

2007-2008 Group on Faculty Affairs  
AAMC Listserve Queries & Responses

**Query: Offer Letters**

*Question from Marcie Weiss, Northwestern University ([mbweiss@northwestern.edu](mailto:mbweiss@northwestern.edu)):*

Do your Departments send something in writing, such as an offer letter or written description, to identified candidates for initial faculty appointment (with info such as rank, start date, salary, space, etc) PRIOR to or AFTER the actual review and approval of the appointment by your chief academic officer?

**Responses:**

*From Patricia Shymanski, University of Chicago ([pshymans@bsd.uchicago.edu](mailto:pshymans@bsd.uchicago.edu)):*

We issue a Contingent Letter of Offer (CLO) with all of the terms. The CLO is heavily reviewed and approved for the institutional resource commitments, but where the appointment is for a senior faculty position, rank/title is contingent on required institutional approvals which need to be processed before the start date.

*From Herbert Herscowitz, Georgetown ([herscowh@georgetown.edu](mailto:herscowh@georgetown.edu)):*

At Georgetown, an offer letter addressing the items you mention is sent out over the signature of the Department Chair, after it receives both financial and programmatic review, but much before the faculty appointment is approved by the relevant committees and institutional officers.

*From Kevin Krane, Tulane ([kkrane@tulane.edu](mailto:kkrane@tulane.edu)):*

Generally the opposite happens at Tulane. The Chair/Department provide that in the offer letter, and then the academic appointment is submitted and conferred through the appropriate committees. Then the faculty member gets a second letter confirming their appointment and rank.

*From Edward Callahan, UC Davis ([Edward.callahan@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu](mailto:Edward.callahan@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu)):*

We provide a template of an offer letter to all departments. They personalize it and include as many details as possible so that it can serve as a reasonable "contract" between the candidate and the school. The draft offer is circulated to those who are responsible for space, finance, and any other resources which are promised or implied. After approval by each, the offer letter can be sent. The department can state the rank at which it will propose appointment but also states that final rank and step within rank will be determined after a careful review process before the appointment is finalized.

2007-2008 Group on Faculty Affairs  
AAMC Listserve Queries & Responses

*From Andrew Ries, UC San Diego ([aries@ucsd.edu](mailto:aries@ucsd.edu)):*

We follow the same process that Ed outlines but call the initial template a "Proposal Letter" and reserve the term "Offer Letter" for the official one after formal review and approval (i.e., an employment contract).

*From Judy Garner, USC ([jgarner@usc.edu](mailto:jgarner@usc.edu)):*

We do essentially the same as Ed describes, except that we are moving to a new system where we ask the department for a list of what is proposed and has been approved by all the space and money people, and Faculty Affairs generates a department-specific letter based on the current general counsel-approved template. This saves on having to retrain all the departments in how to construct the letter every time there is a change. After generated, the letter is sent to the department for final approval and signatures.

*From Kevin Grigsby, Penn State ([rgrigsby@hmc.psu.edu](mailto:rgrigsby@hmc.psu.edu)):*

At Penn State, the letter is not sent until after the actual review and approval. However, many discussions occur that influence the content of the letter.

*From Paula Trief, SUNY Upstate ([triefp@upstate.edu](mailto:triefp@upstate.edu)):*

At Upstate, we have to have 2 offer letters, one from the academic dept., stipulating the academic rank and salary (if any) that will come from state funds and signed by the chair and dean, and one from the MSG (medical service group) that stipulates the clinical responsibilities and income from the MSG, and signed by the president of the MSG (always the chair). Even have to use two different letterheads.

We provide a template of these offer letters, which they personalize with the specific information agreed to. The draft offer is circulated to those who are responsible for space and finance. After approval by each, the chair and the dean sign it and the offer letter can be sent. The rank is included in the state offer letter, but for Assoc. or Full Professors it is stated that appointment to the faculty is contingent on approval of the appointment by the College of Medicine Appointments Committee. Appointment for clinicians is also contingent on clearance from the Medical Staff Office for hospital credentialing. Sound cumbersome???

*From Glenda Cooper, University of Arkansas ([cooperglendaj@uams.edu](mailto:cooperglendaj@uams.edu)):*

At UAMS we use an electronic Justification for Recruitment (JFR) system whereby the Chair must obtain permission from the College CFO to recruit a candidate based on need, salary source, future funding and space needed, etc.

If permission is granted, the department chair crafts an offer letter based on an approved template that the CFO reviews. The approved letter is sent to the candidate who must sign and return it to the chair who will scan and upload in the JFR system. After approval in the system, the appointment is finalized and appointment letters are generated from the Dean, the Vice Chancellor and the Chair. It actually runs quite smoothly.

2007-2008 Group on Faculty Affairs  
AAMC Listserve Queries & Responses

However, if the candidate is coming in as a chair, division chief, center director, etc., a preliminary offer letter is proffered with CFO approval based on the approval of the promotion and tenure committee to appointment of associate or full professor entering with granted tenure before the final offer letter is issued.

*From Karen Novielli, Jefferson Medical College ([Karen.novielli@jefferson.edu](mailto:Karen.novielli@jefferson.edu)):*

We have just revised our system and it is similar to what Glenda describes below. The department must provide data to the dean's office and practice plan to receive approvals for all elements of the offer. After this is done, a standard template letter of offer is generated for signatures. If the candidate wishes to proceed, we verify credentials and if OK, offer a contract.