



Policy Name:	Preferred Name
Effective Date:	July 2017
Last Revision Date:	N/A
Last Review Date:	December 9, 2021
Approving Authority:	Northwest Leadership Team
Responsible Office:	Provost Office
Category:	Academics and Enrollment

**Purpose**

Northwest Missouri State University recognizes the need of campus community members to identify themselves by a name different than their legal name. Therefore, it is the policy of Northwest Missouri State University that any student, staff or faculty member may choose to identify, within the university community, with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name.

As long as the use of the preferred first name is for an appropriate purpose and aligned with the intended use of preferred name<sup>1</sup>, the University will acknowledge the use of the preferred name in university-related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is required. The University will change an individual’s preferred first name or one time at no charge. However, the University will charge a name change fee for each subsequent request for a preferred first name change.

**Preferred Name**

An individual student’s preferred first name will be used in lieu of that individual’s legal name in all instances where use of a legal name is not required and will be used across University systems where available and technically feasible. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to facilitate the use of preferred name by using CatPAWS to add or update the student information system.

An individual should only have to make a single request to update their preferred name across all University systems. However, all campus community members should be aware that some systems do not receive regular updating from the main information system and therefore may not be updated. Individuals who encounter such systems should bring this to the attention of the University Registrar or Human Resources who will work with the appropriate entities to bring the system into compliance with the policy.

Northwest Missouri State University reserves the right to deny or remove any preferred name, with or without notice for misuse, including but not limited to misrepresentation, attempting to avoid legal obligation, use of derogatory names, and violation of the University’s policy as it relates to the appropriate purpose and intended use. Instances in which preferred name will be used include, but are not limited to:

**Students**

- Class rosters
- Residence hall rosters
- University identification cards

- Degree Audit
- Grade Sheets
- University systems (Canvas, Northwest Success 360, myNorthwest, Student Directory and email)
- Wherever it is not necessary for the legal name to be used

### **Faculty and Staff**

- Business Cards
- University Systems (myNorthwest, email, and Directory)
- Wherever it is not necessary for the legal name to be used

### **Legal Name**

A change in legal name requires an official document or court order verifying the correct information at the time the requests is made.

### **Students**

Students are required to verify their legal names prior to the point of admissions. After enrollment, students may process official legal name changes or corrections.

Instances in which legal name **must** be used include, but are not limited to:

- Reporting to state or federal agencies
- Transcripts
- Diplomas
- Payroll documents
- Financial aid documents and processes
- Billing and processes
- Enrollment and degree verification processes
- Official lists of students made available to the public
- Communication with the “Family of”
- Other records where the student’s legal name is required by law or University policy

### **Faculty and Staff**

University employees are required to verify their legal names prior to beginning their employment. After employment begins, the employee may process official legal name changes or corrections.

Instances in which legal name must be used include, but are not limited to:

- Reporting to state or federal agencies
- Payroll documents
- Billing processes
- Background checks
- Other records where the employee’s legal name is required by law or University policy

### **FERPA**

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a student’s name, including preferred name, may be disclosed to the public as “directory information” unless the students opts not to permit such disclosure. To revoke the

disclosure of directory information, a student has the option of requesting privacy through the student information system CatPAWS.

### **Responsible Administrators**

The University Registrar will work with Human Resources, the Division of Student Affairs, Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Associate Provost of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Associate Provost of Graduate and Special Programs, the Associate Provost of Enrollment and Retention Management or their designees to review this policy every five years for updating and implementation.

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For the purpose of this policy “appropriate purpose and aligned with the intended use.....” is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as cases of gender identity that “refers to a person’s deeply felt internal sense of being male or female, regardless of their sex assigned at birth.” See page 14 of the resource “Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students” released by the U.S. Department of Education on May 13, 2016. The complete guide is available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/file/850991/download>

