



Electronic and Digital Signatures	
Policy: Signing Authority and Contractual Commitments	
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Procedure Administrator: Financial Services and Business Manager	Review Period: 3 Years
Associated Documents: Signing Authority Compliance Form Procedure for Executing Contracts and Agreements and Authorizing Transactions Delegation of Signing Authority Procedure	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline

- circumstances in which electronic or digital signatures are appropriate, and
- the manner in which electronic and digital signatures are provided.

PROCEDURE

Red Deer College uses electronic and digital signature to streamline its internal and external business processes, improve customer service delivery and as a result advance recordkeeping, archival and retrieval of business records.

Acceptable Uses of Electronic and Digital Signatures

1. Electronic signatures can be used in place of hand written signature for intra-college transactions.
2. Transactions initiated by the College that require a signature from one or more external parties, are approved through digital signing.

Process for Applying Electronic Signatures

1. Purchasing card transactions are routed for approval and approved using the functionality of the card issuer’s online application.
 - a. Cardholders review transaction and accounting details and edit as necessary. They attach receipts, approve and forward for additional approval.
 - b. If approval from another spending authority (such as PD rep) is required, cardholders obtain an email approval from that authority and upload it with the receipt into the online application.

- c. Approvers review receipts, comments, transaction details and accounting information and final approve the transaction. Before the final approval, approvers may request more information or return a transaction to the cardholder for correction.
2. Other transactions, such as invoices, payment requests, expense claims etc. can be approved in one of two ways:
 - a. through emails or a combination of email and the approver's signature, where the signer can use a generic signature provided by the application used (such as Adobe Sign, for example)
 - I. When sending by email a document that has a signature 'affixed' to it, the name of the signer must match the email sender. This is to prove that one's signature is not being used without their knowledge.
 - II. Whenever possible, documents should be sent from an RDC email account to prevent the emails being blocked or quarantined by the security software.
 - III. When approving a transaction in an email, the approver should reference a document type and number, as well as the amount being approved. Preferably, this information is contained in a subject line. Words 'I approve' without any other context can easily be appropriated and misused.
 - OR**
 - b. using a depiction of the approver's handwritten signature that cannot be altered or edited. In order to preserve the integrity of the signing process, this signature must be kept secure and the copy must not be shared or provided to others to use.

Digital Signing Process

1. Transactions initiated by Red Deer College that require a signature from one or more external parties are executed using DocuSign. At this time, DocuSign is not used for strictly internal transactions (e.g. Purchase Requisition or T&E approval).
2. DocuSign is only used when a document being signed is a pre-approved template or has been reviewed by Risk Services.
 - a. When deemed necessary, Risk Services will take the lead on the contract and facilitate signing with the external entity.
3. Risk Services manages DocuSign access on an enterprise level and the cost of licenses is covered by the College unless the license is issued to a College profit centre.
 - a. Setup and license assignment is managed by the Risk Services.
 - b. Profit centers are charged back for the direct cost of each license assigned to that area.
4. These features and functionality of DocuSign can be utilized to expedite the signing process:
 - a. Access from desktop and mobile devices,
 - b. Ability to upload & send multiple documents at one time,
 - c. Flagged mandatory and optional fields, such as printed name, signature, initial, date etc. for ease of use,
 - d. Ability to track who has sign and who has not, and
 - e. Ability to carbon copy an administrator when the document has been signed by all parties.

DEFINITIONS

Contract: any written or verbal arrangement (agreement, contract, letter of intent, memorandum of understanding or similar) that creates a legally binding commitment for the College.

Discretionary expenses: expenses for which there is an option as to when and if to incur them and for which there must be a purchasing method and approval by the College signing officer.

Digital signature: a guarantee that an electronic document is authentic; verification that a document has been seen and authorized by the signer with private signing key.

Electronic signature: a symbol or process used as an expression of one's agreement to the terms of a particular document. Could be an image of a hand-written signature or any kind of electronic and authenticity stamp that identifies or can be used to identify who and what was signed.

External transaction: A transaction that creates a commitment or liability on College's part that requires at a minimum one signature by an authorized College representative and one or more signatures by external parties to the transaction. Examples of these types of transactions are various revenue and expense contracts, academic agreements, practicum agreements, sponsorship and donor agreements, Fee for Service and other service agreement etc.

Intra-College transaction: A transaction that, in order to be approved, contains exclusively signatures of one or more College signing or spending authorities. An example is issuing a College Purchase Requisition, approving a vendor invoice for payment or authorizing a budget transfer.

Senior Leader: a member of the College Senior Administration team.

Signing authority: legal power delegated by the Board through the President of the College to organizational positions appointing them as agents of the College to perform transactions and execute contracts.

Spending authority: a power delegated to select College positions to authorize expenditures up to a specific amount.

Signing Officer: A College representative with power to sign an agreement or authorize a transaction.