Signature Authorization Policy  
(Revisions to original policy dated 4/14/1983-revised 3/12/1987)

Scope:

To provide guidelines for the appropriate delegation of authority consistent with the organizational structure of the University. Those signatures that will be recognized in the commitment and/or disbursement of funds will be those individuals having official fiscal management responsibility.

Note: It is also emphasized that the authorizations referenced are in relation to internal University transactions only. The Rhode Island Board of Education has authorized specific individuals to approve transactions with external parties.

Purpose:

To maintain a firm internal control environment regarding the commitment and/or disbursement of funds to insure

- Execution of only legitimate and appropriate transactions.
- Adherence to University policy as well as to relevant financial, legal and contractual requirements.
- Detection of errors prior to implementation.

Policy:

In order for the University to be in compliance with Federal and State internal control guidelines and mitigate any financial risk, the integrity of the signature authorization database must be continually maintained. Compliance with the signature authorization policy of the University must be observed at all levels of management.

The University’s organizational structure will normally result in the following individuals being accepted as having officially recognized fiscal management responsibilities for specific funds:

- President
- Provost /Vice-Presidents /Vice-Provost
- Associate Vice-Presidents/Assistant Vice-Presidents/CIO
- Deans
Associate Deans/Assistant Deans
Directors/Administrators/General Counsel
Associate Directors/Assistant Directors
Controller
Associate Controllers/Assistant Controllers
Cash Management Officer
Department Heads
  • Individual in a responsible position of the overall management of activities within his/her department.
Business Managers/Other Fiscal Representatives
  • Any person charged with the responsibility of overseeing the business affairs of his/her college or operating unit.
Designated Responsible Person
  • For self-supporting operations, an individual designated as responsible at the department level subject to Dean/Department Head approval.
  • An individual designated as responsible for the management of a restricted gift or award.
  • The custodian or agent for an agency or organization not directly connected with the University.
Principal Investigator
  • An individual who has the primary responsibility of ensuring that the terms of a research grant or contract (Fund 500) are fulfilled. Controller-Grants & Contract

In the absence of the individual having primary management responsibility, that individual’s organizational superior, unit business manager and/or other recognized fiscal representative may serve as an alternate authorization.

**Note:** Only employees on the Bi-weekly payroll, Graduate payroll, or Internal payroll (excluding students) qualify as authorized signers.

➢ Appointment of Signature Authority

The Chartfield, *(Fund, Department, Program, Project)* is the core financial structure of the university. The Chartfield is used in every monetary transaction at the University of RI and it impacts each of its administrative systems: Human Resources, Budgeting, General Ledger, Procurement, and Grants. Therefore, it is mandatory that each authorized signature for a Chartfield be documented on a Signature Authorization Form *(see Policy-Signature Authorization Form for directions)*.

The “responsible person” is the person who is primarily responsible for the Chartfield. His/her responsibilities include, but are not limited to, making certain that expenditures are within budget and are in accordance with existing federal or state guidelines, that reports are filed accurately and timely as required by the sponsoring agency, and that expenditure documents are approved for payment against the Chartfield only after the service has been rendered or the goods have been delivered except when a contractual prepayment provision exists.
For the purpose of relieving the “responsible person” for the Chartfield the burden of reviewing, approving and signing routine expenditure documents (college requisitions, vouchers, payroll reports, etc.), the “responsible person” for the Chartfield may delegate this approval authority by the appointment of a signature authority. Such an appointment, however, must be made in accordance with the University’s signature authorization policy. The approved signature authority must have proper qualifications to assume administrative and financial responsibilities for the Chartfield. By the appointment of a signature authority, the “responsible person” automatically vests authority in the approved signature authority to ensure the legality, propriety, and allowability of expenditures he or she approved against the Chartfield.

While signature authority may be delegated, budgetary responsibility remains a function of the “responsible person”.

It is recommended that each Chartfield have a minimum of two authorized signers but no more than seven.

Individuals cannot be recognized as having the authorization to approve expenditures to themselves or on their own behalf. Also, authorized persons cannot be the sole signature authority for payments to, or on behalf of persons they have a “reporting to” relationship.

- **Signature Authorization Form**

A Signature Authorization Form [URI Signature Authorization](#) is required for each unique chartfield string… Fund-Department-Program-Project. When requesting a new chartfield, the form must be completed and filed with the Office of Budget and Financial Planning with the Chartfield Request Form. [URI Chartfield Request](#)

The Signature Authorization Form must contain the names, titles and specimen signatures of approved signature authorities for the Chartfield. *(Only employees on the Bi-weekly payroll, Graduate payroll, or Internal payroll (excluding students) qualify as authorized signers.)* All signatures must be in ink. Facsimile signatures are not acceptable. *(Note: Care must be taken in designating the respective documents which the approved signature authority is empowered to sign. The “responsible person” may limit this authorization to any number of documents by checking the proper boxes on the signature authorization form. *(See Signature Authorization Guidelines- Policies & Procedures)*

- **Cancellation of Signature Authorization**

The “responsible person” for the Chartfield must notify the University’s Office of Budget and Financial Planning in writing of the cancellation of appointment of a signature authority setting forth the effective date of cancellation. If the cancellation is due to a change in personnel, the “responsible person” should also file a new signature authorization form with the Office of Budget and Financial Planning listing all approved signature authorities including the new appointment. [Policies & Procedures](#)
It is specifically noted that the appointment and cancellation of signature authorities as mentioned above is consistent with established State procedures.

Board of Governor’s Approved Signature Authorities for the University of Rhode Island

A. Agreements and contracts which promote the objective of the Rhode Island Board of Education and the University, and are consistent with established policies, rules and regulations:
   - David M. Dooley
   - Donald H. DeHayes
   - J. Vernon Wyman
   - Gerald Sonnenfeld
   - Thorr Bjorn
   - Sharon B. Bell
   - Linda A. Barrett
   - Kathy M. Collins
   - Abigail Rider

B. Documents concerning alcohol custodianship and research contractual agreements:
   - Gerald Sonnenfeld
   - Winifred Nwangwu
   - Brian A Nath
   - Michael Katz

C. Business instruments and internal administrative authorizations on behalf of the University of Rhode Island, including the sale, assignment and transfer of securities, checks, drafts, savings and withdrawals, and other instruments payable to the University of Rhode Island and to deposit the same:
   - David M. Dooley
   - Sharon B. Bell
   - James Cacciola
   - Doreen J. Bolster
   - David Hansen
   - Cynthia Mace
   - Michele Wood
   - Eileen Tobin
   - Abigail Rider

D. Purchasing documents:
   - Tracey Angell
   - Elizabeth Gil
   - Debra Lee
   - Ryan Pincince
• Xeniya Jones
• J. Vernon Wyman
• Abigail Rider

E. Personnel action forms and all other personnel forms:
• Anne Marie Coleman
• Laura Kenerson
• Abigail Rider

F. Travel, Payroll, and Miscellaneous Vouchers:
• Sharon B. Bell
• James Cacciola
• Doreen J. Bolster
• Kevin Caswell
• David Hansen
• Cynthia Mace
• Judy H. Moore
• Lisa Richard
• Mary Stiller
• Michele Wood
• Abigail Rider

G. Receiving Reports and Authorization for Payment:
• Sharon B. Bell
• James Cacciola
• Doreen J. Bolster
• Kevin Caswell
• David Hansen
• Cynthia Mace
• Judy H. Moore
• Lisa Richard
• Mary Stiller
• Michele Wood
• Abigail Rider

H. Negotiation, execution and administration of user agency contracts pertaining to the protection of classified information:
• Gerald Sonnenfeld
• David M. Dooley
• Donald H. DeHayes
• Sally Marinelli
• Barbara Cottam
• Abigail Rider