



**ROBERT GORDON  
UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN**

# Transgender Equality Policy



<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Group		
<b>Date Approved</b>	November 2018	<b>Status</b>	Approved
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Director of HR	<b>Impact assessed</b>	Yes
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<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Purpose/Change</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Creation of Policy	November 2018
1.1	Policy transferred into new standard template and updated including policy changes, job title changes and minor grammatical corrections.	August 2022

# TRANSGENDER EQUALITY

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The University recognises that there can be differences between physical sex and gender identity/expression. The University will be respectful and supportive of all people regardless of their gender identity, gender expression or gender presentation, and of any process of gender reassignment, begun or complete. Where this policy refers to 'trans' staff, employees or people, it has in mind people living with any of these identities. This includes those who have non-binary or gender-fluid identities.
- 1.2 The University celebrates and values the diversity of its workforce, and believes that it will benefit from employing trans people at all levels of responsibility. This will result in there being role models for other staff and students who identify as trans. The University will treat all employees with respect, and seek to provide a positive working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- 1.3 The University is committed to:
  - 1.3.1 respecting the confidentiality of all trans staff and will not reveal information without the prior agreement of the individual;
  - 1.3.2 ensuring trans staff will not be excluded from employment or promotion because of their gender identity;
  - 1.3.3 providing a supportive environment for staff who wish their transstatus to be known;
  - 1.3.4 a zero-tolerance approach to transphobic abuse, harassment or bullying, incidences of which will be treated seriously and dealt with under the appropriate procedures.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 The policy covers all employees, contractors, temporary workers and job applicants and applies to all stages of the employment relationship.
- 2.2 The policy should be read in conjunction with the Equality & Diversity Policy and the Dignity at RGU Policy.
- 2.3 While the University will be respectful and supportive of all people regardless of their gender identity, gender expression or gender presentation this policy focuses predominantly on the support and advice that the University can offer to staff who are undergoing, or have undergone, any form of gender reassignment. It also aims to offer advice and guidance to managers or colleagues who are supporting trans staff.

## **3. Legislation**

- 3.1 Gender reassignment is one of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects a person from discrimination, harassment and victimisation if they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) of gender reassignment.
- 3.2 The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows trans people, if they wish to do so, to apply for a gender recognition certificate (GRC) which provides legal recognition in their acquired gender and enables them to obtain a new birth certificate.
- 3.3 Information relating to the gender recognition process is regarded as protected, and it is a criminal offence to disclose such information without an individual's consent. An individual should never be asked if they have a GRC as it could be regarded as harassment.

## **4. Monitoring**

- 4.1 Disclosure of information from employees (and job applicants) relating to gender identity will be treated confidentially and only processed for statistical reports that inform University strategy and decision making. When reporting, all information will be anonymised to avoid individuals being identified.

## **5. Individual Action Plan**

- 5.1 The University will agree an action plan with an employee who has declared their intention to undergo gender reassignment. This will be discussed with and prepared by HR and will include (but not be limited to) an agreed approach to the level of HR support the employee would like; the time off work that will be required for treatment; and the strategy for communicating with colleagues and others (if appropriate).

## **6. HR Support**

- 6.1 The University will support employees undergoing gender reassignment through ongoing engagement with an HR Adviser. The employee will have the option of contacting or meeting with the HR Adviser should they have questions, require advice and/or would just like someone to listen and to talk to. This arrangement, should it be desired by the employee, will be triggered upon the relevant HR Adviser being notified of the employee's intention to transition.

## **7. Time Off for Treatment**

- 7.1 The period of time taken to complete gender reassignment will depend on an individual's circumstances. Employees will not be treated less favourably than employees who have taken time off for other reasons and the University will not designate or report time off for medical appointments or treatment as sickness absence.
- 7.2 Time off for medical appointments or treatment will be paid and categorised as special leave and will not identify an individual as someone who is undergoing gender reassignment.

## **8. Communication**

- 8.1 A communication strategy will be agreed with the employee which covers what information should be conveyed; to whom it should be conveyed; who will convey the information; and when it will be communicated. The employee will be encouraged to do what is best for them and if, during the early stages of gender reassignment, the employee does not wish to inform others then their wishes will be respected.

## **9. Names, Pronouns & Titles**

- 9.1 The University will take all necessary steps to ensure that an individual's change of name, chosen pronoun and title is respected. Referring to a transgender employee, directly or otherwise, by their previous name or an inappropriate pronoun or title may be considered as harassment and would be dealt with accordingly.
- 9.2 Changes will be made (but not be limited to) to HR records, information held in central IT systems, University staff ID cards, staff name badges, desk/room name plates, RGU business cards and contact information.

9.3 Where other staff in the University require to be aware of the employee's transition in order to change a record, the University will obtain the employee's consent before making a request. Staff with knowledge of an employee's gender reassignment will be reminded of their responsibility to maintain confidentiality and the consequences of not doing so.

## **10. Redeployment**

10.1 A trans employee may wish to be redeployed on a temporary or permanent basis. Reasons for this will be dependent on an individual's own circumstances and the conversation should only be instigated by the employee.

10.2 The University cannot guarantee that requests to be redeployed permanently will be accommodated however each situation will be considered on its own merits and, where possible, the University will endeavour to accommodate the employee's wishes. A request for temporary redeployment during gender reassignment will normally be accommodated, however it will depend on the availability of a role that matches the employee's skills, knowledge and experience.

## **11. Toilets and Facilities**

11.1 The University will support a trans employee's right to use the toilets and facilities appropriate to their gender from the point at which the individual declares that they are living their life fully in that gender.

11.2 Agreement will be reached with the employee regarding when they wish to start using the facilities that are appropriate to their acquired gender and, where appropriate, how this should be communicated to colleagues.

11.3 Staff also have the option of using gender neutral toilets which are situated throughout the campus.

## 12. Training and Development

- 12.1 It is the duty of all staff to complete equality and diversity training which covers the 9 protected characteristics and includes gender reassignment.
- 12.2 Where deemed appropriate and with the consent of the employee, the University will undertake training for colleagues and others who the employee will come into regular contact with while undertaking their duties.
- 12.3 The aim of any equality and diversity training, whether it is University wide or targeted, is to help employees understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour, differentiating myth from reality and minimising the potential for hurtful situations and conflict arising from misunderstandings.

## 13. Further Support and Advice

- 13.1 [RGU LGBT+ Staff Network](#) aims to improve the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff at RGU.
- 13.2 [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)](#) is a statutory body with responsibility for protecting, enforcing and promoting equality across all protected characteristics.
- 13.3 [The Gender Trust](#) is recognised as an authoritative centre for professional people who encounter gender identity-related issues in the course of their work.
- 13.4 [The Beaumont Society](#) is a support network that promotes better understanding of the conditions of transgender, transvestism and gender dysphoria.
- 13.5 [Gender Identify Research and Education Society](#) initiates, promotes and supports research, particularly to address the needs of people who have a strong and ongoing desire to live and be accepted in the gender in which they identify.

- 13.6 [Scottish Transgender Alliance](#) offers guidance to employers on transgender equality issues and good practice in Scotland and provides information to support transgender people in understanding and accessing their human rights.
- 13.7 [LGBT Youth](#) provides a range of services for professionals and young people in Scotland.
- 13.8 [LGBT Foundation](#) provides information for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transvestite communities.
- 13.9 [Stonewall](#) is a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights charity in the United Kingdom.
- 13.10 [transEDU](#) is a project run by Strathclyde University that has produced a range of resources and information on supporting trans applicants, students and staff in FE/HE.
- 13.11 The Employee Assistance Programme is a free and confidential 24-hour telephone support service for University employees and their families. Calls are answered by a qualified and experienced counsellor who offers help and support in a professional, friendly and non-judgemental manner.  
Tel: 0800 030 5182

## APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are for information purposes only, good practice is to ask the employee concerned for their preferred terminology.

Term	Definition
Acquired Gender	The new gender of a person who has socially transitioned and had their gender reassigned and/or legally recognised (through the Gender Recognition Certificate). It is possible for an individual to transition and receive legal recognition of their acquired gender without medical assistance.
Deadnaming	Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition.
Gender	Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

Gender Dysphoria	<p>Used to describe when a person experience discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity.</p> <p>This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who does not feel comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth.</p>
Gender Expression	<p>How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not confirm to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identity astrans.</p>
Gender Identity	<p>A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>Refers to a process by which someone changes gender on a permanent basis. It is not necessary for a personto undergo surgery to be legally reassigned to adifferent gender.</p>

Gender Reassignment Certificate (GRC)	<p>This enables trans people to be legally recognised in their affirmed gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. Not all trans people will apply for a GRC and you currently have to be over 18 to apply.</p> <p>You do not need a GRC to change your gender markers at work or to legally change your gender on other documents such as your passport.</p>
Intersex	<p>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.</p>
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)	<p>While trans status is different from sexual orientation, the forms of prejudice and discrimination directed against trans people can be very similar to those directed against lesbian, gay or bisexual people and historically the two communities have coexisted and supported each other. As a result, action and support groups often have a broader remit than sexual orientation.</p>

Non-binary	An umbrella term for a person who does not identify as only male or only female, or who may identify as both. Other terms include gender queer and gender fluid.
Outed	When a lesbian, gay, bi or trans person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.
Pronoun	Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation – for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as 'they' or 'their'.
Questioning	The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
Real-life experience or test	Real-life experience is a phase during gender reassignment in which the individual must live, work and study in the gender with which they identify before they can start hormone therapy and/or undergo surgery.
Sexual orientation	A person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person.

Trans	An inclusive term for those who identify themselves as transgender, transsexual or transvestite. The term 'trans' can be used without offence but should only be used as an adjective, for example 'a trans person'. Following gender transition, people prefer to be referred to as men and women without reference to their historical transition status.
Trans man	A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.
Trans woman	A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.
Transgender	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex. Transgender people may or may not alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically. The term transgender should only be used as an adjective, for example, 'transgender people'.

Transitioning	Transitioning is the term used to describe someone changing from one gender to another, with or without medical intervention.
Transphobia	The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including the denial/refusal to accept their gender identity.
Transsexual person	This was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the 'opposite' gender to the one assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender. Individuals should be referred to as 'transsexual people' not 'transsexuals'.
Transvestite or cross-dresser	A person who dresses and acts intermittently in a style or manner traditionally associated with the opposite sex. Generally, people who are transvestites/cross-dressers do not wish to alter their body.



Robert Gordon University,

Garthdee Rd,

Aberdeen AB10 7AQ