UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

eSignature

Operational Model - Using ConsignO

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Document History

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Overview

An electronic signature (eSignature) can be defined as:

"Electronic information that a person creates or adopts in order to sign a record and that is in, attached to or associated with the record."

Electronic Transactions Act, S.A. 2001 c E-5.5

eSignatures can facilitate faster execution and delivery of documents and other electronic records, and can reduce paper usage. eSignatures have the ability to replace "wet" signatures so long as proper governance is followed. Whether a signature is paper-based or electronic, the fundamental purpose of the signature is the same. A signature links an individual to a document and provides the individual's intent to approve or be legally bound. An eSignature is to provide evidence of the signatory's:

- identity
- intent to sign
- agreement to be bound by the contents of the document

The requirement for a signature can be:

- imposed by an act of Parliament
- imposed by policy
- a customary practice

Technology Guidance

The ability to use an electronic signature to execute transactions can enhance operational efficiency and improve compliance with Information Management and Information Technology Policies. eSignatures must comply with business, policy, legal and technical requirements. The guidelines below comply with requirements of the Electronic Evidence Act or University Security and Privacy Policies.

Leadership

The eSignature solution is under the purview of the Electronic Approval Committee which includes membership from:

- Information Services and Technology (IST)
    - David Dittaro - Director, Enterprise Applications
- Chief Information Security Office (CISO)
    - Gordie Mah - Chief Information Security Officer
- University Records Office
    - Damian Hollow - University Records Officer
- University of Alberta Archives
    - Anna Hollow - University Archivist
- Office of the General Counsel
    - Jax Oltean - Senior Legal Counsel
- Information and Privacy Office
    - Mary Golab, Director, Information & Privacy Office

The eSignature solution will be administered by the Enterprise Applications (EA) group within IST.

Authority to Use eSignature Products

Approvals to Use of eSignature Products

Enterprise-Wide eSignature Product - ConsignO

Units wanting to use the enterprise-wide eSignature product can request access to ConsignO, the University's enterprise product. Approvals to use and how to access ConsignO is further on in this document.

Non Enterprise-Wide eSignature Product(s)

The decision to implement the use of a non enterprise-wide product or application-specific eSignature product must be approved at the Portfolio (Director, Vice-President, or delegate) level or institutional (PEC-O or delegate group) level, align with existing technology governance and strategy, and must go through IT Governance. Where activities impact multiple Portfolios, it may be necessary to seek approval from impacted Portfolios.

Documentation using eSignatures

eSignatures can be applied in situations that are low risk (an email requesting vacation), or in situations that are high risk (electronic approval of multimillion dollar contracts). Accordingly, the University has developed the eSignature Records Governance Rules (in progress) and the Technology/Information Governance Matrix (in progress) to provide clarity on the appropriate use of eSignatures. The documents clarify which types of documents can use eSignatures and where approval for use is obtained.

eSignature Criteria

In practice, an eSignature can take a variety of forms, including:

- Scanned copies of physically-signed documents;
- Scanned or electronic signatures applied or pasted to an electronic document;
- A typed name or signature block;
- A signature created using a stylus or finger on a touchscreen; and
- Clicking an electronic confirmation or acknowledgement on a website.

Units wanting to use ConsignO are responsible for following the categories and constraints and align with technology governance rules and strategy.

Categories of Approval

Category 1 - Unit Level Approval

Category 1 are low risk transactions that can be accomplished through instant messages, emails, or phone calls and do NOT require the use of an eSignature product or additional technology. The decision to implement these processes is made at the Unit level.

This may include:

- Requesting vacation, time off or a change in schedule;
- Timesheet submission and approval;
- Requesting (but not purchasing) supplies, equipments or other assets;
- Approval of unit level procedures, processes, agenda/minutes or other records that support routine operations of a Unit.

Category 2 - Single Signature Approval

Category 2 transactions are higher risk and require approval above Category 1. These transactions involve documents requiring signatures from one internal or external signatory requiring the use of ConsignO.

This may include:

- Employee Verification Letters
- Pledge agreements
- Gift intention/confirmation Form
- Stewardship Thank You Letters
- Vendor Invoices *(evaluation in process)*
- Waivers *(evaluation in process)*

Category 3 - Multi-Signature Approval

Category 3 transactions are also higher risk and require approval from more than one approver. These transactions involve documents requiring multiple signatures from internal, external, or both signatories requiring the use of University technology such as the eSignature product - ConsignO. Signature order can be obtained sequentially or in parallel.

This may include:

- Performance management documentation (performance appraisals / PREP-D)
- Pay Action Forms
- Appointment Letters
- Request for New Endowments
- Gift & Pledge Agreements
- Report of Invention (Research)
- Professional Development forms
- Payment Request / Cheque Requisition

eSignature Use Constraints

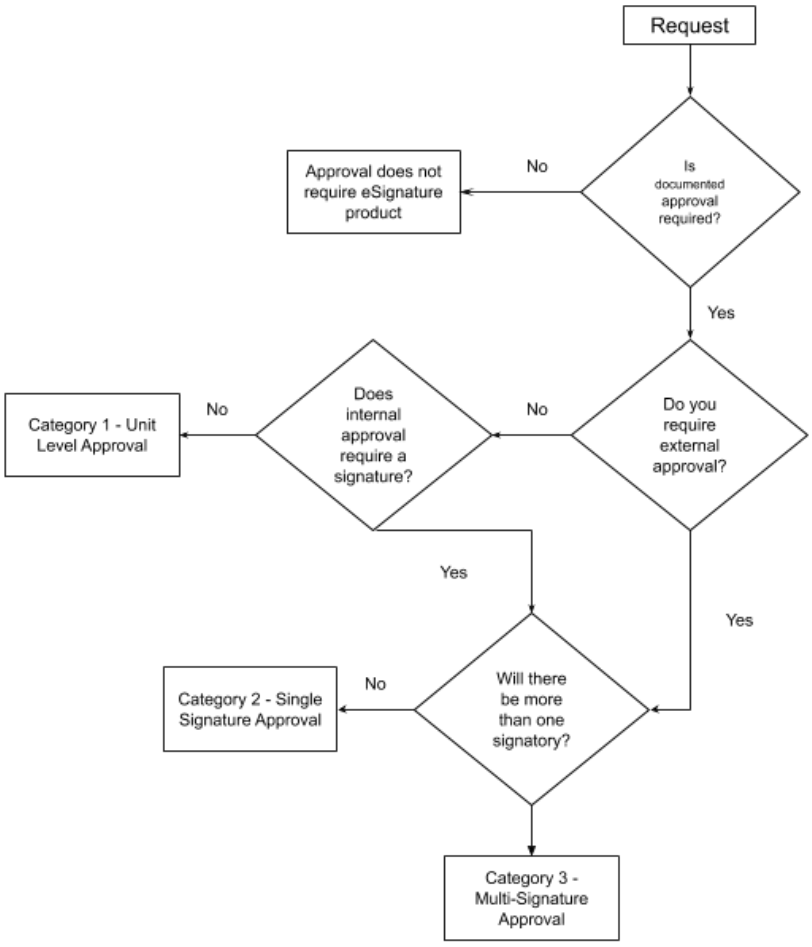
The following are examples of potential unit constraints:

- Transaction amount >$5,000,000 may require a hard copy signature
- Cannot be used for specific goods or services; or
- Should be avoided where cultural norms differ or technology accessibility is a consideration.

There are specific transactions that are not permitted to be signed or approved electronically:

- Wills, codicils and trusts created by wills or codicils;
- Enduring power of attorney under the Powers of Attorney Act;
- Personal directives under the Personal Directives Act;
- Records that create or transfer interest in land, including interest in mines and minerals;
- Documents of title;
- Guarantees under the Guarantees Acknowledgment Act; and
- Negotiable instruments.

Example of an eSignature Workflow



Related Policies and Legislation

Records Management Policy (UofA)

Information Management & Information Technology Policies and Procedures (UofA)

Electronic Transactions Act (Province of Alberta)

Government of Canada Guidance on Using Electronic Signatures

Operations

The following will guide the use of the University's eSignature product ConsignO.

Administration

The overall administration of ConsignO will be overseen by the Enterprise Applications (EA) group within IST.

ConsignO Roles

Administrator

This role will be a staff member from EA and will be the main point of contact to oversee the administration of ConsignO; they will have the ability to assign Manager and Project Initiator roles; they have the ability to overwrite the assignment of any role and can assign/remove administrative rights from any member of the organization.

Manager

This role will provide administration of ConsignO within their respective Department/Faculty/Unit; they will have the ability to assign/remove Project Initiator roles to their staff; they will be the main point of contact

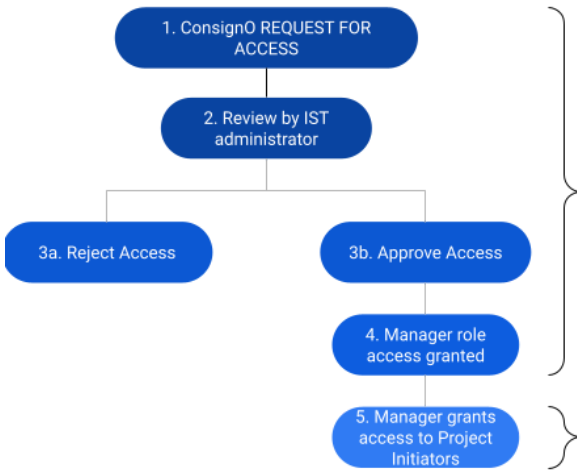
Project Initiator

This role has the ability to create and send projects to send out for signature.

Request for Access

Request to access ConsignO, is completed by a Department / Faculty / Unit's Senior Financial Officer (SFO). A staff member will need to contact their SFO if they would like to use ConsignO.

The process to follow is below:



1. Fill out the ConsignO Request for Access Google form
2. Form will be reviewed by IST administrator
3. Form is approved or rejected
4. The Manager role is granted to the *Department / Faculty / Unit lead
5. **Manager role grants Project Initiator role to their staff

*The Department / Faculty / Unit lead will be responsible for the administration of ConsignO within their area of responsibility. This will be the SFO or delegate.

**Project initiator roles are subject to approval processes within the Department / Faculty / Unit. It is also up to the Department / Faculty / Unit to determine their internal policies/procedures on the use of ConsignO.

Approval Criteria

Approval to use Consigno will be based on the following criteria:

1. Department / Faculty / Unit has an individual assuming the responsibility of being the administrator.
2. Department / Faculty / Unit agreement to the per project cost of using ConsignO.
3. Department / Faculty / Unit provides a chargeable speed code.

ConsignO Account Creation

Once you have been approved to use ConsignO you will be given the link to the ConsignO login and account creation page. Every user, regardless of role, is required to create a ConsignO account. For the email, it is suggested to use your CCID authentication and not your alias email address.

CCID@ualberta.ca ~~*firstname.lastname@uaberta.ca*~~

Note: your ConsignO login is not related to the UofA CCID/password except using the CCID as an email.

Password Resets

If you forget your ConsignO password, you can request a reset on the login page.

Do not request password resets through your ConsignO Manager or Administrator, they will not be able to process a password reset.

Second Factor Authentication

Second factor authentication is required for all projects. This can be done through SMS, phone call, or secret question.

A project initiator will require the signee's phone number. Prior to the signee gaining access to the project, they will need to input a code that will be sent via SMS or email.

Recommendations

To avoid the additional administration, if a project is consistently sent to the same signee, a secret question with the same answer can be set up that can be used on a regular basis.

Records Retention

ConsignO has a retention period of one month once all signatures are received. Each Department / Faculty / Unit is expected to download the signed document and follow the same retention and filing processes within their respective Department / Faculty / Unit (Alfresco, Google Drive, Network Drive, file room) as before. Records containing electronic signatures must be retained for a minimum of one year.

Pricing

Scenario	Cost
Pricing	$1.80 / project Project: document(s) sent out at one time
Scenario: Single document - requires 1 signatures	$1.80
Scenario: Single document - requires 2 signatures	$1.80
Scenario: Single document - requires 2+ signatures	$1.80 up to 8 signatures
Scenario: 3 documents sent together - require 1 signature each	$1.80
Scenario: Single document - requires 1 signature (separately) from 45 people	$81.00

Reporting and Charge Back

Each Department / Faculty / Unit will be provided quarterly reports. Charge back for the number of projects used will be processed at the end of each fiscal year.

User Guide

To learn more about ConsigO and how to use its different features, please refer to their ConsignO Cloud User Guide.

Contacts

Contact Information Services and Technology (IST) for questions regarding access and use of ConsignO:

Phone Support:

Monday to Friday - 7:30am - 6:00pm

780-492-9400

Visit the Information Services and Technology website and click on How We Support You