

POLICY ON STUDENT NAMES

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Sheffield Hallam University and students on collaborative courses.

Applicants, students and alumni

Under the law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, people may change their name at any time, provided there is no intent to deceive or defraud another person. There is no legal procedure to follow, and people may change their forename or surname, add names, or rearrange existing names.

Notwithstanding this, public organisations and financial institutions in the UK have a duty to prevent fraud, and reserve the right to set requirements. This university therefore requires applicants to apply using the name on their passport, birth certificate, or marriage certificate. This name is used at enrolment and during students' studies, and for the award certificate at the end of the course. If students are from a culture which does not use a forename and surname, the full name should be given in the surname space of the application form.

Students are responsible for ensuring that their correct name is recorded accurately by the university, and should notify any errors or change of name prior to being fully enrolled.

If an applicant changes their name before enrolment or a student changes their name during their studies before they have completed their award and final results have been published, they must provide the University with documentary evidence of the name change. Examples of documentary evidence are:

- marriage certificate, if change of name is due to marriage;
- if a student wishes to revert to their maiden name due to divorce or other reason, they must also provide their birth certificate and written statement confirming that the student has reverted to their maiden name for all purposes
- certified copy of birth entry, if a new name has been recorded in the birth entry
- public announcement, eg by an advertisement in a local or national newspaper, stating that the student has stopped using their previous name and has assumed a new one. A copy of the advertisement could provide evidence of name change.
- statutory declaration of name change
- change of name deed (previously known as deed poll)
- police report; if a student has adopted a new name for personal safety

Where applicants have applied through UCAS they will be required to change the name recorded on the UCAS application system complying with relevant UCAS requirements and procedures.

Where students intend to change their name and gender due to gender transition, they may wish to make the changes to their records as part of a broader transition plan. Students can access support for preparing and/or implementing their transition plan from Student Funding and Access Support in the Library and Student Support Services Directorate. This will include consideration of a date to change records to reflect the new name and preferred gender

Degree or award certificates

Degree or award certificates are legal documents. They are issued in the name of the student, as recorded by the university, at the date the student attains the degree or award.

Once students have completed their award and final results have been published, the university will not normally permit retrospective changes to the name on a degree or award certificate. This is because the certificate is a definitive statement of the facts at the date of the award and to prevent fraud. The university will not reissue a certificate in a new name where the name change is after the award was made, for example due to marriage or divorce, or by public announcement, statutory declaration or change of name deed. Therefore, it is important that students ensure that the name on their student record is accurate at the time of conferment of their award.

The university will consider exceptions to this policy and consider a request to change the name on a degree or award certificate retrospectively and reissue it under the new name:

- Change of name associated with gender transition, where a former student affirms a different gender identity and requests a re-issued degree or award certificate in the new name. To protect against fraud, the university will require the individual to provide a passport with the new name and gender or the new birth certificate (where the birth has been re-registered and a birth certificate re-issued in their new name), or statutory declaration of name change.
- Change of name associated with vital personal security such as victim or witness protection, where a former student changes their identity and the police or security services recommend that the change should include the individual's qualifications. A request to change the name must be accompanied by a police report or solicitor's letter and evidence of the name change, eg change of name deed or statutory declaration.
- Very exceptionally, there may be other circumstances where the individual's human rights or vital interests justify the reissue of a certificate in a new name. The university will consider such applications on a case by case basis, depending on reasons and evidence provided.

Requests for a reissued certificate in a new name should be in writing, marked "Strictly Confidential" with documentary evidence, addressed to the Director of Registry Services. All documents received will be treated with strict confidentiality. If the student or graduate has any concerns about the documentation they are being asked to provide or any other issue regarding their student records they should contact the Director of Registry Services

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