

# Preferred Name Policy

## ROWAN UNIVERSITY POLICY

**Title:** *Preferred Name Policy*

**Subject:** *Academic Affairs, Student Life, Equity and Diversity/Title IX*

**Policy No:** *Adm: 2016: 01*

**Applies:** *University-Wide*

**Issuing Authorities:** *President*

**Responsible Officers:** *Vice President for Academic Affairs*

*Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students*

*Chief Equity Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator*

**Adopted:** *03/03/2016*

**Last Revision:** *07 Nov 2023*

**Last Reviewed:** *10/5/2022*

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to enable members of the campus community including students, faculty and staff to use and be known by a preferred name that affirms, reflects, and/or expresses their gender, culture, and/or other aspects of their social identity in the classroom and to conduct general business at the university.

### II. ACCOUNTABILITY

At the direction of the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students shall implement this policy and the Chief Equity Compliance Officer /Title IX Coordinator shall ensure compliance with this policy.

### III. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all students, faculty and staff at the university.

### IV. DEFINITIONS

1. *Preferred Name* – The name by which a person wishes to be known and to have appear in University systems and when conducting day-to-day University business because it affirms that individual's gender, culture and other aspects of social identity. The preferred name will consist of a preferred first name, and preferred middle name when provided. The preferred name does not affect the individual's last name, which must remain the person's legal name.
2. *Legal Name* – The name that is recorded on an individual's legal identification and used on formal legal records at the University.

### V. POLICY

1. Rowan University recognizes that many individuals use and are known by a name other than their legal name due to their gender identity, cultural background or other aspects of their social or personal identity.
2. To the maximum possible extent, faculty, staff, and students of Rowan University should be allowed to use, be known by, and be called by the name that affirms that person's gender, culture and social identity. All University offices and personnel are expected to respect a person's request to be known by

their preferred name and to use that name when interacting with individuals who have followed the process outlined in this policy. This expectation covers all areas of the University including academic instruction, advising, student life and other University business.

3. Rowan University will make good faith efforts to display preferred names to the University community where feasible and appropriate, and to update the reports, documents and systems designated to use preferred names. The University will not guarantee that the preferred name will appear in all locations or in all circumstances.
4. Use of Legal Name:
  - a. The University will not use the preferred name on documents or in systems that require the use of the legal name for legal or business related reasons. The individual's legal name will continue to be used for these records, which include but are not limited to the following:
    - i. Admissions records
    - ii. Official transcripts
    - iii. Enrollment verifications
    - iv. Employment and personnel records
    - v. Paychecks and tax documents
    - vi. Financial aid records
    - vii. Medical records
    - viii. Disciplinary records
    - ix. Law enforcement records
    - x. Responses to legal/government records requests (such as OPRA)
  - b. In order for an individual to change the name used for these records, they will be required to submit appropriate documentation of a legal name change. The process for changing a legal name varies by state and country of residence and the reason for the change. The University cannot change a legal name.
    - i. Individuals must pursue a legal name change with appropriate state and/or federal authorities and then submit a legal name change document (typically a court order) to the Office of the University Registrar.
    - ii. Employees must also submit the document to Human Resources along with a new Social Security card showing the new legal name, and complete an updated I-9 form.
    - iii. U.S. residents must change their legal name with the Social Security Administration as well.
5. Diploma: The University considers the diploma to be a ceremonial document, and students may request to use either a legal name or a preferred name on a diploma using the intent to graduate form. However, please be advised that in some situations the diploma may need to be used as a legal document, and the name appearing on the diploma may need to match other legal documents to be accepted as valid. Students who request a preferred name to appear on the diploma who later wish to have a diploma issued in their legal name or any other name will be charged the appropriate fee for that service.
6. Background Checks and Legal Processes:
  - a. Individuals who request and use a preferred name must be aware that the preferred name will constitute an alias which they may be required to disclose in some circumstances including during background checks and other legal processes. This responsibility may be life long, and may cover each preferred name used even if they later change or discontinue the use of the preferred name.
  - b. Individuals are encouraged to candidly disclose the existence of this alias when appropriate to avoid discrepancies or the appearance that they are attempting to conceal the information. Individuals must also be aware that the existence of an alias may trigger heightened scrutiny during certain federal or state security clearances or background checks, especially in cases where the individual does not disclose the information to authorities.
  - c. The University will disclose and/or confirm the preferred name(s) used by the individual in accordance with any lawful request for this information, and/or upon request by the individual.
7. Due Diligence and Compliance of University Offices and Personnel:
  - a. Offices and personnel should adapt their business processes to accommodate the use of the preferred name wherever feasible and when the use of the legal name is not required to comply with laws or regulations. Offices should consult appropriate IRT personnel for assistance as needed.
8. Non-compliance and Complaints:

- a. When an individual believes that the individual's approved preferred name has not been used in accordance with this policy, the individual is encouraged to seek to resolve that concern informally by communicating the concern directly to the personnel or office which has not properly used the preferred name.
  - b. In cases where a student feels that the student would benefit from additional support or advocacy, or to initiate a formal complaint about non-compliance, students may contact the following offices:
    - i. Dean of Students
    - ii. Office of Social Justice, Inclusion and Conflict Resolution
    - iii. Office of Equity and Diversity
  - c. In cases where a member of the faculty or staff feels that the member would benefit from additional support or advocacy, or to initiate a formal complaint about non-compliance, that member may contact the following offices:
    - i. Office of Equity and Diversity
    - ii. Office of Human Resources
    - iii. Vice President for Academic Affairs (for faculty employees)
9. Use, Abuse or Misuse:
- a. The Rowan Card with the preferred name imprinted on it may be used as a valid identification card (ID) within the University. However, the RowanCard with a preferred name imprinted may not be used as an alternate to a legal ID. Use of the RowanCard to misrepresent the individual's legal identity in any circumstance will be considered misuse and may result in disciplinary or adverse employment action.
  - b. Inappropriate use of the preferred name policy may be cause for disciplinary action and/or denial of the use of a preferred name.
  - c. Failure to comply with an approved preferred name by refusing to use that preferred name may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

## **VI. ATTACHMENT**

1. Attachment A - Procedures for Requesting a Preferred Name

### **ATTACHMENT A PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING A PREFERRED NAME**

#### **Requesting a Preferred Name:**

Individuals who wish to use a preferred name may enter that name at [go.rowan.edu/PreferredNameChange](https://go.rowan.edu/PreferredNameChange).

#### **Approval and Prohibited Use:**

When an individual enters a preferred name, , the individual's records will be updated to display the preferred name in a timely manner, typically within five (5) business days, except in in the following circumstances:

1. The name is intended to misrepresent the person's identity and/or misappropriate the identity of another person or organization.
2. The use of the name is an attempt to avoid a legal obligation.
3. The appearance of the requested name on the University ID or other records would be harmful to the reputation or interests of the University; and/or
4. The name is derogatory, obscene, conveys an offensive message, or otherwise inappropriate.

If the preferred name could be prohibited for one of these four reasons, the appropriate Responsible Official will be contacted. If the Responsible Official decides that the preferred name is prohibited, the requesting individual shall be so notified, given the reason(s) for the denial, and offered the opportunity to appeal. An appeal must be in writing (including email), be addressed to the Responsible Official, and address any specific concerns related to the reason(s) for the denial. A committee comprising representatives from Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and Student Life will review the appeal, consult with the Chief Equity Compliance Officer, and provide a final determination within ten (10) business days of the date the appeal was received by the Responsible Official. The Committee will conduct a *de novo* review of the request. Decisions by the Committee will be final and not subject to further appeal.

In cases where misuse of a preferred name results in disciplinary or employment actions, the normal policies and procedures as well as related appeal processes will apply.

### **Appearance of the Preferred Name:**

The approved preferred name will appear and be used in the following University documents, systems, and processes:

1. Rowan Card (ID)
2. Campus Directory
3. Email search/auto fill functions
4. Class Lists and Grade Reports
5. Advising Lists
6. Blackboard
7. Canvas
8. Rowan Success Network
9. ProfLink
10. Housing Rosters

### **Rowan ID/RowanCard:**

Once approved, individuals may obtain a RowanCard with the preferred name imprinted on the card in place of the legal name. The first card issued with a preferred name imprinted will be provided at no charge. When subsequent replacement cards are requested, the individual will be charged the normal fee for issuance of a replacement card.