

CAP Motion to allow changes to
submitted student projects for
protecting privacy and
confidentiality

Motion: The Committee on Academic Policy recommends and I move that the “WPI Electronic Project Submission Policy” be *modified*, and that the “WPI Personal Privacy and Confidentiality Change Policy with Respect to Electronic Project Submissions” be *added* to allow changes related to privacy and confidentiality without any time constraints, and to update the WPI undergraduate catalog to reflect these changes, as described below.

- The motion would *modify* the current **Electronic Project Submission Policy** (page 18, WPI 2022-23 Undergraduate Catalog) as follows (with ~~striketrough~~ text deleted and **red bold** text added):

The final project report should be carefully proofread. Once the submitted project has been approved by the advisor and released to WPI's digital repository (~~Digital WPI~~) by the Registrar's Office, it is considered an academic record and cannot be ~~edited~~ **changed, with the exception of changes per the WPI Personal Privacy and Confidentiality Change Policy with Respect to Electronic Project Submissions.**

- The motion would *add* the **WPI Personal Privacy and Confidentiality Change Policy with Respect to Electronic Project Submissions** (to follow immediately after the Electronic Project Submission Policy in the WPI Undergraduate Catalog):

WPI Personal Privacy and Confidentiality Change Policy with Respect to Electronic Project Submissions

It is WPI's goal to protect the personal privacy and confidentiality of its student authors and members of the extended WPI community, including sponsors, interviewees, and collaborators. To fulfill this goal, WPI will make reasonable and timely efforts to address personal privacy and confidentiality needs that require changes to published undergraduate student works at DigitalWPI. When brought to WPI's attention by authors or others with an interest in protecting privacy and confidentiality, these requests will receive confidential review for approval, to protect authors' or others' privacy and confidentiality interests. Where possible WPI will partner with authors and advisors to replace or redact original submissions. Original submissions will be retained in the library's non-public administrative archive and file replacements will be documented in confidential library administrative records.

Why?

- Requests include replacing a previously used name with a preferred or “lived” name.
- Personal information might be shared by mistake in reports.
 - E.g. someone’s phone number or address shared in a report

(Requests can be handled during or after student’s time at WPI)

Do others do this?

- Yes, many universities and institutions:
 - California Institute of Technology
 - Cornell University
 - MIT
 - Purdue University.
 - (All considers graduate work)

Several publishers allow updates

- arXiv: <https://blog.arxiv.org/2021/03/11/update-name-change-policy>
- Elsevier: <https://www.elsevier.com/about/policies/inclusive-author-name-changes>
- Dartmouth repository:
https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/policies.html#author_name

In these examples, different from the university library policies, the goal of these policies are stated: “fosters diversity and reflects our inclusive ethos.” “transgender authors and other authors with a strong need for privacy,” “name changes related to gender, marriage, religion, and others)”, “name changes related to gender, marriage, religion, and others)”

Implementation

- Library has put together a step-by-step, detailed implementation scheme.
- Included in the original motion document.

Thanks to Anna Gold

- Anna Gold and their team provided us detailed reports to help us discuss document change policy.

Arxiv

1. In full text works: the author name can be changed in the PDF and/or LaTeX source where it appears in the author list, acknowledgments, and email address
2. In metadata: the name and email address can be changed in the author list metadata and in the submission history metadata for all existing versions
3. In user accounts: the name, username, and email address can all be changed

Elsevier

- On request from the author, author names can be directly updated on published papers on Elsevier's primary publishing platforms, without any correction or other note. Arrangements are then made to update the article metadata in secondary indexation databases such as Scopus, Web of Science and Pubmed, as applicable.
- There may be some authors who have less need for privacy and the name change could impact the visibility of their paper, for example, if the first author changes their last name. The name can then be changed directly in the article but a correction/note might be published after discussion with the author.

Dartmouth Digital Commons

- No justification is required for an author name change to be implemented.
- The change does not need to reflect the author's past or current legal name(s).
- We will then change your name as requested on both the item record(s) and the document(s). There will be no mention of the previous name unless you specifically request that.

CalTech as an example

- Updates After Final Approval

- Any corrections to the thesis must be approved by your advisor and/or Committee and the Graduate Office.
- Once the corrections have been approved, contact the library and ask to have the specific PDF pages replaced.
- The library will make a permanent dark-archived copy of the original thesis, and then either replace the affected pages or upload the corrected full version.
- File name will indicate that it is a "corrected" or "updated" one.
- The new copy of the thesis will then become the visible version.
- If you are correcting typographical errors, contact the library and explain the changes to be made. The library, at its discretion, may decide to simply replace the pages in the original document, or dark-archive the original and display a corrected version.

Cornell as an example

- New version is set to [eCommons administrators](#) .
- Standard practice is for eCommons to maintain access to previous versions, with all versions visible on the landing page, and the reason for each subsequent version.
- If access to one or more earlier versions should be restricted, the submitter should request this specifically. Version history and the metadata for restricted access items will remain visible to users, but the file(s) will not be accessible.
- Creating a new version is the preferred approach when:
 - Nature of change is purely additive
 - New version correct significant error(s)
 - New version includes new content.
 - New version supersedes previous version.
- Upon request, the submitter/author may also ask us that superseded version's file be replaced with a file with an added cover page, prepared and inserted by the submitter,
- A descriptive note will be added to the earlier, restricted version(s), stating "This is not the most current version. To request this particular version, please contact the eCommons administrators."

MIT as example

- All changes must have prior approval from the Vice Chancellor or their designee.
- When the purpose is to correct significant errors in content, the student should [create an errata](#) and obtain approval first from both thesis supervisor or program chair, before submitting for review by the Vice Chancellor.
- If the purpose of change is to excise classified, proprietary, or confidential information, the student should fill out the [application form](#) (pdf) and have the request approved first by the thesis supervisor or program chair, before submitting for review by the Vice Chancellor.

Purdue as an example

- POST-FACTO EDITS

Post acceptance changes are only permitted to correct significant textual, data, or mathematical errors affecting accuracy of content and which could be potentially embarrassing to Purdue University.

- If, after appropriate consultation, it is agreed that a candidate's thesis or dissertation merits post facto revision, please contact the [Thesis & Dissertation Office](#)