

AUTHORITY TO SIGN CONTRACTS OR AGREEMENTS AND ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

AUTHORITY

Contracts are defined as:

- a legally binding promise, enforceable by law.
- an agreement between parties, with binding legal and moral force, usually exchanging goods or services for money or other consideration.
- all types of agreements, regardless of what they may be called, for the procurement or disposal of supplies, services, or construction.
- an agreement between a contracting authority and a person or business unit to provide a good, perform a service, construct a work, or to lease real property for appropriate consideration.

The authority to execute University contracts is vested in the President of Northwestern State University; however, the President has delegated to the Vice Presidents of each division a limited authority to execute University contracts for personal, professional, consulting and social service contracts up to \$49,999 with the exception of Legal Services, Architectural Services and Auditing/Accounting Services.

The Director of Purchasing has authority to sign all purchase orders and non-professional contract agreements on behalf of the University and the Director of Purchasing has delegated limited authority to Procurement Specialists to sign requisitions and purchase orders up to \$30,000.

No employee is authorized to sign contracts or agreements involving the expenditure of funds, regardless of source, or other types of contracts or agreements on behalf of the University not previously outlined. Any contract or agreement involving the expenditure of funds or the expenditure of university resources that require a signature on behalf of the University must be forwarded to the Director of Purchasing for review and receive a subsequent recommendation to request the President or Vice Presidents to sign the contract or agreement.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

Electronic signatures are valid on Purchasing related documents where traditional ink signature by the same signer would be valid, except in those cases where another authority governs another aspect of the transaction, and such authority does not accept electronic signatures. Known examples of such exceptions include:

- Clerk of Court recordation
- Construction desk (recordation)
- Office of State Travel (T-Card and P-Card)

Electronic signatures may take the form of:

1. A scanned ink signatures.
2. A signature captured using a digital pen or pad.
3. An image of a prior signature applied by software (such as Adobe).
4. An encrypted certificate with a signature and additional information.
5. A signature applied by a third-party web platform (such as VeriSign); or
6. Any other form deemed acceptable by the Chief Procurement Officer on a case-by-case basis.

Electronic signatures can be used by vendors and NSU departments. Purchasing will accept electronic signatures interchangeably and consistently with how it accepts traditional ink signatures.