2.1 **Purpose.** This chapter discusses the correspondence clearance process and identifies those Indian Affairs officials who are authorized to sign controlled correspondence.

2.2 **Surname Process.** In DOI and BIA, the “surname process” is used to record official concurrence with the content of a variety of written documents, such as testimony, written responses to Congressional hearings, comments on proposed legislation, correspondence, and reports. This process is designed to ensure that written information is accurate and that the organization provides consistent policy statements.

2.3 **Required Surnames.** No officer or employee is required to surname a document that s(he) believes to be incorrect or inappropriate. If the originating office and the surname official are unable to resolve their differences, the dissenting official should prepare a written explanation of the issues. That information is forwarded with the correspondence to the signing official. The official authorized to sign the correspondence determines whether the correspondence will be signed as written, or returned for revision based upon the opposing views.

2.4 **Correspondence Clearance.** Correspondence should be routed through offices with a direct interest in or responsibility for the functions, programs, or policies that are covered by the correspondence. While the identification of appropriate clearances is often a case-by-case determination, some general clearance requirements that are shown below:

**A. Office Directors** must surname all correspondence originating in their organization that is forwarded for signature by the Deputy Commissioner or any official in the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs.

**B. Subject Matter Experts** must review correspondence that addresses certain specific matters as shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Clear Through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting policies and practices</td>
<td>Administration, CFO  Accounting Officer or Administrative Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOIA and Privacy Act</td>
<td>FOIA Officer  FOIA Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund distribution, appropriations actions, fund status</td>
<td>Planning, Budget and Management Support, CFO  Budget Officer of Administrative Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAO and OIG audits</td>
<td>Audit and Evaluation, CFO  Audit and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interagency Agreements</td>
<td>Acquisition and Property Management (BIA or DOI, as appropriate)  Contracting Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International matters</td>
<td>Territorial and International Affairs  Territorial and International Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2.5 Clearance of Revised Correspondence

If substantive changes are made during the clearance process, the document is re-routed for clearance. Documents that have only minor changes relating to style, grammar, punctuation, and the like, may be sent directly to the office that recommended the changes. In this case, the surnames and dates of the offices that had previously cleared the document are typed on the file copy.

## 2.6 Signature Authority

The following table shows the **lowest** organizational level at which various types of correspondence can be signed. Any official acting for a designated signer may sign, as may those at a higher organizational level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addresssee(s)</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Tribal Leaders</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Tribal Leaders within a single Region</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner</td>
<td>Regional Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Tribal Leaders within a single Agency</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Addressee(s) | Headquarters | Field
--- | --- | ---
Individual Tribal Leaders | Office Director | Superintendent
All School Boards | Director, OIEP | Education Line Officer
All School Boards under an ELO | Deputy Director, OIEP | Education Line Officer
Heads of National Indian Organizations | Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP | Regional Director
Chairman/Ranking Minority Member, Interior Appropriations Subcommittees | Assistant Secretary - PMB | Deputy Commissioner
Chairman/ Vice Chairman, Indian Affairs Committee | Deputy Commissioner | Deputy Commissioner
Chairman/Ranking Minority Member, House Resources Committee | Deputy Commissioner | Deputy Commissioner
Members of Congress: constituent inquiries other than tribal | Office Director | Regional Director
Members of Congress: tribal matters and policy concerns | Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP | Deputy Commissioner
Governors | Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP | Deputy Commissioner
General Public: Release of information requested under FOIA/Privacy Act | Office Director | Deputy Regional Director
General Public: Denial/Partial Denial/ No record responses to FOIA/Privacy Act requests | Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP | Deputy Commissioner
General Public: General information | Office Director | Deputy Regional Director
Secretaries/Deputy Secretaries | Assistant Secretary | Deputy Regional Director
Assistant Secretaries | Deputy Commissioner | Deputy Regional Director
Other DOI Bureau Directors | Deputy Commissioner | Deputy Regional Director
Other DOI bureaus’ and other Departments’ State/Regional Directors | Deputy Commissioner | Deputy Regional Director
BIA Regional and Headquarters Directors | Deputy Commissioner | Deputy Regional Director

#### 2.7 Authorization for Auto Pen Signatures.

The Deputy Commissioner, the Chief of Staff, the Deputies to the Assistant Secretary, and any officer acting for the Assistant Secretary may authorize the use of the Assistant Secretary's auto pen signature by completing the authorization record.