



Post Graduation Name Changes Best Practices

Committee on Student Records

An institution has the discretion to determine whether or not they are going to officially change a student's name post graduation on their student record¹. Approximately 50% of all schools across the country will change a student's name post graduation².

Schools that do not change the name of alumni on the academic record maintain that the student's original name on record at the time of the graduation should remain the official name to avoid misuse of academic documents, confusion of identities or fraudulent use of the record. These schools suggest that alumni provide the concerned parties with legal documentation of the name change(s) that occurred subsequent to the enrollment, thus verifying their identity and the legitimacy of their credentials.

Schools that do change names post-graduation, often do so as a service to former students. Schools electing to change the names with appropriate documentation should be careful to adopt policies and procedures that link both names to the same record with both names appearing on each affected document. These measures are taken to protect the alumni, reduce confusion about the identity of the person involved, and prevent fraudulent use of the record.

For schools that do allow a former student to change their official name, the following best practices are recommended:

- The changing of the name should follow the institution's same protocol and documentation requirements for current students.
- The student record system should adequately retain all former recorded names of the student.
- The academic transcript should indicate the current and former names of the student.
- If an institution allows for the re-issuing of a new diploma:
 - The institution should require that the original diploma be returned or have the student provide a notarized statement that the diploma has been lost or destroyed.
 - The new diploma should indicate that it is a reissue and include a statement that indicates that it is a reissue and the former name.

Adapted from: *The AACRAO 2003 Academic Records and Transcript Guide*. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

¹ Please note the distinction between the student's record and records collected based on a former student's status as an alumnus. Alumni records are not protected under FERPA and the main reason why it is recommended that alumni records should be stored separately from student records.

² For schools that don't change names after graduation, the only time that a name should be changed is in conjunction with a court-ordered gender change. No historical evidence of the gender changed should be included on a transcript. It is also recommended to consult with counsel concerning the requirements of applicable state laws.