

This guide will take you through how to view and validate signatures on documents you have received. You do not need a Smartcard to verify the signature applied with one, but you need to be connected to the internet. The most common types of document used within the profession are Microsoft Word (DOC) and Adobe Acrobat (PDF), which is why we are concentrating on these.

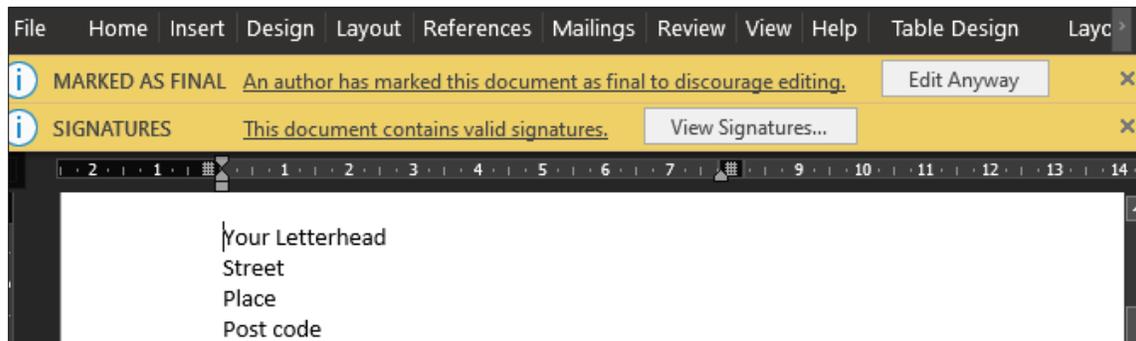
For clarity, the versions used in this guide is Microsoft Office 365. Even if you use a different version of processing software, you will be able to use the following instructions. The buttons might look different, but the functionality will be the same.

NB: Regardless of what word processing software or edition is used: You need to interrogate the digital signature itself, NOT the visual representation that may or may not be visible on the document. That means, validating or confirming a digital signature is only possible on the computer, not with a print-out of the document. A print-out will not give you the information you need to validate the digital signature embedded in the document.

Visual check

1. Marked as Final & Signatures

This edition of Microsoft Word will have two yellow bars at the top, alerting the recipient that the document is **Marked As Final** and that **signatures** have been applied:

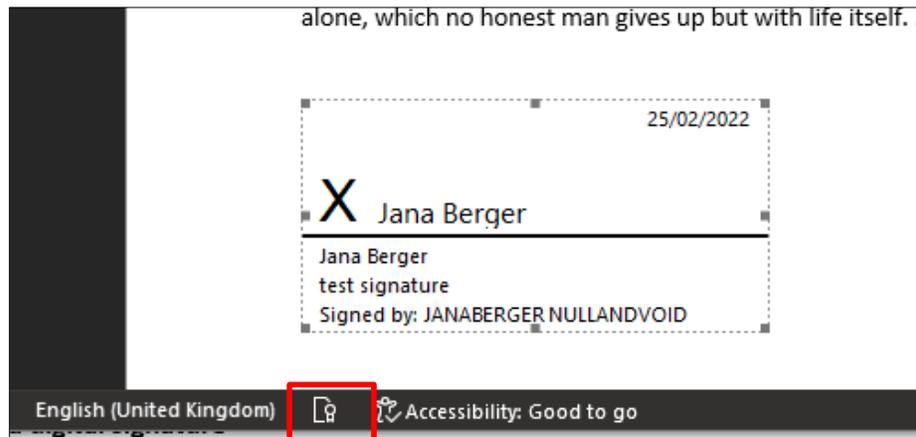


As with previous versions of Word, this shows that the document and its content are protected and cannot be altered. Should any recipient ignore that statement and decide to **Edit Anyway**, the yellow bars will disappear, and the signature will be invalidated. Any following recipient after that will notice that the document has been altered.

In addition, the second yellow bar informs you that the document contains signatures. **View Signatures...** opens the signature panel and lets you check what is contained in that signature.

2. Signature Icon

A third indicator is the signature icon at the bottom of the document.

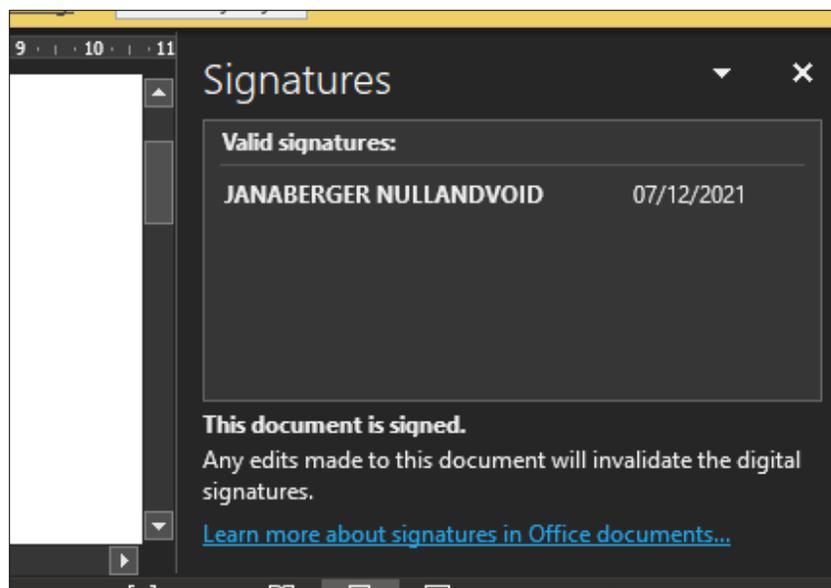


It looks like a wax seal attached to a piece of paper, like they did in olden times, confirming that the document has an electronic signature attached to it.

Interrogating the Signature

1. Viewing/confirming a digital signature

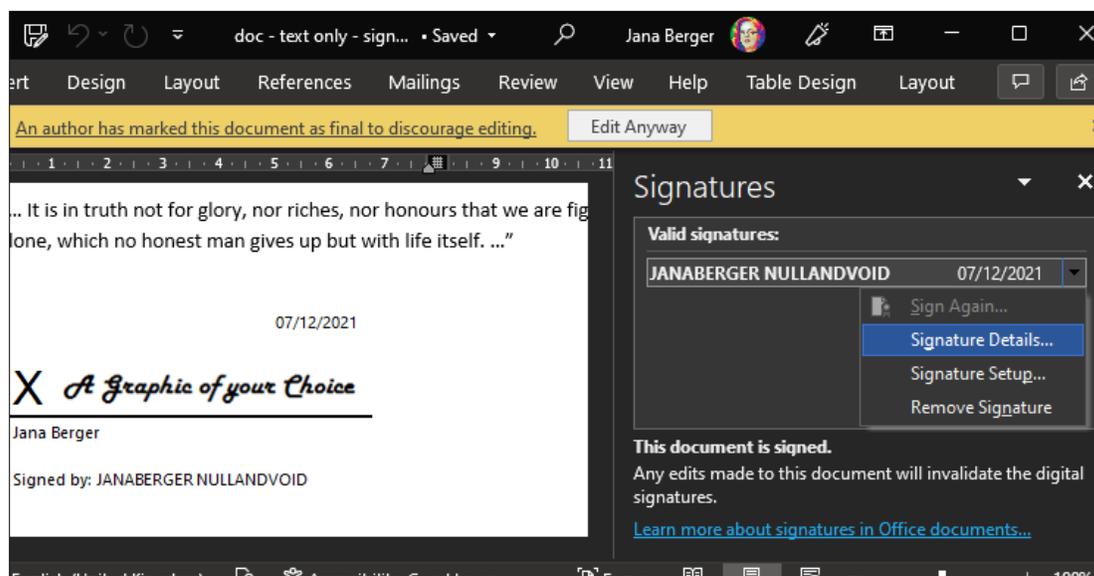
Select **View Signatures...** on the yellow bar on the top to see the signature panel. Alternatively, you can click on the signature **icon** at the bottom of the window. Both will open up the signature panel on the right-hand side.



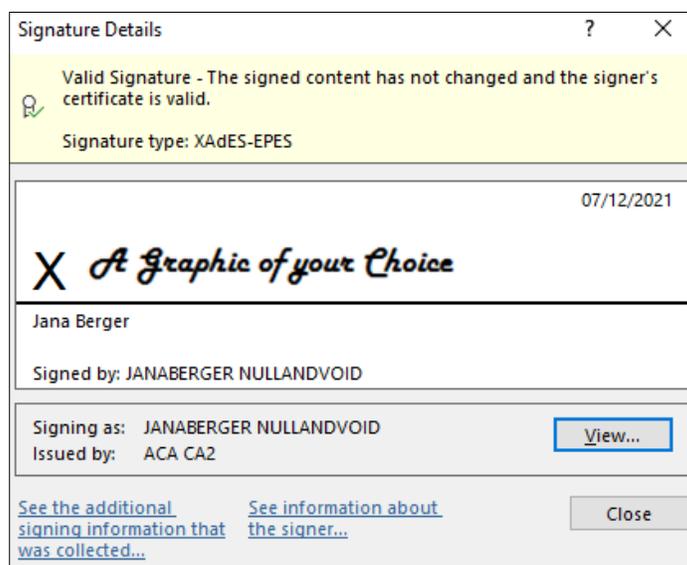
It will tell you who signed the document and on what day. As with other versions of Word, this is the first indicator of who actually signed the document and whether or not it is the person you expected to sign. The name of the signatory showing here is taken directly from

the Smartcard QES on the chip of the card; not from what may have been typed onto the signature line of the document.

Again, bear in mind that what you see on the signature line, the one starting with “X,” is a representation of that person’s signature. It is not the digital signature itself. It will give you information, as to what name was typed and on what date, it might even show a squiggle that looks like the wet signature of the signatory. But it will not confirm validity. For that, you need to interrogate the digital signature embedded in the bits and bytes of the document itself.

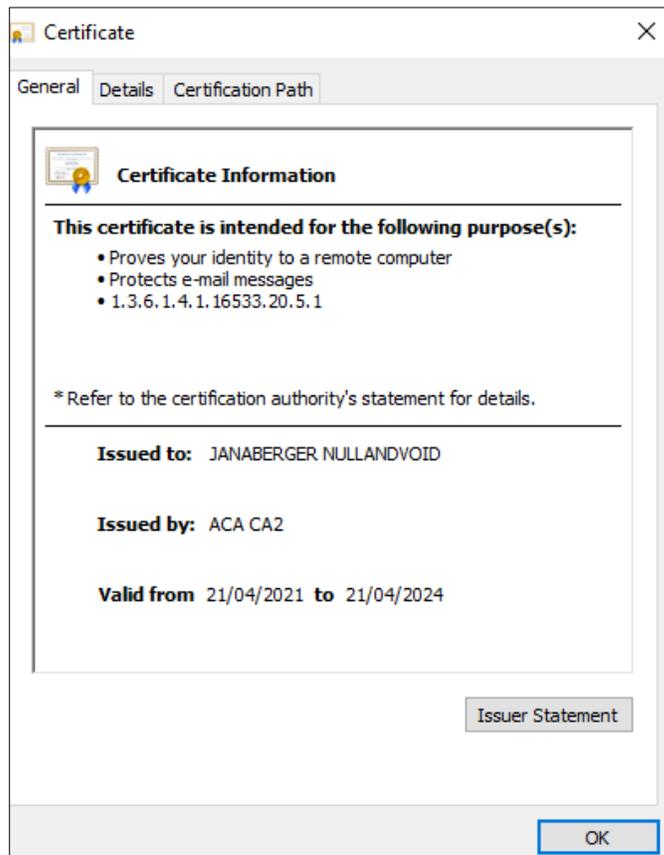


Click on the signature you want to check (it is possible to have multiple signatures in one document) and from here select **Signature Details...** to check all necessary information in the following window:



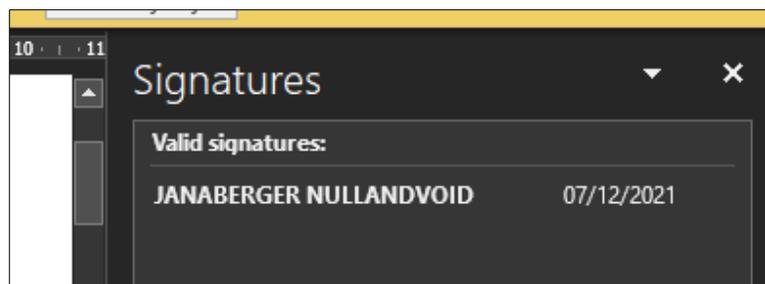
Most important is obviously the first sentence confirming that this in fact a valid signature and that the document has not been tempered with since it was signed.

Click on the **View...** button to open up information about the underlying certificate itself.



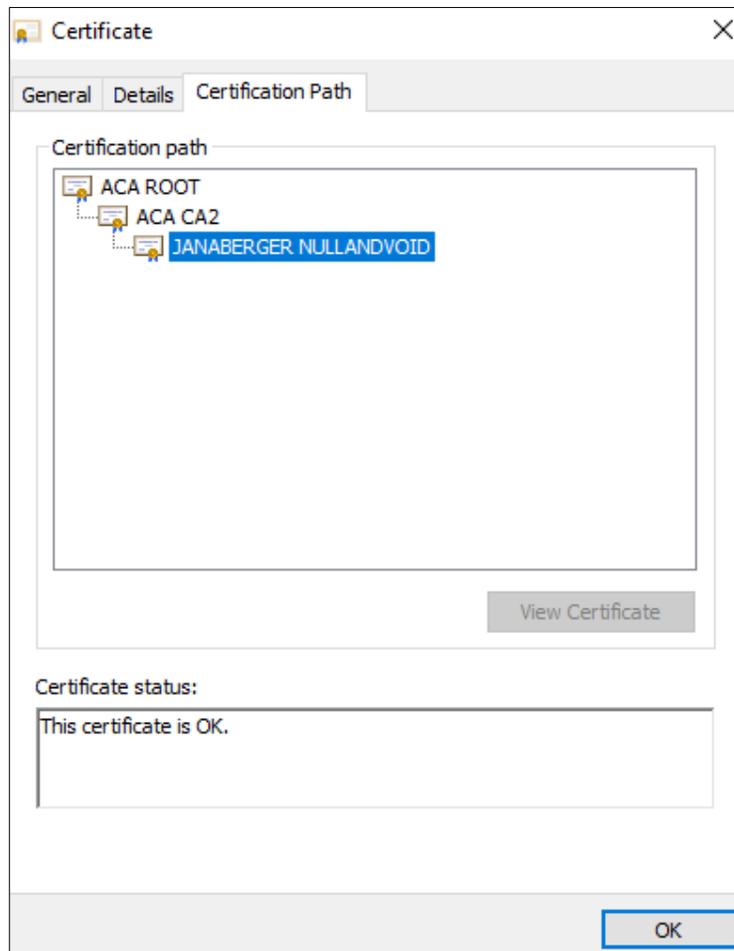
This window tells you who owns the signature (“Issued to: ...”) and who the Certification Authority is (“Issued by: ...”) - the organisation in charge of the underlying certificates. It also confirms the validity period of the signature in question.

You can check these validity dates against the date showing in the signature panel:



This will ascertain that the owner/signatory had a valid digital signature when s/he signed the document.

The certification path shows a so-called “issuance chain.” The signature you are looking at is based on an underlying certificate issued by ACA, the Spanish Bar Association. That in itself is based on a root certificate - the top entry in that list. This root certificate is the basis for every signature issued by the Law Society to our members.



Declining a Signature

If the **Certificate Information** and the **issuance chain** do not say “ACA” as the issuing agency, then that signature in front of you is not a QES issued by the Law Society. You will need to conduct your own checks as to the validity of the signature and the identity of the signatory.