

TITLE	106.1: Use of Electronic and Scanned Signatures
SCOPE	The activities of the Health Research Ethics Board (HREB) operating under the direct authority of the Health Research Ethics Authority (HREA)
APPROVAL AUTHORITY	Ethics Director
EFFECTIVE DATE	April 2024

1.0 PURPOSE

The HREB uses and accepts electronic and scanned signatures as equivalent to handwritten signatures on documents transmitted between the HREB and the Principal Investigator and/or members of his/her research team.

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe the use of electronic signatures / scanned signatures on communications from the HREB.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Electronic Signature (e-signature): Any electronic means that indicates either that a person adopts the contents of an electronic message, or more broadly that the person who claims to have written a message is the one who wrote it (and that the message received is the one that was sent by this person)

Scanned Signature: A digital copy of a signature (converted to an electronic image file) derived from an original hand-written version

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

All HREB members and Research Ethics Office (REO) Personnel are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this SOP are met.

4.0 PROCEDURE

- 4.1 A scanned signature will only be used with authorization from the signatory.
- 4.2 A scanned signature will only be used for the purpose for which it was authorized, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the authorization.
- 4.3 Scanned signatures will be kept as a PDF file and stored in a restricted folder on the HREA shared drive. Only REO Personnel will have access to this folder.

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- 4.4 Each document on which the scanned signature is used will be checked for accuracy and completeness by the responsible REO Personnel and will be approved electronically by the assigned Co-Chair prior to the scanned signature being affixed to the document.
- 4.5 Each scanned signature will be permanently deleted from the HREA shared drive upon termination of appointment with the HREB.
- 4.6 Electronic signatures (such as Adobe) will only be accepted when the applicable signed document/letter has been received by email from the signatory of the document/letter.