



The Research  
Foundation for

The State University of New York

SUNY New Paltz Office of Sponsored Programs & Research Compliance

# Electronic Signature Policy

## Policy

The Office of Sponsored Programs at SUNY New Paltz allows the use of electronic signatures obtained by services such as **Adobe Sign** as an acceptable alternative to an original signature for those documents requiring signature or acknowledgement in accordance with minimum standards, see below. Electronic signature through such a process will be given full legal effect under federal and state law.

Please note that some documents still require an inked signature. Refer to our listing of document types and their approved forms of signature at the end of this document.

## Definitions

The following terms are used in this policy.

Term	Definition
Electronic Signature	Federal ( <a href="#">the federal E-Sign law</a> ) and New York state law ( <a href="#">The Electronic Signatures and Records Act or "ESRA"</a> ) define an electronic signature as: "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."

## Basis for Policy

The following laws were enacted to support the use of electronic signatures.

Law	Definition
Federal Law	The federal government authorized the use and acceptance of electronic signatures in The Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (E-Sign).
NYS Law	The Electronic Signatures and Records Act (ESRA), the New York state law which authorizes the acceptance of electronic signatures in most documents, went into effect in August of 1999. The Act was updated in 2002 to make New York state law consistent with the federal E-Sign law. The act provides that "signatures" made via electronic means will be as legally binding as hand-written signatures. It does not mandate the use of, or require a specific form of, electronic signature.



The State University of New York  
*SUNY New Paltz Office of Sponsored Programs & Research Compliance*

## Minimum Standards

Use of an electronic signature service must be in accordance with the following minimum standards, consistent with NYS issued guidelines. Compliance with these standards helps to ensure the validity of an electronic signature.

- An audit trail must be created and included with the document that has been signed electronically.
- The service must use electronic authentication methods to verify signer identity, such as email, corporate IDs, or a phone pin.
- The service must create legally valid and enforceable signatures by complying with federal and New York State Law.
- The document must be locked and unable to be changed after all parties have electronically signed.

## Common E-signature Services

The following e-signature services are most commonly used and accepted by the Office of Sponsored Programs. Acceptable services are not limited to the following, however, any service provider not included in this list must be approved by the Office of Sponsored Programs prior to use. Approval can be provided by Katelyn Welch-Coffey, AP/PO Manager at SPRC.

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| • Adobe Sign     | • Sertifi        |
| • DocuSign       | • Signable       |
| • SignRequest    | • HelloSign      |
| • PandaDoc       | • AssureSign     |
| • e-signLive     | • KeepSolid Sign |
| • RightSignature | • SignEasy       |

## Unacceptable Forms of Signature

- Digital Signatures obtained by a certificate-based digital ID to authenticate signer identity and demonstrate proof is signed by binding each signature to the document with encryption. Options such as this do not provide an audit trail. An example would be a digital signature added to a pdf through Adobe Acrobat.
- Documents that were signed by hand and then scanned and emailed or faxed. Any document signed in ink must be submitted in its original form to OSP via mail or hand delivery.
- Scanned signatures copied and pasted into a document.



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## OSP Document Types and Allowable Forms of Signature:

Employee Assignment Form (PI & Employee)	Electronic or Inked Signature
Oracle Change Form (PI)	Electronic or Inked Signature
New Employee Wage Notice (employee)	Electronic or Inked Signature
Appointment letter (employee)	Electronic or Inked Signature
Code of Conduct	Electronic or Inked Signature
Handbook Acknowledgment	Electronic or Inked Signature
Paper Benefits enrollment form	Electronic or Inked Signature
Salary reduction form	Electronic or Inked Signature
Paper time sheet (supervisor & employee)	Electronic or Inked Signature
Paper tax forms	Electronic or Inked Signature
IFR/Cost Share Appointment form	Electronic or Inked Signature
<b>I-9</b>	<b>Inked signature required</b>
W-9	Electronic or Inked Signature
Purchase Requisition	Electronic or Inked Signature
Independent Contractor Form	Electronic or Inked Signature
Participant Stipend Form	Electronic or Inked Signature
Order complete form	Electronic or Inked Signature or E-mail Acknowledgement
RF Transportation Reimbursement Request –Same Day Travel	Electronic or Inked Signature
RF Transportation Reimbursement Request – Overnight Travel	Electronic or Inked Signature
Declaration of Missing Receipt Form	Electronic or Inked Signature
Justification for Late Travel Reimbursement	Electronic or Inked Signature
Monthly Exempt Time Sheet	Electronic or Inked Signature
RF Non-Exempt Bi-Weekly Time Sheet	Electronic or Inked Signature
RF Regular Hourly Time Sheet	Electronic or Inked Signature
RF Professional – Non-exempt Employee	Electronic or Inked Signature
RF Hourly Time Sheet	Electronic or Inked Signature
RF Payroll Direct Deposit Form	Electronic or Inked Signature
Debarment Certification Form	Electronic or Inked Signature
Contract Campus Approval Form	Electronic or Inked Signature
At-Risk NARFs	Electronic or Inked Signature
Sponsor-specific contracts and agreements	Electronic or Inked Signature

## Questions/Concerns can be forwarded to:

Katelyn Welch-Coffey, AP/PO Manager at the Office of Sponsored  
Programs & Research Compliance Phone: 845-257-2370

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