Saying Students' Names Right:
10 Top Tips For Policy Makers In Higher Education

What universities can do to address this important equalities, diversity, inclusion & student experience issue

A shareable resource developed by Dr Jane Pilcher & Dr Hannah Deakin-Smith of Nottingham Trent University, drawing on findings from the Say My Name research project funded by the British Academy

SAY MY NAME

NTU

1 Respecting names is important for equalities, diversity & inclusion

"When I mention names, people say its only a little thing. I'm like, it's not. It has such a huge impact on a person's identity & sense of belonging"

Names matter for people's identities. Policy should aim to ensure students' names are said correctly by all staff who are student-facing. Staff & students also need to understand that naming conventions vary by culture.

2 A 'whole university' approach is needed….

"Names being pronounced correctly would seem to be a part of being respectful to different racial & ethnic backgrounds"

Instead of *ad hoc* activities by (some) university staff, there should be institution-wide strategies to address name pronunciation & naming conventions.

"It should just be part of like the student registration process, in terms of taking the lead. I think it has to come from the central university side of it"

3 …from registration to graduation (& everything in-between!)

4 Embed audio-recordings of names in students' records systems

Your students' records software may already have a name audio-recording feature. If not, integrate it with software like NameCoach to capture students' saying their own names. **Do this at registration, like you already do with their photographs.**

"The student could record how to say their name on the system, & then we can check it. Then students won't have to have that conversation with every single member of staff"

SAY MY NAME

5 For all students, include names & identities in induction programmes

Raise awareness of the importance of names by having induction activities on names & identities, on respecting name pronunciation & on cultural variations in naming conventions. Let students know its okay to correct name mispronunciation by university staff!

"In every environment to have an introductory session. You know, maybe encouraging people to introduce themselves, how they'd like their names to be pronounced"

6 For all staff, include names & identities in equalities, diversity & inclusion training

Raise awareness of the importance of names by training all staff on names & identities, on respecting name pronunciation & on cultural variations in naming conventions.

"Staff could be trained so they have an awareness of issues that students might encounter when their name is mispronounced & so that they can put strategies in place"

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7 Develop online resources to help staff respect names

These might include examples of best practice, guides to using online pronunciation tools & to key variations in cultural naming conventions, & how to adapt autocorrect to avoid misspelling names in emails.

"I'd like to see guidance on how to conduct yourself in a way that is showing respect. Also, the actual kind of language side, how do you pronounce these sounds?"

SAY MY NAME

8 **Make it normal for everyone to declare how their name should be pronounced**

"I hope the university can have a place where the pronunciation of names can be recorded, or displayed"

Encourage all staff & all students to include an audio-recording of their name in their email signature, using e.g., NameCoach

9 **Email address protocols should allow for variations in naming conventions**

"Even teachers who say my name right would have difficulty with my email address. Maybe universities could be more flexible with their policies on email addresses"

10 **Policy on respecting names should directly address international students**

It's not an issue for all international students (& can be an issue for home/EU students). But university services for international students should especially show respect for, & celebrate, the cultural diversity of names from around the globe.
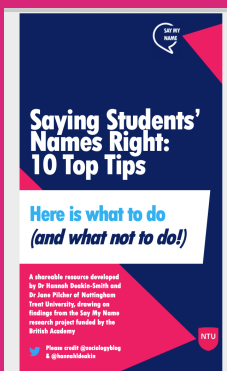
Key Message:

Saying students' names right is not just for graduation!

"It makes me feel horrible, like I don't belong. I feel like I already don't belong there because I'm not English, but pronouncing my name wrong, it just makes matters worse'

"If the university also has some guidelines or something where the staff have to get to know the names of the students in the classroom so that they don't mispronounce & make anybody feel awkward just because of this"

For more information about the Say My Name project, contact jane.pilcher@ntu.ac.uk

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Here is what to do *(and what not to do!)*

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Please credit @sociologyblog & @hannahldeakin

How To Make An Audio NameBadge

Who have an Audio NameBadge?
Audio recordings help people to say names correctly, aiding inclusion & equality.

8 STEPS TO MAKE AN AUDIO NAMEBADGE

STEP 01
STEP 02
STEP 03

Want some resources? Use the QR code or visit https://bit.ly/3LwDf3c

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