

**PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**



**29.01.03.P0.30 Information Resources – Electronic and Digital Signatures**

Approved June 26, 2018

Next Scheduled Review: June 2023

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**UAP Purpose**

The purpose of this University Administrative Procedure (UAP) is to distinguish between an electronic signature to assert the identity of an individual(s) party to a legal instrument (e.g., contract) and a digitally signed certificate utilized to assure the authenticity of the sender and the integrity of electronic communications such as email messages.

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**Definitions**

**Digital Signature** - an electronic identifier intended by the person using it to have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature ([Texas Government Code 2054.060](#)). Digital signatures verify the trustworthiness of information (e.g. sender and content integrity).

**Digital Certificate** - a certificate, as defined in [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 203, Subchapter A, §203.1](#), issued by a business unit for purposes of electronic commerce.

**Electronic Signature** - 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 ([Texas Business and Commerce Code 322.002](#)).

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**Official Procedures and Responsibilities**

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**1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 Use of electronic signatures for official university documents is authorized by [Texas Government Code Chapter 2054.060 Information Resources](#). The manner and circumstances in which electronic signatures are acceptable is enumerated in [Texas Business and Commerce Code Chapter 322](#). When conflicts arise, [Texas Education Code 51.9336 Electronic and Digital Signatures](#) shall prevail.

**2. APPLICABILITY**

- 2.1 This UAP is applicable to all Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) employees, students and departments who desire to use electronic signatures to conduct university business. Such business may include, but not be limited to electronic communications, transactions, contracts, grant applications and other official purposes.

### 3. PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 Electronic signature for legal transactions

3.1.1 Electronic signatures may be used when all parties agree to their use.

3.1.2 Electronic signatures are legally binding and the equivalent of a manual signature.

3.1.2.1 PVAMU employees, students and departments who desire to use electronic signature technology must contact the Information Security Officer (ISO) at [informationsecurity@pvamu.edu](mailto:informationsecurity@pvamu.edu) for approval.

3.1.3 Individuals are accountable for their signatures (manual or electronic). Any fraudulent use, factual or suspected, must be reported immediately to the ISO.

3.1.4 Falsification or inappropriate use of electronic signatures may result in disciplinary action taken by PVAMU as well as any applicable punishments provided under the Texas Penal Code.

#### 3.2 Digitally-signed electronic communication

3.2.1 PVAMU employees, students and departments who have a need to send verifiable email messages can do so by utilizing a digital certificate.

3.2.1.1 Digital certificates for verifiable electronic communications (such as email messages) do not rise to the same level of integrity that is required for a legal transaction. Use instructions in Section 3.1 above when legal transactions are required.

#### 3.3 Federal and State Laws

3.3.1 The procedures described in this UAP do not supersede situations where federal or state laws specifically require a manual signature.

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#### Related Statutes, Policies, Regulations and Rules

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[Texas Administrative Code §203 Management of Electronic Transactions and Signed Records](#)

[Texas Business and Commerce Code 322.002](#)

[Texas Government Code 2054.060](#)

[Texas Education Code 51.9336 Electronic and Digital Signatures](#)

[System Regulation 29.01.03 Information Security](#)

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**Contact Office**

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