

Chosen Name Process & FAQ

At the College of the Atlantic, we are committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community for all our members. We recognize the significance of using a chosen name that aligns with an individual's identity, even if it differs from their legal name. College of the Atlantic permits students to designate the name they prefer to use across various campus platforms. Importantly, these chosen name changes do not necessitate a legal name change.

[Chosen Name Form](#)

Should students wish to alter their legal name of record, they are required to notify the Registrar and provide the necessary supporting documentation, as outlined on the [Legal Name Change Form](#).

How can I indicate the name I would like COA to use?

Students may submit their chosen name, which may differ from their legal or given first name, using the Chosen Name Form. The requested name change will be reviewed by the Registrar and should take effect within 3-4 business days across most systems. Typically, the chosen name, not the legal first name, initially entered into the student's application during the admission process to the college will be the default chosen name within COA's systems.

Why does the college review chosen name requests?

College of the Atlantic has certain legal obligations to prevent misrepresentation, fraud, and identity theft. The use of inappropriate language (as determined by the College) or registered trademarks as names will not be permitted. Names containing numeric or non-alphabetic characters may not be compatible with our systems. The review process ensures that the College adheres to these legal and technological requirements.

Where will my chosen name appear?

In general, your chosen name will be used on most platforms within the College that do not require a legal name. This includes:

- Network account for logging into computers on campus
- COA ID card (1Card)
- Software/vendor accounts (Adobe, Apple, Google)
- e2Campus emergency alerts system
- Housing assignments and college mailbox
- Email display name (in COA email addresses and message headers)
- Printed materials and magazines sent to your campus mailbox and home address

What about my user ID for accessing COA systems?

You may also choose to update your user ID (used for all computer accounts provisioned by the college) when you complete the Chosen Name Form. Please note that the process for changing user IDs takes place in collaboration with the IT department and may result in losing access to

systems for a brief time during the transition. IT will be in contact with you to coordinate this work once they receive your form.

Where will my legal or given name continue to appear?

Primarily due to federal and state legal requirements pertaining to official reporting and self-identification, legal names will continue to be required and published in the following contexts:

- Financial aid applications and award processes
- Official and unofficial transcripts
- Enrollment and degree verifications with the National Student Clearinghouse and other third-party inquiries
- Initial employment documentation
- Payroll pay stubs
- Reporting of wages and financial aid to applicable tax authorities
- Annual tax reports (e.g. 1098, 1099, W-2)
- SEVIS and other U.S. immigration documentation
- Veterans Administration Enrollment Reporting (for students receiving VA educational benefits)
- Federal and state reports
- Bills and notices mailed by the business office

Please note that due to technical limitations of the college's IT systems, legal names may still appear in certain systems like the student portal. We intend to improve this functionality as we update systems, allowing legal names to be hidden in more contexts.

How often can I change my chosen name?

Chosen names can be modified twice each academic year, including changes that revert to a previously used first name. You can initiate a name change at any time.

Is there a cost for changing my chosen name in COA's systems?

There is no fee associated with changing your first name.

Will I get a new COA ID card?

After a chosen name change is active, a new COA ID card will be printed automatically at no cost. You will need to return your old card when you pick up your new card at IT. Please note that legal names will still be displayed in small print on the back of your ID to ensure it can be used as a form of ID when necessary.

Why is the legal/given name printed on official and unofficial transcripts?

Some state agencies use college transcripts as proof of identity, and many employers and graduate schools rely on the names published on official and unofficial transcripts for processing applications and conducting reference and background checks.

Who will know about the name change?

Key offices will be notified of the name changes to make sure they update their systems appropriately. Your chosen name will be displayed on rosters used by faculty members with

whom you are taking classes, as well as by mailroom and residence staff. Please be aware that some forms and documents sent to your non-campus address may display different names, for example, annual tax documents will use legal or given names as required by law, while general college mailings will display chosen names. We recommend you share your chosen name directly with your family and friends as much as possible to avoid any confusion with mail sent home.

Who will continue to have access to my legal name?

Due to technical limitations within our student and faculty portals, faculty and staff are able to view legal names in addition to chosen names. As we work to improve our systems, our goal is to limit access to legal names to only those offices that need that information for legal/reporting purposes.

Can I submit a chosen name when applying to the College?

Yes, students can provide a chosen name at any point during the admission application process or submit a chosen name form before arriving on campus once they have received access to their COA email account.

Will the College accept a chosen last or middle name?

This process only applies to chosen first name changes. Changes to surnames or last names must be made legally. Please notify the Registrar and provide supporting documentation as described on the [Legal Name Change Form](#).

Who should I contact if I notice an inconsistency with how my name is displayed?

If you encounter issues with chosen name inconsistencies, please contact the Registrar at registrar@coa.edu.

May I have my chosen name printed on my diploma?

College practice allows for the printing of a chosen first name on the diploma if requested by the student on the [Intent to Graduate Form](#). Please note that your transcript will continue to display your name of record. While using a chosen name on the diploma is permitted, it is recommended to use your name of record (sometimes referred to as a "legal" name) to avoid potential discrepancies between your diploma and transcript. Such discrepancies may create challenges when submitting applications for graduate school, employment, visas, or other external purposes where the records will be matched. It's worth noting that reprinting a diploma, if necessary, comes with a fee (\$25).