

# ***Plan Your Own Path***

**BUSINESS LAW**



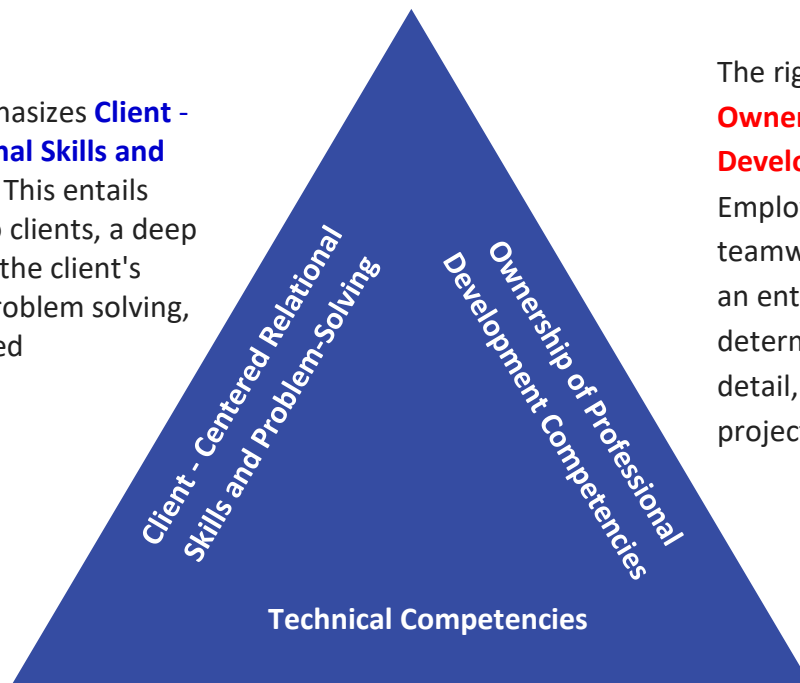
## OVERVIEW

Corporate attorneys play a vital role in advising and handling various legal matters for businesses. This includes entity selection, compliance, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate governance. Some attorneys may also specialize in litigation related to corporate disputes.

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*This handout helps you plan your path to a business law career, covering essential competencies for clients and legal employers. As you plan, ensure you incorporate all three sides of this triangle.<sup>1</sup>*

The left side emphasizes **Client - Centered Relational Skills and Problem-Solving**. This entails responsiveness to clients, a deep understanding of the client's needs, creative problem solving, and client-centered communication.



The right side centers on **Ownership of Professional Development Competencies**. Employers and clients require teamwork, a strong work ethic, an entrepreneurial mindset, determination, attention to detail, integrity, and effective project management skills.

The base comprises fundamental **Technical Competencies**, including knowledge of the law, legal analysis, legal research, communication in the legal context, and legal judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> See Neil W. Hamilton, *The Gap Between the Foundational Competencies Clients and Legal Employers Need and the Learning Outcomes Law Schools Are Adopting*, 89 UMKC L. Rev. 559 (2021).

*This guide is arranged by the three crucial sides of the triangle.*

## **TRADITIONAL TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES**

Enroll in foundational courses during your second year:

- Business Enterprise (4)<sup>\*+</sup>
- Securities Regulation (3)<sup>\*</sup>
- Income Taxation (4)

<sup>\*</sup> Mandatory for Business Law Concentration

<sup>+</sup> Pre-requisite for Corporate Counsel Externship Program

During your 2L and 3L years, build portfolios of knowledge and experiences focusing on the competencies you want to highlight:

### **Recommended Courses – Corporate Law**

#### **Electives:**

- Advanced Contracts Seminar: Drafting (2)
- Advanced Corporate Taxation (3)
- Advanced Mergers & Acquisitions (2)
- Business Law Boot Camp (2)
- Corporate Finance & Acquisitions (2)
- Corporate Taxation (3)
- Corporate & Transactional Legal Research (3)
- Introduction to the UCC (4)
- Mergers & Acquisitions (2)
- Partnership Tax (3)
- Principles of Accounting & Finance for Lawyers (2)
- Private Funds: Regulation, Formation, Operation & Investing (2)
- Securities Litigation & Enforcement (3)

### **Related Courses:**

- Antitrust Law (3)
- Banking Law and Regulation (2)
- Chapter 11 Reorganization (2)
- Corporate Compliance (2)
- Creditors' Rights (3)
- Data Privacy & Cybersecurity (2)
- Employment Law (2)
- Forming & Operating Closely Held Businesses (2)
- International Business & Financial Transactions (3)
- International Business Negotiations (2)
- International Franchising (2)
- Lawyering and Ethics for the Business Attorney (2)
- Remedies (2)
- Secured Transactions (3)

SMU offers a Business Law Concentration for the Juris Doctor degree in Business Law. Students who successfully complete the required courses receive the following designation of their transcripts: "Concentration: Business Law." Contact the Robert B. Rowling Center for Business Law and Leadership for more information. The concentration self-assessment form is attached.

With prior permission, law students can also enroll in up to 6 hours of graduate-level courses at SMU's Cox School of Business. Additionally, Dedman School of Law and Cox School of Business

also offer a joint JD/MBA degree in three-year and four-year program options. Interested students typically apply for the joint degree program in the Spring semester of their 1L year.

**Upper-Level Writing Requirements:** In your third year, choose a business-law related Edited Writing course or Directed Research paper topic (with Faculty pre-approval) to improve and showcase your research, writing, and analytical competencies.

- Artificial Intelligence and the Law (3)
- Blockchain Law & Policy (3)
- Entrepreneurship, Race & Inequality (3)
- Selected Topics in Business Law (2)

### **CLIENT-CENTERED RELATIONAL SKILLS AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

Thoughtfully evaluate experiential opportunities. These are excellent ways for you to cultivate superior client focus, innovative problem-solving, and effective communication skills.

- **Externships:**
  - Corporate Counsel Externship Program (4) (includes classroom component)
- **Clinics:**
  - Small Business & Trademark Clinic (3)
  - Tax Clinic (4)
- **Business Law Courses Approved for EL Credit:**
  - Advanced Contracts Workshop (2)
  - Due Diligence in Business Transactions (2)
  - Franchising & Distribution Law (2)
  - Intro to Venture Transactions (2)

Be sure to work closely with your Office of Career Services advisors to obtain additional experiences (internships, judicial clerkships, public service opportunities) to grow your knowledge and skills in this area.

### **OWNERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES**

Experiences beyond the formal curriculum are vital to your professional growth. Aim to acquire experiences that closely replicate as much as possible the work lawyers engage in within the business law space.

- **Student Organizations:** Commit yourself to relevant, on-campus organizations and actively pursue leadership, project management, and teamwork opportunities within the organization.
  - Corporate Law Association

- **Public Service Opportunities:** A number of pre-approved placements at 501(c)(3) organizations and government offices (such as city attorney offices) that function similarly to a corporate office and will provide you additional perspectives that are valuable to your corporate career development.
- **Board of Advocates:** Participate in transactional competitions, such as:
  - The Closer
  - Wayne State Transactional Law Competition
  - William C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration
- **Law Journals:**
  - Author a note or comment on a business-law topic and seek to have it published in one of our journals or elsewhere
- **Dallas Bar Association Sections:** Explore your interests and immerse yourself in the legal profession by becoming part of these Dallas Bar Association sections.
  - Business Litigation Section
  - Corporate Counsel Section
  - Mergers and Acquisitions Section
  - Securities Section

**Faculty:** Start building a connection with a professor who is familiar with your work and can write you a letter of recommendation or serve as a reference. Here are some of the full-time faculty members who teach in this field.

Carliss Chatman  
Greg Crespi

Christine Hurt  
Carla Reyes

Christina Sautter  
Marc Steinberg  
Kandace Walter

**Cultivate Your Personal Network:** Reach out to corporate attorneys to arrange informational interviews through the Mustang Exchange or connections you establish during your law school journey. You should also ask your Career Services advisor to help you identify graduates and law firms in this space in the location(s) where you want to work.

Full-time and adjunct professor who teach business law courses may have strong networks. Ask them for assistance making these connections.

Attend programs featuring business law attorneys sponsored by the Office of Career Services or student organizations. These kinds of programs are great opportunities to learn more about entry-level careers and to connect with speakers who are often alumni and more willing to assist you.

**BUSINESS LAW CONCENTRATION  
SELF ASSESSMENT FORM**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student ID:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class (circle):** 1L 2L 3L

<b>MANDATORY FOUNDATIONAL (both)</b>	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
Business Enterprise (4)	_____	_____	_____
Securities Regulation (3)	_____	_____	_____

**\*Did you complete both courses?**      Y/N

*\*If "NO," circle reason for incompletion:      catalog number variance      pending*

**FOR ALL BLUE CATEGORIES BELOW (THE "KEY BUSINESS AREAS"),  
THE SAME COURSE DOES NOT COUNT AS MEETING MORE THAN ONE KEY AREA**

<b>COMMERCIAL LAW REQUIREMENT (at least 1)</b>	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
Consumer Law (3)	_____	_____	_____
Creditors' Rights (3)	_____	_____	_____
Introduction to the UCC (4)	_____	_____	_____
Payment Systems (2)	_____	_____	_____
Sale of Goods Transactions (3)	_____	_____	_____
Secured Transactions (3)	_____	_____	_____

**\*Did you checkmark at least one (1) Commercial Law Course  
that is not a duplicate to other courses?**      Y / N

*\*If "NO," circle reason for incompletion:      catalog number variance      pending*

<b>CORPORATE/TRANSACTIONAL REQUIREMENT (at least 1)</b>	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
Advanced Contracts	_____	_____	_____
Advanced Contracts Drafting Seminar (2)	_____	_____	_____
Advanced Contracts Workshop (2)	_____	_____	_____
Advanced Corporate Taxation (3)	_____	_____	_____
Advanced Mergers and Acquisitions	_____	_____	_____
Business Enterprise—Governance	_____	_____	_____
Business Law Boot Camp (2)	_____	_____	_____
Chapter 11 Reorganization (2)	_____	_____	_____
Commercial Real Estate Seminar (2)	_____	_____	_____
Corporate Finance & Acquisitions (2)	_____	_____	_____
Corporate Tax (3)	_____	_____	_____
Forming & Operating Closely Held Businesses (2)	_____	_____	_____
Drafting Oil & Gas Contracts (2)	_____	_____	_____
Due Diligence in Business Transactions (2)	_____	_____	_____
Energy Finance (2)	_____	_____	_____
Energy Transport & Trade (3)	_____	_____	_____
Principles of Accounting & Finance for Lawyers (2)	_____	_____	_____
Franchise & Distribution Law (2)	_____	_____	_____
International Business & Financial Transactions (3)	_____	_____	_____
International Business Negotiations	_____	_____	_____
International Franchising Law (2)	_____	_____	_____
International Oil & Gas Negotiations (2)	_____	_____	_____
International Petroleum Transactions (3)	_____	_____	_____
Introduction to Venture Transactions (2)	_____	_____	_____
Mergers & Acquisitions (2)	_____	_____	_____
Negotiations (3)	_____	_____	_____
Oil & Gas Law (3)	_____	_____	_____
Real Estate Transactions (3)	_____	_____	_____
Private Equity & Hedge Fund Law Related Finance (2)	_____	_____	_____
^("Private Funds: Reg, Formation, Operation & Investing")	_____	_____	_____
Qualifying Graduate-Level Courses at Cox Business School	_____	_____	_____
^Insert Details: _____	_____	_____	_____

**\* Did you checkmark at least one (1) Corporate/Tax Law Course that is not a duplicate to other courses?**

Y / N

*\*If "NO," circle reason for incompletion:                      catalog number variance                      pending*

REGULATORY/COMPLIANCE REQ (at least 1)	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
<b>Administrative Law (2)</b>			
Airline and Railroad Labor and Employment Law	_____	_____	_____
Antitrust Law (3)	_____	_____	_____
Banking Law & Regulation (2)	_____	_____	_____
Blockchain Law & Policy (3)	_____	_____	_____
Corporate Compliance (2)	_____	_____	_____
Data Privacy & Cybersecurity (2)	_____	_____	_____
Employment Discrimination (3)	_____	_____	_____
Employment Law (2)	_____	_____	_____
Energy & Natural Resources (3)	_____	_____	_____
Environmental Law (3)	_____	_____	_____
Food & Drug Law (3)	_____	_____	_____
International & Comparative Health Law (3)	_____	_____	_____
Labor Law (3)	_____	_____	_____
Law & Medicine: Health Law (4)	_____	_____	_____
Securities Litigation & Enforcement (3)	_____	_____	_____

**\*Did you checkmark at least one (1) Regulatory/Compliance Law Course that is not a duplicate to other courses?**      **Y / N**

*\*If "NO," circle reason for incompletion:      catalog number variance      pending*

TAX LAW REQUIREMENT (at least 1)	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
Advanced Corporate Tax (2)	_____	_____	_____
Corporate Tax (3)	_____	_____	_____
Income Taxation (4)	_____	_____	_____
International Tax I (2)	_____	_____	_____
International Tax II (2)	_____	_____	_____
Nonprofit Organizations	_____	_____	_____
Oil & Gas Taxation (2)	_____	_____	_____
Partnership Taxation (3)	_____	_____	_____
Real Estate Taxation (2)	_____	_____	_____
Tax Accounting (2)	_____	_____	_____

**\*Did you checkmark at least one (1) Tax Law Course that is not a duplicate to the other courses?**      **Y / N**



# SMU **Rowling Center for Business Law & Leadership**

*\*If "NO," circle reason for incompletion:      catalog number variance      pending*

<b>ELECTIVE COURSES (can be used to reach 25 credit minimum)</b>	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
Corporate & Transactional Legal Research (3)	_____	_____	_____
Corporate Planning (2)	_____	_____	_____
Economic Analysis of Law (4)	_____	_____	_____
Entrepreneurship, Race, and Inequality	_____	_____	_____
Intellectual Property & Business Organizations (3)	_____	_____	_____
Lawyering & Ethics for the Business Attorney (2)	_____	_____	_____
Selected Topics in Business Law	_____	_____	_____
Trademark & Business Torts (3)	_____	_____	_____

*\*Elective courses are optional; not required.*

<b>WRITING REQUIREMENT (at least 1)</b>	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
Editing Writing (EW) paper on a business law topic w/ <b>Faculty</b> pre-approval	_____	_____	_____
<i>Please list the EW Course:</i>			
A paper on a business law topic that is ≥ 50% of grade in a non-EW course w/ <b>Faculty</b> pre-approval	_____	_____	_____
<i>Please list the topic:</i>			
Directed Research Paper ≥ 2credits w/ <b>Faculty</b> pre-approval	_____	_____	_____
<i>Please list the topic:</i>			
Law Journal Comment w/ <b>Faculty</b> pre-approval	_____	_____	_____
<i>Please list the topic:</i>			

*\*Writing Requirement does NOT have to be EW as long as it meets other requirements.*

*\*Did you checkmark at least one (1) Writing requirement?      Y / N*

*\*Please email [rowlingcenter@smu.edu](mailto:rowlingcenter@smu.edu) the syllabus, topic, and paper or the comment from the law journal used to satisfy this requirement.*

*\*If "NO," circle reason for incompletion:      catalog number variance      pending*

# SMU **Rowling Center for Business Law & Leadership**

<b>EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REQUIREMENT (at least x1 within Clinics, Externships, OR Approved Courses for EL)</b>	Completed (check)	HRS	Semester (f/s, yyyy)
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Clinics & Externships

Federal Taxpayers Clinic (4)	_____	_____	_____
Patent Law Clinic (3)	_____	_____	_____
Small Business & Trademark Clinic (3)	_____	_____	_____
Corporate Counsel Externship Program (4)	_____	_____	_____
Gov. Agency Business Law-Related Externship w/ <b>Faculty</b> pre-approval	_____	_____	_____
Court Business Law-Related Externship w/ <b>Faculty</b> pre-approval	_____	_____	_____

***Faculty Advisors:** Martin Camp, Greg Crespi, Eric Hinton, Joe Norton, Carla Reyes, Marc Steinberg*

Business Law Courses Approved for EL Credit

Advanced Contracts Workshop (2)	_____	_____	_____
Drafting Energy Transactions (2)	_____	_____	_____
Due Diligence in Business Transactions (2)	_____	_____	_____
Franchising and Distribution Law (2)	_____	_____	_____
Int'l and Foreign Legal Research (3)	_____	_____	_____
Intro to Venture Transactions (2)	_____	_____	_____

**\*Did you checkmark at least one (1) Experiential requirement?** Y / N

*\*If "NO," circle reason for incompletion:      **catalog number variance**      **pending***

**Total Credit Hours** \_\_\_\_\_

**MINIMUM CREDIT REQUIREMENT = 25 CREDITS**

**Did you take a minimum of 25 credits among all courses above? Y / N**

**STUDENT CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this self-assessment is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*date*