

Transgender guidelines

This guidance is intended to form the basis for sensitive support of transgender members of the college community. It is likely to apply to a very small number of students and/or staff but has a major impact on the experience of those individuals.

The term 'transgender' applies to the following groups:

1. "A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex." (Equality Act 2010 definition)
2. People who do not wish to transition permanently to a new gender role, but who identify as gender variant, intersex or who choose to live permanently with a more fluid gender identity

Gender reassignment

People are identified at birth as male or female on the basis of their sexual characteristics. For most people, our **sex, gender identity** (how we feel inside) and our **gender role** (how we behave in society) are consistent with each other. Some people see gender as a spectrum, not a binary choice, and express their gender identity in ways that reflect this.

Occasionally individuals find that the way they look outside and are expected to behave doesn't fit how they feel inside. Also the way they are expected to behave may be different from the way they want to behave. This causes a feeling of deep discomfort described as **gender dysphoria**. This is not a mental illness, but is a recognised condition for which medical treatment may be appropriate.

Transition (or gender confirmation) is the process of changing from the gender assigned at birth to a gender with which the individual identifies. This may, or may not involve medical or surgical treatment. Gender transition is a journey that is different for everyone. Every individual is unique and will experience gender variance to a different degree that also depends on social circumstances. Some may attempt to suppress their discomfort, while others may live permanently in the gender role that is most comfortable for them, but without seeking any medical treatment. Some people choose to follow a medical process called **gender reassignment**.

What to expect if someone plans to transition

Diagnosis of gender dysphoria is carried out by a specialist and may take place over months or years. Someone may not seek diagnosis until they are profoundly distressed by the discrepancy between the way they feel inside and the sex assigned to them at birth.

Transitioning is a lengthy process, which may take some years. The individual is likely to have counselling and may need time away from work or study to attend assessment by a specialist medical professional. Much of the transition process is about social aspects such as name, clothes, appearance and personality rather than medical aspects.

If an individual wants to go through the medical gender reassignment process it is a requirement for National Health Service (NHS) treatment that they first spend a period living in their desired gender – the 'real life experience'. Often an individual chooses to take paid or unpaid leave from the workplace and return presenting as a different gender. This may then be followed by hormone treatment to alter physical characteristics: physical appearance will typically start to change after six months. Some people opt to have further medical interventions, including possible genital surgery, breast removal/augmentation surgery, cosmetic surgery and laser hair removal. Having surgery is a personal choice and is not a key criterion for the process of gender transition.

Practical arrangements

Toilet facilities

People should be able to use gender-appropriate toilets.

Designating some gender-neutral toilet facilities is a sensible approach where this can be accommodated and may also be welcomed by people with a non-binary gender or who are genderfluid.

The college will agree with the individual the point at which to change their use of single sex facilities. There is often anxiety from other people about the use of toilet facilities, so clear information should be given. Requiring someone to use a toilet designated for disabled people is not acceptable.

Name and gender identification

Someone who transitions may wish to adopt a variation of their legal name or use a nickname. Once they notify the college of their preferred name and title (Ms, Miss, Mrs Mr) this name should be used in all circumstances, rather than their birth name and all relevant records should be updated.

The college will recognise people in the gender in which they present, irrespective of their legal gender. When dealing with external organisations, however, (e.g. examination boards) we should be aware that they will be dealing with legal gender, not presenting gender.

A transgender individual may prefer a particular title: this might be 'he', 'she' or 'they' (used to refer to a single person). In non-binary communities, Mx and Msc are gaining popularity, and some non-binary people prefer constructed pronouns such as 'zie' or 'ey'.

Staff name changes

Staff name changes should include personnel records, email details, ID card and contact information. Where possible, information relating to a staff member's previous identity that needs to be retained, such as copies of qualification certificates, should be kept confidentially and separate from their current record.

Student name changes

Registry should be contacted to change the student's name on college records.

Students' name changes should include student records, email details, ID card. Where possible, information relating to a student's previous identity that needs to be retained, such as copies of GCSE certificates, should be kept confidentially and separate from their current record.

Some students may not wish to identify as male or female and feel that they have a more fluid gender identity, either while they transition or permanently. The preferred sex should appear on all student accessed records (e.g. academic profile), but the legal sex should be used for external agencies such as examination boards.

Identification

A full Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) gives a trans person the means to obtain a new birth certificate but other official identification and services reflective of their preferred gender can be gained without a full GRC including a passport, driving licence and the ability to change bank details.

It is illegal for the college to ask to see a GRC. However, they may ask for a Statutory Declaration of Name Change, Deed Poll or other official identification. There can be very real cost implications in changing identity documentation and this may not be accomplished all at once especially by students and lower paid employees. The college should be flexible where possible and clear about what information is required as well as any alternatives that can be offered.

This guidance has been adapted from the **University of Oxford Transgender Guidance** document (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/transgender>)