

What is a Digital Signature and Why are They Relevant to Applied Biology Professionals?

UNLIKE MOST ELECTRONIC signatures, digital signatures are used to confirm authorship and protect the data integrity of electronic documents. The use of digital signatures assures professionals, their employers, their clients, and the public that their electronic work products are authentic and protected from tampering.

Rule 13.4 in the *College of Applied Biology Rules* states that a signature and seal may be affixed to documents in electronic format only when using a College-approved digital signature and seal. In March of 2015, in response to requests from members, the College entered into an agreement with third-party service provider Notarius to issue and manage digital signatures for College members within a highly secure, ISO 27001:2005-certified environment.

Why would I need a digital signature?

Copying and pasting your signature's image onto electronic documents is a contravention of Rule 13.4 and fails to ensure data integrity or guarantee authorship, since the signature and any components of documents can easily be copied, removed, or otherwise manipulated. When a digital signature is applied, the documents become encrypted with an individual's private signature key, which detects any changes

to the document throughout its lifecycle, thereby guaranteeing the authorship and integrity of the document.

Digital signatures also formally link your identity and professional status with your electronic documents and carry the same level of legal validity as your handwritten signature. At a time when both the public and corporate sectors are transitioning to paperless systems, the use of secure digital signatures ensures document origin, integrity, and legal authority is not compromised in the process.

How do I get a digital signature?

Notarius is offering the promotional price of \$40 to College members who sign up for a digital signature kit by July 16, 2015, savings of \$100 over the regular price of \$140. In addition to the one-time sign-up fee, an annual fee of \$185 will apply per user for the first subscription. Group rates are available for employers who wish to purchase digital signature kits for several employees. Visit the College's webpage on the Notarius website for more information or to sign up: <http://notarius.com/cab/#overview> 



→ **INTRODUCTORY OFFER FROM NOTARIUS:** Sign up for a digital signature kit by July 16th and save \$100.

→ **DIGITAL SIGNATURES** preserve document integrity and verify authorship.