

BEST PRACTICES, Office of General Counsel

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

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Source: University of Texas System

Co Area:

Addl Info: http://www.sacubo.org/sacubo_resources/best_practices/2004.html

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.