

# ADAC-Legal 0.9.0-draft.1 — Field Vocabulary Guide (Practitioner Edition)

**Audience:** Attorneys, legal operations teams, litigation support professionals, records and compliance staff

**Purpose:** Explain the base ADAC-Legal vocabulary in professional legal terms without requiring schema knowledge

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## 1. What this guide is for

This document is the practitioner-facing guide to the **base** ADAC-Legal vocabulary.

It is intended to help legal professionals answer practical questions such as:

- What does a base ADAC-Legal term mean in practice?
- When should a neutral base term be used?
- When should a jurisdiction-specific guide be consulted instead?

This guide is **explanatory**. The profile specifications remain authoritative.

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## 2. How to use this guide

1. Start here for **base legal vocabulary**.
2. If the matter is jurisdiction-specific, then consult the relevant jurisdiction guide:
  - us
  - us-la
  - us-pr
  - uk
  - uk-sct
  - uk-nir
  - de
  - eu
3. Prefer the most specific term that accurately reflects the governing legal concept.

## Practical rule

- Use a **base term** when it remains accurate across jurisdictions.
  - Use a **jurisdiction-specific term** when local doctrine, procedure, or document form materially affects meaning.
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## 3. Related jurisdiction guides

- [ADAC-Legal-US-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
  - [ADAC-Legal-US-LA-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
  - [ADAC-Legal-US-PR-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
  - [ADAC-Legal-UK-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
  - [ADAC-Legal-UK-SCT-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
  - [ADAC-Legal-UK-NIR-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
  - [ADAC-Legal-DE-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
  - [ADAC-Legal-EU-Profile-Vocabulary-Reference.md](#)
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## 4. Base legal vocabulary (all jurisdictions)

### 4.1 Document Types (`classification.documentType`)

Term	Meaning in Practice	Use When	Avoid / Notes
exhibit	Document formally introduced as evidence.	A document is marked or treated as an evidentiary exhibit.	In bundle-based systems, a bundle reference may also be needed.
courtFiling	Document filed with a court or tribunal.	The filing is procedural or generic and no more specific type is needed.	Prefer a more specific local term if one exists.
statementOfCase	Pleading defining disputed issues.	A neutral, cross-jurisdiction pleading label is needed.	Local pleading terms may be more precise.
application	Motion or application requesting an order or direction.	A party is asking the tribunal or court to act.	Local procedure may use more specific names.
judicialOrder	Order, judgment, or ruling issued by the	A neutral label for a court-issued decision is	Some jurisdictions distinguish

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning in Practice</b>	<b>Use When</b>	<b>Avoid / Notes</b>
	tribunal.	sufficient.	order/judgment forms more sharply.
<b>correspondence</b>	Correspondence between parties, counsel, or tribunal.	The document is a letter or equivalent communication.	Not for formal pleadings or structured filings.
<b>contract</b>	Contract, agreement, or deed.	The document's core legal function is contractual.	Some civil-law or notarial systems use more precise local forms.
<b>testament</b>	Will or testamentary instrument.	A neutral estate/planning label is sufficient.	Louisiana and Puerto Rico often use more specific testament forms.
<b>witnessStatement</b>	Written witness statement or sworn affidavit.	A witness's evidence is recorded in writing.	Some jurisdictions prefer more specific procedural labels.
<b>expertReport</b>	Expert witness report or opinion.	Expert analysis is submitted in support of the matter.	Germany distinguishes court-appointed and party-retained expert opinions.
<b>transcript</b>	Transcript of oral proceedings.	Hearings, examinations, or oral argument have been transcribed.	Not for affidavits or witness statements.
<b>writtenSubmissions</b>	Written submissions, skeleton arguments, or briefs.	The filing is legal argument rather than evidence.	Some jurisdictions use more specific local forms.
<b>witnessSummons</b>	Summons or subpoena compelling testimony or document production.	A compulsory process document is issued to a witness or document holder.	Terminology varies significantly by jurisdiction.
<b>notarialAct</b>	Instrument executed before a notary.	A neutral civil-law notarial category is needed.	Prefer local forms where they matter doctrinally.
<b>regulatoryFiling</b>	Filing to a regulatory body.	The matter is before an administrative or supervisory authority.	EU institutional proceedings may justify EU-specific terms.
<b>internalMemo</b>	Internal memorandum or working document.	The document is internal and not externally filed.	May overlap with privilege questions depending on content.

## 4.2 Confidentiality Levels (classification.confidentialityLevel)

Term	Meaning in Practice	Use When	Avoid / Notes
public	Public record with no access restriction.	The material may be openly shared.	Do not use if any protective, statutory, or contractual restriction applies.
confidential	Restricted by order, agreement, or professional obligation.	The document is restricted but not sealed or privileged.	Some jurisdictions provide more specific confidentiality tiers.
legallyPrivileged	Withheld because the content is privileged.	Privilege is the core reason for restricted access.	More precise privilege categories should be recorded where available.
sealed	Sealed by tribunal order.	Access is restricted by formal court sealing.	Distinct from ordinary confidentiality.
restricted	Restricted by law, regulation, or contract.	Access is limited but no more precise label applies.	Prefer a more specific label when one exists.

## 4.3 Matter Types (matterReference.matterType)

Term	Meaning in Practice	Use When
litigation	Contentious civil or commercial court matter.	Ordinary court litigation.
arbitration	Arbitral proceeding.	The matter is before an arbitral tribunal.
mediation	Mediation or ADR matter.	The matter is being mediated rather than adjudicated.
transaction	Transactional engagement.	The matter concerns a transaction rather than a dispute.
regulatory	Supervisory or regulatory matter.	The matter is before a regulator.
succession	Estate or probate matter.	A cross-jurisdiction inheritance/estate label is sufficient.
familyLaw	Family law matter.	The dispute concerns family law.
criminal	Criminal prosecution or defense.	The matter is criminal in nature.

Term	Meaning in Practice	Use When
immigration	Immigration or asylum matter.	The matter concerns immigration status or relief.
realProperty	Land or real-property matter.	Property title, transfer, or land dispute.
intellectualProperty	Intellectual-property matter.	Patent, trademark, copyright, or related issues.
insolvency	Insolvency or restructuring matter.	A generic insolvency label is adequate.
publicLaw	Constitutional or administrative law matter.	Public-authority challenge or public-law proceeding.
employment	Employment or labor matter.	Employment dispute or labor law matter.
investigation	Internal or regulatory investigation.	The matter centers on investigative work.
advisory	Non-contentious advisory engagement.	The engagement is legal advice without a live dispute or closing.

#### 4.4 Custody Actions (`custodyChain[].action`)

Term	Meaning in Practice
received	Received from an outside source.
transferred	Passed to another custodian.
copied	Copied or duplicated.
scanned	Converted from physical to digital.
stored	Placed into storage.
retrieved	Retrieved from storage.
sealed	Sealed by court order.
produced	Produced or disclosed.
destroyed	Destroyed under policy or order.
exported	Exported from a system.

## 4.5 Privilege Categories (`privilegeLog[].claim`, `legal:privilege.claim`)

Term	Meaning in Practice	Use When	Avoid / Notes
<code>legalProfessionalPrivilege</code>	Neutral legal privilege label.	The exact local privilege doctrine is not being distinguished.	Prefer local doctrine names where available.
<code>litigationPrivilege</code>	Privilege for litigation-prepared materials.	The basis is litigation preparation.	UK and US have more specific doctrine labels.
<code>commonInterestPrivilege</code>	Shared privilege among aligned legal interests.	Multiple parties share privileged material in aligned interests.	Local doctrine may be more precise.
<code>withoutPrejudice</code>	Settlement communication protection.	A neutral settlement-protection label is sufficient.	UK-specific settlement doctrine is more precise.
<code>publicInterestImmunity</code>	Public-interest withholding.	State/public interest prevents disclosure.	Some jurisdictions define more specific variants.
<code>journalisticPrivilege</code>	Source-protection privilege.	Journalist/source protection is the basis.	—

## 4.6 Hold Types (`holdNotices[].holdType`)

Term	Meaning in Practice
<code>litigation</code>	Hold for pending or anticipated litigation.
<code>regulatory</code>	Hold for regulatory inquiry.
<code>audit</code>	Hold for audit activity.
<code>governmentInvestigation</code>	Hold for government investigation.
<code>contractual</code>	Hold required by contract.
<code>statutory</code>	Hold required by statute or regulation.

## 4.7 Redaction Reasons (legal:redaction.reason)

Term	Meaning in Practice
personalData	Personal data / PII redaction.
legallyPrivileged	Privileged legal content redaction.
commerciallyConfidential	Commercial confidentiality redaction.
tradeSecret	Trade secret redaction.
tribunalOrder	Redaction required by tribunal order.
protectedIdentity	Redaction to protect identity.
thirdPartyConfidential	Redaction for third-party confidential information.
nationalSecurity	Redaction for national security concerns.
regulatoryRestriction	Redaction required by regulatory restriction.

## 5. Final drafting recommendations for practitioners

1. Use the most specific accurate term available.
2. Preserve local legal terminology where it materially affects meaning.
3. Use base terms when the matter is cross-jurisdictional or the local distinction does not matter.
4. When in doubt, classify first by **what the document legally is**, then by **which jurisdiction's doctrine governs it**.