

**Standard Contracts and On-Line Check-Lists
For Automated Attorney Review**

Georgia K. Harper

Section Manager, Intellectual Property Section
of the Office of General Counsel

The University of Texas System

Abstract

There are nine academic campuses and six health institutions in The University of Texas System. Many of the institutional contracts require legal review, but not all of the institutions have a designated legal department. Therefore, in many cases the institutions must refer the personnel responsible for contract negotiations to the Office of General Counsel (OGC) before they execute agreements.

Processing contracts through the OGC often delays transactions. To improve contract processing, the OGC developed standard forms of agreements for many typical transactions and, when standard forms are not used, checklists that allowed institution personnel to review and revise the contracts without direct attorney involvement.

Two attorneys in the Office of General Counsel developed the checklists and one programmer helped to create the interactivity features. The standard forms were developed over more than a decade. All of these resources were posted on the Internet, which made them accessible to everyone.

The procedures reduced OGC workflow, reduced overall time to complete transactions at the institutions and made a moderate level of advice available to a larger segment of contracting personnel. Overall, the percentage of contracts that include state-mandated clauses has likely increased.

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Statement of the Problem/Initiative

Processing contracts through the Office of General Counsel often delayed transactions because staffing was rarely adequate to accommodate quick turn-around times. The Office of General Counsel developed standard forms of agreements for many typical transactions, and where standard forms are not used, they developed checklists that allowed institution personnel to review and revise contracts without direct attorney involvement.

Design and Implementation

Two attorneys in the Office of General Counsel developed the checklists and one programmer helped to create the online interactivity features. The standard forms were developed by the entire office over more than a decade. All of these resources were posted on the Internet, which made them accessible to everyone. Business procedures were revised to incorporate the automated review.

Benefits

The procedures reduced workflow through the Office of General Counsel. They also reduced overall time to complete transactions at the institutions and made a moderate

level of advice available to a larger segment of contracting personnel. Overall, the percentage of contracts that include state-mandated clauses has likely increased.