suppliers, including Advocates and Sheriffs (for disbursements) as well as office suppliers.
3. General Ledger accounts.
4. WIP (unbilled fees and disbursements) can also be imported.
5. Posting codes can be imported, typically if the posting codes provided by LawPracticeZA are inadequate. Note that it is also possible to add or modify posting codes at any time using the Posting Code module, and be aware of the Tariff Bundles.

Note: Instructions are included with each import module. The spreadsheet must contain the precise headings as contained in the module, but only headings with an * are mandatory. Additional fields, not defined in the module, if they exist in the legacy system as well as in LawPracticeZA (e.g. postal address or contact name), can be added and imported.

LawPracticeZA can also email firms a spreadsheet template of the formats required. Most commonly, clients complete the spreadsheet to the best of their ability and email the result back to LawPracticeZA, where we check (and invariably correct) the format, and import the data.

11.8.1 Matters

Import Clients with their associated Matters and balances or Matters for existing client's. There is also an option to import balances for existing Matters (where the Matter code must be provided), typically use when the balances were not available when initially importing the Matters. When importing data from a legacy system, opening balances, and not historical transactions, are imported. The historical transactions from the previous system should be retained for reference.

Note: If Matters for existing client/s, the client name (exact) or code must be entered for each Matter. There is an option to list the client's currently in the system, where you can cut and paste the name or code. If importing balances only, the Matter code is required.

For balances imported, the General Ledger account DEBTORSCONTROL is updated with the total of all balances in business, trust and investment, respectively.

The opposite entry is posted to the General Ledger account DEBTORSCONTROLSUSPENSE.

1. For Business balances, a Journal entry (Business) can be posted to debit DEBTORSCONTROLSUSPENSE and credit the imported General Ledger Debtors Control account, as the LawPracticeZA system Debtors Control account is automatically updated (debited) with the import and the two balances should be the same.
2. For trust balances, a Journal entry (Trust) can be posted to credit DEBTORSCONTROLSUSPENSE and debit the trust bank/s, as the sum of trust creditors should be reflected in the trust bank/s account/s.
3. A Section 86(4) account will be automatically generated for each Investment. If there is more than one Investment bank, these must be configured by LawPracticeZA prior to the import.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matter/importfile>

11.8.2 Suppliers

The sum of supplier balances will credit the CREDITORSCONTROL account in the General Ledger, with the opposite entry debiting the CREDITORSCONTROLSUSPENSE account.

Once the General Ledger import has taken place (which must be from a balanced trial balance, and will therefore include Creditors), credit CREDITORSCONTROLSUSPENSE in the General Ledger (Journal entry) and debit

the imported Creditors control account, as the sum of the creditor balances will now be in the LawPracticeZA system CREDITORSCONTROL.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/supplier/importfile>

11.8.3 General Ledger accounts

The spreadsheet to be imported must contain a trial balance of all General Ledger accounts as at the date of take-on; i.e. where the total debits equal credits.

If at the beginning of a financial year, the Income and Expense accounts will have zero balances, and the trial balance will include a retained profit or loss for the previous financial year.

If during a financial year, the income and expense accounts will include balances, with no current profit or loss, as this figure is calculated as the difference between income and expenses.

If Clients Matters with business balances and suppliers with balances are imported, the Accounts Receivable (Debtors) and Accounts Payable (Creditors) balances will be journalised against the DEBTORSCONTROLSUSPENSE and CREDITORSCONTROLSUSPENSE respectively, as detailed above.

You can also export the General Ledger to a spreadsheet, make changes and import it back in again.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/account/importfile>

11.8.4 Posting codes

Posting codes are used when capturing fees and disbursements, and can be individually added or modified in Masterfile Maintenance.

This option enables you to create a spreadsheet of your own posting codes for bulk import.

As with other imports, adhere strictly to the guidelines presented when you load the module.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/product/importpostingcodes>

11.8.5 WIP

For recording unbilled fees and/or disbursements in bulk, the details can be entered in a spreadsheet and imported by this module.

As with other imports, adhere strictly to the guidelines presented when you load the module.

<https://lawpracticeza.com/matterdraftlineitem/importwip>

CONCEPTS

This section explains concepts such as trust accounting, recording fees (WIP) and billing client's.

12.1 Trust accounting and trust transfers

Trust funds refer to funds held by an attorney on behalf of a client: -

1. As a deposit for work to be done. Once invoiced, a trust transfer can release the trust funds, allowing the law firm to move the funds from the trust to the business bank account.
2. To be used by the law firm to pay a third party on behalf of the client; e.g. SARS in a property transaction.

Trust funds can only move between Clients (Matters) and a trust bank account; i.e. the sum of all monies held in trust per client must equal the sum of monies in the trust banks. LawPracticeZA includes accounting controls to ensure that this is always the case. Importantly, LawPracticeZA takes care of the debits and credits, automating wherever possible to provide a simpler solution that both reduces errors and is more efficient.

The Trust Commitment / Investment report, which can be generated on demand as at any date, provides a list of trust creditors, with the corresponding trust banks investments. The report includes Section 86(4) investments, where a client's trust funds are invested, on the written request by the client, in an individual interest bearing account, for the client's benefit.

When a trust payment is received from a client, it is posted as a Matter Receipt - Trust. LawPracticeZA will

1. Debit the Trust Bank account
2. Credit the client's matter in trust

Captured fees and disbursements (WIP), when invoiced, can affect the trust transfer (i.e. if there is available trust - trust less any reserved trust - in the Matter). When an invoice is produced from unbilled fees and/or disbursements, LawPracticeZA automatically generates the following accounting entries: -

1. Debit the Clients Matter in Business with the invoice amount. If there is trust available on the Matter, this Matter becomes eligible for a trust transfer.
2. Debit Debtors control in the General Ledger with the invoice amount.
3. Credit Fees / Disbursements with the ex VAT amount (if registered)
4. Credit VAT (if registered).

The automatic **Trust Transfers** program interrogates each Matter to establish whether there are funds to transfer; i.e. a business debit (typically the client has been invoiced) and available trust (a trust receipt from a client, taking into account any reserve, e.g. for payment to a third party).

If a Matter has a trust debit balance (trust money paid against the Matter where no trust was available) and/or a business credit (a payment received into business where there was no prior business debit, or a credit note generated where money was previous transferred as a result of the invoice), a negative transfer will be generated.

Note: The automatic Trust Transfer program first displays all Matter where a transfer will take place, with details of the transferable amounts, with the option of deselecting prior to processing. This gives the bookkeeper

the opportunity to investigate a Matter with a negative transferable amount (credit, in red) and rectify a possible accounting error, without generating a negative transfer.

A list of Matters that qualify for a trust transfer is displayed, all selected by default. Processing a transfer will

1. For each selected Matter:
 1. Credit the Matter in Business and
 2. Debit the Matter in Trust, with the transferable amount, which is the lessor of the business or trust balance if different, else the balance amount.
2. For the sum of the transferable amounts for all Matters
 1. Debit the system 'Trust Transfer Clearing' Matter in business and
 2. Credit the system 'Trust Transfer Clearing' Matter in trust.

The transfer clearing matter subsequently contains the balances that are to be transferred from trust to business.

Note: If the transfer has been run (and individual matters updated) but the payment from trust of the transferable amount has not been made, the system 'Trust Transfer Clearing' Matter will show a credit trust balance, and also feature in the trust investment / commitment report, until the payment is made. The business balance on the clearing matter will similarly remain, until the payment has been posted as received into the business bank account (posted against the clearing matter).

To complete the trust transfer, after the transferable amount (obtained from the **Trust Transfer Report**) has been paid from the trust bank/s to the firm's bank account, the two accounting entries must be posted: -

1. **Matter payment - Trust**, paid against the 'Trust Transfer Clearing' Matter. This will clear the Trust balance in the 'Trust Transfer Clearing' Matter.
2. **Matter Receipt - Business**, received against the 'Trust Transfer Clearing' Matter. This will clear the Business balance in the 'Trust Transfer Clearing' Matter.

12.2 Billing a client for work done

To bill a client, you first need a Matter to bill (an instruction from a client), and a Matter must be linked to a Client.

So you will need to add a client account, and a Matter, if they do not already exist. If a new matter for an existing client, add a matter linked to the existing client (a client can have one or more matters).

All fees and disbursements are initially captured as unbilled (WIP), and subsequently converted into an invoice (at which stage they become an accounting entry).

Unbilled fees are not accounting transactions, and can therefore be modified or deleted.

Once converted to an invoice, an invoice cannot be modified or deleted, as an invoice is an accounting entry. If an invoice is in error (e.g. for the incorrect client or matter) a credit note must be generated, which can be done automatically from the invoice, and which generates accounting transactions, reversing all the invoiced accounting entries. All invoice line items (from previous unbilled) can be returned as unbilled, with the option to move them to a different account (or modify or delete). As unbilled, they can be subsequently invoiced.

Note: Where a credit note has been generated by LawPracticeZA (a mirror image copy of an invoice), the original invoice and credit note can be 'hidden' (including on the client's statement). See the Reversals Shown / Hidden toggle.

See **Trust Transfers** for the impact invoices have on trust transfers.

12.3 Period end (Month and year end)

LawPracticeZA does not ‘roll balances’ like many legacy systems, but maintains all transactions and calculates balances as required, based on the transaction date, using a ‘freeze’ date to mark both month and year end.

Note: There are two major benefits to using a freeze date, made possible by the increased power and capacity of computer technology: firstly, there is no month or year-end delay and secondly, because all balances are calculated ‘on the fly’, reports can be extracted for any period or as at any date, without the need to restore a backup.

12.3.1 Month end

The following example illustrates how month-ends are managed in LawPracticeZA

1. During January, transactions are posted dated January: they fall into the January financial period.
2. If during the beginning of February,
 1. Fee Earners produce invoices, the accounting entries produced fall into the February financial period.
 2. If the Bookkeeper posts transactions (for example, from a bank statement)
 1. dated January, the accounting entries produced fall into the January financial period.
 2. dated February, the accounting entries produced fall into the February financial period.
3. When the bookkeeper has completed all posting relating to the January period, he or she sets the Period end - month to the 1st February, and no more transactions can be posted into January.

12.3.2 Year end

Once the month-end postings have been completed and the month-end ‘freeze-date’ set, if the last month in the financial year, the year-end ‘freeze-date’ is also set.

Setting Year-end identifies the financial year for report purposes, e.g. the Income and Expense report.

Note: To accommodate exceptions where it is necessary to post into a previous financial period (for example, to capture auditor adjustments, which could be received months after a financial year end) a special setting is provided to release the ‘freeze’ date. To change this setting requires Auditor privileges.

12.4 Take on from legacy system

Many firms that decide to change to LawPracticeZA are operational Law Firms that have existing systems.

LawPracticeZA includes a number of Import modules, to cater for importing Clients and Matters, Suppliers, and General Ledger accounts. In addition, any WIP (fees that have been captured but remain unbilled) can also be imported, as can ‘Posting codes’: a firms customized tariff. The following are some typical scenarios: -

1. Firm elects to ‘start with a blank slate’. This would also apply to new firms. In this instance, LawPracticeZA is set up with no Clients, Matters or accounts loaded - just the default settings, including a standard chart of GL accounts.
2. Import existing Clients and Matters, and possibly Suppliers, but no General Ledger (as it sometimes takes time for the legacy system to produce a balanced trial balance). LawPracticeZA provides options for importing Clients and Matters, with or without balances (which can be imported later), from a spreadsheet. Instructions are included in the import module, and a spreadsheet template can be provided with the format required. A similar option is provided for Suppliers. The General Ledger can be imported at a later stage,

but should be 'as at' the same date as the Clients and Matters (i.e. the sum of the Matter business balances must equal the Debtors control in the General Ledger).

3. Import an entire, balanced system: Matters and Clients, Suppliers and General Ledger, from spreadsheets, each formatted as per the import modules specifications. Generally this data will be exported from the legacy system to spreadsheets and formatted as per the requirements of each import module.

Note: When we import data from a legacy system, we do not import historical transactions, only balances. So it is important to retain access (whether printed or online) to historical data, i.e. transactions prior to the conversion to LawPracticeZA.

12.5 Reports using Pivot Tables

Pivot tables in spreadsheets provide an extremely flexible and powerful yet simple reporting tool.

Because reporting requirements vary between law firms, LawPracticeZA has optimised a number of reports for Pivot Tables, the most common being Unbilled Fees and Pending Disbursements and Invoiced Fees and Disbursements.

In both the above, fees can be analysed by Client, Matter, Fee Earner, accounting period and more, with a simple drag and drop. Together with a number of other reports, LawPracticeZA includes Pivot Tables in the exported spreadsheet (option EXCEL PIVOT).

Apart from creating Pivot Tables, the existing ones can be easily modified, by dragging and dropping fields, to accommodate various ways of looking at the data.

Note: There are many excellent tutorials on YouTube for both Excel and LibreOffice Pivot Tables. Also worth investigation Excel 'Text to Table' and LibreOffice 'Filter' for other report formats, such as the General Ledger transaction analysis (Statement of Accounts)).

12.6 VAT on the Invoice basis

Where a firm is required to be registered for VAT, LawPracticeZA applies VAT on the Invoice Basis. LawPracticeZA does not accommodate VAT on the Payment basis, as it is inappropriate for law firms (because VAT on the payment basis requires each invoice issued to be associated with a payment received, which is particularly problematic in the case of trust transfers). Each payment to a supplier must also be associated with a suppliers invoice. VAT on the Payment basis was generally designed for small, cash businesses, and is restricted to a maximum turnover during the preceding 12 months.

Cash flow is often raised as a reason for selecting the payment over the invoice basis, where this choice is available.

Proforma invoices can alleviate the potential impact that VAT can have on cash flow. By presenting client's with proforma invoices, arrangement can be made for settlement prior to invoicing the client. It is only at the time of invoicing that the liability for VAT arises.

Taking deposits where possible, although in some cases this is not possible, will eliminate the problem. Deposits for work to be done are deposited in Trust (and to the trust balance of the client's Matter) and once an invoice is generated, can be immediately released from trust.

In addition, as soon as a vatable invoice from a client is posted, the VAT credit is claimed, rather than waiting until the supplier is paid.

12.7 Auditors

This section explains where to find the reports that the auditors typically require.

Note: Where a report includes transactions, you can select a ‘from - to’ date (e.g. Account Enquiry), and where a report contains accounts with only balances (e.g. Financial Reports), an ‘as at’ date.

In LawPracticeZA, all transactions are maintained and balances calculated on the fly (as opposed to legacy systems where transactions are generally rolled up into a brought forward balance at month and year end). This has the significant advantage that reports can be drawn for any period, without restoring backups.

Reports include an option to extract to PDF or a spreadsheet (e.g. Excel). In a spreadsheet, data is more easily analysed, especially by using tables and pivot tables.

The following are typically the reports required by auditors, and where to find them in the **bookkeepers menu**.
Tip: type part of the report name in ‘Filter menu...’

1. **Trust Investments / Commitments:** The spreadsheet / PDF includes three ‘tabs’: -
 1. All client’s matters that have a trust and/or investment balance, with totals.
 2. Trust Bank/s, with the total balance/s equal to the total of the trust balance in the first tab.
 3. Individual Section 86 (4) investments, with the total equal to the total of investments in the first tab.
2. **Trust Transfers**, under Reports. For each trust transfer there is a PDF report, listed in date sequence. Each report identifies the matter/s where monies have been transferred, with a total amount to be paid from trust to business.
3. **Client Statement.** A selected Matter or all Matters for the selected client, with an option to include matters with zero balances (as at the ‘to’ date). If this option is not selected, an account where the balance has become zero (e.g. an invoice paid) will not be included. The statement shows all accounting transactions, in separate sections for Business, Trust and Investments.
4. **Statement of Account(s):** General Ledger accounts with transactions for the selected period. This report extracts all general ledger accounts for the selected period, with any transactions preceding the ‘from’ date represented as an Opening balance. To analyse accounts, it is recommended to extract to a spreadsheet and convert to table (Excel) or Filter (LibreOffice) where columns provide filtering (e.g. of one or more accounts and/or a particular transaction type), sorting, etc.
5. **Audit Trail.** Includes all accounting transactions, both automatically generated (e.g. from invoices) and captured (e.g. Receipts and Payments) for the selected period. Transaction are in chronological order of date recorded and show the time and user. The Audit Trail includes a filter to make it easier to find specific transactions.
6. A **Bank Recon** can be run for any period, showing the LawPracticeZA opening balance, any unreconciled transactions at the time, with a calculated closing balance, which should equal the Bank Statement balance of the same date.
7. **Matter Movement** shows all business, trust and investment transactions for all matters for the selected period.
8. **Debtors Age Analysis** lists all Clients Matters with a business balance, with aging to 120 days. The trust and investments balances are also shown, for information purposes.
9. **Suppliers Age Analysis** lists all creditors with a balance, aged to 120 days.
10. **Invoiced fees and disbursements.** This report has been optimised for a spreadsheet Pivot table, where the fees and disbursements can be analysed in a variety of ways; e.g. by Period, by Fee earner, by Client and/or Matter, with or without VAT, etc.
11. **VAT Report.** Can be extracted for any period (as defined on Firm details: i.e. for Odd or Even months, or Monthly). A completed VAT 201 PDF is produced for the period, with detailed transactions with corresponding totals in an accompanying spreadsheet.

12. **Financial Reports.** These are produced as a PDF document or Spreadsheet, as at the selected date, with tabs for
1. *Trial Balance.* A list of all General Ledger accounts (including the system Debtors Control, representing all Clients Matters Business Balances, and Creditors Control, representing all suppliers balances). Separate columns are included for Trust and Investment balances.
 2. *Income and Expense report.* All income and expense accounts, with the difference between the two the profit or loss.
 3. *Balance Sheet.* All assets and liabilities (including owners equity), including the calculated profit or loss (from Income and Expense).

Note: Account categories and sub categories can be configured. See **GL Account categories** and option AR-RANGE.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

Questions asked by LawPracticeZA users, with answers.

13.1 Where has my Matter gone? (archived Matters)

To retrieve an archived Matter,

1. Select **Matters** in the bookkeeper menu.
2. Click on Expired for a list of all archived Matters.
3. If you need to search for a Matter, enter part of the Matter description, or code, in the search field.
4. Click on the Matter description, and the Matter is loaded.
5. Top right corner is the unarchive icon (sun): click and the Matter will be returned to 'live'.

13.2 How do I correct an incorrect posting?

Mistakes do happen.

LawPracticeZA provides the option to reverse entries; i.e. LawPracticeZA will post accounting transactions opposite to the original entry, thereby reversing the entry.

Accounting entries cannot simply be modified to correct a mistake. To protect the accounting data integrity, an adjusting accounting transaction is required, which will appear on the audit trail. This is why it is also advisable to include a clear explanation for the reversal - one that both the client (on the Client Statement) can understand, as well as the auditor - perhaps six months after the reversal.

Note that unbilled fees and pending disbursements can be amended or even deleted. This is because they are not accounting entries. When invoiced, they are converted.

Because invoices are generated by the system, special functionality is provided - as described below.

Note: Because a reversal produces a mirror-image of the original transaction (i.e. all the same transactions are posted, but in reverse) you can 'hide' reversals: i.e. the original entry and the reversal, including on the clients statement. You can toggle between Hide and Show Reversals.

13.2.1 Reversing invoices: generating Credit Notes

With invoices, as with all accounting records, once generated, the details cannot be changed. To cancel an invoice, you need to create a Credit Note and, if necessary, re-invoice.

LawPracticeZA provides a number of options to automate what would otherwise be a laborious process.

If an invoice needs to be credited (e.g. to wrong client or has incorrect address),

1. Select the invoice (tip! for invoice INV1005, for example, in the Search bar type **invoice INV1005** and select - or click on INV1005 in Account Transactions). With the invoice selected, click the icon for 'Copy to unbilled' (icons in top right of screen). This will reinstate all the unbilled fees and/or disbursements. Then click the back-arrow icon to generate the Credit Note. You can enter a reason: e.g. incorrect address.
2. Update the client address (and name if applicable); change to the correct invoice name and address and (re) invoice.

If you invoiced the incorrect client, after step 1 select the Matter and under unbilled, click MOVE SELECTED to move the unbilled fees and/or disbursements to the correct Matter, then invoice the correct Matter.

Remember that unbilled fees and pending disbursements (WIP) can be edited or deleted, as until invoiced, they are not accounting records.

13.3 Does LawPracticeZA have short-cuts?

There are a number of short-cuts in LawPracticeZA that will save you time.

1. Press / to load the search (same as clicking the magnifying glass). To find a Matter, enter any part of the client or matter details or code. For other options, press ?. There are options for finding suppliers, or specific transactions such as invoices or receipts, and more.
2. Press \ for the menu filter (where you can enter any part of a menu item name - for example
 1. **au** will display the **Audit Trail** option for selection.
 2. **com** the **Trust Investments / Commitments** option.
 3. **86** both the **Section 86(4) Investment Withdrawal** and the **Section 86(4) Interest / Charges** options.

13.4 Time-based fee calculations appear incorrect. How can this be?

LawPracticeZA uses the national and international standard for lawyers of billing per 6 minutes, or tenths of an hour: e.g. 40 minutes as 0.7 hours.

The reason this standard has been adopted is because a calculation based on minutes will often result in strange amounts. A recent query from a client: 40 minutes at R950 an hour would result in R633.3333333 (recurring). Based on per 6 minutes, the amount charged will be R665.00. Accountants tend to charge per 15 minutes, but this is because each attendance by an accountant tends to be longer than an attendance by an attorney; i.e. an accountant's attendance will be a minimum of 15 minutes.

LawPracticeZA does nevertheless provide the option to change the basis of calculation (for example to minutes or per 15 minutes, whether to round up, etc. These options can be found in **Firm details**). But for the reason above, this is not recommended.

What is recommended is that in your terms of engagement with your client, together with your other conditions, you state that, as per the national and international standard, you charge per 6 minutes or part thereof.

There is also an option in Firm Details to show the unit as fractions of an hour rather than minutes: for example, 40 minutes could show on the invoice as 0.7.

Warning: Changing the minute-block setting will cause some of your previously entered WIP (draft item) to fail a calculation check when invoicing. Either make the change when you have billed/cleared your WIP, or load and update each WIP entry so the system will recalculate the WIP totals.

13.5 Why is the VAT total of my invoice not exactly a percentage of my ex-VAT amount?

In LawPracticeZA, VAT is calculated on each line item of the invoice and rounded to the nearest cent. This is an acceptable way of calculating VAT. This means that each line item could introduce a small difference of between $-\frac{1}{2}c$ and $\frac{1}{2}c$. If, for example, you have 100 items then this could result in a maximum difference of 50c. In many cases the small increased difference will mostly cancel out the small decreased difference, but it can still lead to a small discrepancy if you take the final total and multiply it by your VAT amount (say 15%).

Some companies prefer the VAT to be calculated on the sub total of the invoice. This is possible, and it can be set Per Department, under Department Settings. In this case, however, if one sums the VAT column it will not add up exactly to the VAT total at the end of the invoice, and therefore an additional line item is added to the end of the invoice called “VAT Rounding” to make sure that the column will summed up perfectly to the invoice’s VAT total. The option of choosing whether to do the calculation from the inclusive amount or the exclusive amount is available. If you quote prices including VAT you’ll probably want the VAT rounding to inclusive amount, if you want VAT rounding.

The “VAT Rounding” line item can be hidden on client invoices, this is also an option in Department Settings. Note that there could be more than one “VAT Rounding” line item, as Fees and Disbursements are calculated separately. When the VAT Rounding lineitem is hidden then if one adds the individual VAT items together, you will not always get to the invoice total.

Not all items attract VAT, so it would be an incorrect assumption to assume all line items are the same VAT percentage. If VAT is rounded to invoice total, each VAT type is summed separately and VAT is calculated.

LawPracticeZA uses the Bankers Rounding Strategy, also known as [Half to Even](#) rounding, according to the [IEEE 754](#) standard of 1985.

13.6 Invoices: can I include my own message at the bottom of an invoice?

You can add a message to invoices sent to client’s. Go to Firm details (you must have Administrator privileges) and add the message under banking details. An example of a message is “payment must be made 30 days from date of invoice”. Note that this message will appear on all invoices. It can be changed (e.g. for December you could include an additional message). Messages can be on separate lines. Before invoicing check messages with a proforma invoice.

Note: If you are sending an individual invoice, you can send a message with the email. When you click send, you get a prompt to add a message to the email.

13.7 Matter Receipts: can I show outstanding invoices when capturing?

To view outstanding transactions on a matter, you can view them under **Transactions**, on the Matter, or via Account Enquiry. You could also produce a Proforma, which you could tab to in the browser when doing the receipt.

13.8 How do I print a Matter Receipt?

The automatic production of a Matter Receipt was removed, at the request of users. The option to print a receipt is still there, but needs to be selected from the receipt transaction, which can be accessed from Matter Transactions, or searching for the receipt.

For split receipts, a Matter Receipt is generated for each Matter, not only the total amount received.

13.9 In the Cash Book, how can I see to which matter the funds are allocated?

We do not show the opposite entry in the Bank Account enquiry. We have adopted the approach that everything can be exported to a spreadsheet (e.g. Excel), in order to provide flexibility in reporting. This has been done to accommodate the varied requirements of many different law firms.

You will see in the manual that some reports are well suited to being rendered as a Pivot Table. For these, we have optimized the reports accordingly.

Others are well suited to be analysed as tables, where you can filter the report using a standard and flexible filter that can be assigned to every column at the click of a button. In this instance I would use the Matter Movement where you can, for example, filter the reference column to include only transactions that start with TP (Trust Payment). This will produce a list of all Trust Payment per client's matter, with full details. You can have multiple filters, sort data, etc.

Note: There are many short YouTube videos that will show you how to create tables in Excel. If you are using the free and open source LibreOffice Calc, simply select AutoFilter.

Remember that reports can be for selected time periods, even after month and year ends.

13.10 Why did LawPracticeZA send a client multiple emails for the same invoice?

The user requested the system to send a set of unsent invoices, but 1 of them had a faulty email address (e.g. should not include quotation marks). So the entire batch was reported to be rejected to the user, while actually some of the invoices were successfully sent. The user then tried to resubmit the entire batch a few times, resulting in multiple invoices being sent to some client's.

As a result of this, some modifications have been made to LawPracticeZA

1. Improve email validation, using a live email validation tool that we have created.
2. Remove bad characters (such as quotation marks) from email addresses automatically.
3. Change the sending of invoices to be batched. They'll still go out ASAP, but are processed one at a time, which allows only the offending invoice to 'bounce' back to the user as an issue. The issue will identify the problem with the email (e.g. invalid domain).

13.11 How do I account for VAT when I capture an expense with VAT directly into the business cashbook?

You do not capture directly into the Cash Book. Input VAT can only be derived from a suppliers tax invoice (even if an alternatively accepted invoice such as the policy for an insurance premium can be used as the invoice).

To follow correct procedure without introducing additional work, LawPracticeZA has introduced the option of immediate payment on Suppliers Invoices.

Note: Tip: Open a COD Supplier to be used for these type of postings.

This means that posting one entry will generate the correct accounting entries to accommodate VAT. We have also provided an automatic one-click feature for posting bank charges (and interest) directly from an imported bank statement (Reconzilla), where you can also post all other transactions from the bank statement.

13.12 Can I integrate LawPracticeZA with some of our other systems?

From our website, under Developers: LawPracticeZA has been built with an API-first approach. All business logic operations and data IO can be performed over our secure RESTful JSON API mounted at /api. This means that developers are free to integrate LawPracticeZA with other systems such as document generation, business management, customer relationship management, etc.

Note: For larger firms with internal IT expertise, this functionality can prove extremely useful. We have also used the API to enable integration with e4 transfers, for example.

13.13 What if I receive an error message?

This calls for an explanation of how LawPracticeZA deals with errors.

Error messages can be ugly and annoying: so we've put furry animals on them. We call them Error Animals. It helps our users understand different kinds of errors.

For example, a bunny usually indicates that there is something invalid about the data. For example, a matter cannot be opened for a client that didn't yet exist.

Another kind of animal that might appear is the Llama. Llama's are the most vague, and often indicate there is a bug in the system, or we've encountered a situation that the system wasn't expecting at all. If you do see a llama, it's time to contact support. (Although all llama errors do get automatically sent to our central 'Sentry' system for us to analyse and resolve, so we might already know about it. But all additional information is helpful.)

The border collie occurs when the address (URL) is incorrect - this could be due to a broken link or incorrect parameters or perhaps a link getting garbled or cut off in an email - or partially cut-and-paste. If you followed a link from within LawPracticeZA please contact our support so we can fix it. If you followed a link from another website please tell them so they can fix it.

Note: At the bottom of every page in LawPracticeZA is SUBMIT A SUPPORT REQUEST. Please use this for reporting any errors, or even if you have a query. The reason is: the details you SUBMIT are immediately sent to our logging system and everyone in LawPracticeZA is informed, both on our computers and cell phones. A screen shot (typically of an error) is automatically sent with the message, as is all other other information that can assist us with resolving the problem or answering the query.

13.14 If a fee earner leaves, how do I manage his or her Matters?

When a Fee Earner leaves a firm, they should be 'expired' on LawPracticeZA.

From the Fee Earner Menu option, from the 'old' Fee Earner's menu options (three vertical dots), select Expire. This will provide the options for a Replacement Fee Earner and a date on which to expire the old Fee Earner. There is also the option to disable the old Fee Earner; this will prevent the old Fee Earner from accessing the system.

Once accepted, all the old Fee Earner's Matters will be assigned to the new Fee Earner This can involve reassigning a number of files, so may take a minute or two..

Note: First create the login for the new Fee Earner, if the new Fee Earner is new to the firm, then expire the old Fee Earner, as described above.

13.15 Can I charge interest on overdue accounts?

Yes: if you scroll to the bottom of the Debtors Age Analysis, there is an option to charge interest on accounts that have been overdue for a specified period, at a specified monthly interest rate.

13.16 Posting disbursements

A disbursement is both a 'purchase' (e.g. invoice from advocate) and a 'sale' (disbursement charged to your client). The two methods for capturing both the 'purchase' and 'sale' simultaneously are: -

Capture Suppliers invoice (the 'purchase'), and select the option to also post the disbursement charge ('sale') to the client's Matter. As with capturing fees, the disbursement charge on the Matter is unbilled until invoiced.

The **Fee Earner captures disbursement** charge to the client (the disbursement is unbilled until the client is invoiced) when capturing the disbursement and selects **Also capture Expense**, i.e. post the supplier invoice.

The purchase and sale can also be posted independently of each other, or together via one of the two options mentioned above.

Disbursements, processed correctly in the above manner, result in paying the supplier (e.g. Advocate) out of business (Supplier Payment). If the client has paid a deposit, received into trust, then once the client has been invoiced for the disbursement, a trust transfer will release the funds from trust to business.

Note: If a disbursement is incorrectly paid from trust (e.g. pay an Advocate or Sheriff from trust) then the accounting entry would be a Matter Payment - Trust. In this example the Advocates invoice would not be posted, and the disbursement cost cannot be charged to the client (as the clients (trust) money has been used to pay the supplier). Note that this latter method is incorrect and the former mentioned method should apply. NB! The advocate or sheriff invoices the law firm (VAT / tax implications), not the client, so the invoice must be processed by the law firm, which also means that the supplier cannot be paid from trust.

In the instance where a firm pays for a disbursement such as hospital records, in principle the same procedure applies: in terms of the purchase, if there is no invoice (although there should always be some record, even for petty cash items), the posting can be as follows:

1. Create a COD or Miscellaneous Supplier and capture the invoice, with the option 'Paid'. The expense account is 'Disbursement Costs'. In this way, the system updates the 'Supplier' with both the invoice and payment (resulting in zero balance) and the expense account and bank, in the General Ledger.
2. The client would be charged for the cost in the usual way: under Capture Fees, Disbursements, with a meaningful narration (e.g. Obtaining copy of hospital records).

If the client has money in trust, once invoiced, this will result in a trust transfer. Alternatively, the client is invoiced, and pays the bill.

13.17 Reversing an incorrect trust transfer

A 'Trust Transfer' is an automatic process that updates Matter business and trust balances, which are the result of transactions such as trust receipts and invoices to clients, reducing both Matter business and trust balances by the transferable amount, with is then available to transfer from the trust to the business bank account.

The Trust Transfer program includes an automatic reversal when there is either a trust debit or a business credit on a matter. A reversal reduces the amount available for transfer if the overall transferable amount is positive, else the payment should be made from the business to the trust bank for the net reversal amount.

If there was an error with a trust transfer, it cannot simply be reversed. The issue needs to be resolved: at the time of the transfer, the system reflected a trust credit and business debit on the matter, so if a subsequent reversal of an automatic transfer is required, it must mean that either the trust or business balance (or both) on the matter were incorrect at the time of the transfer. A transfer results from these balances, which result from individual transactions, so these underlying transactions need to be attended to.

For example, say a receipt of R900 was incorrectly posted to Matter A rather than Matter B, and Matter A has a business debit balance of R600. A transfer is processed and Matter A's business balance is reduced to zero and trust balance to R300 credit, with R600 available for transfer. The mistake is picked up after the transfer and a trust journal is posted (or a reversal of the original Receipt and new correct Receipt), crediting matter B (where the receipt should have been posted in the first place) in trust and debiting Matter A in trust with R900, resulting in a trust debit of R600 in Matter A. A transfer is run and the system generates a negative transfer on Matter A of R600, reducing the trust balance to zero and reducing the transferable amount by R600 (if the only transfer processed, would need to transfer from business to trust, rather than the usual trust to business).

There is no magic wand to reverse a transfer. A bookkeeping system is simply the recording of actual transactions that have taken place, so if there is an error, it needs to be corrected (which in some cases could even be a payment from trust into business) and the transaction/s recorded. Because the trust transfer is an automated process, it also produces a negative transfer when a matter has either a trust debit of a business credit (to maintain an accurate trust investment vs commitment balance).

Another alternative is that the amount, for whatever reason, is written off. In this case a credit note can be generated, with an appropriate reason, and this will clear the business balance. Where there is no debit balance on the matter (e.g. where an invoice has been paid) and a credit note is generated (say a refund to the client), an automatic trust reversal will be generated, resulting in a trust credit (the client is owed the money). After the reversal, the business balance will be zero.

Another example: the supplier of a disbursement (e.g. Advocate) is paid directly from trust (reducing the trust balance to zero) and the disbursement is (incorrectly) raised against the client and invoiced, and a trust transfer is run (no transfer takes place as the trust balance is zero). To resolve this, the disbursement charged to the client should be reversed (credited), as the disbursement has been effectively paid by the client (from their trust funds), and cannot therefore be charged to the client.

To re-emphasize: Accounting systems only record transactions and the trust transfer is an automated process that is based on a Matters transactions (balances); i.e. cannot post a journal entry to correct a trust transfer, the underlying transactions that cause the error must be rectified.

13.18 Receive refund from Law Society

The Law Society should be created as a Client and Matter.

When you receive trust interest, it is posted as a trust receipt to the Law Society Matter.

Any bank charges that can be offset against the Law Society are posted as a business debit. When a trust transfer is run, the business debit is offset against the trust credit, providing an amount that can be transferred from your business to your trust bank account: i.e. recovery of costs against interest.

The refund is a special case, as normally the Law Society is a trust creditor.

It is suggested that the Law Society should also be created as a supplier (business creditor) for any other fees raised by them. These would then process in the usual way:

Original entry: -

1. Receive account from Law Society. Process as Supplier Invoice.
2. Pay Law Society. Process as Supplier Payment.

Refund.

1. Receive credit from Law Society. Process as Supplier Invoice with negative amount and appropriate narration.
2. Deposit payment received from Law Society. Process as Supplier Payment with negative amount and appropriate narration.

13.19 When someone leaves, how do I remove their login?

If the person leaving is a fee earner, then you should first expire the fee earner. From the Admin menu, under **Fee Earners**, select Expire from the menu (three vertical dots) for the fee earner leaving: -

1. Select Replacement Fee earner. This will be the Fee earner who will be allocated the expired fee earners files.
2. The date - accept the calculated date.
3. There is an option to disable the login: this will mean the expired fee earner will no longer be able to log into the system (all their 'Zones' will be removed).

For a non-fee earner, to prevent the person from logging in future, from the Admin menu,

1. Select Logins and Update from the menu (three vertical dots) opposite the Fee Earner.
2. Delete the General zone (x) This will prevent the fee earner from accessing LawPracticeZA.
3. Click Archive Yes and press OK to update

13.20 How do I deal with Third allowances to / from corresponding attorneys?

Using this example where you are instructing another attorney: -

1. You bill your client in the normal way, for the full amount. If the client pays you a deposit prior to invoicing, receipt into trust and once invoiced, will form part of the next trust transfer (if the client pays after being invoiced, should be receipted into business).
2. You treat your supplier as a normal supplier: you receive an invoice from her for the amount less the third, which you pay from business. What remains in your business bank (after the transfer or receipt into business of the full amount from your client) is the allowance.

An issue to consider is that the amount invoiced by the correspondent should be posted against your fee account (to reduce your income account by the allowance given).

Create a new General Ledger income account, called something along the lines of "Correspondence costs for fee sharing". This is the account that you use when posting the Suppliers Invoice - the invoice from the corresponding attorney.

Using the above example: -

1. You instruct attorney B to do work for your client.
2. Attorney B agrees to charge R1,4000 (plus VAT to be added) with an allowance of 33.3% of this amount;
3. Attorney B does the work and sends an invoice/statement for her fee of R933.32 (due and payable) being R1,400 less the allowance of R466.68;
4. Capture the fee of R1400 in the normal way. The narration may be something like "Summons issued by Attorney B".
5. Capture the invoice from Attorney B (Suppliers Invoice, with Attorney B created as a supplier), in the amount of R933.32 and with the income Account "Correspondence costs for fee sharing" selected.

The result in your income and expense account will be the R1400 reflected in fees income (a credit), Attorney B's costs in "Correspondence costs for fee sharing" income account as a R933.32 debit with the net fee income the difference, i.e. R466.68, your allowance.

When you are sharing your fees with a correspondent it is quite simple: post the fee to your correspondents matter and add the third allowance as a 'discount', a negative amount. For example, if the fee is R900, you capture 'Third allowance' as -300.

13.21 Generating a credit note / writing off a balance / writing off a bad debt.

There are several ways to generate a credit note:

1. To credit an entire invoice, load the invoice in question (e.g. by clicking on the invoice number under the BUSINESS & TRUST ENTRIES on the matter page under transactions, or from the link in the client's statement), and then use the REVERSE button to create a credit note for the whole invoice.
 1. If 'Reversals hidden' is set, an invoice reversed in this way, and the credit note (if dated the same date as the invoice), will be hidden - both on the transactions displayed and the Clients Statement.
 2. A COPY TO UNBILLED option on the invoice will return all items on the invoice to UNBILLED fees and/or disbursements, which can be edit/delete/moved to a different Matter, and re-invoiced.
 3. **NB!** You cannot reverse a Credit Note with a date prior to the current freeze date, as this would cause issues with financial reports and the VAT 201 return if already submitted (if registered for VAT). When reversing the invoice (i.e. generating the credit note) there is an option to change the credit note date (e.g. to within the current period). Under these circumstances, you cannot hide the reversal. If the temporary freeze date has been set to a date prior to the current period, it will be possible to generate a credit note in a prior period, *but you must be aware of the implications mentioned above.*
2. For a 'stand-alone' Credit Note, capture a Unitary fee on the matter, with a Quantity of 1 and a negative Rate. In other words, prefix the Rate with a minus sign (e.g. -100 or -0.01 if writing off a small amount). You can use any activity: just replace the narration with an explanation for the credit (or you can create an Activity: Masterfile Maintenance Posting Codes (Fee / Qty)). If the total amount that you want credited includes VAT, you need to calculate the ex VAT amount (total amount divided by 115 multiplied by 100), as VAT will be added. For example, for a total of -115, enter -100 and LawPracticeZA will add R15 VAT.
3. For a bad debt, the above option, but create a posting code with VAT type selected as Bad Debts (if registered) with an income account (the credit will reduce income) selected as Bad Debts (so that all Bad Debts can be identified via this General Ledger (income) account. After selecting the General Ledger 'income' account for the Bad Debt Posting code, the category on the account can be changed in the General Ledger from income to expense (if you prefer it to show as an expense in the Income and Expense report). This has no impact on the financial report totals, but some accountants prefer bad debts to appear under expenses, rather than as reduced income.

Note: Before generating the Credit Note (click INVOICE SELECTED, which will create a Credit Note), produce a PRO FORMA to check that the details are correct (will show as a proforma with negative amounts). Generating the Credit Note will update all accounts (Matter / Fees / Disbursement income / VAT) in reverse to the original invoice.

13.22 To open a trust account when starting out I made a deposit from my private bank. How do I post this?

You will need to open a Client and Matter in your name for 'own' trust account. Set 'Reserve trust' on the matter to the amount that you are advancing (so that it will not automatically transfer until you are ready to do so). You will

also need to open a Private Bank account (menu option Business and Trust Banks) and assign a Receipt Method (EFT) to the bank.

1. Post a Matter Payment, Business, selecting your Private Bank and the above Matter. This will Debit the Matter in Business and Credit your private Bank
2. Post a Matter Receipt, Trust against the same Matter. This will Debit the trust bank and Credit the Matter in trust.

Once your practice is up and running and your trust bank has funds, you can recover the advance from the trust bank. Clear the reserve trust on the Matter and run a trust transfer. Post the trust payment against the trust transfer clearing matter (Matter Payment, Trust)

1. Credits the Trust Bank account
2. Debits the Trust Transfer Clearing Matter. This clears the trust balance.

and the Business receipt to your personal bank account (Matter Receipt, Business)

1. Debits your personal Bank account (clearing the balance)
2. Credits the Trust Transfer Clearing Matter. This clears the business balance.

13.23 How do I obtain a list of expired or archived matters with option to restore?

Under menu option Bookkeeper Master file Maintenance Matters, select VIEW EXPIRED for a list of all expired (archived) matters. To restore a Matter, click on the Matter Description to load the Matter, then the Unarchive icon (top right, sun icon).

Note: You can view an Archived Matters transactions, but cannot post transactions to the Matter, unless you first unarchive the Matter.

To extract the list of Archived matters to a spreadsheet, scroll down and Export to XLS. In the spreadsheet you can reformat the list to include the fields required (tip: use Pivot Tables) and export the result to PDF format as an option.

13.24 Why are my clients are reporting that our emails or invoices are being delivered to their spam/junk folder

Unfortunately sometimes emails go into the spam or junk folders. Although we get 100% score on various mail reputation systems including Mail-Tester.com (97%), SenderScore (99%) and 100% delivery on Google's infrastructure, we seem to get into the junk/spam folder more often on Microsoft's Outlook.com. (Users of outlook seem to get false positives into their junk folder all the time, so are often accustomed to having to pick our legitimate email out of the junk folder). We've tried various approaches to fix this (including using expensive third-party email providers, but with very poor success). The problem is that our emails will never be "aligned" without various setup on DNS on the client side. Alignment refers to the "From" address matching the "Return Path" SMTP envelope address. This gives us the authority we need to send emails on your behalf. To align the emails the client would have to set up three DNS records (SPF, DKIM, and a CNAME). If they already have an SPF record, then they would need to amend (not replace it) or else their own regular email will stop working. All of this is a bit complicated for most users.

An alternative fix for this is to set up SMTP host, SMTP username and SMTP password (under Firm Details). This will send all emails via your own email infrastructure thereby avoiding the complexity of the DNS records above. The downside is that sending emails will be a bit slower. (Although slowness won't be noticed for batches/bulk sending, as in most cases.) One would need to ask your email provider to provide you with a new email address, for example accounts@[yourcompany.co.za] and enter the SMTP host, SMTP username and SMTP password

under Firm Details. Always test once updating this fields as incorrect information here will result in emails not being sent.

One should setup the reply to the email to be sent back into LawPracticeZA. You can do this by setting up an auto-forward to [your-database-name]@u.lawpracticeza.com

Whenever possible, one should ask the recipients of the email to mark the email as 'Not Spam'. This will help the reputation of the email system.

Note: Always test your emails after editing the SMTP settings. Leaving incorrect SMTP settings will break lots of things.

SECURITY AND RELIABILITY OF RECORD KEEPING

14.1 Data Centre

All records are kept on our self-managed servers at the underground Xneelo Data Centre in Cape Town and Johannesburg who enforce very strict security measures with respect to geotechnical audits, surveillance, access control, fire prevention, power outages, etc. More information is here: <https://xneelo.co.za/legal/security/>

14.2 Security

All access to the server is possible only via HTTPS and SSH both of which are encrypted connections using industry standards. Only our senior developers would have any access to these production servers. All of whom have over 20 years experience in security on Linux-based servers. All customer records are kept in their distinct databases and thus mitigates against the risk of cross-database data leaks due to potential bugs in the software.

14.3 Redundancy & Backups

We replicate all database traffic to a backup server, with an additional 7-day rotational backup of the database. Uploaded files are also backed up on a 7-day rotational basis. Access to the backup servers are the same as the production servers.

14.4 Monitoring

Audit logs of access to the servers are logged (both locally and remotely) and we have fail2ban software installed to help against brute-force password guessing attacks. We have various testing systems that run periodically to test the stability of the servers as well as any database anomalies. Third-Party Data Sharing Data is not shared with any third party without explicit opt-in from the user, and then only the minimum data is shared for an integration to function. For example, the Gmail calendar integration shares matter names, diary dates and diary entry descriptions, and does not divulge anything to Google that isn't necessary for each diary appointment. The integration with E4 gives their system the same access as a bookkeeper user as it is necessary for this integration to be able to query accounting transactions and post fees. In all cases third party access is granted explicitly to each firm database, there is no third party API key with access to multiple databases.

14.5 Weaknesses

By far the greatest know security risk is with the users themselves. Obtaining a username and password from an employee at the users workspace would allow someone access to the data.

14.6 Operating System Security Updates & Firewall

All our servers run Ubuntu Linux-based OS and security updates are applied regularly. Only a minimal set of secured ports are open to the public. Port 80 / HTTP is used only to issue redirect responses to Port 443 / HTTPS.

14.7 Retention Policy

We keep all records while the user is still a customer of LawPracticeZA and for 6 months after termination of their account. All records can be deleted upon request.

Document Authored by: Edward van Kuik B.Sc. (Computer Science) UCT

Updated: 2018-10-10 Updated: 2020-11-11

API GUIDE

Our API (Application Programmer Interface) is very much fully implemented, because we ourselves use this very same API for all reads and writes in LawPracticeZA. In other words the main LawPracticeZA interface itself is a user of the API. This guide covers only a small portion of the available functionality - we're still working on adding a full API reference to this documentation, however this guide will get you as far as being able to post fees, create/send invoices and query accounting transactions. Please drop us a line with any questions and to tell us what you integrations you're working on: support@lawpracticza.com

15.1 Some configuration and setup

For the purposes of example in this guide, VUKA is the fictitious name of the system being integrated with LawPracticeZA. Assume that the database name / firm code for VUKA's LawPracticeZA instance then is "vuka".

It will be necessary to log in to VUKA's LawPracticeZA instance via our main web interface (<https://lawpracticeza.com/>) and set up some records in LP and then persist their unique IDs in VUKA whether in config files / database / some other persistent but private, secure storage. These are some things you'll need initially:

- Get or create the credentials for an API user in the client's LP instance. The API user should have bookkeeper access. It is not necessary to have fee earner access as bookkeeper can post fees on behalf of other users.
- Create or get the relevant department_id(s) you will be working with
- Create or get the relevant salesagent_id(s) - otherwise known as Fee Earners - that you will be posting fees on behalf of.
- Create at least these posting codes (Masterfile Maintenance -> Posting Codes) in your system as per the requirements of the firm:
 - VUKA Fees - vatable
 - VUKA Disbursements - vatable
 - VUKA Fees - non-vatable
 - VUKA Disbursements - non-vatable

The database table for posting codes is *product*. So each of these records will have a *product_id*. I suggest persisting the *product_id* of these posting codes somewhere in VUKA so that you can easily post fees of the correct types. We will leave it to VUKA to set the amount, date and description of each fee so it is only necessary to create the above permutations to cover whether Fee or Disbursement, and whether VAT is charged or not.

The database IDs are long unique strings that are generally hidden from the UI but are visible as parameter in the URLs - eg navigating to the update or detail view of a department it will be easy to pick out the ID from the URL of that page. Alternatively you can use the API list or listforselection methods to get JSON lists of objects to determine IDs - eg when logged in go to `/api/salesagent/list` to get a full list of all fee earner records.

15.2 Guide to the Guide

This guide uses examples of actual API interactions written in JavaScript using jQuery - this chosen due to JavaScript being the lingua franca of programming. You do not have to implement your integration with JavaScript - it should be trivial talk to our API from just about any programming language.

Data sent to the server is as regular GET or POST form variables (x-www-form-urlencoded). The response data is JSON encoded UTF8 strings. After each API call in this guide I've included an example of the API response.

The API is a REST-ful(ish) API. One can use GETs or POSTs interchangeably - generally one should use GETs for reading data and POSTs for writing data - or just always use POSTs if running into issues with length of querystrings or proxy caching issues. All the API requests take this URL form: <https://lawpracticeza.com/api/object/method>

Additional positional arguments may be appended after the method as path components to the URL. For example, the word 'only' is the first and only positional argument in this URL: <https://lawpracticeza.com/api/company/update/only>

Named arguments are simply query string parameters.

I've also represented these in this doc as function signatures, in case that's more understandable to you.

HTTP response status codes are meaningful: 200 means the operation was successful, 406 means a user error such as a validation error, 500 means an application error / unhandled exception. See <https://http.cat> for an amusing illustration of HTTP statuses.

To try out these interactions open [LawPracticeZA](#), log in if you're not already logged in, and then open a browser console (F12 or Ctrl+Shift+J in most browsers). Cut and paste these code snippets into the console, and ensure that network requests are being logged so that you can inspect the parameters and return values.

15.3 Create your own API function

I suggest creating a single function through which you will make all your API calls so that you can set up the authentication and error handling in one place like the following one which uses jQuery's \$.ajax method to do the HTTP requests, setting the special X-token header if the global token variable has a value and throwing an exception if the status response is not a 200 (you may want to modify this to do something else like pop up an error dialog for example).

Note: If using nodejs at the command line, you can use najax to get a jQuery.ajax-like http client library:

```
npm install najax
npm install jquery
node

> $ = require('jquery');
> $.ajax = require('najax');
> //now use $.ajax like you would with jQuery in a browser
```

```
var token;
var apisrc = 'https://lawpracticeza.com/api';

function api(l, a, w) {
  a = a || {};
  w = w || {};
  w.method = w.method || 'POST';
  if (Array.isArray(l)) l = '/' + l.join('/');
  w.url = apisrc + l;
  if (token) w.headers = { 'X-token': token }
```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```

w.data = a;
w.timeout = 5000;
w.dataType = 'json';
w.error = function(xhr) {
    throw xhr.responseText;
}
return $.ajax(w);
}

```

This function takes as its first argument an array of positional arguments (or a path string) and the second argument is a javascript object of named parameters (field names and values). The remaining argument is for further options you may want to specify for the \$.ajax call, eg global: false if you want to bypass global ajax event handlers. It returns a Deferred object which you can then use with resolve/cancel functions - eg .then()

Now we're ready to log into our API for the first time - all these sample API calls use the api function defined above.

15.4 Log in to the API

`access.login(database, login_code, password)`

Login to LawPracticeZA and if successful receive a token to use to access privileged API functions.

Parameters

- **database** (*str*) – The database name of the LawPracticeZA instance, sometimes called “firm code”. In this example it is “vuka”.
- **login_code** (*str*) – Username, excluding the ‘.’ + database suffix
- **password** (*str*) – Password

Returns JSON token object

```

api(['access', 'login'], {'database': 'VUKA', 'login_code': 'apiuser',
'password': 'canonSuezLycrainks'}).then(function(response) {
    token = response.token;
});

```

Response:

```
{ token: 'bd4fc904-c9f7-4ca6-bd3c-4f62aa0ecf64' }
```

15.5 Check Login Status / Retrieve Login Information

Sessions are generally long-term but your application should check status at the beginning of a set of interactions and also on any HTTP 403 error received and handle the case where the user may have become logged out, by presenting them with option to re-log-in or update credentials if they have become obsolete or password has changed, etc.

`access.status()`

Check status of currently logged-in user. Authentication methods are either 1) by sending access token as a custom HTTP header called “X-token” or, 2) by sending HTTP cookie called “token”.

Returns JSON object

```

api(['access', 'status']).then(function(response) {
});

```


Response:

```
{ signon_uid: null,
  pincode: null,
  freezeDate: '2016-12-12',
  zones: ', legal, salesagent, allmatters, bookkeeper, loginmanager, auditor',
  activationdate: null,
  sessiontimeout: 315360000,
  login_uid: 'LGN_SYS_1_20713181404328',
  tagcode: null,
  archived: 0,
  loggedin: true,
  database: 'vuka',
  stampdate: '2017-11-05 12:38:10',
  rev: 0,
  login_code: 'apiuser',
  email: 'blackhole@lawpracticeza.c',
  token: '46f39732-1bcb-49bd-b2a2-607032b792c3',
  points: 0,
  gravatar: '9eaf01cc480ccf661edb3f92645ecaca',
  activationcode: null,
  sessiontimeupdated: true,
  login_name: 'API User' }
```

When logged in, like above, status returns some user information about the currently logged in user. When not logged in it looks like this:

response:

```
{ loggedin: false, database: null }
```

15.6 Retrieve Firm Details

`company.detail ('only')`

Retrieve information about the firm.

Returns JSON object

The string 'only' in this case is a special value because there can only ever be one valid company (firm) per LP instance.

To retrieve information about the law firm you're currently logged in to such as to get whether they are VAT registered, their firm name etc:

```
api(['company', 'detail', 'only']).then(function(response) {
});
```

Response:

```
{ data:
  { area_id: null,
    company_code: 'ABCLaw',
    tel: '+27 21-300-1073',
    uifnumber: null,
    fromname: 'ABCLaw',
    scrapdate: '9999-12-31 23:59:59',
    creditterms: null,
    streetaddress: null,
    vatflag: 'E',
    notify: 'info@lawpracticeza.com',
```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```

defaultinvoiceprefix: null,
logo: null,
emailtemplate: null,er      login_uid: 'LGN_SYSTEM',
tagline: null,
hurrytweet: null,
rev: 0,
company_id: 'COMP_SYS_1_22627470809605',
bankdetail: null,
regnum: '8748567874/12',
costcentrefields: 'productcategory_name,salesagent_name',
tradingas: null,
company_name: 'VUKA',
default_department_id: 'DEPT__SYS_1_82637389569365',
email: 'mfairfoot@VUKA.co.za',
website: null,
fax: '086 710 8657',
receipttemplate: null,
effectivedate: '1970-01-01',
emailsig: 'ABCLaw',
vatnumber: '23476283746',
expirydate: '9999-12-31',
backupemail: 'info@lawpracticeza.com',
directions: null,
postaladdress: '78 Strand Street,\r\n\r\nCape Town.\r\n\r\n8000',
mailfrom: null,
stampdate: '2017-11-02 14:31:34',
notes: null,
invoiceshowminutes: 1,
town_uid: null,
company_uid: 'COMP_SYS_1_22627470809605/9999-12-31/9999-12-31
23:59:59' } }

```

The vatflag field can be one of other: E (Even months), O (Odd Months) or N (Not registered for VAT)

15.7 Create a new Client (debtor)

`customer.insert (**kwargs)`

Create a new client (customer) record. See *Schema* for required and optional parameters.

Returns JSON object

```

api(['customer', 'insert'], {'customer_name': 'ACME Enterprises',
'customer_code': 'ACME100', 'postaladdress': '1 Freedom Way\r\nMoon
Crescent\r\nEldorado',
'department_id': 'DEPT__SYS_1_24294194765458'}).then(function(response)
{
});

```

Response:

```
{ id: 'CUST_API_1_39321029271287', success: true }
```

15.8 Create a new Matter

`matter.insert (**kwargs)`

Create a new matter record. See *Schema* for required and optional parameters

Returns JSON object

Fees can only be posted to a matter, not directly to a client - so first we must create at least one matter after creating the client.

```
api(['matter', 'insert'], {matter_name: 'Sale of 23 Firdale Road (ERF
27)', matter_code: 'ACM/2109/120',
customer_id: 'CUST_API_1_39321029271287',
owner_salesagent_id: 'SA__SYS_1_12291091625556',
dateopened: '2017-11-13'}).then(function(response) {

});
```

Response:

```
{ id: "MTR_API_1_61355827191366", success: true }
```

15.9 Update existing Matter

`matter.update (**kwargs)`

Update an existing matter. Every field must be supplied when updating a record.

Returns JSON object

Retrieve the existing matter record with lookups switched off, make any changes to the data, and then update the database with the changed data.

```
api(['matter', 'detail', 'MTR_SYS_1_76799379571032'],
{lookup: ""}).then(function(r) {
  var d = r.data;
  //make changes to the record:
  d['matter_name'] = 'Driving under the influence';
  api(['matter', 'update'], d).then(function(response) {

  });
});
```

Response:

```
{ id: 'MTR_SYS_1_76799379571032', success: true, recordcount: 1 }
```

15.10 Create a new Transfer

`matterset.createtransfer (**kwargs)`

Shortcut method to create the two pairs of matters linked to two pairs of clients required for a conveyancing transfer.

Returns JSON object

This is a shortcut method to create separate buyer and a seller matters under respective buyer & seller client records. The data passed must have attributes prefixed with `buyer_` and `seller_` respectively, as well as a field called `matterset_name` which you can fill with a reference or ID for the whole transaction. In this example, we pass existing customer records for both buyer and seller by specifying an existing `buyer_customer_id` and `seller_customer_id`, but this routine creates new matters for both the buyer and seller.

```
api(['matterset', 'createtransfer'],
{'buyer_customer_id': 'CUST_SYS_1_77118312361113',
```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```
'buyer_owner_salesagent_id': 'SA__SYS_1_12291091625556',
'buyer_matter_code': 'B0123', 'buyer_matter_name': 'Purchase of
B0123', 'seller_customer_id': 'CUST_SYS_1_33385024356314',
'seller_owner_salesagent_id': 'SA__SYS_1_12291091625556',
'seller_matter_code': 'S0123', 'seller_matter_name': 'Sale of
S0123', 'matterset_name': 'Transfer of B0123'}).then(function(response)
{
});
```

Response:

```
{ seller_matter_id: 'MTR_API_1_25128165461388',
  buyer_matter_id: 'MTR_API_1_6203268231442',
  matterset_uid: 'MS__API_1_41657935671694' }
```

15.11 Post or update a draft fee to a matter

`matterdraftlineitem.upsert (**kwargs)`

Updates a WIP draft invoice item if it exists or inserts it if it doesn't exist. Existence is determined either by supplying our ID (`matterdraftlineitem_uid`) or external unique ID (`srcid`)

Returns JSON data

When posting a fee you'll need to send `unitprice`, `trantotal` (the total of the transaction including VAT if applicable) and a tax amount and if these do not agree with the tax rate set on the posting code (product) or if the client's tax setting overrides this (for example overseas client) then there will be an error.

This particular call also returns the stored record (in the `detail` property) along with some extra information for rapid presentation back into a list of captured fees due to requirements in our own application - this may be useful for you too otherwise just ignore it.

If `matterdraftlineitem_uid` is in data then the draft fee will be updated, otherwise it will be created.

If `srcid` is in data, and if a draft item exists with the same `srcid`, the draft item will be updated. Otherwise it will be created. `srcid` is a unique but nullable field, so it can be either NULL but if not NULL then it must be unique.

```
api(['matterdraftlineitem', 'insert'],
{matter_id: 'MTR_API_1_61355827191366',
product_id: 'PROD_SYS_1_94741331371456', unitprice: 4600, qty: 1,
trantotal: 5244, tax: 644, matterdraftlineitem_name: 'Registration of
Mortgage Bond',
salesagent_id: 'SA__SYS_1_12291091625556'}).then(function(response)
{
});
```

Response:

```
{ uid: 13,
  success: true,
  detail:
  { _exvat: 4600,
    trantotal: '5244.00',
    tax: '644.00',
    qty: 1,
    currency_name: 'South African Rand',
    salesagent_id: 'SA__SYS_1_12291091625556',
```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```

matter_code: 'ACM/2109/120',
product_code: 'VUKAFEE',
salesinvoice_name: null,
login_uid: 'LGN_SYS_1_20713181404328',
customer_name: 'ACME Enterprises',
login_code: 'apiuser',
rev: 0,
salesinvoice_uid: null,
matter_id: 'MTR_API_1_61355827191366',
percentage: 14,
customer_id: 'CUST_API_1_39321029271287',
product_name: 'VUKA Fee',
status: 'Draft',
customer_code: 'ACME100',
matter_name: 'Sale of 23 Firdale Road (ERF 27)',
trantotal_display: 'R5,244.00',
price: 5244.000000000001,
matterdraftlineitem_name: 'Registration of Mortgage Bond',
taxtype_name: 'Sales Goods',
date: '2017-11-13 16:42:45',
salesagent_name: 'Clive Bredenkamp',
unit_uid: 'qty',
matterdraftlineitem_uid: 13,
product_id: 'PROD_SYS_1_94741331371456',
created: '2017-11-13 16:42:45',
stampdate: '2017-11-13 16:42:45',
unitprice: '4600.0000',
taxtype_uid: 'TT_001',
taxtype_code: 'SG',
salescreditnote_name: null,
cssclass: 'bgm-black',
minutes: null,
login_name: 'API User',
currency_uid: 'ZAR',
salescreditnote_uid: null } }

```

15.12 Delete a captured unbilled fee or disbursement

`matterdraftlineitem.quickdelete` (*uid OR src*)

Returns JSON object

Deletes a draft item by either its uid (`matterdraftlineitem_uid`) or its srcid. If deleting by srcid you must pass it as a named parameter.

```

api(['matterdraftlineitem', 'quickdelete'],
{srcid: '67424'}).then(function(response) {

});

```

Response:

```
{ numdeleted: 1 }
```

15.13 List all captured unbilled fees or disbursements for a matter

`matterdraftlineitem.childlist` (*matter*, *matter_id*[, *lookup*])

List all unbilled (WIP) invoice items for given matter.

Returns JSON object

Specifying a value for the optional lookup parameter will also include foreign name lookups in the data returned - for example the fee earner's name, not just their salesagent_id

```
api(['matterdraftlineitem', 'childlist', 'matter',
'MTR_API_1_61355827191366']).then(function(response) {
});
```

Response:

```
{ data:
  [ { status: 'Draft',
    matterdraftlineitem_uid: 13,
    salesagent_id: 'SA__SYS_1_12291091625556',
    product_id: 'PROD_SYS_1_94741331371456',
    created: '2017-11-13 16:42:45',
    stampdate: '2017-11-13 16:42:45',
    rev: 0,
    taxtype_uid: 'TT_001',
    qty: 1,
    matterdraftlineitem_name: 'Registration of Mortgage Bond',
    matter_id: 'MTR_API_1_61355827191366',
    salesinvoice_uid: null,
    unitprice: '4600.0000',
    trantotal: '5244.00',
    date: '2017-11-13 16:42:45',
    tax: '644.00',
    customer_id: 'CUST_API_1_39321029271287',
    minutes: null,
    login_uid: 'LGN_SYS_1_20713181404328',
    currency_uid: 'ZAR',
    salescreditnote_uid: null } ],
  results: 1 }
```

15.14 Get current accounting balances for matter

`matter.balances` (*matter_id*)

Get business, trust and investment balance information for given matter.

Returns JSON object

```
api(['matter', 'balances',
'MTR_API_1_61355827191366']).then(function(response) {
});
```

Response:

15.15 Get statement of business entries for a matter

`matter.statement3` (*matter_id*)

Get list of the business transactions (ie not including trust nor investment) for given matter.

Returns JSON object

```
api(['matter', 'statement3',
'MTR_SYS_1_20872615341588']).then(function(response) {

});
```

Response:

```
{
  "data": [
    {
      "reference": "INV1002",
      "date": "2018-04-13",
      "salesinvoice_salesinvoice_uid": "SI__API_1_37440926887645",
      "narration": "Invoice",
      "object_display": "Invoice",
      "login_uid": "LGN_SYS_1_20713181404328",
      "description": "Invoice",
      "staff_id": null,
      "supplier_id": null,
      "amount_neg_display": "-R1,368.00",
      "accountentry_uid": 103,
      "object_name": "Invoice",
      "amount_display": "R5,515.09",
      "matter_id": "MTR_SYS_1_20872615341588",
      "customer_id": "CUST_SYS_1_10989112001592",
      "sent": 0,
      "department_id": "DEPT__SYS_1_82637389569365",
      "reversaluid": null,
      "account_id": "ACC_SYS_1_89892334896025",
      "object": "salesinvoice",
      "accum_ZAR": "5515.09",
      "parentuid": "SI__API_1_37440926887645",
      "accum_ZAR_display": "R5,515.09",
      "accountentry_name": "Advocates account: JJ Smith for opinion on
classified documents.",
      "salesagent_id": "SA__SYS_1_51422332387169",
      "product_id": null,
      "salesinvoice_salesinvoice_name": "INV1002",
      "stampdate": "2018-04-13 12:13:09",
      "journalentry_name": null,
      "taxtype_uid": null,
      "voucherdate": "2018-04-13",
      "objectuid": "SI__API_1_37440926887645",
      "amount": "5515.09",
      "bticode": "B",
      "salesinvoicelineitem_name": "Invoice",
      "currency_uid": "ZAR"
    }
  ]
}
```

This method returns only business transactions at the invoice level, ie not each line item of each invoice.

15.16 Get business, trust and investment accounting entries for a matter

`matter.statement2` (*matter_id* [, *customer_id*, *startdate*, *stopdate*])

Get a lot of information including lists of all accounting transactions for given matter. Accounting transactions will be included for each ledger (business, trust and investment). Additional information such as client and firm header information will be included for presentation purposes on letterhead etc.

This method returns all the information you would need to send a complete accounting statement, with sections for business, trust and investment. There is quite a lot of output so here is some explanation:

- **customer:** an object containing all the client information data
- **company:** the law firm's information for showing address info, VAT info, logo etc
- **matters:** a list of matter objects. If as in this example it was called with *matter_id* then will only contain single matter, but it is also possible to call this statement for a whole client (*customer_id*) by using named parameter. Then there could be multiple matters.
- Each matter row contains general information about the matter as well as these keys:
 - **B:** which contains rows, a list of business transactions
 - **T:** which contains rows, a list of trust transactions
 - **I:** which contains rows, list of investment transactions

```
api(['matter', 'statement2',
'MTR_API_1_50521349608080']).then(function(response) {

});
```

Returns

```
response: {
  "customer": {
    "website": null,
    "scrapdate": "9999-12-31 23:59:59",
    "surname": "Bartlett",
    "customer_code": "Buyer_K1234/T001_64518",
    "entitytype_name": null,
    "streetaddresslines": [ "8 Old Main Road, , , 3660"
    ],
    "creditterms": null,
    "extratelnumbers": null,
    "customer_uid": "CUST_API_1_62114584447723/9999-12-31/9999-12-31
23:59:59",
    "entitytype_uid": null,
    "tel": "908786677",
    "login_uid": "LGN_SYS_1_20713181404328",
    "customer_name": "Carl Bartlett",
    "bankaccount": null,
    "login_code": "apiuser",
    "firstname": "Carl",
    "postaladdresslines": [
      "8 Old Main Road, , , 3660"
    ],
    "bankname": null,
    "taxtype_code": null,
    "rev": 0,
    "cell": "908786677",
```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```

"tradingas": null,
"customer_id": "CUST_API_1_62114584447723",
"email": "b@b.XO.ZA",
"department_id": "DEPT__SYS_1_24294194765458",
"sendstatement": 0,
"bankbranch": null,
"fax": null,
"effectivedate": "2018-02-24",
"taxnumber": "4547476576",
"accountsemail": null,
"expirydate": "9999-12-31",
"birthday": null,
"regnumber": "VAT 4445545454",
"taxtype_name": null,
"directions": null,
"postaladdress": "8 Old Main Road, , , 3660",
"password": null,
"data": null,
"soundex": "C640 B6343 ",
"entitytype_code": null,
"taxtype_uid": null,
"stampdate": "2018-05-28 10:26:15",
"notes": null,
"title": "Mr/s",
"streetaddress": "8 Old Main Road, , , 3660",
"coord": null,
"department_name": "Conveyancing",
"idnumber": "888888 8888 88 8",
"login_name": "API User"
},
"startdate": "1969-11-30",
"all": false,
"hidereversals": false,
"database": "VUKA",
"company": {
  "area_id": null,
  "company_code": "ABCLaw",
  "tel": "+27 21-300-1073",
  "uifnumber": null,
  "fromname": "ABCLaw",
  "scrapdate": "9999-12-31 23:59:59",
  "streetaddresslines": [],
  "creditterms": null,
  "bankdetaillines": [],
  "streetaddress": null,
  "vatflag": "E",
  "notify": "info@lawpracticeza.com",
  "defaultinvoiceprefix": null,
  "logo": null,
  "emailtemplate": null,
  "login_uid": "LGN_SYSTEM",
  "postaladdresslines": [
    "78 Strand Street,",
    "Cape Town.",
    "8000"
  ],
  "tagline": null,
  "hurrytweet": null,
  "rev": 0,
  "company_id": "COMP_SYS_1_22627470809605",
  "bankdetail": null,

```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```

"regnum": "8748567874/12",
"costcentrefields": "productcategory_name,salesagent_name",
"tradingas": null,
"company_name": "VUKA",
"default_department_id": "DEPT__SYS_1_82637389569365",
"email": "mfairfoot@VUKA.co.za",
"website": null,
"fax": "086 710 8657",
"receipttemplate": null,
"effectivedate": "1970-01-01",
"emailsig": "ABCLaw",
"vatnumber": "23476283746",
"expirydate": "9999-12-31",
"backupemail": "info@lawpracticeza.com",
"directions": null,
"postaladdress": "78 Strand Street,\r\n\r\nCape Town.\r\n\r\n8000",
"mailfrom": null,
"stampdate": "2017-11-02 14:31:34",
"notes": null,
"invoiceshowminutes": 1,
"town_uid": null,
"company_uid": "COMP_SYS_1_22627470809605/9999-12-31/9999-12-31
23:59:59"
},
"stopdate": "2018-05-30",
"matters": [
  {
    "scrapdate": "9999-12-31 23:59:59",
    "lastone": true,
    "surname": "Bartlett",
    "matter_uid": "MTR_API_1_50521349608080/9999-12-31/9999-12-31
23:59:59",
    "reservetrust": null,
    "workphone": null,
    "matter_code": "Matter_asdasdasdasd1_Buyer_64518",
    "department_name": "Conveyancing",
    "deadfilenumber": null,
    "customer_name": "Carl Bartlett",
    "login_code": "apiuser",
    "effectivedate": "2018-05-25",
    "title": "Mr/s",
    "rev": 0,
    "login_uid": "LGN_SYS_1_20713181404328",
    "cell": "908786677",
    "matter_id": "MTR_API_1_50521349608080",
    "customer_id": "CUST_API_1_62114584447723",
    "feelevel_name": null,
    "department_id": "DEPT__SYS_1_24294194765458",
    "customer_code": "Buyer_K1234/T001_64518",
    "fax": null,
    "B": {
      "currency_uids": [
        "ZAR"
      ],
      "closingbalance": {
        "ZAR_words": "R0.00 is due by you.",
        "ZAR": "0.00",
        "ZAR_display": "R0.00"
      },
      "openingbalance": {
        "ZAR_words": "R0.00 is due by you.",

```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```

        "ZAR": "0.00",
        "ZAR_display": "R0.00"
    },
    "rows": []
},
"matter_name": "PROPERTY and ERF 37000 MITCHELLS PLAIN",
"firstname": "Carl",
"I": {
    "currency_uids": [
        "ZAR"
    ],
    "closingbalance": {
        "ZAR_words": "Investment Balance should not be in debit.",
        "ZAR": "0.00",
        "ZAR_display": "R0.00"
    },
    "openingbalance": {
        "ZAR_words": "Investment Balance should not be in debit.",
        "ZAR": "0.00",
        "ZAR_display": "R0.00"
    },
    "rows": []
},
"accountsemail": null,
"expirydate": "9999-12-31",
"feelevel_uid": null,
"I": {
    "currency_uids": [
        "ZAR"
    ],
    "closingbalance": {
        "ZAR_words": "R383,000.00 is held in trust.",
        "ZAR": "-383000.00",
        "ZAR_display": "-R383,000.00"
    },
    "openingbalance": {
        "ZAR": "0.00",
        "ZAR_display": "R0.00"
    },
    "rows": [
        {
            "reference": "TR1004",
            "date": "2018-05-28",
            "narration": "Transfer Duty Paid",
            "object_display": "Trust Receipt",
            "login_uid": "LGN_SYS_1_20713181404328",
            "description": "Trust Receipt: Transfer Duty Paid",
            "staff_id": null,
            "supplier_id": null,
            "amount_neg_display": "R383,000.00",
            "trustreceipt_name": "Transfer Duty Paid",
            "accountentry_uid": 856,
            "object_name": "Trust Receipt",
            "amount_display": "-R383,000.00",
            "matter_id": "MTR_API_1_50521349608080",
            "customer_id": "CUST_API_1_62114584447723",
            "department_id": "DEPT__SYS_1_24294194765458",
            "reversaluid": null,
            "account_id": "ACC_SYS_1_89892334896025",
            "object": "trustreceipt",
            "accum_ZAR": "-383000.00",

```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```

    "parentuid": "TRR__API_1_8852081526208",
    "accum_ZAR_display": "-R383,000.00",
    "accountentry_name": "Transfer Duty Paid",
    "salesagent_id": null,
    "product_id": null,
    "taxtype_uid": null,
    "stampdate": "2018-05-28 10:17:03",
    "objectuid": "TRR__API_1_8852081526208",
    "amount": "-383000.00",
    "bticode": "T",
    "voucherdate": "2018-05-28",
    "currency_uid": "ZAR"
  }
]
},
"address": null,
"owner_salesagent_id": "SA__SYS_1_12291091625556",
"soundex": "P6163 A530 E610 M3242 P450 ",
"dateopened": "2018-05-22",
"stampdate": "2018-05-28 10:26:17",
"bticodes": [
  "T"
],
"owner_salesagent_name": "Clive Bredenkamp",
"email": "b@b.XO.ZA",
"cssclass": "bgm-black",
"login_name": "API User"
}
],
"meta": {},
"ageanalysis": {},
"statementdate": "2018-05-29",
"date": "2018-05-29",
"_title": "Statement for Carl Bartlett as at 2018-05-29"
}

```

15.17 Invoice specific unbilled item(s) on a matter

`matter.bill` (*matter_id*, *matterdraftlineitems*=["*mdid0*", "*mdid1*", etc.]

Tell the system to create a business tax invoice from the specified draft unbilled items for the matter.

Returns JSON object

Note: The value of the `matterdraftlineitems` parameter should be JSON string representation of an array of `matterdraftlineitem_uids`. In this example there is only one element: "13"

```

api(['matter', 'bill', 'MTR_API_1_61355827191366'],
{"matterdraftlineitems": '["13"]'}).then(function(response) {
});

```

Response:

```
{ what: 'salesinvoice', uid: 'SI__API_1_5797205714080' }
```

15.18 Invoice all unbilled items on a matter

`matter.bill` (*matter_id*, *all=True*)

Tell the system to create a business tax invoice from all the draft unbilled items for the matter.

Returns JSON object

```
api(['matter', 'bill', 'MTR_API_1_61355827191366'],
{"all": 1}).then(function(response) {
});
```

Response:

```
{ what: 'salesinvoice', uid: 'SI__ADM_1_13587111593649' }
```

15.19 Open a browser to view Sales Invoice

Provided the user is logged in to LP with access to view the invoice, you could present them with a link to - for example if the salesinvoice ID were *SI__API_1_5797205714080* then:

https://lawpracticeza.com/salesinvoice/detail/SI__API_1_5797205714080

Or in PDF view:

https://lawpracticeza.com/salesinvoice/servepdf/SI__API_1_5797205714080

15.20 Send Sales Invoice

`salesinvoice.send` (*salesinvoice_uid*)

Send by email the invoice to the accounts email address on the matter. If not set, then it sends to the accounts email address on the client. If no accounts email found then sends to the client's email address.

This will cause LP to send the invoice to email address(es) associated with the debtor - either the accounts email property, if set, or to the customer's email address.

```
api(['salesinvoice', 'send',
'SI__API_1_5797205714080']).then(function(response) {
});
```

Response:

```
null
```

SCHEMA

16.1 Client

Object Name: customer

Label	Field Name	Required?	Type	Key	Default Value
Id	customer_id		text	PRI	
Code	customer_co de	✓	text	MUL	
Name	customer_na me	✓	text	MUL	
Tradingas	tradingas		text	MUL	
Entitytype#	entitytype_ uid		lookup	MUL	
Taxnumber	taxnumber		text		
Regnumber	regnumber		text		
Idnumber	idnumber		text		
Title	title		text		
Firstname	firstname		text		
Surname	surname		text		
Cell	cell		text		
Tel	tel		text		
Fax	fax		text		
Email	email		text		
Accountsemai l	accountsemai l		text		
Password	password		text		
Website	website		text		
Extratelnumb ers	extratelnumb ers		text		
Streetaddres s	streetaddres s		text		
Postaladdres s	postaladdres s		text		
Directions	directions		text		
Coord	coord		text		
Notes	notes		text		
Creditterms	creditterms		text		
Bankname	bankname		text		
Bankaccount	bankaccount		text		
Bankbranch	bankbranch		integer		
Taxtype#	taxtype_ uid		lookup		
Login#	login_ uid	✓	lookup	MUL	\$USER
Stampdate	stampdate	✓	datetime	MUL	NOW()
Scrapdate	scrapdate	✓	datetime	PRI	
Effectivedat e	effectivedat e		date	MUL	1970-01-01
Expirydate	expirydate		date	PRI	9999-12-31
Rev	rev	✓	integer		0
Department_ Id	department_ id	✓	lookup	MUL	
Birthday	birthday		text		

Continued on next page

Table 1 – continued from previous page

Sendstatement	sendstatement	✓	boolean		
Soundex	soundex		text	MUL	
Data	data		text		

16.2 Matter

Object name: matter

Note: Generally, where the same field in the following matter table also exists in customer, and the field is not required in matter but is required in the Client (customer) table, then the value from the Client will be used. For example if you leave accountsemail null in matter but one is set in customer then invoices/statements will be sent to the address specified in the customer table.

Label	Field Name	Required?	Type	Key	Default Value
Id	matter_id		text	PRI	
Code	matter_code	✓	text	MUL	
Name	matter_name	✓	text	MUL	
Owner_Sales agent_Id	owner_sales agent_id		lookup		
Cssclass	cssclass		text		
Customer_Id	customer_id	✓	lookup		
Feelevel#	feelevel_uid		lookup		
Title	title		text		
Firstname	firstname		text		
Surname	surname		text		
Email	email		text		
Accountsemail	accountsemail		text		
Address	address		text		
Cell	cell		text		
Workphone	workphone		text		
Fax	fax		text		
Department_Id	department_id		lookup		
Dateopened	dateopened	✓	date		
Reservetrust	reservetrust		decimal		
Deadfilenumber	deadfilenumber		text		
Effectivedate	effectivedate		date	MUL	1970-01-01
Expirydate	expirydate		date	PRI	9999-12-31
Stampdate	stampdate	✓	datetime		NOW()
Scrapdate	scrapdate	✓	datetime	PRI	
Login#	login_uid	✓	lookup		\$USER
Rev	rev	✓	integer		0
Soundex	soundex		text	MUL	

16.3 Draft Fees & Disbursements

Object name: matterdraftlineitem

Label	Field Name	Re-quired?	Type	Key	Default Value
Uid	matterdraftl eitem_uid	in-	text	PRI	
Name	matterdraftl eitem_name	in-	text		
Customer_Id	customer_id	✓	lookup		
Matter_Id	matter_id		lookup	MUL	
Currency#	currency_ui d	✓	lookup		
Product_Id	product_id	✓	lookup	MUL	
Unitprice	unitprice	✓	decimal		
Taxtype#	taxtype_uid	✓	lookup		
Tax	tax		decimal		
Trantotal	trantotal		decimal		
Salesagent_ Id	salesagent_ id	✓	lookup		
Status	status	✓	enum (‘Draft’, ‘Billed’, ‘Deleted’)		Draft
Salesinvoice #	salesinvoice _uid		lookup		
Salescreditn ote#	salescreditn ote_uid		lookup		
Login#	login_uid	✓	lookup		\$USER
Qty	qty	✓	decimal		
Minutes	minutes		integer		
Date	date	✓	datetime	MUL	
Stampdate	stampdate	✓	datetime		NOW()
Created	created	✓	datetime		
Rev	rev	✓	integer		0
Source ID	srcid		text	UNI	

16.4 Posting Codes

Object name: product

Label	Field Name	Re-quired?	Type	Key	Default Value	Comments
Id	product_i d		text	PRI		
Code	product_c ode	✓	text			
Name	product_n ame	✓	text			
Productcat egory_Id	productcat egory_id	✓	lookup	MUL		
Department _Id	department _id		lookup			
Unit#	unit_uid	✓	lookup		time	“time” for time-based fee, “qty” for unitary
Unitprice	unitprice		deci- mal			
Costprice	costprice		deci- mal			
Taxtype#	taxtype_u id	✓	lookup			
Login#	login_uid	✓	lookup		\$USER	
Stampdate	stampdate	✓	date- time	MUL	NOW()	
Scrapdate	scrapdate	✓	date- time	PRI		
Effectived ate	effectived ate		date- time	MUL	1970-01-01 00:00:00	
Expirydate	expirydate		date- time	PRI	9999-12-31 23:59:59	
Rev	rev	✓	inte- ger		0	
Factory#	factory_u id		lookup			
Account_I d	account_i d		lookup	UNI		

16.5 Posting Code Categories

Object Name: productcategory

Label	Field Name	Required?	Type	Key	Default Value
Id	productcateg ory_id		text	PRI	
Name	productcateg ory_name	✓	text		
Parent_Prod uctcategory_Id	parent_pro d uctcategory_id		lookup	MUL	
Account_Id	account_id		lookup		
Unbilled_Ac count_Id	unbilled_ac count_id		lookup		
Department_ Id	department_ id		lookup		
Stampdate	stampdate	✓	datetime		NOW()
Scrapdate	scrapdate	✓	datetime	PRI	
Effectivedat e	effectivedat e		date		1970-01-01
Expirydate	expirydate		date	PRI	9999-12-31
Login#	login_uid	✓	lookup		\$USER
Rev	rev	✓	integer		0

16.6 Bank Account

Object Name: bankaccount

Label	Field Name	Required?	Type	Key	Default Value
Uid	bankaccount_uid		text	PRI	
Bticode	bticode	✓	{B, T, I}		
Name	bankaccount_name	✓	text		
Code	bankaccount_code		text	UNI	
Login#	login_uid	✓	lookup	MUL	\$USER
Rev	rev	✓	integer		
Stampdate	stampdate	✓	datetime		NOW()
Supplier_Id	supplier_id		lookup		
Reconcile	reconcile	✓	boolean		
Account_Id	account_id	✓	lookup	MUL	
Matter_Id	matter_id		lookup		
Department_Id	department_id	✓	lookup		

None