



# Student Names Policy

**2024-25**

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Authors:	Director of Academic Services and Deputy Academic Registrar, Student Experience Manager
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# Student Names Policy 2024-25

## 1. Overview and purpose of policy

- 1.1. In order to fulfil a wide range of legal responsibilities, including fraud prevention, and to uphold the highest standards in its administrative and academic work, the University acknowledges the importance of obtaining and maintaining accurate records of the identity of all its students. The Student Names Policy ('The policy') sets out the University's approach in this area.
- 1.2. The University is committed to creating a truly inclusive environment for our students throughout their time at Essex and beyond, whilst ensuring we meet our legal obligations.

## 2. Recording of names

- 2.1. The Essex Student Information System (ESIS) provides a record of a student's legal name as evidenced on the Right to Study document(s)<sup>1</sup> supplied by the student at their initial registration session where their name is recorded and checked. The record remains unchanged for the duration of a student's studies and beyond, unless formal notification is received from the individual student and a request made for the name to be changed.
- 2.2. The University recognises that a student may have a single name rather than a 'first' and 'surname'. The University accepts a single name as a student's legal name where it appears as such on the passport or other accepted identification documentation. The single name is recorded in the 'surname' field on ESIS and a null value is retained in the 'first name' and 'other names' fields.
- 2.3. With the exception of students whose names comply with the format set out under clause 2.2 above, all student names will be recorded on ESIS according to UK convention with the family name followed by first and additional names.

## 3. Use of legal names

- 3.1. The name recorded on ESIS is used by the University for all formal activities, including those related to legal requirements, such as determining immigration status. This name also appears

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<sup>1</sup> A valid passport is the University's preferred form of identification for registration purposes. However, the full list of acceptable [Right to Study documents](#) can be found online.

on any formal documentation produced by the University to record a student's academic achievement, such as award certificates, academic transcripts and the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR). Without exception, the University does not permit preferred, alternative or amended names to be used for these purposes.

- 3.2. Where a student has a single name recorded as their legal name, the award certificate shows the name as recorded in the surname field on ESIS and the academic transcript shows the title (e.g. Mr, Ms, Mx etc) and the name as recorded in the surname field on ESIS.
- 3.3. It is not currently possible for a student to have special characters (e.g. accents) contained within their name recorded on ESIS.

## 4. Changing the University's formal record

- 4.1. The process to change the University's formal record of a current student's name is managed by the Academic Section. A student wishing to change their name, including where a typographical error has been made, is required to contact their Student Services Hub.
- 4.2. If a student who does not require immigration permission to study in the UK wishes to change their name on the University's formal record and is not able to attend the Student Services Hub in person, an electronic version of a valid passport must be sent, in addition to one of the following forms of identification:
  - a marriage or civil partnership certificate
  - a divorce decree absolute or civil partnership final order
  - change of name deed or enrolled deed poll
  - statutory declaration of new name
- 4.3. For students who have immigration permission to study in the UK, the University must see the student, in person, with their valid passport and immigration status document(s) in the new name before the change can be made. Students who are in the UK with immigration permission under a student category of the UK's Immigration rules should seek advice from the University's International Services Team before applying to have their legal name changed.
- 4.4. Where a student's legal name changes, the formal record and related documentation will only record the new name where the student has informed the University during the period of study, in accordance with Section 4 of this Policy, and where satisfactory evidence of a legal change of name has been provided.
- 4.5. A student's award is conferred in the legal name that they hold at the time of conferral. **The legal name will be printed on award certificates and used in graduation proceedings.** In accordance with the Award and Alumni Policy, the University will not normally change a former student's name on formal academic records following a legal name change. Only in exceptional

circumstances, such as the protection of an identity or a name change as part of gender transition, will a name change be considered. Such requests should be made in writing to the Graduation and Awards Office.

## **5. Preferred names and/or titles**

5.1. The University permits a student to indicate a preferred name and/or title as an alternative to the formal name recorded on ESIS. Examples of circumstances where a preferred name may be applicable for use include:

- international students wishing to adopt a different name during their time at University
- transgender or non-binary students
- students in the East 15 Acting School, who may adopt a stage name
- students who wish to be known by a middle name rather than their first name; or
- for personal security

5.2. While the University understands and accepts the need for permitting preferred names to be recorded on its systems for use across the University, it reserves the right to refuse to record a preferred name if it is not considered appropriate for the purpose for which it is intended.

## **6. Recording and use of preferred names and/or titles**

6.1. A preferred name and/or title is recorded separately on ESIS as the preferred name in addition to the legal name. A preferred name can be printed on to a student's registration card and may also be used for the production of departmental class lists. It is used for more informal communication with the student. Changes to a preferred name and/or title are managed via the Student Services Hub, again upon request. No formal documentation is required to make a change.

6.2. A student's registration card is produced using the student's legal name. Where the student wishes the card to show the preferred name, the student must request for the preferred name to be recorded on ESIS (see section 6.1) and for a replacement card to be produced. There is no charge for a replacement card where a preferred name is requested. Where a student requests for a preferred name to be used before the registration card is produced, the preferred name will appear on the card.

Where a student notifies the University of a change of name due to a change in their gender identity or marital status, there is no charge for the production of a replacement card.

## **7. Policy review**

- 7.1. The Policy is reviewed at least annually and more frequently if required to ensure it continues to meet the University's legal and operational requirements. The review process includes seeking input from all relevant stakeholders, including the Students' Union.
- 7.2. Any policy changes are considered and approved by the Registrar and Secretary on behalf of the University Steering Group.

## Document Control Panel

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