



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Preferred Name Policy

Policy Number 1-10

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, November 13, 2025

Issued by Interim President Jeffery Osgood, 12/05/2025

Responsible Office: Academic Affairs

Previous Policy: PRP 4901

1. Purpose

Commonwealth University recognizes that many students for a variety of reasons use a first name other than their legal name. Therefore, the University has established a preferred name policy to allow students to indicate their preferred first name to the University community even if they have not changed their legal name.

2. Scope

All members of the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania community, including students, faculty, staff, and officials, may be impacted by this policy.

3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Definitions

3.1.1. Legal First Name or Given Name: The first and/or middle name that identifies a person for legal, administrative, and other official purposes. A person's legal first name generally is the name given to register a birth certificate.

3.1.2. Legal Last Name or Surname: Legal last name or surname is a familial name that identifies a person's heredity, guardianship, or marriage within a family. Surnames cannot be changed or altered for university-identifying purposes without a legal name change.

3.1.3. Legal Name Change: A judicial order that changes the first, middle, and/or surname of an individual for all legal, administrative, and official purposes at the state and federal level.



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3.1.4. Preferred Name: A first and/or middle name selected by a person for university-identifying purposes. Only first and/or middle names may be changed to a preferred name.

3.2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.2.1. Dean of Students Office: The Dean of Students Office will maintain the request form for a student to begin the preferred name change process.
- 3.2.2. All University offices, according to this policy, asked to change a first and/or middle name to a preferred name must comply.

4. Policy

- 4.1. While any Commonwealth student is welcome to use a preferred first and/or middle name, this option has been developed to respond to the needs of some international, transgender, and gender non-conforming students. Examples may include but are not limited to individuals who prefer to use a middle name or nickname instead of a first name, an anglicized name, a name to which the individual is in the process of legally changing, or a name that better represents the individual's gender identity.
- 4.2. As long as the use of a preferred first and/or middle name is not for the purpose of misrepresentation or deception, the university acknowledges that a preferred first and/or middle name may be used in the course of university business and education. Therefore, the university will permit a student to change their name within the university's information systems with a preferred first and/or middle name to be used instead of their legal name.

5. Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines

- 5.1 Students may submit the online form to request a preferred name change on the Dean of Students webpage. The form can be found here: _____.
- 5.2 A preferred name change will appear in these locations: Student Identification Cards*, Official Student Email Display Name, Online Student Directory, Class and Grade Rosters (for students taking courses), Brightspace, Banner, University Diploma, Press Releases, Social Media Sites, other instances where a legal name is not required by law.
 - 5.2.1 *A one-time waiver of the fee to update the Student Identification Card with the preferred name will be provided. Subsequent changes will result in the University's standard replacement/loss ID fee.
- 5.3 A preferred name change will not appear in these locations: Legal Documents and Reports Produced by the University, Student Financial Records, Financial Aid and Scholarship



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Documents, Medical Records, Transcripts, Enrollment Verifications, Degree Verifications, Student Employment Documents, Employment Verifications, Employment Documents, Paychecks, W2s, and other Payroll documents, and Benefits Enrollment.

6 Compliance and Enforcement

- 6.1 Every University policy will undergo a regular review on a five-year cycle, with approximately 20% of the total policies inventory being reviewed each year.
- 6.2 All policy reviews will be conducted by the responsible Senate Committee to assure that the policy remains relevant and aligns with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, PASSHE Board of Governors policies, and other University policies, procedures, standards, or guidelines.

7. Additional Information

6.3 Supporting Documents

6.4 History

6.4.1 PRP 4901

6.4.2 Effective Date – [Date Approved by the University Senate or Issued by the Office of the President as an Interim Policy]

6.4.3 Revised - [Date of Revision]

6.4.4 Next Review Date - [Date of Revision]

6.5 Related Policies - [Reference related policies]

6.6 Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting

[Name of Office/Division, Commonwealth University, Attn: [Name of person to serve as contact, email address of contact hyperlinked, office phone of contact in format of XXX.XXX.XXXX]]