

# Trans Equality

## Frequently Asked Questions

As part of its wider [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) Queen's University ("the University") is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming community where staff and students are enabled to meet their full potential and are treated as individuals.

This includes providing advice, support and understanding to those individuals who are considering, are taking or have taken steps to present themselves in a sex different to that assigned at birth.

The University recognises that this can be a very difficult and complex time for an individual and would wish to act in a sensitive and supportive way by having a helpful policy and practices in place to ease any transitional period.

These Frequently Asked Questions are designed to provide staff at Queen's University with **some basic guidance and further information** relating to trans issues.

They have been developed following engagement and consultation with relevant parties and complement the information which is contained within the University's Trans Equality Policy which can be accessed [here](#).

A full list of useful Trans terminology is available [by clicking here](#).

## **1. What is Transgender?**

A general, inclusive term describing all those whose gender expression falls outside the typical gender norms: for example, those whose biological sex is female but who feel more comfortable wearing men's clothes, or those who cross-dress occasionally but are content with their gender identity and do not wish to become a permanent member of the opposite sex.

## **2. What is a Transsexual?**

Someone who is transitioning permanently from one gender to another.

## **3. Are all transsexuals gay?**

No, transsexuals share the same feelings and choice with regard to their sexual orientation and sexual attraction as the rest of the population.

## **4. What is the process for a person who is transsexual to become the desired gender?**

Initial psychological analysis is undertaken to determine if the patient is experiencing gender dysphoria. This is where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there's a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity.

Once diagnosed the patient must complete a period of 2 years (NHS rule) living in the role of the desired gender before reassignment surgery can take place. This is known as the "Real Life Experience".

During this period the patient will undergo a number of treatments in order to change their physical characteristics.

## **5. Will the person need to change their name?**

Male to female transsexuals will typically change their name to an appropriate female name (or vice versa) and this will be used exclusively for all documents, e.g.

- At work

- Driving licence
- Bank details
- Passport

The name change is usually carried out by using a deed-poll.

The Real Life Experience will not normally be considered to have started until the person's name has been changed.

## **6. How do I refer to this person?**

Ask the person and in a respectful way. They will inform you about their preferred name and may wish to use a shortened version of their name or even a nickname.

If this is the case it is preferable that (for staff) managers are advised of the preferred name or nickname in advance so that the person's legal/prior name is not used in error.

Once a trans person has made known their preferred name, this name should be used in all circumstances, rather than their birth name(s).

A person who identifies with a certain gender, whether or not they have had surgery, should also be referred to using the pronoun they have a preference for (this could be "he", "she" or "they").

## **7. Does the person have legal protection in their acquired gender?**

Yes, under the Sex Discrimination Gender Reassignment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 it is unlawful to discriminate on grounds of gender reassignment in the provision of goods, facilities and services, as well as employment.

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. This is a personal process, rather than a medical process.

It may include undergoing the medical gender reassignment treatments, but it does not require someone to undergo medical treatment in order to be protected.

**8. Will the male to female transsexual continue to use the male toilet facilities once full time in the acquired female gender?**

No, as a female, the use of the female facilities will be required along with any of the unisex facilities (and vice versa for female to male transsexuals).

Where possible, gender neutral toilet facilities should be used.

**9. How will the dress code apply?**

In accordance with the University's dress code, clothing must be appropriate for wearing in an office/teaching environment.

However, as a general rule, the person will typically dress in clothing which is suited to them and their preferred gender.

**10. Changes to records - what is required?**

The employee's staff ID will need to be replaced and a new photo and name applied.

Likewise, the employee's e-mail address and associated equality monitoring and personnel information will need to be updated to reflect their new name.

**11. What other records may need to be changed?**

If a trans employee or student is transitioning at the University, following their statement of intent to transition, their staff or student records should be changed at a mutually agreed time to reflect their preferred gender and name.

This must include all paper records which must be replaced with a full set of new ones in the new name and gender.

As a rule, no records should be changed without the permission of the employee or student concerned.

With the exception of degree certificates and pensions a written note of intent to transition is sufficient for the gender and name on staff and student records to be changed.

Staff records can be changed through People and Culture and student records through Student Administration.

## **12. What support is available for Trans staff and students?**

Any employee who is considering going through, going through or has gone through the process of gender reassignment can seek support from their manager, local HR Business Partner or Occupational Health. Self referrals can also be made to the University's Counselling service.

Any student who is considering going through, going through or has gone through the process of gender reassignment can seek support from the [Resilience and Wellbeing Team](#) or Occupational Health Service (also available to staff) to discuss any concerns or work through the practical elements of transitioning as it relates to their studies.

They can help transitioning individuals to discuss how they would like the transition to be managed, such as with an academic School or University accommodation.

Students can also avail of the full range of support services available from [the Student Guidance Centre](#) and Students' Union.

It is a matter of choice who should be contacted but it is recommended that the contact person works with the employee or student to agree an action plan to cover the period of their transition.

## **13. Can I tell others about this situation?**

It is imperative that confidentiality is maintained at all times, for staff and students who may be considering, undergoing transition or have in the past undergone gender reassignment.

While, as a general rule, no communication or action should be taken without the explicit consent of the individual concerned, there may be particular circumstances where it is necessary for some information to be shared at an appropriate management level.

**14. Where can I find further information?**

Please contact either the University's [Diversity and Inclusion Unit](#) by email ([eqdiv@qub.ac.uk](mailto:eqdiv@qub.ac.uk)) or phone (02890 971976).