

## **Preferred Name Policy**

Accommodations for individuals with disabilities in accessing these policies are available upon request by emailing [accessiblepolicy@wcupa.edu](mailto:accessiblepolicy@wcupa.edu)

### **Purpose and Scope**

West Chester University recognizes members of its community use and identify with first names that are different from their legal names. A chosen or preferred name may be a valuable component of a person's identity and impact their ability to successfully navigate the campus environment. Therefore, the University has established this policy that allows preferred first names to appear in select University systems and records, even if individuals have not changed their legal names. While anyone is welcome to use a preferred name, this policy was developed to respond to the needs of transgender and non-binary communities, international communities, and anyone who prefers the use of a name other than their legal name. This policy applies to all staff/students at all campuses.

### **Definitions**

**Legal Name** – The legal name is the first name and/or middle name that identifies a person for legal, administrative, and other official purposes. A person's legal name generally is the name that was given to the person for the purpose of registration at birth and which then appears on a birth certificate, but may change subsequently.

**Legal/Given Last Name (surname):** Legal last name used, which cannot be changed/altered within the university's information systems unless it has been changed through a legal process outside of the University.

Preferred Name - A name designated in the University systems and communications as the preferred alternative to the individual's legal first name. Only first names may be changed to a preferred name.

### **Policy Statement**

A student or employee's preferred first name will be used in place of the person's legal name in select University systems and records as follows:

- University identification cards
- Official email display name
- Phone directory
- Class and grade rosters
- Diplomas
- Commencement
- Select student activities records
- Student Information System (MyWCU account)
- Learning management systems (e.g., D2L)
- University communications and mailings
- Press releases
- Social media

Legal names will be used for official University records including, but not limited to, the following:

- Legal documents and reports produced by the University
- Student account statements
- Financial aid and scholarship documents
- Transcripts
- Enrollment and degree verifications
- Employment and personnel records

- Paychecks, tax documents, and other payroll documents
- Benefits enrollment

**Individuals will be held responsible for any actions under their signature with the use of their Preferred or Legal Name.**

### **Policy Framework**

Students and employees will only be permitted to change a preferred first name once per semester. A one-time waiver of the fee to update the student or employee identification card with the preferred name will be provided. Subsequent changes will result in an applicable fee. University identification cards for students and employees are managed through the Ram Card Office by Student Services, Inc. (SSI).

Students may choose to restrict directory information, including the listing of their (legal or preferred) name, by completing the Request for Nondisclosure of Directory Information. This is done through the Registrar's Office.

### **Procedures**

Students and employees can request a preferred name through [MyWCU](https://mywcu.edu).

Requests for a preferred name are reviewed in a two-tier process. For students, primary approval is granted or denied by the Office for Student Affairs. Secondary approval is granted or denied by the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. For employees, primary approval is granted or denied by the Office of Human Resources. Secondary approval is granted or denied by the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Preferred name requests may be denied or revoked when the name is deemed inappropriate including, but not limited to, any of the following reasons: avoidance of a legal obligation; fraud; obscene language, or misrepresentation. Reports of such activity will be addressed pursuant to University policies and procedures and applicable law. The following offices may be notified as the circumstances warrant: Human Resources; Student Conduct; Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Provost; University Legal Counsel, and/or any appropriate law enforcement entity. A preferred name request that is denied may be appealed to the Vice President of Student Affairs (students) or Vice President of Finance and Administration (employees), or their designees, if new information that was not previously available is presented that might change the nature of the request. All appeals must be made in writing, within thirty (30) days of the notification of the denied request.

**Reviewed by:** Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

**Policy Owner:** Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer

**Approved by:**



John Villella

Vice President of University Affairs and Chief of Staff

March 11, 2021

**Effective Date:** April 18, 2019

**Review Date:** ~~Date~~ February 1, 2025

**History:**

**Initial Approval:** April 18, 2019

**Review Dates:** January 28, 2021

**Amended:**