



***Guide to
Legally Changing
Your Name and
Gender in California***

**Higher Education
Handbook**

This document is a supplement to my Name and Gender Change in California guide and is intended specifically for students at California colleges and universities.

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About This Guide

This document supplements my Name and Gender Change in California guide and is written specifically for students in California’s higher education system. While the overall process is not as standardized as state and federal updates, this handbook outlines the general flow and identifies the key offices to contact on campus.

This guide is intentionally shorter. Most students should be able to complete these steps within a few hours total, though you may need to do some institution-specific digging. To make navigation easier, the first step is separated by community college, UC, and CSU policies. The process is largely the same for undergraduate and graduate students; where it differs, those distinctions are clearly noted. If you encounter obstacles, your first point of contact should be your campus Registrar’s Office. Campus LGBTQ+ resource centers can also be helpful when navigating internal systems.

Nearly every university offers a “lived name” (sometimes called “preferred” or “chosen” name) option that can be updated without documentation. This name typically appears on class rosters, email, and most campus-facing systems, but your legal name may still appear on official transcripts, diplomas, and certain financial or employment records. Use the lived name option – usually available in your Student Information System¹ (SIS) portal – while you complete the legal update process.

For an official legal name change with your university, complete through Step 7 of the main guide first. Before initiating your campus update, have the following updated documents ready:

- Court order
- Social Security record (updated SSN)
- Driver’s license or state ID

¹ Student Information Services, or SIS, is the technical term for the portal where you can register for classes, view transcripts, change communication preferences, etc. Think Campus Solutions, for example. While navigation will be different for every university, the “lived name” option is likely under “Profile” or “Account Settings”.

1) *Campus Registrar*

The Registrar's Office (sometimes called Admissions and Records) maintains your official student record, including enrollment, transcripts, and degree status. It should be your first stop when updating your name on campus.

Submitting a name change through the Registrar will update most core academic records. Because many institutions use centralized systems, one approved change often carries across connected platforms, such as class rosters and internal databases. Processing may take time, and the update is not universal – systems outside the Registrar's authority may require separate requests. The following sections outline additional offices you may need to contact to ensure your name is updated campus-wide.

Proceed to the subsection for your college system. If you are an alumnus (regardless of institution), skip to Section D. If you attend a private university, I cannot provide system-specific guidance, but the CSU section may offer a useful reference point.

a. community colleges

Community colleges (CCs) often have the least formalized process for name changes. In most cases, the simplest approach is to call or visit the Admissions and Records office and ask directly about their procedure. Many CCs handle name updates manually. You may only need to present a certified court order for staff to update your record. Because processes can be less centralized and more low-tech, published instructions are sometimes limited or unclear. When I assisted a community college student with her update, we were unable to find formal guidance online; emailing campus IT ultimately resolved the issue. To avoid unnecessary delays, search “[your community college] name change” to see whether specific forms or documentation are required. Even if the process is informal, some campuses maintain internal forms that are not prominently advertised.

b. uc system

The University of California (UC) campuses appear to follow a broadly similar process for legal name changes. In most cases, the request falls under the jurisdiction of the Registrar's Office and can be completed entirely online. Because each UC campus

operates its own internal student system, I cannot provide exact, step-by-step instructions here. The process and required documentation are outlined on each campus's website, along with a link to the appropriate online legal name change form. Below are links to each UC campus's name change page:

- [Berkeley](#)²
- [UCLA](#)
- [Davis](#)
- [Irvine](#)
- [San Diego](#)
- [Santa Barbara](#)
- [Santa Cruz](#)
- [Riverside](#)
- [Merced](#)
- [UCSF](#)

Each page explains what documentation is required and how to submit your request. I apologize that I cannot offer more specific walkthroughs. The actual submission forms are typically accessible only through student login portals, which means they are available to currently enrolled students only.

c. csu system

CSU campuses do not follow a single, standardized process for legal name changes, and many do not publish clear instructions online. From what I have gathered, most campuses require a short form (typically one to two pages) submitted to the appropriate office along with supporting documentation. This appears to be the procedure at campuses such as East Bay, Sacramento, and Chico – unfortunately, the form and exact office appears unique to each CSU.

Begin by checking your Student Information System (SIS) portal. Some campuses provide a direct link or instructions there for submitting a legal name update. You can also search “[your CSU] name change” to see whether your campus has published guidance or forms online. If you are unable to find clear instructions, the process will fall under the jurisdiction of the Registrar's Office. Contact the office using your student email and ask

² For UC Berkeley students: CalCentral → My Dashboard → Student Resources → Legal Name Change Request.

what forms are required and where they should be submitted. Below is a template you may use:

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [First Last], and I am a student at [CSU]. I have completed a legal name and gender change and would like to update my information in the university's system. However, I am unsure how to begin the process.

Could you please advise me on the required steps and documentation?

Thank you for your time,

[First Last]

[Student ID]

d. alumni

As an alumnus, you will not have the same access to internal systems as a currently enrolled student. Your best course of action is to contact the Registrar's Office directly – ideally from your alumni email account, if you still have access to it.

Below is a template you may use:

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [First Last], and I am a graduate from the class of [Year]. I have completed a legal name and gender change and would like to update my degree and associated records to reflect this. However, I am unsure how to begin the process.

Could you please advise me on the required steps and documentation?

Thank you for your time,

[First Last]

Attach a scan of your degree and court order. From what I can see looking at the universities that have published guides for alumni name changes, you will likely need to return your old diploma and pay any associated fees.

2) Student ID Card

After updating your name in campus systems, the next step is to ensure your physical student ID card reflects this change. Identify the office responsible for issuing ID cards. While there is no universal standard, this is commonly handled by the Bursar's Office or a dedicated ID Card Services unit. Most colleges and universities maintain a webpage explaining how to replace an ID card – follow those instructions first. In many cases, institutions charge a replacement fee (typically \$20–\$35), as these processes are designed for lost or damaged cards. It is a good idea to ask whether this fee can be waived for name changes, but you should be prepared to pay it if necessary.

If your student account includes a transit pass (such as a Clipper or TAP card), you will likely need a replacement for that card as well. Transit programs are often administered by a different office from student IDs, commonly Parking & Transportation or Student Services. Review the relevant webpage to confirm the procedure and any associated fees.

Most offices print cards on site, meaning you will usually receive your updated version during your visit.

3) *Workplace and Payroll*

This section will be very similar to the step with the same name on the main guide. The only difference is that this will provide information specifically for students employed by their institution.

There are a few contexts where this step could be relevant: work-study, course grading, research and GSI work, etc. Because student employment is embedded within university administrative systems, updating your name or gender marker as a campus employee can involve multiple offices and platforms. Your student and employee records may be partially linked but not automatically synchronized, meaning this step requires intentional follow-up.

I strongly recommend completing this step immediately after Steps 2 and 3, so you spend as little time with conflicting records in the university system as possible. Since your student and employee information is so much more intertwined than most forms of employment, you're more likely to run into system or payroll errors the longer your name is mismatched.

Think back to the identification materials you provided during onboarding as a student employee. You will likely be asked for similar documentation again. Prepare the following:

- Court order
- Birth certificate
- Driver's license or state ID
- Social Security card

In most cases, only some of these documents will be required. Provide what is specifically requested rather than submitting everything preemptively.

Keeping your supervisor in the loop, start by contacting the unit that administers student

employment at your institution. This may include a Student Employment Office, departmental administrator, or campus Human Resources unit that oversees student workers. If your position is housed directly within a department or research group, your supervisor or faculty advisor may be able to initiate or coordinate updates across relevant systems. These may include payroll, timekeeping platforms, benefits eligibility records, campus directories, ID badges, and internal scheduling tools.

If you anticipate delays, confusion, or inconsistent communication, it can be helpful to maintain a paper trail. Communicate by email or text whenever possible, and frame your request as ensuring that your employment records accurately reflect your legal identifying information. You may also note that timely updates help prevent payroll and tax reporting discrepancies on their side, which can encourage the request to be prioritized.

4) ***Federal Financial Aid***

Be absolutely sure that you have updated your Social Security information before beginning this step, as this is what federal aid programs use to verify name changes.

Go to FAFSA.gov and log in. Click on your profile, go to Settings, and click the Edit box next to your name. This is checked against your Social Security Records before fully saving. Your next step is to submit corrections to the current financial aid year's FAFSA form, only updating your name. This is generally processed quickly and FAFSA will email you when the correction is complete. You don't need to submit corrections for any previous years, and going forward your new name will be used in the context of federal financial aid.

4) *State Financial Aid*

You may or may not be aware of what CSAC is: the California Student Aid Commission. They oversee the Cal Grant and Middle Class Scholarship programs, along with many other state-run grants. Essentially, if you receive any state financial aid (and you by all likelihood do), you need to update your CSAC profile.

Navigate to <https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/>. Create an account if you haven't already. Because they handle sensitive information, they will always require two-factor authentication via an emailed code to login. However, the code doesn't always send, without a clear pattern behind this. Should you be stuck waiting for one, just type something random in and hit enter. It'll tell you that's incorrect, but a "resend code" button will also appear, and that one will actually send you the code within a minute or so.

Now that you've logged in, take note of your CSAC ID. Fill out Section 1 and Section 6 only of Grant Record Change Form For Students (G-10). Don't forget to enter the award year in the top right corner. Once you have filled it out, email the file to studentsupport@csac.ca.gov, along with two forms of updated identification and your court order. Write the following for the email subject line: G-10 Grant Record Change – [Your CSAC ID].

I should note that unlike every other government name change, there isn't really a clear step-by-step process listed out by any agency or person online. These instructions were all given to me verbally via the CSAC customer support phone number. The G-10 form is specifically for the Cal Grant Program, but updated my entire CSAC profile so I believe it works for everyone. Should you run into any problems, however, you can email studentsupport@csac.ca.gov or call their support line at (888) 224-7268.

4) *Miscellaneous records and organizations*

This step is more of a cleanup process, as it's likely that there are organizations that aren't synced to your academic record with your old name. Think college clubs, university insurance and healthcare, or scholarships. The most successful strategy for me was searching my deadname in my inbox, so I could find them all at once and form a checklist.

The process for updating these varies greatly depending on how structured/formal the organization is. For more relaxed ones such as clubs, simply emailing leadership asking to update your name, pronouns, and gender in their records should be enough. For more structured systems, I recommend checking their website's version of Profile Settings to see if there's any way to update it on your end. If not, email or call to inquire about the process. Here's a template you can use:

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [First Last], and I am [role] at [organization]. I have completed a legal name and gender change and would like to update my information in the [organization] system. However, I am unsure how to begin the process.

Could you please advise me on the required steps and documentation?

Thank you for your time,

[First Last]

[Student ID]

And you're done! If you're at this part, you're either entirely finished with the name change process or just about to be. Plan something nice to celebrate.