

SUNY Geneseo's Preferred Name Process

General Information

What is a Preferred First Name?

A preferred first name is one that you choose to be called that is different from your legal or official name of record. SUNY Geneseo allows you to do this by setting a Preferred First Name with the Registrar's Office. We recognize that some use the terminology of lived name over preferred name, but for now Geneseo uses the word preferred.

What is the purpose of SUNY Geneseo's Preferred First Name Process?

SUNY Geneseo recognizes that some students wish to use a first name other than a legal or official name of record to identify themselves in day-to-day use. As long as the use of this preferred name is not for the purposes of misrepresentation, to avoid legal obligation, or a use of a highly offensive or derogatory name, the College acknowledges that a "preferred name" can and should be used where possible in the course of college education, business, and communication. This policy is limited to first names and not surnames or family names. For non-U.S. citizens, the official name of record is the passport name. The College extends this accommodation in order to help foster a more welcoming, supportive and respectful campus climate for all of its students.

Process

Where will my Preferred First Name appear?

The College will utilize the Preferred First Name for Knightweb, Canvas, the Online directory, Class Rosters, Mid-term evaluations, Final grade submissions, Advisee Listings, the Student Transcript search page, myGeneseo, Google Gmail, PointNClick, DegreeWorks, Faculty Grade Entry, Student Registration, Student Profile, etc. If you like, it can also be used on your diploma or in Commencement. A student's legal/official name of record name will remain unchanged in all other College-related systems. Students who wish to change their legal/official name of record must contact the Registrar's Office.

Who can modify a Preferred First Name?

Preferred first names are set at the Registrar's Office and require student consent. Therefore, only you as a SUNY Geneseo student can modify your own Preferred First Name.

How do I modify my Preferred First Name?

Students wishing to add a preferred first name, or modify an existing first name, will use the online [Preferred First Name Request Form](#). This online form is available at this link or from the Registrar's Office.

Where will my legal/official first name of record be used?

Wherever reasonably possible, the preferred first name is used in SUNY Geneseo's systems. Official transcripts, enrollment verifications, third party database systems, paychecks, medical records, financial aid documents, federal immigration documents, all external communications (in many cases even letters home), such as hometown newspapers (dean's list announcements, etc.), or any other College business requiring legal needs, however, will continue to use your legal/official name. The College will attempt to display preferred first name to the College community where feasible and appropriate and make a good faith effort to update reports, documents and systems accordingly. Two places in Knightweb that we know will also use your official name are: Student Profile for your advisors, and Registration for you. The code writers for our database system are currently working on a new version to add functionality and fix issues such as these.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can anyone update my Preferred First Name?

A: No. Only you as the student or employee through the Registrar's Office can update your preferred first name.

Q. Can I set my Preferred First Name to whatever I want?

A: Although students are generally free to determine the preferred names they wish to be known by, inappropriate use of the preferred name policy (including but not limited to avoiding a legal obligation or misrepresentation) may be cause for denying the request. In addition, the College reserves the right to remove a preferred name if it is deemed inappropriate (e.g., is offensive or derogatory), or if used inappropriately. Students should also be aware that the faculty and staff at Geneseo will see their choice of their preferred name, so they should choose wisely.

Q: Can I use my Preferred First Name for everything at the College?

A: No. Your Preferred First Name can only be used and will only appear in Knightweb, in Canvas, in the Online directory, on Class Rosters, on Mid-term evaluations, on Final grade submissions, on Advisee Listings, in the Student Transcript search page, in myGeneseo, in Google Gmail, in PointNClick, In DegreeWorks, in the Faculty Grade Entry, in the Student Registration Ssb, and in the Student Profile, etc. If you like, it can also be used on your diploma or in Commencement. On all other College records and documents your legal/official first name will appear.

Q: How often can I change my Preferred First Name at the College?

A: Your preferred name can be changed no more than once an academic year and twice during your tenure at Geneseo.

Q: How do I correct or change my Legal/Official Name at the College?

A: Students who wish to change their official name of record must submit official documentation (e.g., court order, divorce decree) directly to the Office of the Registrar.

Q: Where will my preferred name appear within campus systems?

A: Knightweb, Canvas, Online Campus Directory, Class Rosters, Grading Midterm evaluations, Advisee listing, myGeneseo, Google, Gmail, PointNClick, DegreeWorks, Faculty Grade Entry, Student Registration, Student Profile.

Q: What about my ID card?

A: New students can request that their first ID card contain their preferred name. The preferred name will appear on the front of the card, while the “official name of record” will appear on the back. Returning students can optionally contact CAS to request that a new ID card with their preferred name be issued. There is a required \$20 reissue fee charged for new cards. The preferred first name is placed on the front of the ID card, but as a way to hopefully maintain the validity of the ID card for state and federal identification purposes, the “official name of record” will be placed on the back of the card.

Q: Why do both the preferred name and “official name of record” appear on the card?

A: The preferred first name is placed on the front of the ID card as that is what most people will see. But as a way to hopefully maintain the validity of the ID card for state and federal identification purposes, the “official name of record” will be placed on the back of the card.