

FP-39: Authorization of Electronic Signatures

Policy Statement

- A. East Tennessee State University recognizes the use of electronic signatures for pre-approved university processes and seeks to facilitate use within the university, TBR and State of Tennessee code.

Purpose

- A. To establish when an electronic signature may replace a written signature and when an electronic record may replace a paper document in official activities of East Tennessee State University. This policy complies with Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Guideline B-095, "Use of Electronic Signatures & Records."

Definitions

Electronic Signature

- A. An electronic sound, symbol, or process, attached to or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record with the use of adequate security and authentication measures that are contained in the method of capturing the electronic transaction (e.g., use of personal identification number or personal log-in identification username and password), and the recipient of the transaction must be able to permanently retain an electronic record of the transaction at the time of receipt.

Approved Electronic Signature Method

- A. One that has been approved in accordance with this guideline and applicable state and federal laws, and which specifies the form of the electronic signature, the systems and procedures used with the electronic signature, and the significance of the use of the electronic signature.

Procedures

Procedures for Approval of Electronic Signatures

- A. With respect to the use of electronic signatures or electronic transactions, the following requirements pertain to approved electronic signature methods:
- B. In determining whether to approve an electronic signature method, consideration will be given to the systems and procedures associated with using that electronic signature, and whether the use of the electronic signature is at least as reliable as the existing method being used. After a review by the University Legal Counsel, the final approval of any electronic signature method will be by the Chief Information Officer.
- C. If approved, electronic signature method requires the use of encryption technology that uses public or private key infrastructure and/or certificates. Information Technology Services will be responsible for the administration of such public or private keys and certificates. An approved electronic signature method may limit the use to particular electronic records, particular classes of electronic records, or particular department. An electronic signature used outside of its defined parameters will not be considered valid by ETSU. In the event that it is determined that a previously approved electronic signature method is no longer trustworthy, the Chief Information Office must revoke the approval of that electronic signature method. If there is an on-going need for electronic signatures, which had previously been made by the revoked method, the Chief Information Officer will take steps to see that appropriate electronic signatures are obtained by an approved electronic signature method. An inventory of all approved electronic signature methods shall be maintained by the Office of the Chief Information Officer.