

Gender Identity and Gender Transition: Statement of Commitment and Respect for all Staff

1. Statement of Commitment

We are committed to being a fair and inclusive employer and support equality of opportunity and the promotion and celebration of diversity. We are fully supportive of any employee who expresses an intention to undergo gender transition or who has already undergone gender transition and is living in their affirmed gender identity.

We are, likewise, supportive of any employee who defines their gender as non-binaryⁱ or expresses an intention to define their gender as non-binary.

1.1 Principles of Commitment

- We are committed to ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender transition, gender identity or gender expressionⁱⁱ.
- Every person working for the University is accountable for their own behaviour and actions.
- Every person working for the University is responsible for ensuring that they are supportive regarding colleagues' gender transition, gender identity or gender expression.
- All staff must contribute to ensuring that colleagues do not suffer any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation as a result of their gender transition, gender identity or gender expression.
- We will take complaints about discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of gender transition, gender identity or gender expression very seriously and such complaints could, on full investigation, provide grounds for disciplinary action.

1.2 Ensuring respect

Many people may not have supported a colleague who is undergoing gender transition or identifies under the trans umbrellaⁱⁱⁱ and may be unsure of what they should/should not say, how to react, what is appropriate and supportive behaviour, and what can cause embarrassment and discomfort.

Bearing this in mind the following guidelines are key for all staff working with a colleague who is transitioning or is living in their affirmed gender identity:

1. Use the person's chosen name and pronoun that accords with their gender identity (e.g. she/he/they^{iv}; hers/his/theirs or other gender neutral pronouns that individuals wish to use^v). If you do not know the person, listen to how they introduce themselves or how close colleagues, introduce them. If you still do not know, it would normally be

- acceptable to ask how they wish to be addressed but avoid unnecessarily gendered language e.g. avoid saying “Good morning, Sir”.
2. Try not to dwell on any minor unintended mistakes you make – it will just make you and others feel more uncomfortable. If you make a mistake with names or pronouns, correct yourself and move on rather than making a big deal out of it.
 3. Respect people’s privacy and boundaries – prying personal questions, jokes or remarks at the persons’ expense and generally insensitive behaviour are never acceptable.
 4. Remember that everyone has the right to confidentiality – someone else’s transition and (current or former) personal details are not yours to share.
 5. Relate to the person in their gender identity and within the context of the role they hold, as you would do with any other person.

ⁱ **Non-binary Gender Identities:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn’t sit comfortably with ‘man’ or ‘woman’. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely. Note this is not the same as **Intersex**, which is a term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary

ⁱⁱ **Gender** - refers to the cultural and social distinctions between men and women. It consists of three related aspects: (1) **society’s constructed gender roles**, norms and behaviours which are essentially based on the **sex assigned at birth**; (2) **gender identity**, which is a person’s internal perception of their identity and (3) **gender expression**, which is the way a person lives in society and interacts with others.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Trans** is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms.

^{iv} **They** has been in consistent use as a singular pronoun since the late 1300s (usually when referring to someone when their gender is unknown) and is now often adopted by non-binary people as their pronoun of choice.

^v There are other singular gender neutral pronouns used by some - the most common of which are **ze**, **zir**, **zirs** and **zirself**.

It should be noted that vocabulary is evolving. Further advice can be found from our EDI webpages, Advance-HE and [Stonewall’s glossary of terms](#).