



Electronic and Digital Signatures

Policy Objective:

This policy establishes guidelines for the appropriate use of electronic or digital signatures in lieu of handwritten signatures. Usage of electronic signatures has been adopted by the Office of Research & Economic Development (ORED) as outlined by ICSUMA 08100.00 – Electronic and Digital Signatures. (PolicyStatID: 7951553)

While Digital Signatures may be used for all internal processes, some forms of electronic signatures may not be appropriate for certain workflows/functions. Alternately, electronic signatures are often easy to perform and may prove acceptable in many circumstances. Also, the authorization to enter a contract or sign a document on behalf of the CSULB Research Foundation is limited to personnel with specific written delegation by the Board of Directors.

The purpose of this document is to identify the procedure for identifying the types of forms/processes that may utilize a specific type of electronic signature.

I. Electronic Signatures:

An electronic signature is an electronic sound (e.g., audio files of a person's voice), symbol (e.g., a graphic representation of a person in JPEG file), or process (e.g., a procedure that conveys assent), attached to or logically associated with a record, and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record.

Electronic signatures may be used for bilateral contractual and legal documents, unilateral contracts and other University and Research Foundation controlled documents, internal campus forms and approvals, and external forms and approvals.

II. Digital Signatures:

A digital signature is a specific type of electronic signature that uses cryptographic transformation of data to provide authenticity, message integrity, and non-repudiation. For a digital signature to be valid, it must be created by a technology accepted for use by CSU Long Beach and the State of California and conform to technologies capable of creating digital signatures as set forth in California Government Code Section 16.5:

1. It is unique to the person using it;
2. It is capable of verification;
3. It is under the sole control of the person using it;

4. It is linked to data in such a manner that if the data are changed, the digital signature is invalidated;
5. It conforms to Title 2, Division 7, Chapter 10, of the California Code of Regulations.

Digital Signatures may be used for any record or document when permitted and unless a handwritten signature is explicitly required. Digital signatures must be used in lieu of a simple electronic signature when legally required.

III. Authorization & Approval

- Please keep personal electronic signature accounts separate from official CSULB issued electronic signature accounts. Access to CSULB’s electronic signature accounts is made through the CSULB Single Sign On dashboard.
- Your electronic signature is a legally binding signature.
- The signer may not delegate signing authority to those who do not have the authorization to sign documents. To maintain the security of electronic signatures and all other ORED services, never share your username and password for any electronic signature tool.
- A signer always has the option to print the document, "wet" sign it and return a hard copy to the sender, instead of agreeing to sign with an electronic signature.
- All electronic signatures and approval must follow the university's [Signature and Delegation of Authority](#). All electronic signatures must adhere to the university’s approved delegation of authority.

IV. Procedures:

In accordance with the CSU policies, The Office of Research & Economic Development has created a list of document types where digital and/or electronic signatures may be applied, along with recommended signature type for each.

Document Type	Risk Level	Recommended Signature
Internal (Campus & Research Foundation) forms and approvals: Processes which require campus personnel to sign (e.g. direct payment requests, hospitality expense approval forms, etc.) and are retained by campus personnel	Low	Electronic
External forms and approvals: Processes which solicit non-protected or non-sensitive information for data	Low to Moderate	Electronic

gathering purposes which are not intended to form a contract		
<p>Unilateral/Bilateral contracts: Processes which are signed by ORED personnel only may utilize electronic signatures. Typically, these documents are intended to form a contract and are sent to an outside person or agency. Other documents where the CSULB Research Foundation is the only signatory and is providing acknowledgements or approvals. This also includes the processes which creates a legally binding agreement/contract.</p>	Moderate	Electronic

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