
CHOSEN NAME POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy serves employees who choose to use a first name that is different from their legal name. This policy is limited to first names as opposed to surnames or family names.

INTRODUCTION

Westfield State promotes an institutional culture of belonging in which identity and self-expression are celebrated. Accordingly, we will strive to use an employee's chosen name whenever a legal name is not required for business, legal, or state reporting purposes. Toward this goal, the University will make efforts to update forms, documents, and systems to allow for the capture and display of employees' chosen names. Such efforts represent a multiyear effort, the pace of which will be largely determined by the state's initiative to modernize its Human Resources/Customer Management System (HR/CMS) database which serves as the central repository for employee data. Effective May 1, 2023, the HR/CMS will feature voluntary, self-identity options for first name, gender identity / expression, and disability.

DEFINITIONS

- **Chosen Name:** The name of a person's choosing that they would like to appear in the University's systems and have others use when addressing them instead of their legal name.
 - **Nickname:** The name that a person prefers for informal communications and conversations.
 - **Professional Name:** The name an individual is known by in a professional capacity.
- **Legal Name:** The name that an individual is given at birth and which appears on a birth certificate or other government-issued identification recognized by a legal entity.
- **Dead Name:** The birth name or previous name of someone who has changed their name, especially the pre-transition name of a transgender person.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR USE OF CHOSEN NAME

Employees are entitled to choose a name that reflects their identity, personal, or professional preferences. Westfield State will strive to use an employee's chosen name when possible including in the course of campus operations, as long as the use of this name is not intended for the purposes of avoiding legal obligations or misrepresentation.

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Opportunities for use of a chosen name include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Job applications.
- New employee onboarding materials:
- Appointment letters
- Performance evaluations
- Westfield State identification cards
- Interoffice mail
- Routine communications

REQUESTS

Employees may request to use a chosen name by submitting an Employee Contact Information Form for review by Human Resources, Title IX, and Equal Opportunity. Upon receipt of an employee's request, HR will provide the information to Payroll so that an update may be made to the employee record.

LIMITATIONS

The University is obliged to use an employee's legal name for legal and select business reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Pre-employment: Criminal records checks, transcripts, employment verifications and immigration records.
- Employment and payroll records.
- Health insurance records.
- Disability and workers compensation claims.
- Financial documents and reimbursements.
- Other documents or systems that require the use of one's legal name.

EMPLOYER RIGHTS

As campus needs dictate, the University reserves the right to do the following:

- Ask employees to confirm their legal name and provide identification when necessary.
- Refuse a chosen name that contains numbers, symbols, or inappropriate language or otherwise runs counter to the spirit of the policy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For questions, additional information, or to provide feedback related to this policy, please contact Human Resources, Title IX, and Equal Opportunity at hr@westfield.ma.edu.

For questions regarding students' chosen names, please contact the Office of the Registrar at registrar@westfield.ma.edu.

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For resources regarding gender diversity, please contact the Division of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) at jedi@westfield.ma.edu.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Associate Vice President of Human Resources.