Howard University

DocuSign User Guide

Signing Documents Electronically

Version 2
Modified 02/2018

CONTENTS

DOCUSIGN OVERVIEW

Electronic signing provides a quick, easy, and secure method for signing and submitting internal sponsored project forms without the need to appear in person. This guide provides information on how DocuSign is used to access, review, sign, and forward a proposal package to Research Administrative Services (RAS).

DocuSign uses the term "envelope" to refer to documents within the application. The term will be used to represent the proposal package in this guide.

ACCOUNT SETUP

A DocuSign account is not necessary to review or sign an envelope. However, it may be useful for storing and tracking documents that you have signed. RAS will create DocuSign accounts upon request.

GETTING STARTED

Before beginning this process, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- Signers are responsible for reviewing the envelope and acting on it in a timely manner. RAS recommends that proposal package envelopes be acted upon within 2 business days of receipt.

ACCESSING THE PROPOSAL PACKAGE ENVELOPE

As a Signer, you will receive an email notifying you of an envelope that needs your review and approval. This email is sent from DocuSign on behalf of the PI.
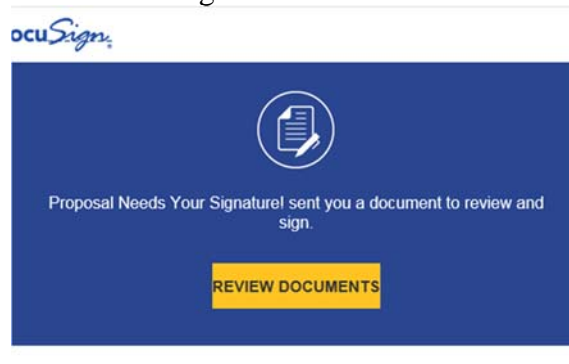
Click on the **Review Documents** link in the email to start the review and signature process. Once you click the link, the DocuSign user interface will open in a web browser.

The **Other Actions** options will be discussed later in this guide and can be ignored at this time.

To access the envelope, click on the **Continue** button. If a checkbox is displayed, click on it to access the Continue button.

THE PROPOSAL PACKAGE ENVELOPE

This envelope includes the more common forms required by RAS before a proposal can be submitted to a sponsor. It also includes additional, supplemental documents attached by the PI.

ENVELOPE LAYOUT

There are several controls available when looking at the envelope.
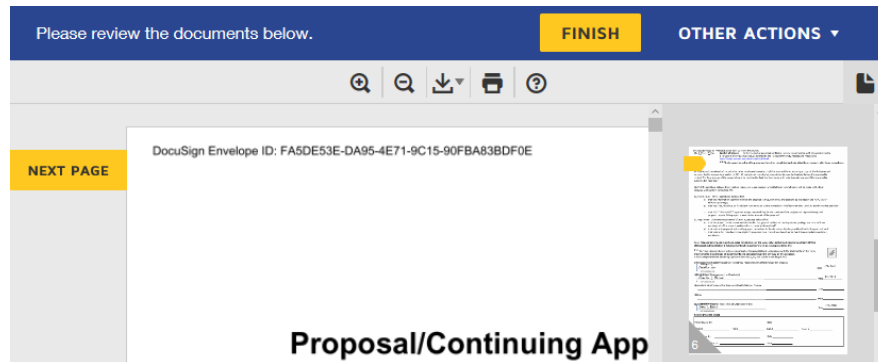
Zoom In – Zoom in to the envelope.

Zoom Out – Zoom out of the envelope.

Download – Create and download a PDF copy of the envelope in its current state.

Print – Print a copy of the envelope in its current state.

Help – A link to FAQs, tutorials, and other helpful DocuSign tools. Contact RAS for assistance with specifics regarding the envelope.

NEXT PAGE **Next Page** – Use this button to jump to the next page of the envelope.

Thumbnails – Click on this icon to view thumbnails of all pages in the envelope. Click on any thumbnail to navigate directly to that page. Thumbnails with a yellow arrow represent pages that require the action of the current signer. Once these actions are complete, the arrow turns green.

Click the **Sign** or **Initial** tab to place a signature or initial in the document. You will be asked to adopt a signature.

After adding information to a page, you can click **Next Page** to go to the next page.

Once all of the required actions have been completed, you can review the document and **Finish**. This will complete the process for you. The next person in line will now have to sign.

OTHER ACTIONS

The following options are available to you throughout the review process. Click on the **Other Actions** button to access them.

- **Finish Later** – Use this option to save your progress. You may return to your review by clicking on the Review Documents link in the initial email requesting you to sign the envelope.
- **Assign to Someone Else** – Use this option If you received the request to sign in error or wish to have someone else sign for you, you can use this option. Enter the name and email address of the person who should receive the envelope for approval. The name and email address of the new Signer is required.
- **Decline to Sign** – Use this option only if the envelope is highly erroneous or should not be submitted to the sponsor. This option voids the envelope. The PI will have to submit a new envelope.
- **Mark Up** – Use this option to negotiate changes to the envelope. Each change must be initialed by everyone who previously reviewed the envelope. Mark Ups are not recommended for submissions that require many changes.
- **Help & Support** – A link to FAQs, tutorials, and other helpful DocuSign tools. Contact RAS for assistance with the envelope.
- **About DocuSign** – An overview of DocuSign as a company.
- **View History** – Use this option to see all actions that have taken place in the life of the envelope.
- **View Certificate** – This option opens a PDF version of the certificate of completion, which includes information about the envelope events.
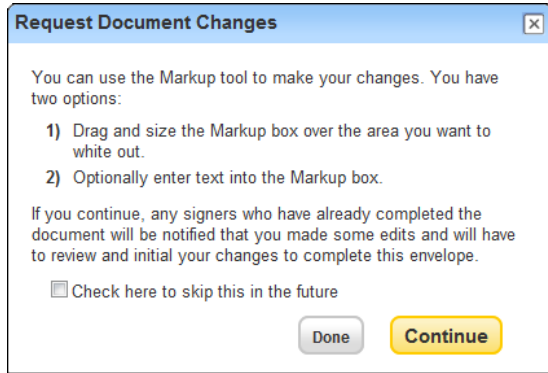- **Session Information** – A summary of the current session.
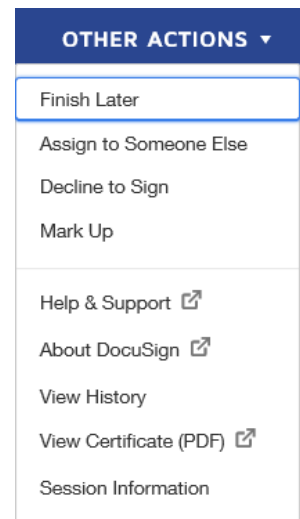
MORE ON MARKUP

There may be times when you need to be able to suggest changes or negotiate other aspects of a document. For example, you would like to suggest that the PI change the wording of a clause in the document. Using this will allow the PI to make minor changes to the document without having them resubmit a new envelope.

With the Mark Up feature, you can suggest that the PI make changes and additions to a document through, while managing approval initials from all signers for the changes and maintaining a secure audit trail of the changes.

The markup tool is used to add new text in a blank region of the document. Changes made by the PI must be reviewed and approved by all other recipients of the document. Recipients that signed a document before the changes were made are given a new opportunity to review and approve the changes before the document is finalized.

Request Document Changes ☒

You can use the Markup tool to make your changes. You have two options:

1) Drag and size the Markup box over the area you want to white out.

2) Optionally enter text into the Markup box.

If you continue, any signers who have already completed the document will be notified that you made some edits and will have to review and initial your changes to complete this envelope.

☐ Check here to skip this in the future

Done | **Continue**

Review the information in the dialog box. Optionally you can select to skip this dialog box in the future. Click **Continue** to enable the markup.
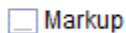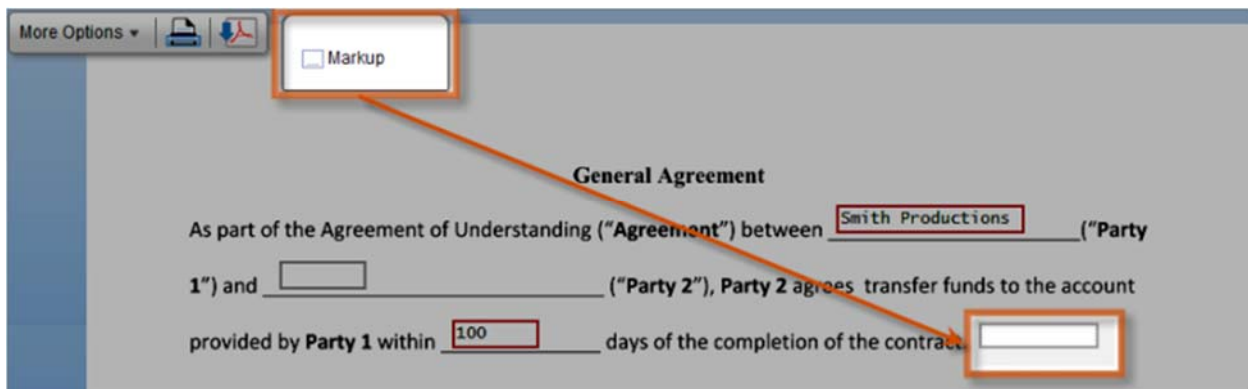
☐ Markup

Click and drag the Markup tool onto the document. Use the edges of the textbox to change its size to meet your needs.

Important!

You will not be able to place the Markup box on an existing text box or any other fillable object. It is recommended that Page 1 is used for Markups.

More Options ▾ | 🖨 | 📄   ☐ Markup

General Agreement

As part of the Agreement of Understanding ("**Agreement**") between ___Smith Productions___ ("**Party**

1") and _____ ("**Party 2**"), Party 2 agrees transfer funds to the account

provided by **Party 1** within ___100___ days of the completion of the contract.

- To remove a markup box from the document, click in the markup box and click the X that appears in the top-right corner.
- After adding any changes with the Markup tool, a small initial tab will appear to the far right of the page. You will be required to initial the Markup before you can complete the envelope.
- Complete signing the envelope normally. Your signature is confirming the markup, not the submission in its current state. The envelope will be routed to the PI for review and change.

SIGNING THE ENVELOPE

This portion of the guide will show you how to sign or initial documents within the envelope. When you click on a **Sign** or **Initial** tab, you will be asked to adopt a signature and initials. Each signature has its own id code that links the signature to the email address of the signer. Since these are in-house documents and the identification code verifies the identity of the signers, RAS has agreed to accept any of these signatures.

ADOPTING A SIGNATURE

To adopt a signature:

- Verify that your name and initials are correct.
- Select a style from the right to use for signatures and initials. This style is used for all signatures and initials in the document.
- Finally, click **Adopt your Signature** to save the save the information.

DRAWING A SIGNATURE

Depending on your browser, you may be able to draw your signature using various tools. After clicking **Draw** the signature styles are replaced with blocks for adding a signature and initials. This option is best with a touch pad or similar drawing device.

- In the **Draw your signature** and **Draw your Initials** blocks draw your signature/initials using your finger or stylus (for a touch-screen) or mouse.
- If you make a mistake, click **Try Again** to reset the block.
- Click **Adopt my Signature** to save your name, initial, and signature style and return to the document.
- You can return to the pre-set signature styles by clicking **Select a Signature Style**.
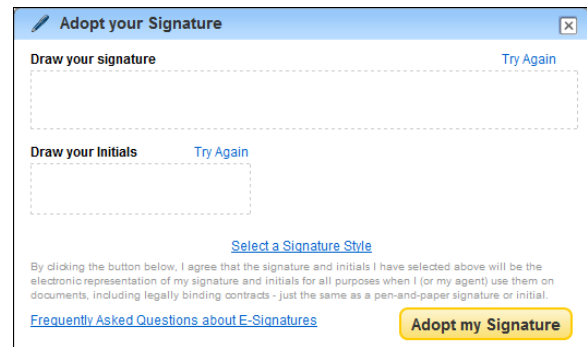
COMPLETING THE SIGNING PROCESS

When you have completed signing and initialing all of the required fields in the envelope, a **Finish** button will appear in the blue bar at the top of the page.

Take this time to review the envelope one last time and click the Finish button when you have completed your review. Once the button is pressed, the envelope will be forwarded to the next reviewer. You are again given the option of downloading a PDF copy of the documents or printing a copy of the documents.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are electronic signatures legal?

In 2000, the U.S. Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce (ESIGN) Act established electronic records and signatures as legally binding, having the same legal effects as traditional paper documents and handwritten signatures. But not all eSignature solutions are created equal. Only DocuSign warrants federal ESIGN Act compliance. Per European Directive 1999/93/EC, DocuSign's advanced signature is legally admissible and enforceable in the European Union. In fact, almost every civilized country in the world has adopted an electronic signature law, and the vast majority recognized DocuSign's form of electronic signature as meeting the definition of a valid electronic signature.

Since the documents included in the proposal package are primarily in-house documents, Research Administrative Services has agreed to accept documents signed electronically through DocuSign.

How do I get a DocuSign account?

The RAS staff will create and distribute accounts for PIs and other signers. Once complete, an introductory email will be sent to you with login credential information, reference material, and a link to the proposal package. Please note that a DocuSign account is NOT required to review or sign a proposal package.

Can I designate Alternate Signatories?

Signers, especially Department Chairs and Deans, should always inform their staff of when they will be unable to sign documents and who will be their designated signatory. It is up to the PI to contact signees to find out the status of signatory responsibilities.

Can the routing process be more parallel instead of hierarchal?

No. The routing process is a hierarchal in nature and DocuSign follows the rules of that process.

Can some members of the routing process be edited or omitted?

It is recommended that all members of the routing process review and sign the proposal as necessary. If there is no other choice, the signature of the budget officer and AVP are the only signatures that are absolutely required in order for RAS to process a proposal.

The PI may edit signers or the order of signing by logging into their DocuSign account.

What is an envelope?

An envelope is a collection of documents that are sent to recipients for review and signature.

Do I have to sign all of the documents? If not, which ones require signature, etc.?

No. There are some documents that are required and some that are mandatory based on the research. The *Application to Seek off-Campus Funds* is always required. Forms such as the *F&A Waiver/Reduction Request*, *Cost Sharing Authorization* are only required if the items are included in the proposal.

Can I edit the information on a document?

It is possible to edit information on a document, but that will delay the process. The PI and all prior signees will have to review and initial any changes made. It is recommended that submissions are returned to the PI for edits and changes using the markup feature.

Can I print or save the document at any stage?

Yes. The PI or anyone who has signed a document may save or print the document at any time. To save the document, use the **Finish Later** feature under **More Options**. To get back into the document, click on the **Resume** link in the email containing the access code.

How can I "mark-up"/edit a document within DocuSign?

A signer may wish to suggest a change to a document by using the mark-up feature. The document will be sent back to the PI with the suggested edits. The PI will have to make the changes and sign off on those changes.

What should I do if I receive a submission in error?

Contact RAS. The document will be resent to the correct reviewer.

What internet browsers support DocuSign?

DocuSign has been tested on and works fine with Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Apple Safari. It is also compatible with most mobile-based browsers.

Does DocuSign support SMS messaging?

DocuSign does not support SMS messaging, but you can get email reminders on a mobile device if you sync your HU email to your mobile device.

Is a DocuSign Signature a "Digital Signature"?

No. DocuSign lets you create an electronic signature, which is not the same as a digital signature.

An **electronic signature, as defined by the Federal ESIGN Act,** is an "electronic sound, symbol or process, attached to or logically associated with a contract or other record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record" (ESIGN). All 50 states have laws that define electronic signatures in substantially the same way.

Whereas, a **digital signature** or **digital signature scheme** is a mathematical scheme for determining the source of a digital message or document. A digital signature by definition is a technology, a method of authenticating. It does not by itself meet the standards of what constitutes a valid electronic signature, nor does it mean that the signer's identity has been verified. Digital signatures are most often used to apply a digital "seal" to an electronic document in order to make it tamper-evident. In fact, DocuSign uses digital signatures in this way; DocuSign customers and signers have the option to apply a digital signature to a DocuSigned document when the transaction is complete.

So when you need to get a legally-binding signature, make sure you're using a complete electronic signature solution.

Does this process affect the deadline to submit a proposal to RAS?

No. When submitting a proposal for routing, PIs should keep in mind that proposals should be submitted to RAS at least 5 business days prior to the proposal deadline date given by the sponsor. We ask all signees to sign DocuSign submissions within 2 business days of receipt.

VERSION NOTES

Version 2 – updated 3/1/18
Images and text were updated to reflect the new user experience.
Some grammar issues were fixed.

SUPPORT

RAS is available to receive any questions or comments regarding DocuSign. Please feel free to contact us at any time. You may call us at (202) 806-4759 or email the DocuSign administrator using the information below:

LeeRoy Smith
leesmith@howard.edu