

CONTRACT SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS: VICE PRESIDENT for ADMINISTRATION and FINANCE, CFO
VICE PRESIDENT for LEGAL AFFAIRS, GENERAL COUNSEL

EFFECTIVE DATE: XX/XX/2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE: XX/XX/2027

APPROVAL BY PRESIDENT

I. POLICY STATEMENT

POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the positions on campus with authority to approve certain transactions and sign related contracts on behalf of Northern Kentucky University.

Kentucky law empowers the Board of Regents to exercise most purchasing and contracting functions on behalf of the University, subject to delegations made by the Board. Under the Board's [Finance and Transactions Approval Policy](#), Board approval is required for certain significant contracts and transactions. For all other contracts, the Board has delegated approval authority to the President. [Article VII of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents](#) also authorizes the President to execute contracts on behalf of the University.

To ensure efficiency in the institution's operations, the President hereby delegates contract approval and signature authority to other University positions in the manner described in this policy. The authority to sign a contract includes the final authority to approve it on behalf of the University, unless otherwise indicated.

For purposes of this policy, a "contract" includes all contracts, agreements, memoranda of understanding, memoranda of agreement, purchase orders, and other legally binding written instruments that are entered into with non-University entities and individuals, including clients, customers, sponsors, vendors, service providers, suppliers, contractors, government agencies, and other educational institutions. A "contract" may or may not involve the exchange of money.

The University typically should use a written contract when it establishes a payment or other legal obligation pertaining to another entity or person.

All University employees must comply with the terms of this policy and other University purchasing policies and contract procedures.

Before presenting a contract for final approval and signature, employees should obtain proper internal approvals in the manner required by their division, college, or office.

CONTRACT AMENDMENTS

Amendments, extensions, and other modifications to a contract must be signed at the level at which the underlying contract was signed, at a minimum. If a contract amendment triggers a threshold that requires signature at a higher level of authority, then signature of the amendment must occur at the higher level.

However, routine amendments to construction and other capital project contracts, including change orders, may be signed at the level corresponding to the value of the amendment.

PRIOR REVIEW BY LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT; TEMPLATE CONTRACTS

Procurement Services and Legal Affairs may create template contracts and terms for specific categories of agreements identified in this policy.

All contracts must either be on a template approved by Legal Affairs or be reviewed prior to signature by Procurement Services or Legal Affairs.

The individual with delegated authority to sign a contract must obtain that review, if necessary, before signing the contract.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES AND CLICK-THROUGHS

The authority to approve and sign includes the authority to affix a binding electronic signature, electronic click-through, or other equivalent electronic final approval to business or contract terms on behalf of the University. For example, electronic acceptance of a vendor's contract terms, such as via a click-through button, constitutes a "signature." Other University requirements pertaining to electronic signatures may be found in the [Electronic Signature Policy](#).

SUB-DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The authorized positions identified in this policy may temporarily sub-delegate their authority to other University positions, usually within the delegator's supervisory chain (e.g., during vacations). Temporary sub-delegations must be documented in writing and shared with the Director of Procurement Services and the General Counsel. Delegators may use this optional sub-delegation form [form hyperlink inserted here in final policy].

Temporary sub-delegations may be revoked in writing for any reason at any time by the delegator.

Delegations that are intended to be made indefinitely should be incorporated into this policy.

For contracts signed after effective date of this policy, this policy supersedes and replaces all prior delegations, even if in writing.

COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Many University contracts are subject to competitive bidding requirements, which are described on [this NKU Procurement Services webpage](#). Before signing a contract, individuals with delegated signature authority must consult with Procurement Services as necessary to ensure that applicable bidding requirements have been satisfied.

REPOSITORY OF SIGNED CONTRACTS

After a contract is signed, the individual with delegated signature authority must provide the final, signed contract to Procurement Services.

EXTERNAL APPROVALS

Many University contracts require approval by an external authority, such as personal service contracts subject to approval by the state Government Contracts Review Committee. Applicable external approvals are in addition to the University approvals governed by this policy.

EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to signature or approval of the following:

- Documents used solely for internal University purposes, such as expense reimbursements, internal requisitions, purchasing-card reports, and office budgets and related internal transfers;
- Standard University contract forms and terms used in connection with routine retail or similar campus transactions (e.g., campus recreation membership terms, residence hall housing contracts, tuition payment forms, terms accompanying disposition of surplus property, Athletics and SOTA ticketing terms);
- Approvals and other actions in furtherance of routine transactions that already have been approved pursuant to this policy or other University policies (e.g., booking previously approved travel and conference registrations), except that contracts associated with those activities must be reviewed and signed in accordance with this policy;
- Customary employment offer letters and faculty appointment letters;
- Contracts made for the University's account by an authorized concessionaire or vendor, when permitted by the underlying contract between the concessionaire/vendor and the University;
- Forms, reports, and other deliverables required to be submitted by NKU to an outside party that do not incur a legal obligation on behalf of the University or commit the University to spending or receiving money (e.g., deliverables required by a contract, reports required by law); and
- Contracts in the name of the NKU Foundation and the NKU Research Foundation that do not involve expenditure of University funds; these contracts are subject to the Foundations' policies.

UNAUTHORIZED CONTRACT SIGNATURE

The only employees who may sign contracts on behalf of the University are those expressly authorized to do so by this policy, other applicable University policies, or in a valid written delegation of authority. University employees may not sign contracts without authorization. Employees who sign contracts without authorization may incur personal liability under the contract and be subject to disciplinary action, including termination, in accordance with the University's employment policies and processes.

NO CONTRACT-SPLITTING

Splitting or dividing transactions into multiple contracts in order to avoid the approval thresholds described herein is prohibited.

INTERPRETATION

Questions regarding this policy may be directed to and resolved by the Vice President for Administration and Finance / Chief Financial Officer and/or the General Counsel.

II. AUTHORIZED CONTRACT SIGNATURES

The following types of contracts may be signed only by the positions indicated below or by a more senior position within the relevant line of authority.

A contract that is not described below may be signed only by the President or by the Vice President of Administration and Finance, CFO (referred to below as “CFO”).

SIGNATURE BASED ON CONTRACT VALUE

Contracts involving NKU’s expenditure or receipt of funds, other property of value, or other direct equivalent financial impact are approved and signed as follows:

Aggregate value of \$10,000,000 or more.....President, with Board of Regents approval

Annual value¹ of \$5,000,000 or more.....President, with Board of Regents approval

Annual value of \$500,000 to \$4,999,999.....President

Annual value of \$250,000 to \$499,999.....CFO

Annual value through \$249,999.....Director, Procurement Services

*This policy applies to contracts made in the name of the University regardless of source of funds. University contracts paid with Foundation funds are subject to this policy.

*Note that many revenue-generating contracts are subject to a Board-approved schedule for rates, fees, and charges.

SIGNATURE BASED ON CONTRACT CATEGORY

Contracts within the categories described below may be signed as indicated, notwithstanding the dollar-value thresholds established above. Signature is subject to any Board approval requirements that may apply:

Academic and clinical affiliation agreements, clinical site affiliation agreements, MOUs, and similar contracts Agreements that include a monetary value or direct equivalent financial impact, including discounting or waiving NKU tuition or fees, must be co-signed by the CFO.	Provost
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¹ As used in this policy, “annual value” refers to the largest annual value during the contract term.

Advertising and marketing contracts (less than \$250,000 total)	VP Advancement
Athletics game contracts (as home or visiting team) <p>Contracts involving total guaranteed payments exceeding \$10,000</p> <p>Contracts involving total guaranteed payments of \$10,000 or less</p>	<p>CFO and Director of Athletics</p> <p>Director of Athletics</p>
Athletics – Name, Image, Likeness Agreements	Director of Athletics
Capital projects contracts (e.g., design, pre-construction, construction, renovation, demolition) <p>Contracts of \$500,000 or more</p> <p>Contracts of \$499,999 or less</p> <p>Contracts of no dollar value (e.g., time-only change orders)</p>	<p>CFO</p> <p>AVP, Facilities Mgmt.</p> <p>AVP, Facilities Mgmt.</p>
Center for Economic Analysis and Development (\$10,000 total) <p>This applies only to routine CEAD revenue-generating service contracts totaling \$10,000 or less. Contracts of greater value must be signed by the Provost.</p>	Dean, College of Business
Certifications, consents, and similar miscellaneous documents with no specified dollar value	VP for relevant area
Collaboration and general “partnering” agreements with no specified dollar value (e.g., umbrella/master memoranda of understanding)	VP for relevant area
Contracts involving the outsourcing or concession of a significant institutional function	President, with Board of Regents approval
Employment contracts and similar agreements <p>Customary offer letters and faculty appointment letters are not subject to this policy. The President’s employment contract may be signed only by the Chair of the Board of Regents.</p>	President

Facility/space use and rental agreements with outside entities (not exceeding \$10,000 or two years total; all others must be signed by CFO; no leases)		
	Athletics facilities	Director of Athletics
	Campus Recreation Center	Director, Campus Recreation
	Digitorium	Dean, College of Informatics with Ass't Director for Conference Mgmt and Event Services
	Fine Arts Center spaces	Dean, College of Arts and Sciences with Ass't Director for Conference Mgmt and Event Services
	Student Union	Ass't Director for Conference Mgmt and Event Services
	University Center	Ass't Director for Conference Mgmt and Event Services
	All others	VP for relevant area, with Dean if applicable
Gift agreements (gifts to NKU) Agreements for gifts to the NKU Foundation are not subject to this policy.		VP Advancement and CFO
HIPAA Business Associate Agreements with no specified dollar value		VP for relevant area, with General Counsel approval
Law enforcement mutual aid and similar agreements		Chief, NKU Police Department
Legal Settlements		See Legal Settlements Policy
Library collections acquisitions (Steely) (less than \$10,000 total) This includes license agreements to acquire access to scholarly databases and other services that support library operations. Agreements must be approved by IT and Legal or Procurement Services in advance.		Dean, Steely Library

<p>Licenses and assignments of NKU intellectual property (patents, trademarks, copyrights)</p> <p>NKURF licenses may be executed by NKURF according to its policies.</p>	<p>President</p>
<p>Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality Agreements with no specified dollar value</p>	<p>VP for relevant area</p>
<p>Norse Network Hub</p> <p>Revenue-generating agreements (\$5,000 or more)</p> <p>Revenue-generating agreements (\$4,999 or less)</p> <p>Routine collaboration and partnering agreements with no specified dollar value</p>	<p>VP Advancement and CFO</p> <p>Exec. Dir., Norse Network Hub</p> <p>Exec. Dir., Norse Network Hub</p>
<p>Planetarium licensing agreements (\$15,000 total or less)</p> <p>This consists of acquisition of licenses and similar performance rights.</p>	<p>Dean, College of Arts and Sciences</p>
<p>Real estate purchases, sales, and leases</p> <p>This includes agreements regardless whether NKU is buyer, seller, lessor, or lessee.</p> <p>Agreements for single-family residential properties may be signed by the CFO, no Board approval required.</p> <p>Norse Neighborhood student housing agreements may be signed by the VP for Student Affairs, no Board approval required.</p> <p>Easements may be signed by the CFO. Permanent easements require Board approval. Temporary easements do not.</p>	<p>President, with Board of Regents approval</p>

Risepoint contract documents <div>Contracts and amendments with a stated dollar value \$500,000 and above</div> <div>Contracts and amendments with a stated dollar value \$499,999 or less</div> <div>Contracts and amendments with no stated dollar value (e.g., program addenda)</div>	<div>President</div> <div>CFO</div> <div>Provost</div>
School of the Arts (SOTA) licensing agreements (\$25,000 total or less) This consists of acquisition of licenses and similar performance rights.	Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Sponsored research contracts, grants, and awards This includes research non-disclosure, confidentiality, data use, and material transfer agreements. Grants and similar agreements that require an NKU match must be co-signed by the Provost. The Director of Research, Grants and Contracts is the Authorized Organizational Representative for purposes of federal grant and similar submissions.	Director, Research Grants and Contracts
Sponsorships and advertising agreements (revenue to NKU)	VP Advancement, co-signed by VP for relevant area
Software licenses (NKU acquiring license, as licensee) <div>Licenses with annual value in excess of \$10,000</div> <div>Licenses with annual value of \$10,000 or less</div>	<div>CFO</div> <div>Director, Procurement Services</div>
Use of University name, logos, and marks , unless included as customary term in another contract covered by this policy	President
Work-for-hire agreements and copyright assignments with NKU faculty	Provost

REVISION HISTORY

REVISION TYPE	MONTH/YEAR APPROVED
Policy Adopted	X/XX/2025