

POLICY ON THE NAMING OF BUILDINGS, FACILITIES AND EXTERNAL SPACES



This document sets out policy for the naming of buildings, facilities and identifiable external spaces

Version	1.1
Executive Sponsor	Chief Operating Officer
Officer Responsible for Policy/ Procedures	Director of Estates
Consultation Process	Executive Engagement Group Executive Operations Group
Date of Approval and Committee and/or Executive Officer	Executive
Effective Date	1 June 2021

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 Purpose of the Policy

The naming of buildings, facilities and identifiable spaces serves a number of purposes:

- to facilitate orientation and movement around the campus
- to honour individuals for outstanding achievement and contribution
- to recognise significant benefaction
- to reflect and celebrate the history and heritage of the University.

This Policy applies to all buildings, facilities and identifiable spaces owned or leased by Aston University.

1.2 What is Covered by the Policy

This Policy covers situations in which the naming of a building or identifiable external space, including roads, after a person would be appropriate and sets out how proposals to designate or change the name of a building or identifiable external space will be considered. Changing the names of buildings or identifiable external spaces ought not to take place too often for a number of practical (for example, cost of changing signs and literature and possible confusion arising from the need to re-orientate staff, students and visitors) and reputational (for example, embarrassment caused to donors) reasons.

The naming of facilities or space within buildings is normally determined locally by the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean in conjunction with the Director of Estates and the Director of Development and Alumni Relations (the latter in cases where the proposal is in recognition of benefaction). In considering such proposals, these officers must take account of the principles set out in this policy. Where appropriate, these officers may decide to refer the naming of space within a building to the process set out in this Policy.

1.3 Who is Covered by the Policy

The Policy applies to staff involved in setting the names of buildings, facilities and identifiable spaces owned or leased by Aston University.

1.4 Who is Responsible for the Policy

The Chief Operating Officer is the Executive sponsor and the Director of Estates is the officer responsible for this Policy.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Names given to buildings, facilities and identifiable external spaces should reflect and enhance the University's brand, and be consistent with Aston's mission and values. Designations that might enhance the University's profile with regard to diversity are particularly welcome. Building names should not cause offence to the University community or external stakeholders.

2.2 As a general principle, naming should be consistent and part of an overall concept, and should be part of a stable system that is changed infrequently. Building names should be clear and aid orientation and movement around the campus.

2.3 Names used for existing building, facilities or open spaces, on campus or in surrounding areas, should not normally be re-used.

- 2.4 The naming of a building must comply with any legal agreements entered into by the University, for example, with funding bodies or planning authorities, or written agreements reached with benefactors.
- 2.5 In general, the naming of buildings or facilities should not be discipline specific as occupancy may well change over time. However, in circumstances where a facility is discipline specific (eg a specialist laboratory) a name which reflects the current discipline and use may be appropriate.
- 2.6 The names of staff, students or independent Council members of the University, should only be used exceptionally where individuals are associated with major change within the University or academic achievement of the highest excellence. Such cases would be expected to feature prominently as part of the historical record of the University or be associated with significant achievement in the relevant academic discipline recognised at national or international level. Such names should not be used whilst the individual remains an active member of the University.
- 2.7 The naming of buildings after people external to the University may occur only where they have been associated with events or achievements of major significance, such as a landmark achievement in an academic discipline or major humanitarian contribution, compatible with the University's mission and values. Ideally there would be an association with the city of Birmingham or the University but this is not a requirement. It would normally be expected that such achievements would have clear recognition outside the University, for example, by recognition at national or international level. Additional factors to be considered include congruence with the mission and values of the University. No name will be approved that implies the University's endorsement of a partisan political or ideological position. This does not preclude the use of a name of an individual who has at one time held public office.
- 2.8 Buildings named in recognition of a major benefaction linked to that building should normally be made when either c.30% or more of the fundraising appeal target, or c.30% or more of the construction cost of the building(s) or facility/facilities has been met by the donor's gift. Building naming recognition will also be considered where exceptional philanthropic gifts have been pivotal to the success of a project because of their scale or by unlocking key government or private funding. Facilities within the building may be more appropriate for lower-level benefactions. It may very occasionally be appropriate to name a building in recognition of extraordinary contributions made by long-standing benefactors to the University, where no gift has been made towards the cost of the specific building in question. Due diligence will be carried out to ascertain the source of any funding and ensure it nor the donor compromises the University's values, or financial and legal liabilities, and should also consider the likely reaction of stakeholders and the wider community. The specific duration of the naming rights should be agreed at the same time as the building, facility, room or space naming and will form part of the Gift Agreement. A donor may be given the right to be consulted about the naming of adjacent or contained buildings or facilities, but not to veto it. The donor is being recognised for their generosity, they are not buying the naming rights to the asset in question.
- 2.9 Buildings should not normally be named after companies, charities or trusts unless part of a contractual or gift agreement which clearly brings other benefits to the University. These must be subject to a thorough degree of due diligence to avoid any appearance of commercial influence or conflict of interest.
- 2.10 The University may initiate an open call for suggestions to name a building, facility or identified external space, or an individual or group may submit suggestions. Proposals to designate a new building or identifiable external space or to rename an existing building or

identifiable external space, should be submitted to the Naming Advisory Group for consideration, comprising:

- Chief Operating Officer (Chair)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Engagement)
- Director of Development and Alumni Relations
- Director of Marketing and Communications
- Director of Estates.

Proposals should then be submitted to the Executive for consideration. When satisfied that the naming opportunity confirms to this policy and that the recommendation warrants support, the Executive shall make a recommendation to the Finance and Infrastructure Committee (FIC) for approval. FIC reports approvals to the Council for information. Where appropriate FIC may seek further guidance and direction from the Council.

Approval must be signed off by FIC before any building or identifiable external spaces names are made public.

- 2.11 The naming of a building, facility or identifiable external space is in the gift of the University and entirely at its discretion. All such names will be reviewed by the University every five years. The University reserves the right to terminate the naming rights at any time, if for any reason it considers the association with the name to be damaging to its reputation or if the donor or commercial partner is in breach of the agreement. Termination of naming rights shall be managed by the Naming Advisory Group and reported to FIC. When a named space is proposed for renaming because of a change in purpose, reasonable efforts will be made to inform the original honouree or donor in advance. If the honouree or donor is deceased, reasonable efforts will be made to inform the next generation of family members in advance of the renaming.
- 2.12 The designation of names of buildings and identifiable external spaces may be subject to a statutory process requiring approval from the local council and this must be followed if required. This process is completed by Estates.
- 2.13 All new designations and changes of names of buildings, facilities and identifiable external spaces must be reported to the Director of Estates, who will be responsible for maintaining a register of all approved names.
- 2.14 Plaques or other signs recognising named buildings or physical spaces shall be of a generally uniform design and consistent with Aston's branding policy/guidelines. The Naming Advisory Group, through the Chief Operating Officer, should be consulted on all named space recognition signage. External corporate logos and/or wordmarks will not be permitted on Aston recognition signage, though this may be waived on a case-by-case basis for charitable bodies.
- 2.15 Contraventions of this policy will be dealt with on a case by case basis and any action taken will be in accordance with existing policies and/or contract documentation.



Aston University
Birmingham
B4 7ET, UK

+44 (0)121 204 3000
aston.ac.uk

