

Preferred First Name Policy

What Is a Preferred First Name?

Some Charter Oak students are known by a first name that is different from their legal first name. In an effort to accommodate these students, the Board of Regents (BOR) has created a preferred first name option for student information as it appears in select locations. While anyone is welcome to use a preferred first name, there are several groups of people for whom this option is invaluable. For example, some students are known by a middle name or a nickname and are hard to identify when their legal name is used. Additionally, this option will allow students to use a preferred first name at the College without pursuing a legal change of their first name. Many international students may also find this option helpful if they use a nickname during their course of study in the States.

Use of Preferred First Name

Students will be able to add a preferred first name to their student record by submitting a "Preferred First Name Request" form to the Registrar's Office in order to update their information. This form can be found on the Student Self Service Tab of the MyCharterOak student portal, under Student Forms. When submitted, this preferred first name will replace your legal name as it appears on course and grade lists in both Blackboard and MyCharterOak, COSC student email and directory, the commencement program, and student ID card.

The Registrar's Office will make every effort to process requests for preferred first name changes within 7 business days. After processing, the Registrar's Office will send a confirmation email to the student with final instructions for completing the information change process and instructions for obtaining an updated student ID card. Use of a preferred first name on the student ID card is optional.

Charter Oak has attempted to display preferred first names to the College community where feasible and has made a good faith effort to update the systems that are designated to use a preferred name. In the event that your preferred first name is not displaying correctly, please contact the Registrar's Office.

Disclaimer: Charter Oak State College reserves the right to approve or deny preferred first name change requests.

Required Use of Legal First Name

In some instances, students' legal names must always be used regardless of whether preferred names have been added to the system. Legal names will always appear on all external use reports and documents including, but not limited to, hiring paper work, paychecks, accounts payable checks, student billing, financial aid forms, reporting to the National Student Clearinghouse, tax forms, official College transcripts, and any other documents required by law. Legal first names can only be changed on these records when students pursue a legal name change with their home state and/or federal authorities and then submit that documentation to the Registrar's Office.

If students are using a preferred name in the college systems they must be prepared to use legal name and identification in all instances where legal identification or official information is necessary. In addition to the areas noted above, a student ID card that displays a preferred name cannot be used as a valid form of identification where it is normally accepted such as in DHS I-9 hiring forms, and in some states for voter check-in during official elections. All students with a preferred name on a student ID card are encouraged to obtain a legal State ID, driver's license, international ID, and/or a Federal Passport for identity verification purposes when needed.

The use of a preferred name at the College may also lead to more intensive examinations when seeking certain federal or state security clearances or background checks. You are encouraged to disclose this information to your investigating authorities ahead of time to avoid unexpected discrepancies and delays.

Note: Students wishing to change their legal first or last name must submit the "Change of Name" form along with legal name change documentation (i.e. marriage certificate or divorce decree). This form can be found in the MyCharterOak student portal. Legal name changes are not processed in the middle of the semester. Once the semester has ended, the request will be processed.