



Policy AC056: Preferred First Name

Recommended for Approval by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Fisher".

James Fisher, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Anderson".

Jon Anderson, Ph.D.
President

Effective Date: 07/01/2022 | **Amended:** 04/03/2025

A. Intent

To define and delineate the scope of the use of preferred first names at the University.

B. Definition(s)

Legal name: The name used for official governmental documents, such as licenses, passports, and tax forms.

Preferred first name: An alternative to an individual's legal first name.

C. Policy

1. A University employee or student may request the use of a preferred first name for/in the following University-related systems or documents:
 - Class and grade rosters (for students and employees taking courses)
 - Learning management system (for example, D2L/Brightspace)
 - Most employee self-service navigation panes
 - Most Self-Service Portal panes
 - Employee or student email display name
 - Online directory (Through Policy AC053, Family Educational Rights and Privacy, a student may request to restrict the list of their legal name and/or preferred student name, by submitting a request in writing to the Office of the Registrar before the end of the first week of the semester. Employees may request to restrict the listing of their legal name and/or preferred name by contacting the Office of Human Resources.)
 - Press releases
 - Social media sites
 - Employee or student identification card (A student or employee will be provided a one-time waiver of the fee to update the Student or Employee Identification Card to adjust to a preferred first name. Subsequent changes to the preferred first name will result in an applicable fee.)

- Diploma (The name appearing on the diploma will be a student's legal first name if the student does not indicate a preferred first name for the diploma when applying for graduation)
2. The legal name of a University employee or student will continue to be used for official University records, including but not limited to the following:
 - Benefits enrollment
 - Degree verifications
 - Employment documents
 - Employment verifications
 - Enrollment verifications
 - Financial aid and scholarship documents
 - Legal documents and reports produced by the University
 - Paychecks, W2s, and other payroll documents
 - Student Account statements (for example, bills)
 - Student employment documents
 - Transcripts

Procedure(s)

1. **Students.** Upon first contact with the University, a prospective or admitted student may request the use of a preferred first name through an online form. After matriculation, students requesting a preferred first name can submit the request through the Self-Service portal. Requests will be reviewed by the Office of the Registrar.
2. **Employees.** The Office of Human Resources will receive and review employee preferred first name requests.
3. **Alumni:** The Office of Alumni Engagement will receive and review alumni preferred name requests.

D. Related policies

Family Educational Rights and Privacy (AC053)

Name Change Policy (AC055)

Transcript and Diploma Policy (AC041)

University Diplomas, PASSHE Policy 1989-01-A

E. Contact Information

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Registrar (registrar@pennwest.edu), Office of Human Resources (hr@pennwest.edu), or Office of Alumni Engagement (alumni@pennwest.edu), as appropriate.

F. Policy Review Schedule

All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in BOG, PASSHE or Pennsylvania or federal law would create the need for an immediate change.