

Plan Your Own Path

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES LAW

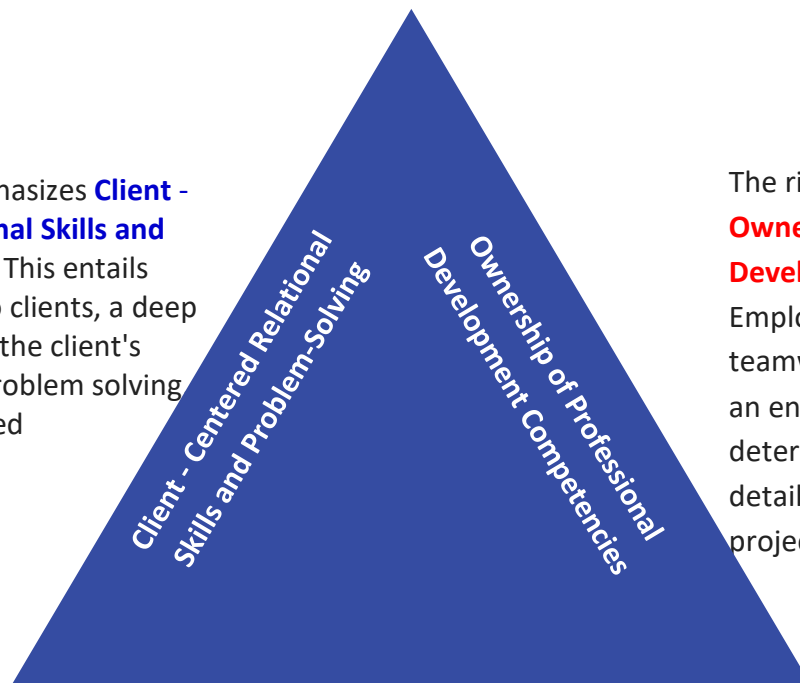


OVERVIEW

Energy, environment and natural resources law deals generally with the regulation and management of resources critical to sustainability and responsible development. The field includes legal responses to the control of pollution from human activities including air, water and solid and hazardous waste. It also includes legal systems for the preservation and management of natural resources. Practice in the field necessarily requires familiarity with a wide range of legal areas including business, real estate, tort and administrative law.

This handout helps you plan your path to an energy, environment and natural resources law career, covering essential competencies for clients and legal employers. As you plan, ensure you incorporate all three sides of this triangle.¹

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.

¹ 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 aspects of the triangle.

TRADITIONAL TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

Enroll in foundational courses during your first and second year:

- Property I and II
- Legislation and Regulation
- Environmental Law
- Administrative Law

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

Recommended Courses – Electives:

- Advanced Environmental Law (EW)
- Energy and Natural Resources Law
- Energy Transport and Trade
- International Environmental Law
- Regulation of Energy
- Regulation of Hazardous Substances

Related Courses - Strongly Recommended:

- Business Enterprise
- Economic Analysis of Law

- International Petroleum Transactions
- Land Use
- Local Government Law

Other Related Courses:

- Oil and Gas
- Oil and Gas Contracts
- Toxic Tort Litigation in the Petroleum Industry
- Real Estate Transactions

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

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:**
 - Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6 through the Government and Public Interest Externship Program (includes classroom component)
- **Clinics:**

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 energy, environment, and natural resource law space.

- **Student Organizations:** Commit yourself to relevant, on-campus organizations and actively pursue leadership, project management, and teamwork opportunities within the organization.
 - Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Law Society
- **Public Service Opportunities:** These pre-approved placements at 501(c)(3) organizations and government offices may provide you additional perspectives that are valuable to your career development.
- **Board of Advocates:**
- **Law Journals:**
 - Author a note or comment on an energy, environment or natural resources 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.
 - Energy Law
 - Environmental Law

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.

James Coleman
Monika U. Ehrman

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 energy, environment, or natural resources law courses may have strong networks. Ask them for assistance making these connections.

Attend programs featuring energy, environment, or natural resources 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.