Policy on Use of Chosen Name

I. Purpose and Scope

Northeastern University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming living, learning and working environment that is free of discrimination. The university recognizes that, for a variety of reasons, students or employees may want to use a name to identify themselves that is different from their legal name. The university will accommodate that usage to the extent permitted by specific information systems and legal requirements.

This policy applies to all current students, faculty and staff of Northeastern University.

II. Definitions

For purposes of this policy,

Chosen Name means the name by which an individual wishes to be addressed by the university community that is different from an individual’s legal name.

Legal Name is the name that appears on an individual’s passport, driver’s license, birth certificate, or U.S. Social Security Card.

III. Policy

Northeastern students and employees may indicate their chosen name to the university community, even if they have not changed their legal name. Chosen name will be displayed in lieu of the legal name in university systems that can accommodate a chosen name, for example in directories, class rosters, employee time records, and health and wellness benefits (but note that using chosen name for medical claims may complicate claims reimbursement). To request use of a chosen name, please refer to contact information below.

Where use of legal name is required by law, contract or university policy, the legal name will continue to be used for associated university records, documents, and business processes, such as
external reporting, financial aid and student billing records, immigration documents and payroll/tax forms.

A chosen name should be tasteful and appropriate for a university setting and not created for the purposes of misrepresentation/fraud or avoiding a legal obligation.

Both a student's chosen and legal first name are considered to be directory information under the Policy on Student Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

IV. Additional Information

Northeastern uses multiple systems to manage its data and operations and not all university systems can accommodate the use of a chosen name. In some cases, that is because they are the source for official documents or reporting that require an individual’s legal name. As Northeastern adds and updates information systems, we will strive to use chosen name wherever possible.

V. Contact Information

For staff and faculty: contact the Human Resources Service Center at 617-373-2230 or by email at HRInfo@northeastern.edu. Please refer to the following link for additional information:

https://service.northeastern.edu/hr?id=kb_article&sysparm_article=KB000420027

For students: refer to the following link with instructions.

https://registrar.northeastern.edu/article/updating-personal-information/