

Standard E-Signature Use for University Transactions

STANDARD PROCEDURES OVERVIEW

Unless a University unit establishes and publishes a customized e-signature policy in accordance with the *BPPM* 90.50, the following standard procedures apply to the use of e-signatures for University transactions.

Definition

For the purpose of the e-signature policy and procedures (*BPPM* 90.50 and 90.51), transactions are exchanges or interactions where a signature, declaration, acknowledgement, or assent of some sort is required by one or more parties to the transaction.

University transactions include, but are not limited to, transactions between:

- Two or more University departments;
- The University and employees or students; or
- The University and a non-University company, agency, group, or individual (other than a University student or employee).

Restrictions

E-signatures may *not* be used or accepted for any of the types of transactions listed under "Restrictions" in *BPPM* 90.50.

ACCEPTABLE E-SIGNATURE METHODS

The following e-signature methods may be utilized for University transactions, with the stated restrictions. (See "Forms of E-Signature" in *BPPM* 90.50 for definitions.)

Authorized Use

Any department using any type of signature methods/devices must ensure that:

- The person whose signature is used has approved signature authority for the document. See "Signature Authority" in *BPPM* 90.50 for further information.
- Anyone affixing the person's signature to a document has authority to use the signature on the specific document being signed.
- An online checkbox, click through, or click wrap signature in which a signer is asked to affirm their intent or agree online by clicking a button, if *all* the following criteria are met:
 - Information is available that tends to validate that the e-signature/clicking was done by the individual represented to be the person completing the form or document (e.g., the signer must use a log-in verification system with a unique ID and password to access the check-box, click-through, or click-wrap signature field); and
 - The e-signed document is retained in its entirety for WSU records.

Checkbox, Click Through, or Click Wrap

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PIN or Password

- An e-signature created through use of a personal identification number (PIN) or password, if *all* the following criteria are met:
 - Information is available that tends to validate that the e-signature was affixed by the individual represented to be the person completing the form or document (e.g., the PIN and/or password are created and maintained in a secure fashion); and
 - The e-signed document is retained in its entirety for WSU records.

Digitized Signature

- A digitized signature (e.g., scanned image of an individual's signature) on a document, if *all* the following criteria are met:
 - The document is sent as an attachment in an email message or other retainable technology;
 - Information is available that tends to validate that the email or other retainable technology was sent either by:
 - ♦ The individual whose signature is represented to be on the document; or
 - ♦ An individual authorized to send the email or other retainable technology transmitting the document;
 - The e-signed document is retained in its entirety for WSU records; and
 - The transmittal document (for example, the transmittal email) is retained for WSU records where possible.

Digital Signature

- A digital signature, if *all* the following criteria are met:
 - A private user signing key and a public validation key is used to verify that the document was not altered after signing.
 - The public key is issued by a certification authority that binds individuals to private keys and issues and manages certificates.
 - The signature is indicated by a unique mark (called a *signed hash*).

Autopen Signature

The signature device must be secured from unauthorized use and the person with signature authority is responsible for securing the device.

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Hybrid Approaches

Hybrid approaches combining techniques from several e-signature methods are acceptable if all of the applicable criteria listed above are met.

Software Program

Any type of e-signature may be created through a software program, if *all* the following criteria are met:

- The software system tracks the signature process;
- The software system *logically associates all the signed record's components*, such as the identity of the signer and the date and time of signature;
- The circumstances surrounding the creation of the signature tend to validate that the signature was in fact affixed by the individual whose signature is represented to be on the document; and
- The e-signed document is retained in its entirety for WSU records.

Contact ITS regarding allowable software programs for creating e-signatures or to review potential software programs.

Specific Transactions

The divisions of Finance and Administration and Information Technology Services may recommend or require the use of specific e-signature methods for specific transactions based upon the levels of risk involved (e.g., amount of money at issue).

End User Instructions and Training Materials

University departments which use or accept e-signatures are responsible for providing clear instructions and training materials for users.

COMPLIANCE

University employees and areas which utilize e-signatures for University transactions are responsible for following all laws and policies applicable to e-signatures, as well as laws and policies applicable to University transactions. **NOTE:** All transaction laws and policies apply regardless of whether or not signatures are obtained on paper copies or using e-signatures.

An employee and their area must bear the liability that arises from the failure of the employee and/or area to follow applicable laws and policies.

Records Retention

Requirements regarding retention of University records apply regardless of the media or technology used to create and store the records. (See *BPPM* 90.01.)