Electronic Signature

Version 1.0, June 6, 2016

Policy

To increase the efficiency of transactions that require authorization by signature, Hocking College encourages and may require the use of an electronic signature. This policy governs all uses of electronic signatures to conduct college business.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to allow for electronic signatures at Hocking College by methods that are practical and secure, balance risk and cost, streamline administrative processes, and comply with applicable law.

Policy Details

I. **Electronic signature** use
   - A. The College may designate specific college transactions to be executed by electronic signature.
     - i. Employees, including student employees, may be required to use an electronic signature for transactions with the college or to conduct college business.
     - ii. External parties (individuals, including students, and entities not employed by the college) must use an electronic signature to conduct business with the college, unless the college or the external party opts out of conducting business electronically as provided in the Procedure section.
   - B. An electronic signature may be accepted in all situations when the requirement of a signature or approval is stated or implied, except when law or regulation specifically requires a hand-written signature.
   - C. To the fullest extent permitted by law, the college recognizes an electronic signature as legally binding.
   - D. When a college policy, rule, procedure, standard, law, or regulation requires or requests that a record have the signature of a responsible person that requirement or request is met by an electronic signature, except when law or regulation specifically requires a hand-written signature.
   - E. An electronic signature may not be valid if the individual did not have the authorization to sign an electronic record.
   - F. An electronic signature must employ a college-approved authentication method at the time of signature.

II. All new electronic signature systems must be approved by the Offices of Business and Finance and the Office of Information Technology.

III. Falsification
   A. Falsification of electronic records or electronic signatures is prohibited.
   B. It is a violation of this policy for an individual to sign as if they were another individual.

IV. Violations
   A. Employees who falsify electronic signatures or otherwise violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, including and not limited to termination of employment and/or potential criminal prosecution under applicable federal, state, and local laws.
   B. Students who falsify electronic signatures or otherwise violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct and/or potential criminal prosecution under applicable federal, state, and local laws.
   C. Other individuals and entities to whom this policy applies who falsify electronic signatures or otherwise violate this policy are subject to appropriate sanctions, including but not limited to termination of the relationship and/or potential criminal prosecution under applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Procedure

1. An electronic signature is defined as any electronic process signifying an approval to terms and/or ensuring the integrity of the document presented in the electronic format.

2. Students use electronic signatures to register, check financial aid awards, pay student bills, obtain unofficial transcripts, update contract information, log into campus computers, complete forms, submission of class work, tests, etc.

3. Faculty and staff use electronic signature for submitting grades, viewing personal payroll data, logging into campus computers, accessing protected data through the administrative computing system and custom web applications provided by the College, etc.

4. An electronic signature is considered valid when one of the following conditions is met:
   A. Hocking College provides student or employee with a unique username.

B. Student or employee sets his or her own password.
C. Student or employee logs into campus network and secure site using both the username and the password.

5. It is the responsibility and obligation of each individual to keep his or her passwords private so that others cannot use his or her credentials.

6. Once logged in, the student or employee is responsible for any information he or she provides, updates, or removes.

7. Hocking College will take steps to ensure the passwords are protected and kept confidential. Users are responsible for logging out of all systems and exercising the necessary precautions when using publicly accessible computers.

8. Interface requirements
   A. When at any time during an **electronic transaction** a state agency requires a signature or is conducting a financial transaction, the state agency must require a separate and distinct action on the part of the person conducting the transaction for financial transactions and each signature. The separate and distinct action must be clearly marked as indicating an intent to complete a financial transaction or electronically sign a writing. The separate and distinct action may include a series of keystrokes, a click of a mouse or other similar action.

Additional Contacts

Submit comments, questions, and suggestions to the Hocking College IT Helpdesk at helpdesk@hocking.edu or 753-6113.

Review of Policy

This policy may be reviewed and updated from time to time to reflect substantial changes to the information technology resources or changes in legal statutes that impact computing resources, copyright, intellectual property or privacy. The Hocking College CIO is responsible for determining when the policy needs to be assessed and revised.

Definitions

Access Control	Process of granting access to information system resources only to authorized users, programs, processes, or other systems.
Authenticate	To confirm the identity of an entity when that identity is presented.
Authentication	Security measure designed to establish the validity of a transmission, message, or originator, or a means of verifying an individual's authorization to receive specific categories of information. (NIST) Assurance that the electronic signature is that of the person purporting to sign a record or otherwise conducting an electronic transaction (Ohio Administrative Code Rule 123:3-1-01).
Digital Signature	An encrypted electronic identifier, created by computer, intended by the party using it to have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature. (ORC 1733.29(H)(2)(d)) The result of a transformation of a message by means of a cryptographic system using keys such that a Relying Party can determine: (1) whether the transformation was created using the private key that corresponds to the public key in the signer's digital certificate; and (2) whether the message has been altered since the transformation was made. (NIST 800-32)
Digitized Signature	A graphical image of a handwritten signature, generally created by scanning in a handwritten signature.
Electronic Signature	ORC section 1306.01(H) defines electronic signature as —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.‖ On the federal level, The Government Paperwork Elimination Act defines it as any method of signing an electronic message that identifies and authenticates the person who is the source of the message and indicates their approval of the contents (NIST 800-32).
Electronic Transaction	The exchange of an electronic record and electronic signature between a state agency and a person to: consent to release information; purchase, sell, or lease goods, services or construction; transfer funds; facilitate the submission of an electronic record with an electronic signature required or accepted by a state agency; or create records upon which the State of Ohio or any other person will reasonably rely including but not limited to formal communication, letters, notices, directives, policies, guidelines and any other record (OAC rule 123:3-1-01).