

Missouri Western State University

Policy Name: Preferred First Name	Date Effective: August 1, 2025
Policy Category: Governance, Legal, and General Administration	Date Last Revised:
Approval Authority: Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs	Date Last Reviewed: February 2, 2018
Responsible Office: Registrar's Office	Recommended Review Cycle: 5 years

I. Purpose

This Policy facilitates the use by students, faculty, and staff of a first name of their choice in most University information systems without pursuing a legal name change. While law, policy, or business needs require use by the University of Legal Names in certain contexts, individuals may choose to be identified in other University systems and contexts by a Preferred First Name designated in accordance with this policy.

II. Applicability

This Policy applies to all University students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

III. Definitions

Legal Name. A person's full legal name as it appears on official governmental documents such as licenses, passports, and tax forms. For students, this is collected at admission. For employees, this is collected at time of initial hiring. A change of legal name requires an official document or court order verifying the correct information at the time the request is made.

Preferred First Name. A name selected by an individual to use in place of the individual's legal first name in certain University contexts, formally communicated to the relevant administrative authority.

Preferred Full Name. The combination of an individual's Preferred First Name and legal last name.

IV. Policy

Missouri Western State University recognizes that individuals may wish to be identified by a first name other than that listed on official government documents. The policy of the University is that students, staff, and faculty may designate a Preferred First Name to be used in many University data systems where technically feasible and on many University documents. However, any such name must not be obscene, offensive, harassing of others, in jest, in violation of University policies, or designed to create confusion with another. The arbiter of whether the Preferred First Name of a member of staff or faculty shall be allowed is the Director of Human Resources. The arbiter of whether the Preferred First Name of a student shall be allowed is the Dean of Students (or successor position).

V. Procedures/Policy Details

Students may designate their Preferred First Name either when initially enrolling or by visiting the Registrar's office at any point after initial enrollment. Staff and faculty may designate a Preferred First Name either when completing new-hire paperwork or by contacting the Office of Human Resources.

MWSU will make good faith efforts to update all relevant reports, documents, and systems in which the Preferred First Name can appear, but once approved, a new Preferred First/Full Name may not be reflected in University systems or on new University documents for several business days (including for reasons beyond the University's control, such as for data systems with longer refresh timelines). If an individual's Preferred First Name is not displaying in a particular University system as expected within ten (10) business days, the requestor should follow up with the Registrar (for students) or Office of Human Resources (for faculty and staff).

At all times, the University reserves the right to remove any Preferred First Name that is deemed misrepresentative or otherwise in violation of this Policy, even if the Preferred First Name has already been approved via the appropriate process. Moreover, the University may revoke the privilege to designate a Preferred First Name for individuals deemed to have violated this Policy.

As noted above, within certain University systems and on certain University documents, only an individual's Legal Name will be used; to change one's Legal Name, submission of official government documents to the Registrar or Human Resources will be required. The following tables provide a non-exhaustive guide to the name that will appear in or on some University systems and documents. Note that the information in these tables is subject to change without notice, and the Policy will not be updated merely to correct these tables. Current name display information may be obtained from the office responsible for handling designation of one's Preferred First Name.

SYSTEMS AND DOCUMENTS THAT ONLY USE LEGAL NAMES

Enrollment/Degree Verification Processes	Financial Aid Records
International I-20s	Official Transcripts
SEVIS (immigration status reporting)	Federal and State Agency Reports
Student Financial Accounts	Payroll, Tax, and Benefits Documents (e.g., paychecks, timecards)
Official NCAA Athletic Documents	Directory Information Disclosures
University Identification Cards	

SYSTEMS AND DOCUMENTS THAT USE PREFERRED FIRST/FULL NAMES

Alumni/Foundation Database	Email Display Name and Network Login
University Portal Account Name	University Portal Student Information
Griffon GPS (degree audit system)	Learning Management System
Online Student/Employee Directory	Residence Life System
Student Conduct System	Unofficial Transcripts (via University Portal)
Student Life/Leadership System	University Communications/Publications
Athletic Rosters, Website, and Statistics	Diplomas and Graduation Lists