



Preferred Names

Bellingham Technical College is committed to promoting and providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. Referring to students by the name they wish to be called in classrooms and when interacting with college personnel supports a respectful learning environment. The reasons for choosing a preferred name that may be different from a legally changed name are personal and different for each individual.

Changing Your Preferred Name

You can add or update a preferred name in myBTC Portal or visit the Registration Office to add a preferred name.

Adding or Updating Your Preferred Name in myBTC Portal

1. Login to myBTC Portal using your SID and PIN (default is your birthdate in MMDDYY format).
2. Go to PROFILE > CHANGE CONTACT INFO
3. Enter or update your preferred name in the "Preferred Name:" field.
4. Click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the screen below your contact and emergency information.

If you change your preferred name after the first day of the quarter, then you must notify your instructors of the change to your preferred name. The college will not notify them that you have provided or changed a preferred name, although they will be able to see your preferred name and your student identification number.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a preferred name?

A preferred name is a name a student wishes to be known by in the college community that is different from a student's legal name. Typically, preferred names are first names. Surnames (last names) can be changed only with a legal name change.

What is a legal name?

A legal name is the name that appears on your passport, driver's license, birth certificate, or U.S. Social Security Card.

What does a preferred name mean at Bellingham Technical College?

The term “preferred name” refers to a name that an individual may wish to use that differs from their legal name on legal documents and/or differs from the name that is listed on a student’s original Bellingham Technical College student record that has not been changed legally.

Where will the preferred name appear?

- Class lists
- Canvas roster
- myBTC Portal “Change Contact Info” page
- Student database “Preferred Name” screen available to some college staff and administrators
- myBTCbridge communications database (is this true and how to list it if it is?)

What documents will not have preferred names?

Legal names, not preferred names, will appear on transcripts, diplomas, official student accounts and financial aid records, certification documents, student employment records, and immigration/SEVIS documents.

Where will my legal name be used?

Your legal name will be used in business processes and other activities that require use of a legal name. These include:

- Student Financial Resources Documentation
- Financial Aid
- Student Employment Records
- Federal Requests for Information
- National Student Clearinghouse
- Transcripts
- Academic Certifications
- Diplomas
- International Education Documentation

Does a preferred name affect my legal name?

No. Setting a preferred name does not change your legal name.

How do I change my legal name?

The [Name Change form](#) is available online. For a legal name change, please fill out the Name Change form and bring it to the Registration Office. You must provide official documentation to prove the legal name change.

Official documentation for a legal name change is considered one of the following:

- Government issued ID AND Social Security Card with the new name
- Certified Court Order
- Marriage Certificate
- Dissolution/Divorce Decree

Do I have to use a preferred name?

No. Use of a preferred name is optional.

When will my preferred name go into effect?

Typically, it will take 24 business hours for the update to take effect in our college systems. You may change your preferred name at any time and more than once.

Why would someone want to use a preferred name?

The reasons for choosing a preferred name that may be different from a legally changed name are personal and different for each individual.

Students may have many reasons for asking to have their preferred names, over their legal names, displayed on non-legal documents:

- Students known by names that are different from their legal names
- Transgender or gender nonconforming identities
- International students or other students who wish to adopt an English language name

Will all College Employees use my Preferred Name?

- Since your Preferred Name is available to the Instructor and in the classroom via CANVAS and your legal name remains in other systems, staff may use your legal name at times.
- When this is the case, please confirm your legal name and let us know you have a preferred name that you would rather we use when interacting with you.

What are the terms and conditions of setting a preferred name at Bellingham Technical College?

When you set your preferred name, you agree that:

- You have not set a preferred name with an intent to impersonate someone else, to deceive, or to defraud
- Hate speech, inappropriate language, or repeated frequent use of this feature may bar you from using this option, at Bellingham Technical College's discretion

Are there any preferred name restrictions?

Preferred names may not be used for purposes of fraud or misrepresentation. Bellingham Technical College reserves the right to remove a preferred name if it contains inappropriate or offensive language.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please contact the Registration Office at registration@btc.edu or 360.752.8350

Bellingham Technical College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender identity or expression, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, or genetic information in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director for Human Resources, 3028 Lindbergh Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225, 360.752-8354. BTC publications are available in alternate formats upon request by contacting the Accessibility Resources office at 360.752-8345.