

LSAC Legal Education Brief Series: The 2021 LGBTQ+ Law School Survey

Student Experiences: Name and Pronouns

Chosen Names

Schools can signal their commitment to inclusion through their policies and practices pertaining to chosen names. The 2021 LGBTQ+ Law School survey found that more than 90% of the 121 schools that responded to this question indicated that they allow students to use their chosen names. While many students—especially transgender and gender nonbinary students—will legally change their names at some point, for various reasons many of them will not have done so yet either by the time they enroll or during law school. Ensuring that students can use their chosen names is crucial to the law school experience for these students.

Despite the high percentage of schools reporting that they allow students to use their chosen names, schools' policies and practices may not be equitable depending on how students are able to *find out* if their school(s) of interest will allow them to use their chosen names. The 2021 survey reveals that, for the most part, candidates learn about a school's policy or practice around chosen names later in the enrollment journey, rather than during their initial law school search. Of the 111 schools that responded to this question, more than 60% reported that students are notified on their application that they can use their chosen names on the school's application.

Students' ability to use their chosen names is just one part of name-related inclusive policies. Students also need to know *exactly where* their chosen name will appear, as well as the processes involved in ensuring that their chosen name is used. The following information was provided by responding schools:

- 95% ($n = 111$) reported that students' chosen names can appear on their orientation name tags and/or materials.
- 90% reported that students' chosen names can appear on faculty class rosters.
- 44% reported that students' chosen names can appear on transcripts that can be sent to employers.
- 58% said that students' chosen names can appear on their diploma.

However, *how* students' chosen names appear in these areas varies. The schools that responded to this question reported the following:

- 67% reported that students' chosen names automatically appear on their orientation name tags and/or materials.
- 49% reported that students' chosen names automatically appear on faculty class rosters, 41% reported that this action requires students to submit a request, and 5% reported that students' chosen names cannot appear on faculty class rosters.
- Only a very small proportion of schools indicated that students' chosen names automatically appear on their transcripts (15%) and diplomas (14%).
- Almost 40% of schools reported that students' chosen names *cannot* appear on transcripts that can be sent to employers.

- Almost one-third of the schools reported that students' chosen names *cannot* appear on their diploma.

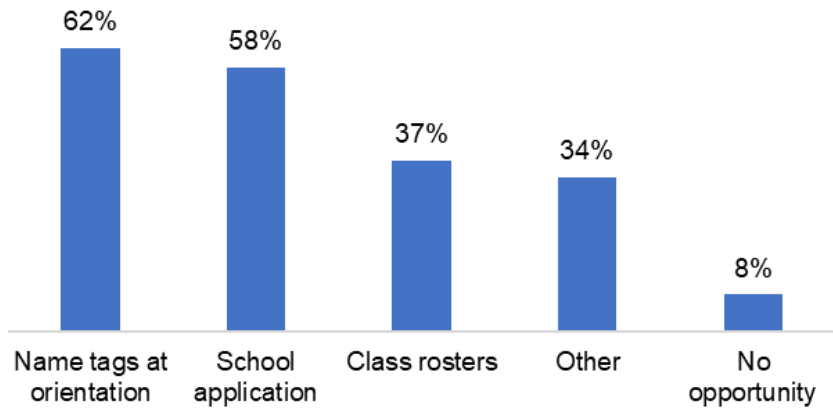
Pronouns

Another way schools and institutions can signal their commitment to inclusion is through their policies and practices pertaining to pronouns.

Key takeaways from Figure 1:

- Most schools reported that pronouns can be indicated on orientation name tags and on the school application.
- Less than 40% of the schools that responded to this question reported that students have opportunities to indicate their pronouns on class rosters.
- Nine schools (8%) indicated that they do not provide students with opportunities to indicate their pronouns.

Figure 1: Places Students Have Opportunities to Indicate Pronouns (n = 113)



Source: 2021 LSAC LGBTQ+ Law School Survey data

While the survey results reveal that many schools offer students opportunities to indicate pronouns, there is a need for schools to be prepared to effectively *use* the pronoun information they collect to ensure that students will have an inclusive experience from application through graduation. For example, the survey found that only 40% of schools reporting that students can indicate their pronouns on their application also reported that pronouns can be indicated on class rosters.

To learn about recruitment, admission, orientation, engagement, and more, [download the full report online](#).