



MYTHS ABOUT WET SIGNATURES¹: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Digital alternatives ² to wet signatures have no legal standing	Queensland State Archives requires you to use wet signatures rather than digital alternatives	Timesheets can be approved without a wet signature	Wet signatures are easier than digital alternatives
<p>No, if a signature is required under legislation, in most cases that requirement can be met using a digital alternative. The Electronic Transactions (Queensland) Act 2001 (ETA) sets out principles and requirements that have to be met.</p> <p>Some legal requirements for signatures cannot be met digitally. Check out Schedule 1 of the ETA for further information or seek legal advice if you're unsure.</p>	<p>No, QSA supports the use of digital alternatives where it makes sense to use them.</p> <p>If you want to move away from wet signatures, look at the risks involved and decide how you might do the things a wet signature typically does such as signifying knowledge, approval, acceptance or obligation. Something as simple as an email documenting approval may be a suitable alternative.</p>	<p>Yes, timesheets can be approved using digital alternatives.</p> <p>For example, at QSA we have changed our internal procedures and implemented a digital approval process for timesheets. It involved updating timesheets which are managed in our eDRMS and treating those updates as approvals. We can track who did what to the timesheet using audit trails and save the timesheet as a record that cannot be altered.</p> <p>Think about what might work in your agency.</p>	<p>No, not for digital transactions. Information born digitally should be managed digitally.</p> <p>Continuing to rely on wet signatures in a digital environment is likely to slow down business processes, result in confusion through the creation of multiple copies of documents and add paper management costs.</p> <p>More and more agencies are making use of digital alternatives that achieve the same outcome as a wet signature.</p>

¹ A hand-written signature on a hard-copy document

² An electronic method of signing an electronic message that identifies and authenticates a particular person and indicates approval of the information contained in the message. Digital alternatives may include digitised signatures (including scanned handwritten signatures inserted as images or use of signature blocks on emails); email approvals; digital signatures (technology that utilises encryption technology to transform a message to a seemingly unintelligible form and back again) or click through agreements (e.g. 'I agree' style statements).