



Forensic Handwriting Examination - Verification of Signatures

Principle

In forensic handwriting examination, questioned handwriting is compared with the authentic handwriting of a person to assess whether there are indications of authenticity or inauthenticity. Although handwriting is person-specific and thus has biometric value, it is never the same and changes over time as well as depending on internal and external influencing factors (writing instrument, writing surface, psyche, illness, alcohol, etc.).

Original versus copy

The examination of handwriting requires original material. Copy documents (photocopies, scans, photographs, etc.), binding and conclusive statements are not permissible. Depending on the quality of the reproduction, tendency statements are possible. What is feasible in a specific case - and what is not - can only be judged after a preliminary examination of the questioned document.

Comparison samples

Quality and quantity of the known handwriting are decisive for the evaluation of the findings. The authenticity of a handwriting/signature cannot be judged on the basis of only one specimen writing. The requirement is to have at least 12-15 known samples produced close in time to the questioned handwriting. The more the better !

Requested samples are to be written before the expert and according to his instructions.

Technical examination

Prior to the handwriting comparison, a technical examination of the original is always carried out. Using special equipment, the document or handwriting/signature in question is examined non-destructively. The purpose is to identify the material properties of the writing surface (paper, etc.) and the writing instrument (ink, etc.) as well as any traces of manipulation.

Evaluation - Conclusion

Handwriting examination involves the subjective evaluation of correspondences and divergences in the handwriting characteristics. The result of this comparison is not exact. The expert can only state the likelihood between the results of the examination under the assumption of hypothesis and alternative hypothesis (genuine versus false).