

## Juris Doctor – Academic Advising Guide

<b>QUICK SNAPSHOT</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	87 Credit Hours (individual grades of D or higher; overall average grade of 2.000 or higher)
<input type="checkbox"/>	First-Year Required Courses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Upper Level Required Courses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Experiential Learning Requirement
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Residence Credits (1 credit is earned per 12 term hrs. or more; $\frac{3}{4}$ credit is earned per 9-11 term hrs.; $\frac{1}{2}$ credit is earned per 6-8 term hrs.; $\frac{1}{4}$ credit is earned per 3-5 term hrs.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	30 Hours of Public Service

**What courses do I take my first year of law school?** The first-year curriculum is set. It is designed to teach the fundamentals of legal analysis, to introduce you to legal subjects on which most of the law is built, and to give you a strong foundation in legal research, writing and advocacy skills.

**What other courses are required?** In addition to the first-year classes, all students must take Professional Responsibility, Constitutional Law II, an Edited Writing Course (denoted with an EW in the Registration Materials). Students who began law school in Fall 2019 or earlier must also satisfy a General Writing Course (GW). Students who started in Fall 2020 are not required to take a General Writing Course or otherwise satisfy the requirement.

All students must satisfy the “Experiential Learning” (EL) requirement. This means they must complete one or more experiential courses totaling at least six credit hours.

<i>Required Course</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Constitutional Law II	3.00
Professional Responsibility	3.00
1 Edited Writing Seminar (EW)*	3.00
Experiential Learning	At least 6.00

±And 1 of the following:	2.00 - 3.00
General Writing Course (GW);	3.00
Law Review (if selected); OR	2.00 - 5.00
Directed Research Paper	2.00 - 3.00

Do not wait until your last semester to satisfy these graduation requirements. Scheduling can become problematic if you need too many required courses in your last semester when there may be scheduling conflicts or full

If a student fails to receive a minimum passing grade in any required course, the student must repeat the course the next time it is offered. A failing grade is never replaced by a subsequent grade in the same course.

± Only students were admitted to the law school in Fall 2019 or earlier must satisfy the GW requirement in one of these three ways.

**What elective courses should I take?**

SMU Dedman Law offers a rich variety of elective courses each semester in a number of areas. Choose courses that interest you or that you think might help you in your practice. Most students take Business Enterprise, Evidence, and Income Taxation, which are prerequisites to other courses, academic programs, and clinics. Therefore, you should consider taking these as soon as possible.

Except with special permission of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, J.D. students may enroll for elective courses only after they have completed all required first-year courses.

You are encouraged to explore different areas of the law, but also make sure you have the necessary foundational courses to later be successful on the bar exam and in your legal practice. Please refer to the practice area guides on our website for more information. These guides suggest courses in each of the following practice areas and identify clinics, externships, and public service opportunities to enhance students’ skills and understanding.

Antitrust Law	Health Law
Bankruptcy Law	Immigration Law
Business and Corporate Law	Intellectual Property
Civil Litigation and Dispute Resolution	International and Comparative Law
Commercial and Consumer Law	Labor and Employment Law
Criminal Law	Real Estate Law
Estate Planning	Tax Law
Family Law	

**What is the maximum number of elective course hours taken on a pass/fail basis?** A student may not apply more than six hours of upper-class elective courses on a credit/no-credit basis (*i.e.*, non-graded or pass/fail hours) toward the 87 hours required for graduation. Students cannot elect to take a class pass/fail. The pass/fail hours include Law Review, Moot Court/Mock Trial and BOA for a total of 6 hours. Although externships are pass/fail, these are not included in the 6-hour limit.

**What are the minimum/maximum number of hours I can take?** To be considered a full-time student for purposes of residency, no fewer than 12 hours must be taken in a regular term. First-year students are required to take 16 hours in the fall term and 16 hours in the spring term.

After the first year, most students take 14-15 hours per semester. Students may take more than 16 hours in a regular term only with permission of the assistant dean for student affairs. No student can take more than 17 hours in a regular term.

**How does the law school determine credit hours?** One-credit hour is an amount of work that reasonably approximates 50-minutes of classroom or direct faculty instruction for fourteen weeks. Therefore, two-hour classes meet 1,400 classroom hours in either one 100-minute class

or two, 50-minute classes per week. Three-hour classes meet 2,100 classroom hours in two, 75-minute classes or three, 50-minute classes per week. Four-hour classes meet 2,800 classroom hours in two, 100-minute classes per week.

**What is the process for adding, dropping or swapping courses?** Upper-class, continuing students may add, drop, and swap courses through my.SMU during the add/drop period. If you are not able to add a class (and there is not a hold on your account), please check the seat availability for the class to make sure that the class is still open.

Students enrolled in required first-year courses must also obtain the permission of the assistant dean for student affairs to withdraw from a course.

**Can I make changes to my schedule after the add/drop deadline?** After the add/drop deadline, continuing upper-class students may drop a class with the Instructor's approval up until the last day of classes. A withdrawal form must be completed, signed by the instructor and submitted electronically to the Registrar's Office. A grade of "W" will be reflected on your transcript.

First-year students must seek permission from the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the professor from whose class they seek to withdraw. First—year students are not permitted to add or drop classes through My.smu.

In order to add hours to your schedule after the add/drop deadline, you must petition the University Registrar's Office and pay a \$30 fee for each transaction. Your petition and fee must be turned in to the Law School Registrar's Office. A schedule change request form and an approval form will be attached and submitted to the University Registrar's Office for processing.

**How do I search for a class to check seat availability?** You may search for a class via [www.my.SMU.edu](http://www.my.SMU.edu). Click on the Class Search/Browse Catalog under Guest Features, select the term, select search classes, and click GO. Select the subject (Law), uncheck the open classes box, and click search, then OK. On the right-hand side of the screen for each class you will see the status (a green circle if the class is open or a blue square if the class is closed) of the class and the unrestricted and restricted seat availabilities. The unrestricted seat availability tells you how many available seats are in the class. There are no waiting lists for any law school classes, except clinic.

**What is an edited writing seminar?** An Edited Writing Seminar is an intensive, scholarly expository writing project. It may take the form of a single paper, of at least 30 pages, or several shorter papers, as the professor may direct. These seminars are designed to be a “capstone” experience for third-year students, although second-year students are allowed to take edited writing classes if space is available.

Enrollment in each seminar is strictly limited to 20 students. Classes that fulfill this requirement will be labeled “EW” in the registration materials.

**What is a general writing requirement?**<sup>±</sup> A student must complete a general writing unit, in addition to the first-year Legal Research, Writing and Advocacy course and the Edited Writing Seminar. The writing unit can be satisfied through a General Writing Course (GW), through Law Review Hours (if selected) or through a 2 or 3-hour Directed Research paper. Courses that fulfill this requirement will be labeled “GW” in the registration materials.

*± Only students who began law school in Fall 2018 or earlier must satisfy the GW requirement. Student who began law school in Fall 2020 do not have a GW requirement.*

Writing courses can be an opportunity to research and explore, in depth, an area of the law and then to write a scholarly paper under the guidance of our outstanding faculty. This is a luxury it will be very difficult, if not impossible for many, to experience after they leave law school.

**I am interested in the course identified as a paper course, but it is also listed on the exam schedule. Will this course require a paper or an exam?** Generally, courses are listed this way when the course has a paper/exam option. The Professor will give you further instructions regarding this option in his or her syllabus or on the first day of class.

**Why are there so many different course listings for Trial Advocacy?** Trial Advocacy has two components. First, there is one large lecture section that meets once a week that all students who register for the course are required to attend. Second, there are several small "practice" sections scheduled at various times throughout the week where students actually practice the different parts of a trial, and, ultimately, do an entire trial. Students must register for the large section AND the small section of their choice. The number of small sections varies depending on the total enrollment in the course.

**What opportunities do I have to attain practical experience?** There are many opportunities to obtain practical experience while you are in law school. We have an excellent clinical program where you will get hands on experience working with real clients under excellent supervision from the clinic professors.

In addition, we have four approved externship program: Corporate Counsel Externship Program; Federal Judicial Externship Course; Government & Public Interest Externship Program; and the Small and Mid-Sized Law Firm Externship Program. Each is connected to a number of field placements. Please see the Experiential Courses – FAQ handout for more information.

**What bar courses should I take?** It is important to take enough Bar Courses so that the Bar Review course you take is truly a Bar REVIEW and not a Bar NEW!

Evidence is tested on both the essay and multiple choice sections of the Uniform Bar Exam. Business Enterprise as well as Trusts and Estates are tested on the exam portion of the exam.

SMU Dedman Law offers two courses on bar exam preparation called Advanced Legal Reasoning and MPT Bar Prep Course. These are not to be taken in lieu of taking a commercial bar preparation class. Rather, they are opportunities to refresh your knowledge of some of the subjects tested on the Uniform Bar Exam and to gain experience in the testing format of the bar exam.

**What opportunities are there to earn credit beyond the classroom?**

<b>Directed Research</b> - A student may register for a total of three hours of directed research while in law school.
<b>Study Abroad in Oxford</b> - Students may earn five hours of credit in this summer program by taking one course taught by an SMU professor and one Oxford-style tutorial taught by an Oxford tutor.
<b>Courses Outside the Law School</b> – Students may earn up to six hours by taking graduate-level courses in other schools at SMU. Prior approval by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs is required.
<b>Law Reviews</b> – Students may earn up to five hours of academic credit for work as a staff editor and board member on one of our law reviews.
<b>Moot Court and Mock Trial</b> - A student may receive one hour of academic credit for service on the BOA executive board or the Jackson Walker Moot Court Board or just for competing.

**Can I take courses outside the law school?** Graduate-level courses in other graduate or professional schools of the University that are relevant to the student's program may be taken with approval of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, who will also determine the law school credit equivalents to be awarded for such study. Students may not take courses that are designed to teach an area of law (*i.e.*, business law), nor may students take a course the subject matter of which is taught in a law school course.

A student may earn no more than six total credits toward the JD degree in other graduate or professional schools of the University. Students must earn a "C" or better to receive credit toward their law school degree. The grade will not, however, be included in calculating the student's law school grade point average. Request for Permission forms are available on-line as well as, in the Registrar's Office.

You must receive permission from the Law School prior to attempting to register at the other graduate or professional school. Receiving permission from the Law School, however, does not guarantee that you will be permitted to enroll in the course at the other graduate or professional school.

Law students may take undergraduate courses at SMU (*e.g.*, Spanish or undergraduate engineering classes to become patent bar eligible); however, no credit or grade is awarded for such classes.

**Can I receive credit for work completed at other law schools?** Yes. While enrolled at the Law School, students may earn up to eight credit hours at other ABA-approved law schools outside

the Dallas-Fort Worth area during the summer. Students interested in this option must make application through the Registrar's Office to the assistant dean for student affairs.

In extraordinary circumstances, a student may be granted permission to attend another law school for his or her final term or year of law school while still receiving an SMU degree. Permission will not be granted without evidence of compelling personal circumstances.