



University
of Exeter

Policy Name:	Gender Identity and Transitioning Policy
Owner:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team
Approved by:	University Executive Board (UEB)
Date approved:	15/05/2025
Equality Impact Assessment date:	16/05/2025
Review date:	16/11/2025

This policy may be reviewed sooner than the above review date, pending any relevant changes in legislation or statutory guidance.

Gender Identity and Transitioning Policy

The University of Exeter values the diversity of its community because it believes this enriches employment, research, studying and learning experiences. The University is fully committed to ensuring that its Equality and Diversity Policy is embedded throughout the University and that every member of its staff can work to their full potential, is made welcome, comfortable and has equal access to the services and facilities they need.

This policy sets out our commitment, intent, and principles for trans equality and applies to all our prospective applicants for employment and study, staff and students (both past and present) and 'third parties' such as our contractors, visitors, and partners. The University of Exeter will not discriminate against people on the grounds of their gender identity or gender expression.

Where this policy refers to 'trans people,' this policy refers to everyone whose gender identity is not expressed in ways that are typically associated with their biological or sex assigned at birth. This includes those who have non-binary, agender or gender-fluid identities. The use of language is very varied in this field, it changes continuously and is personal to individuals. People may self-describe as, for instance, gender queer, pan-gender, poly-gender, neutrois, gender fluid, non-gender, and trans* (the asterisk denotes an emphasis on inclusion of all gender diversity), and so on. Those who are intersex will also be accommodated and protected under this Policy.

This Policy Statement is intended to promote the fair and equal treatment of members of our trans community, recognising that the OfS guidance stipulates the widest possible definition of freedom of speech within the law. This policy should thus be read and implemented in full compliance with our Freedom of Speech Policy and our Agreement on Academic Freedom.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of the Gender Identity and Transitioning policy is to set out a framework for how the University will support members of our community who identify as trans and those wish to take steps to change the gender they were assigned at birth or have already done so.

The Policy and associated documents will help the organisation and employees, including trans people themselves, to manage any practical issues that may arise. The Policy outlines the University's position and actions required of all members of staff.

The University strives to ensure that the work environment is positive and free from discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, bullying or victimisation, and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

No member of staff at the University should be treated less favourably, whether before, during or after their employment on the grounds of gender identity or transition.

Principles

The University will undertake the following:

- Staff will not be excluded from employment or promotion because of their gender identity or the way they express it.
- Transphobic abuse, bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the appropriate University procedures.
- The University will seek to ensure that its environment supports and reflects the diversity of its staff and student community.
- The University will include gender identity in its portfolio of training.
- Staff undergoing medical and surgical procedures related to transition will receive positive support from the University to meet their particular needs during this period. Absences for this reason will not impact negatively on opportunities for personal progression within the organisation.
- Staff are able to self-select their gender on HR Systems and have the option to use a gender-neutral title. These titles can be displayed on staff identity cards and will be used in formal University correspondence.

Confidentiality

The University will respect the confidentiality of all trans staff and will not reveal information without the prior agreement of the individual.

The University will provide a supportive environment for staff who wish their trans status or history to be known. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender identity. To 'out' someone, without their permission is a form of harassment and can be a criminal offence.

If an individual notifies the University of their intention to transition during their employment, the University will agree with them what steps should be taken. A trans person's file will reflect their current name and gender. Any material that needs to be kept related to the person's trans status, such as records of absence due to medical reasons, should be stored confidentially. This will be discussed with the individual and no records will be changed without the permission of the staff member.

When a person informs the University that they have received a Gender Recognition Certificate, the University will undertake further checks and action to remove references to the individual's former name and gender with their agreement.

Transitioning

It is essential that all relevant people are informed of their responsibility to facilitate a staff member's transition and to take pre-emptive steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Therefore, it may be necessary to provide information or training to colleagues. If this training relates to the transition of a particular person, rather than general training, that person must be involved in the decision-making process about how this is to be undertaken.

Time off

An employer must not treat a trans staff member less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have transitioned than they would be treated if they were absent because they for any other reason (and it would be unreasonable to treat them less favourably than another person).

The request of time off does not have to relate to a medical process but could be other matters relating to their change of gender status. It could, for example, be to take legal advice or to arrange a name change.

Not all people who transition choose to undergo any medical or surgical treatment. However, the individual may decide to undergo a number of medical procedures to support their transition.

Managers must provide sufficient flexibility to meet the worker's needs for appointments. These may be treated as sick leave, or the employee may make up time as needed. Time off for surgical procedures is treated as the same as other scheduled medically necessary procedures. Occupational Health can support with guidance and advice around medical procedures and support a phased return to work.

Further guidance and advice

Further advice can be provided from the LGBTQ+ Network (Exeter) or Kemeneth (Cornwall) who offer a visible and accessible source of support to both staff and managers. Details of volunteer contacts and further information can be found at:

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/inclusivitynetworksandgroups/lgbtqnetwork/>

The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team can also be contacted for advice and guidance, and can be emailed at EDI@exeter.ac.uk or here:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/departments/inclusion/contactus/>

Please speak to your HR Business Partner or Advisor for specific confidential advice and guidance.