

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Legal Research and Due Diligence Workflow

This SOP details the **legal research and due diligence workflow**, encompassing the systematic process of gathering, analyzing, and verifying legal information prior to transactions or case handling. It includes identifying relevant laws and regulations, evaluating contractual obligations, assessing risks, and ensuring compliance with legal standards. The goal is to provide accurate, thorough, and timely legal insights that support informed decision-making and mitigate potential legal issues.

1. Purpose

To standardize the process for legal research and due diligence, ensuring completeness, accuracy, and risk mitigation for all relevant legal matters.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all legal professionals conducting research and/or due diligence for transactions, litigation, compliance, and risk assessment.

3. Responsibilities

- **Legal Team:** Conducts all research and verification tasks; compiles findings.
- **Supervising Attorney:** Reviews and approves all research and due diligence reports.
- **Support Staff:** Assists in data gathering and document management.

4. Workflow Steps

1. **Initiation**
 - Receive assignment or transaction details.
 - Conduct an initial discussion to define objectives, deliverables, and timeline.
2. **Scoping & Planning**
 - Identify required documentation and key parties/stakeholders.
 - Determine applicable laws, jurisdictions, and regulatory requirements.
3. **Data Collection**
 - Gather all relevant documents (contracts, corporate records, licenses, etc.).
 - Access and review publicly available records, court filings, and regulatory databases.
4. **Legal Research**
 - Identify key legal issues and areas of concern.
 - Retrieve and analyze statutes, regulations, precedents, and case law.
 - Assess regulatory and compliance requirements.
5. **Analysis & Verification**
 - Compare findings against transaction or case objectives.
 - Evaluate contractual obligations and risk factors.
 - Verify the accuracy and validity of documents and information.
6. **Report Preparation**
 - Summarize key findings, risks, and recommendations.
 - Attach supporting documentation as appendices.
 - Submit report to supervising attorney for review.
7. **Follow-up & Communication**
 - Address feedback; revise reports as necessary.
 - Communicate results and provide advice to relevant stakeholders.
8. **Documentation & Record-Keeping**
 - File all research materials, reports, and correspondence securely.
 - Retain records in accordance with firm and regulatory policies.

5. Deliverables

Deliverable	Description
Due Diligence Checklist	Itemized list of all documentation and checks performed.
Legal Research Memorandum	Detailed analysis of relevant legal issues and findings.
Due Diligence Report	Comprehensive summary of findings, risks, and recommendations.

6. Quality Assurance

- All findings must be double-checked by at least one other team member.
- Reports must be approved by the supervising attorney before dissemination.
- Periodic training to update on latest legal research tools and best practices.

7. References

- Firm's legal research guidelines
- Applicable regulatory authority guidance
- Internal document retention policy