



Student Name Policy

At Manhattan School of Music (MSM), we recognize that names are a core expression of identity. We are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment in which all community members can be addressed and recognized by the name they wish to be known. Furthermore, MSM recognizes a student may have different needs and desires for using alternative name(s). To request use of an alternative name, rather than that which is legally assigned, we invite you to review this policy to understand the definitions for names, and if desired, follow the process(es) outlined below to request the use of a preferred name or make a legal name change to your MSM student records.

1. Preferred (Campus) Name:

MSM affirms students' right to be recognized by the name that reflects their identity. MSM supports the need or preference for members of its community who identify by a name other than their legal name and will accommodate a preferred name, when possible, in the course of school business and education.

A preferred name is defined as a first and/or middle name that is different from a student's legal name. The preferred name is often the name by which a student wishes to be known within the MSM community.

Students' last names can be changed only through a legal name change because last names serve as the primary legal identifier in federal and state reporting, financial aid and tax documentation, immigration records, and degree-verification systems. MSM is required to use the legal last name unless an official legal name change has been completed.

As such, MSM will use a student's preferred first and/or middle name plus the student's legal last name to form the full preferred name. A preferred name is optional, and reasons for choosing a preferred name are personal and different for each individual. Possible reasons include:

- Preferring to use a nickname or middle name instead of a legal first name
- Choosing a name that aligns with your gender identity
- A student from another country wishing to adopt an English name

A preferred first and/or preferred middle name will be used wherever reasonably possible. This includes:

- Student ID Card
- Class Rosters
- Student Portal

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- Email Address, Email Display Name, and Username
- Canvas
- eRezLife
- ASIMUT
- Campus Security
- Student Directory, unless a FERPA Request to Withhold Directory Information Form has been requested
- Diploma*

**See Diploma Name for alternative name options in section 2 below*

Students may choose a preferred name by submitting a [Biographical Information Update Request form](#), available on the [student portal](#).

MSM reserves the right to deny or remove, with or without notice, any preferred name for misuse, including but not limited to fraud, misrepresentation, attempting to avoid legal obligation, or the use of highly offensive or derogatory names.

See Section 4 below for circumstances in which institutional records must reflect legal name rather than preferred names.

2. Diploma Name:

Manhattan School of Music recommends that your diploma name match your legal name; however, a preferred name may be used. Beginning in Spring 2026, current students can request that their preferred first and/or preferred middle name on record with MSM appear on their diploma. The last name printed on the diploma must match the legal last name on record.

Students who do not already have a preferred first and/or preferred middle name on record must first submit a [Biographical Update Request Form](#), available in the [student portal](#), to add the preferred name to their record. This is necessary for future third-party verification that may take place.

MSM considers the diploma to be a ceremonial document; however, students should consider the following circumstances before submitting a Diploma Name Request Form:

- Students who plan to live, work or study outside the United States may wish to avoid using a Diploma Name that differs from their Legal Name, as international employers, immigration authorities, or credential evaluation services may require the diploma name to match official legal documents.



- Students who may request an apostille or other document authentication for use in another country should be aware that discrepancies between the Diploma Name and Legal Name may complicate or delay the authentication process.
- Employers, licensing boards, and third-party background check providers typically verify degrees using a student's Legal Name. Using a different Diploma Name may make credential verification more difficult.

Students who wish to have a preferred first and/or preferred middle name printed on the diploma must submit a [Diploma Name Request Form](#) four (4) weeks prior to graduation. This request cannot be made after a degree has been awarded.

All requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure students are informed of any potential future considerations related to a diploma name change, including possible discrepancies with official records as noted above.

3. Diploma Reissuance Policy:

Diplomas may be reissued upon request if the original document has been lost, destroyed, or if a graduate's legal name has changed. All replacement diploma requests are subject to applicable processing fees.

Graduates requesting a diploma reflecting a legal name on record with MSM or a legal name change, must return the original diploma before a replacement can be issued. Supporting documentation of the legal name change will be required. **Note:** MSM will not reissue a diploma with a preferred first and/or preferred middle name after graduation.

To request a replacement diploma when the original has been lost or destroyed, the graduate must submit a Diploma Request and Attestation Form affirming that the original diploma is no longer in their possession. This form must be signed and notarized.

Replacement diplomas will display **"Reissued: [date]"** in the lower right corner of the document.

Processing will begin once the completed Diploma Request and Attestation Form, any required supporting documentation, and applicable fees have been received. If a student has any questions or needs support, please contact the registrar at registrar@msmny.edu.

For information about circumstances in which legal names will appear on MSM records, see Section 4 below.



4. What is a Legal Name:

A legal name is the name that appears on your State/Government issued documents (passport, driver's license, birth certificate, U.S. Social Security Card, Visa).

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

- International Student Documentation (SEVIS records, immigration/visa documents)
- Student Financial Services Documentation
- Employee/student employment records
- Student Health Insurance
- Financial Aid (PowerFAIDS)
- Federal or State Requests for information (including tax forms- 1098T, W-4, etc.)
- Federal or State Reporting Requirements (National Student Clearinghouse, New York State Education Department, National Student Loan Data System, etc.)
- Educational history records (Academic Certifications, Transcripts, and Diplomas*)

**See Diploma Name for alternative name options in section 2 above*

Students may change their legal name by submitting a [Biographical Information Update Request form](#), available on the [student portal](#), and providing the Office of the Registrar legal documentation that shows the updated legal name. Acceptable forms of documentation include:

- A government-issued photo ID
- Name change court order
- Other official documentation showing your full legal name