Student Preferred Name Summary

As a student, you are able to designate a preferred first and middle name, which is:

- a name that you can designate to be used on certain University-related records or documents in place of your primary name
- a name that you wish to be known or identified by in the classroom (and elsewhere on campus)
- different from your primary name

As long as the use of this preferred name is not for the purposes of misrepresentation, Cornell University acknowledges that a “preferred name” may be used where possible on certain University records.

Student Preferred Name

Cornell University recognizes that many of its students use a name other than their primary name. As long as the use of a preferred name is not for the purpose of misrepresentation, the University acknowledges that a preferred first and middle name should be used whenever possible in the course of University business and education.

Therefore, the University will permit any student to choose to identify themselves with a preferred name in addition to their primary name. It is further understood that the student's preferred name should be used on internal documents, in University communications and, where appropriate and feasible, in information systems and reporting, except where the use of the primary name is necessitated by university business or legal requirement.

Generally, you can set a preferred name to any name, but Cornell University reserves the right to delete a preferred name if it is used inappropriately, such as misrepresentation or fraud; such usage will also subject the student to disciplinary action in accordance with University policy. A periodic review of preferred first and middle names will be conducted by the Office of the University Registrar to identify and remove inappropriate or offensive names.

What is a Preferred Name?

A preferred name is a first name (i.e., given name) and middle name that may be chosen to be used instead of primary first and middle names. Preferred name will appear in the Cornell University directory and in other university records and documents including class lists, grade rosters, and university ID cards. Some records, such as health and insurance or financial aid, that require use of a legal name, will not change to preferred name. However, whenever possible, preferred name will be used.

Primary first, middle and last names will be used for external documents, systems and reports including transcripts and diplomas; federal, state, and compliance reporting; and enrollment and degree certifications. NetID’s will be composed of the initials of the student’s primary first, middle, and last name.