

## POLICY

Effective Date: May 9, 2017

Approved By: President Sabah Randhawa

Authority: [RCW 19.360.020](#); [RCW 19.360.030](#)

Cancels:

See Also: [FRM-U3000.06](#) Electronic Signatures Solution Approval Form  
[Guidelines-Using Electronic Signature](#)  
[Electronic Signature Guidelines for Washington State Agencies](#)

### **POL-U3000.06            USING ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES**

***This policy applies to the use of electronic signatures on University-originated transactions***

#### **Definitions:**

**Electronic signature:** An electronic sound, symbol, or process, attached to or logically associated with an electronic record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record.

**Electronically signed record:** A record that is created and signed by electronic methods.

**Authentication:** The assurance that the electronic signature is that of a person purporting to sign the record or conduct the electronic transaction.

**Desired Signature Transaction:** A transaction for which there is no legal requirement of a valid (written or electronic) signature but for which a valid (written or electronic) signature may be desirable in order to bind a party or emphasize the significance of a transaction. Examples include but are not limited to internal memos or letters from one office to another.

**Required Signature Transaction:** A transaction governed by law or regulation that requires the presence of a valid (written or electronic) signature before it is considered legally effective. Examples include but are not limited to contracts, letters of offer, and federal financial aid documents.

#### **1. Departments May Use and Accept Electronic Signatures**

Unless otherwise specified by law or agency rule, the University recognizes that an electronic signature has the same force and effect as that of a signature affixed by hand.

#### **2. Chief Information Officer Establishes Standards for Electronic Signature Methods**

The Chief Information Officer establishes standards for electronic submittal and receipt of documents with electronic signatures and a process for approval of electronic signature methods.

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### **3. University Security Officer Approves Electronic Signature Methods for University-Originated Transactions that Require Signatures**

University employees who originate electronic records that require signatures shall use only the electronic signature methods and software that have been approved in writing by the University's Information Security Officer

### **4. Signers of University-Originated Transactions Determine Whether a Signature is Desired or Required**

To determine whether a signature is desired or required, signers of documents should consult *FRM-U3000.06 – Electronic Signatures Solutions Approval Form* for guidance.

- a) **Desired Signature Transactions:** Electronic signatures can be used when a signature is not required by law or regulation but is desired to emphasize its importance and there is an intent to give the same force and effect as the use of a signature affixed by hand. In these cases, there is no legal requirement for authentication, and the signature method does not require approval by the University Security Officer.
- b) **Required Signature Transactions:** Electronic signatures can be used when a signature is required by law or regulation. In these cases, the signature method must be approved by the University's Information Security Officer who determines whether the resulting signatures have all of the necessary components to make them legally enforceable. Any approved system must produce or ensure:
  - An electronic form of signature,
  - Proof of intent to sign,
  - Association of signature to record,
  - Identification and authentication of the signer, and
  - Integrity of the signed record

### **5. Departments Shall Retain All Electronically Signed Records**

Retention requirements are based on the function and content of the records rather than on format. Employees with signature authorities and departments shall retain all electronically signed records for the same period as paper records as specified in the retention schedule approved by the University Records Center. Electronically signed legal documents must remain in their original form, searchable and retrievable for the length of the designated retention period (RCW 40.14.020 (6) and WAC 434-662-040).

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### 6. **Falsification of Electronically Signed Records and Electronic Signatures Is Prohibited**

It is a violation of this policy for an individual to sign a University transaction as if they were another individual or to sign on behalf of another individual, unless such specific authority has been granted by that individual.