

## Preferred/Chosen Names and Pronouns Policy

**Category:** Administration and Governance, Human Resources

**Responsible Office:** Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Office of the Registrar

**Responsible Executive:** President

**Date Established:** 6/22/2017

**Date Last Updated:** 3/14/2025

### Summary

The university will use an individual's preferred/chosen name when legal name is not required and will use an individual's choice of pronouns.

### Policy Statement

The University at Buffalo (UB, university) recognizes that individuals may use a name other than their legal name to identify themselves. Additionally, individuals may use pronouns that reflect their gender identity. The university will use an individual's preferred/chosen name and pronouns, when possible, in the course of university education and business unless the legal name is required by law or the preferred/chosen name is used for purposes of misidentification, fraud, or misrepresentation.

The university will allow students to enter a diploma name when applying for graduation or when purchasing an additional diploma. Students may choose their legal or a preferred/chosen name to appear on their diploma. If no diploma name is entered, legal full name will be used.

The university may be required to use the legal name for many official records, reports, and communications including, but not limited to:

- University and State University of New York (SUNY) reporting for compliance purposes
- Bills
- Financial aid documents

- Parking tickets
- Tax forms
- Benefits
- Payrolls
- Transcripts
- Immigration documents
- Medical records

Students who change their legal name may update their legal name of record through the [Office of the Registrar](#). A legal name change will not impact students' ability to select a preferred/chosen name. HUB provides students the option to enter a preferred/chosen name quickly and discreetly, and without needing to ask for accommodations or assistance from university staff. When a preferred/chosen name is entered, that name appears on certain high-impact screens within HUB and other support systems allowing employees to refer to a student by their preferred/chosen name.

The university reserves the right to review all name changes. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) prohibits individuals from using lewd, indecent, or discriminatory names. Students who change their name in violation of university policies or the *Student Code of Conduct* will be notified via their UB email address and the name(s) will be removed. Students who repeat this violation will be referred to [Student Conduct](#).

Employees who change their legal name may update their legal name of record through the *Biographical Update for Employees* form. Employees who do not obtain a legal name change may submit a *Preferred Name Request* form. Both forms are available on the "Updating My Information" section of the [Information About Me](#) webpage. Employee preferred/chosen names will be displayed in systems and areas where their use has been enabled and where the use of legal names is not required.

UB Information Technology (UBIT) will change individuals' UBIT names when this is necessary to accurately reflect their gender identity. UBIT display names will reflect the preferred/chosen name.

University employees must use an individual's preferred/chosen name and pronouns whenever possible; using a different name or pronouns for the purpose of misgendering them violates UB's [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#). UB systems and processes that use gender markers and honorifics will ensure that these allow individuals to accurately reflect their gender identity whenever possible.

Individuals who experience problems related to the misuse of their preferred/chosen name or pronouns when use of legal names is not required, or who experience other forms of misgendering or discrimination, should contact [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#). Complaints of violations of this policy will be handled through the university's [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#).

## Background

UB recognizes that promoting the use of chosen names, pronouns, and other gender markers is essential to inclusion of our transgender community, and benefits others who prefer to use a name other than their legal name. UB has made progress, including implementing chosen names and pronouns in the HUB system, and is continuing its work in expanding the use of preferred/chosen names for all members of the UB community. The State University of New York Board of Trustees June 7, 2022 policy requires that UB have policies allowing the use of chosen names and pronouns whenever possible.

## Applicability

This policy applies to all members of the university community, including students, faculty, staff, volunteers, vendors, visitors, and guests.

## Definitions

### Diploma Name

The name a student requests be printed on their diploma. Preferred/chosen names are not automatically printed on diplomas.

### Gender Marker

A symbol or indicator of an individual's gender identity. This is most commonly in the abbreviations F (female), M (male), or X (nonbinary, intersex, or gender non-conforming).

### Honorifics

A title that conveys esteem or respect. Common honorifics are "Dr.," "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Ms.," and "Mx."

## **Legal Name**

The name of a person recognized on official records (e.g., birth certificate, passport, driver's license), as recorded at the person's birth or as subsequently changed by legal process.

## **Misgendering**

An action that intentionally or unintentionally refers to someone by a gender that is different from that individual's gender identity. Misgendering can take a number of forms, including:

- Using the wrong pronouns
- Referring to someone's gender as their assigned sex at birth, when the two do not align (e.g., referring to a transgender man as a woman)
- Using a past pronoun or referencing their assigned sex at birth before transitioning (e.g., "used to be a man")
- Using the wrong gendered honorifics (e.g., "Ms." for a man, calling a nonbinary person "sir")
- Deadnaming (i.e., using a previous name that the individual no longer uses and that doesn't reflect their gender identity)

## **Preferred/Chosen Name**

The name by which an individual may wish to be known or has chosen to be called, that differs from their legal name.

The term "preferred name" applies in situations where an individual still identifies with their legal name, but prefers to use a different name (e.g., nickname) in most situations.

The term "chosen name" applies in cases where an individual no longer wishes to be associated with their legal name.

## **Pronouns**

Third-person words that substitute for an individual's name. Pronouns may include he/him, she/her, they/them, or other terms.

## Responsibility

### University Employees, Including Faculty, Staff, Graduate Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Student Assistants

- Use an individual's preferred/chosen name unless required to use legal name.
- Use an individual's chosen pronouns and honorifics.
- Use an individual's legal name only when required.
- Route inquiries about preferred/chosen names, pronouns, and gender markers to the Office of the Registrar and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as needed.

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Investigate and respond to complaints regarding misuse of a preferred/chosen name or pronouns, or other forms of misgendering.

### Office of the Registrar

- Oversee student preferred/chosen name, diploma name, and student pronouns functionality in HUB, including maintenance, testing, explanation of policy, and reviewing for student abuse of policy.

### UB Information Technology

- Change email usernames to reflect an individual's gender identity, as necessary.

### Human Resources

- Use preferred/chosen names in systems that allow their use when an employee has completed a *Preferred Name Request* form.

## Contact Information

Contact An Expert		
Contact	Phone	Email
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	716-645-2266	<a href="mailto:diversity@buffalo.edu">diversity@buffalo.edu</a>
Office of the Registrar	716-645-5698	<a href="mailto:UBRegistrar@buffalo.edu">UBRegistrar@buffalo.edu</a>
Human Resources	716-645-7777	<a href="mailto:ub-hr@buffalo.edu">ub-hr@buffalo.edu</a>
UBIT Help Center	716-645-3542	<a href="mailto:ubithelp@buffalo.edu">ubithelp@buffalo.edu</a>

## Related Information

### University Links

- [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Faculty and Staff Guidance on Preferred/Chosen Names](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Office of the Registrar - Preferred/Chosen Name](#)
- [Office of the Registrar - Preferred/Chosen Name Guidance](#)
- [Preferred/Chosen Names and Pronouns Policy Guidance](#)
- [Requesting a Different UBIT Name](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Conduct](#)

### Forms

- [Employees - Information About Me \(includes Biographical Update for Employees and Preferred Name Request\)](#)

### Related Links

- [State University of New York Implementation of Preferred Name](#) Download pdf
- [State University of New York Chosen Name and Pronoun Policy Announcement - June 2022](#)

## History

### Policy Revision History

March 2025

Full review. Updated the policy to:

- Allow the use of a preferred/chosen last name
- Update the definition of Diploma Name, Legal Name and Preferred/Chosen Name

September 2023

Full review. Updated the policy to:

- Change the title of the policy from *Student Preferred/Chosen Name* to *Preferred/Chosen Names and Pronouns*
- Change the policy Category classification from Academic to Administration and Governance, Human Resources
- Clarify how names will appear on diplomas
- Include change of legal name and preferred first name request guidance for employees
- Revise the Background statement
- Revise the Applicability section to include all members of the university community including students, faculty, staff, volunteers, vendors, visitors, and guests
- Add a definition for Diploma Name, Gender Marker, Honorifics, Misgendering, and Pronouns
- Clarify the definition of Preferred/Chosen Name
- Add a responsibility for university employees to use an individual's chosen pronouns and honorifics

- Add a responsibility for UB Information Technology and Human Resources
- Add [Preferred/Chosen Names and Pronouns Policy Guidance](#)

February 2021

Updated the policy for inclusive language.

## Presidential Approval

*Signed by President Satish K. Tripathi*

*Satish K. Tripathi, President*

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6/22/2017

*Date*

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