



eSignature for a digital campus: Why Augsburg University chooses signNow

Step-by-step introduction of signNow on campus

Step 1.

Augsburg University first embraced the concept of eSigning about a year before the COVID lockdown. Back in 2019, the state of Minnesota introduced a new law that required all employees to confirm their awareness of their own employment status as well as their salary with a signature.

“Our University’s HRs quickly realized that collecting these confirmation letters in a traditional pen-and-paper way would be a real nightmare! This obviously needed to be done digitally and fast, primarily because there was a tight deadline,” explains Krajewski.

The HR Team, in collaboration with IT, looked at several available eSignature options on the market and made their decision in favor of signNow for the following reasons:

- The pricing structure of the available paid plans
- Convenient and quick document preparation using various types of fillable fields
- Team management over standard sets of documents via shared folders
- Intuitive interface and ease of use for staff members and students of all levels and majors.

The use of signNow for employment status confirmations caught on and was quickly implemented with every other type of document used by the HR office.

“Interestingly, the HR team actually integrated signNow into their workflow in an entirely independent way, without any IT people getting involved,” notes Krajewski.

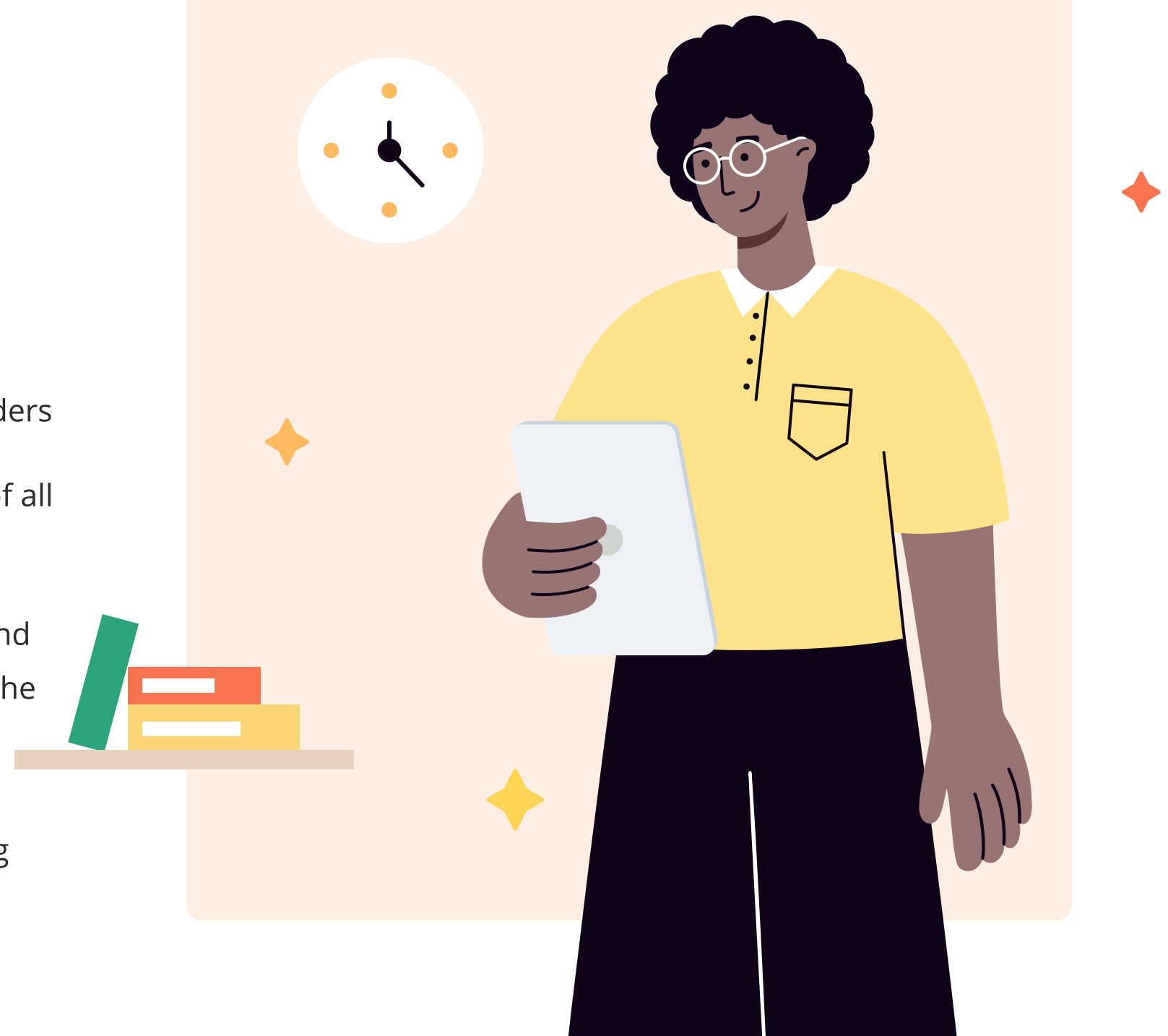


Customer profile:

- Scott Krajewski
- Director of IT & Chief Information Officer
- Augsburg University, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 500+ employees using signNow, both on and off campus
- 17 signNow admin users across multiple teams and departments

Problems before switching to eSigning:

- Long document lifecycle
- Manually tracking signatures and sending reminders to signers when needed
- Slow document preparation which often involved scanning, emailing, and printing copies



Step 2.

When COVID hit in March 2020, most campus activities immediately transitioned to remote operations. University staff members were turning to the HR office to ask about the tool they had been using for eSignatures. In a matter of weeks, signNow expanded to several other departments and teams.

“The most critical, in terms of signNow use volumes, was the Student Counseling Center. Previously, for their intake forms, demographic forms, and information release forms, the Center used wet signatures. Under lockdown conditions, when Counseling went online with telehealth via Zoom, getting signatures in the fastest and most effortless way was of critical importance. Mental health is a top priority, and paperwork should not be getting in the way when someone needs help,” says Krajewski.

Step 3.

In the summer of 2020, Augsburg University had to move their traditional summer workshops for K-12 teachers online. The needed workshop leader contracts went digital as well. Later, Krajewski was approached by the Grant Office. They also wanted to integrate eSigning into their document workflows. Next was the office of Academic Affairs. Their contract collection had always been a process of sign-scan-email (and the scans were rather low-quality at times). With signNow, this process became 100% digital.

Benefits delivered by signNow to Augsburg University:



Consistency in document style.

signNow's shared folders of Documents and Templates became one of the most-used features outside of eSigning for university staff, both on and off campus. Reusable templates were especially appreciated by the HR office:

“All outgoing documents must follow a standard layout, with the same style and university identity. At the same time, these documents are often prepared by different people, some of them working from home. Reusable templates did not only save time but also helped us to manage the same style and stay consistent, no matter how many documents are being prepared,” explains Krajewski.



Independence in software use.

During the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters at Augsburg University, only 10% of all classes were continued offline. With nearly everyone working from home, teaching the staff to use new software could have been problematic. However, Krajewski notes that onboarding was straightforward:

“With just a little bit of initial training, literally everyone was good to go and could start sending out documents. No one comes back to ask questions!”



New level of convenience with document delivery.

eSignature and paperless workflows are overall known for their tremendous time-saving effect which is noticeable and easily quantifiable. But there are also unquantifiable variables, for example, less procrastination.

Preparing and submitting documents in an old-fashioned way always takes time: printing out the forms, filling them in, then either scanning and emailing, or sending them back by snail mail. People get tired just thinking about the entire process, and often tend to postpone document delivery to the very last minute.

But when you know in advance that the whole process won't take more than two minutes and requires minimal manual effort on your part — it's a totally different story!

Future plans

The study abroad office in the Center for Global Education and Experience

at Augsburg University was supposed to be next in line to integrate eSigning into their paperwork. This was put on hold due to reduced travel conditions under COVID lockdown. However, the office still has these plans on the table.

For Augsburg University, eSigning became one of those very few positive takeaways from remote working conditions:

“This is one of those things that's definitely going to stay with us after lockdown. We are not going back to pen and paper, primarily because it takes so much time! In the long term, less time on paperwork means more time for really meaningful work, like having live interactions with our students,” Scott Krajewski sums up.