

## **Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic and Digital Signatures**

California State University, Fresno adheres to the guidelines set forth by the CSU in regards to acceptable use of electronic and digital signatures:

### **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

It is the policy of the CSU to permit the use of electronic or digital signatures in lieu of handwritten signatures. Usage of electronic or digital signatures is at the option of an individual campus or the Chancellor's Office provided they conform to the terms set forth in this policy.

This policy does not pertain to facsimile signatures printed on checks issued by the CSU.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **100 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.

#### **200 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 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.

#### **300 Electronic and Digital Signature Implementation**

Campuses must develop procedures to identify, evaluate, and document where electronic signatures are permitted and digital signatures are required. Procedures should follow a risk assessment methodology defined in the Electronic and Digital Signature Standard and must be approved by the Vice President for Administration/CFO.

Campus and Chancellor's Office standards and procedures for electronic signatures must meet CSU electronic and digital signature standards and may be used for transactions between the CSU and outside parties only when approved by the campus Vice President for Administration/CFO and when both parties have agreed to conduct transactions by digital means.

#### **400 Acceptable Use**

Simple Electronic Signatures may convey intent of an individual to sign a record and are often easier to implement. Simple electronic signatures may be acceptable and authorized for internal campus or Chancellor's Office uses involving low risk.

Digital Signatures may be used where simple electronic signatures are acceptable and authorized for use. They may be permitted or required for any record or document where a signature is required by Federal law, California law, or by CSU policy unless a handwritten signature is explicitly required. Digital signatures must be used instead of a simple electronic signature when legally required or when greater risk exists.

The presence of an electronic signature does not mean that a record was properly signed or that the signatory was authorized. Campus and Chancellor's Office procedures must identify the person by position who is authorized to sign, approve, and/or prevent unauthorized actions from being taken as a result of an electronic signature.

In accordance with these policies, California State University, Fresno has created a list of forms that accept electronic and digital signatures along with justifications for each. This list can be found [here](#).

Criteria for determining risk of each form and the complete CSU policy on electronic and digital signatures can be found [here](#).