

## TRANS AND GENDER IDENTITY

### Supporting Information and Procedures for Staff and Students

#### 1. Introduction

The University aims to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, staff, partners and visitors and is committed to ensuring that all individuals are provided with equality of opportunity and treated fairly, with dignity and respect for who they are.

To ensure that not only does the University meet its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and other associated legislation, but that it actively promotes an inclusive community, the University has an Equal Opportunities statement as part of its Equal Opportunities policy:

“The University of Reading is committed to promoting equal opportunities and non-discriminatory treatment for all members of its community regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).”

#### 2. Gender Identity

Traditionally, approaches to gender and sex have been to promote a binary understanding and classify people into categories of male and female. From birth, babies are assigned a sex of ‘boy’ or ‘girl’. For most individuals, this feels right, however for some people this might be incongruent with how the individual feels.

More recent thinking offers different ways of understanding gender including considering gender as a spectrum, being gender fluid, being non-binary or genderqueer, or being agender. The following terms are used widely across LGBT+ communities and beyond.

- **“Gender identity”**: The expression of a person’s internal and deeply held sense of their own gender. Examples of this include non-binary, man or woman.
- **“Gender expression”**: The ways in which people may manifest their gender, for example through how they dress and how they behave.
- **Sexual orientation**: Different from gender identity. Sexual orientation is a person’s romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person, for example heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual.

- **“Biological Sex”**: The objectively measurable organs, hormones and chromosomes of a person, with the two main categories being male and female, with “intersex” being a combination of the two.
- **“Transgender”**: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour is not aligned to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.
- **“Non-binary”**: An umbrella term for a person who does not identify as only male or only female, or who may identify as both.

How someone self-defines is very important, and should be respected by others. A more detailed glossary of terms to help people understand more about trans and gender identity including how this differs to terminology used for gender expression and sexual orientation can be [found via this link to the Stonewall website](#); information about Stonewall is contained in Section 6 below.

The University respects an individual’s right to self-identify as male, female, gender fluid, non-binary or any other gender identity and commits to recognising all members of the University community however they choose to present gender in so far as is reasonable and practicable.

The University is also committed to providing appropriate support to individuals before, during and after transition. The section below outlines the procedure and support available to staff and students.

### **3. Transitioning at the University**

The definition of transition may vary from person to person and the University will support the needs of the individual in relation to gender identity and gender reassignment.

The University will be guided by the wishes of the individual in terms of the speed at which the transition will progress, in addition to agreeing the steps to be taken, the timing, and which and when other relevant parties should be notified.

As any transition will be led by the individual, the University will discuss and agree what support can be provided on an individual basis based on the needs and preferences of the individual.

#### **3.1 Supporting staff and students through a gender transition process - Recommended procedure**

3.1.1 The University recognises that making the decision to transition is a very significant step in a person’s life and not something they will have undertaken lightly. For most

transgender people, reaching this point will be the culmination of years of seeking to reconcile the person they are seen to be with the person they feel themselves to be. In this process, feeling supported as they develop their new identity is key.

The University is committed to supporting staff and students through their transition process. The section (3.1.4) below sets out the staff and student processes for letting the University know you are going to transition. This includes the development of a transition action plan to capture key transition points and to agree and record how issues such as updating records and informing others will be addressed.

3.1.2 Whilst an individual's specific needs will be reflected in their action plan, the University believes that there are some general principles that should always be followed:

- Acknowledge a person as the gender they identify as from the outset of the transition process. This means, for example, using the individual's chosen name and pronouns from the day they begin transitioning, if this is what they wish to happen.
- Respect people's boundaries. Transitioning is a very personal and individual experience. Some people may choose to talk openly about their transition, whilst others may choose to keep the experience private.
- Respect a person's privacy. Do not tell others about a person's transgender status or transition process.
- If unsure of how to address or refer to someone, politely ask them how they would like to be addressed, including which pronouns they would prefer to be used.

3.1.3 The University has various options for support available for staff and students. The University recognises that the definition of transition may vary from person to person and will support the needs of the individual in relation to gender identity and gender reassignment.

3.1.4 Noting that any transition plan will be led by the individual, where possible the University recommends that the process set out below is followed, to ensure that the member of staff or student transitioning is properly supported and that the University is able to meet any required obligations

**a) Initial disclosure.**

- Staff who are intending to transition should inform a member of Human Resources or their Head of School/ equivalent line manager as soon as they feel ready to do so.
- Students should contact their Personal Tutor or a representative of Student Services via the Student Support Centre. In doing so, appropriate support structures can be arranged and tailored to individual need where practical. These notifications can be made either verbally (in person) or in writing depending on the preference of the individual.
- A forward planning meeting is usually then arranged to talk through the transition plan with the individual. Actions can be agreed before the transition occurs and any preparation and plans will be made together to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.
- To enable additional support for the individual, employees may wish to be accompanied by a colleague, a Staff Forum Representative or a Trade Union representative and students may wish to be accompanied by a friend or their Student Union representative.

**b) Forward planning meeting.**

This meeting will normally include the following people (unless it is agreed with individuals that other members of University staff are more appropriate to attend):

<b>STAFF</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>
<b>Essential</b>	<b>Essential</b>
Head of School or equivalent "Line Manager"	Personal Tutor
Member of Human Resources	Representative of the Student Services Directorate
<b>*Optional*</b>	<b>*Optional*</b>
Trade Union representative or work colleague	Student Union representative or fellow student
Friend	Friend

**c) Items to discuss at forward planning meeting:**

- **A proposed timetable** that the person wishes to follow in their transition and noting that this may be amended as needed by the individual. This should include the date for any announcement to relevant colleagues and the date from when the individual wants to make the social change to the acquired gender.
- **Where available, dates of appointments** with doctors and specialists (up to and including a provisional date for any surgery). This will enable the University to ascertain any necessary arrangements for leave.
- **Procedures for amending official records** with the new name if appropriate (e.g. campus card, payslip, contract of employment, telephone directories, prospectuses, web biographies etc.). The process for making such changes will be discussed with each individual depending on their needs.
- **Agreeing a communication plan** including when and how to inform relevant colleagues of the change (possibly including drafting of communications documents). It should be the individual's choice as to whether affected colleagues are informed by them personally, or by an alternative individual(s) such as the appropriate Human Resources or "Line Manager" equivalent, or Student Representative or other. Alternatively, it may be agreed that communications are undertaken jointly. A mutually acceptable strategy should be discussed and decided upon prior to any announcement being made. Should an individual withhold consent to communicate the University will be limited in the support that it can provide to the individual in communicating about the transition or managing practical difficulties that may arise.
- **A discussion as to whether any support or information may be required for other individuals** to assist them with understanding the transition and to enable them to support the person transitioning.
- **Agreement in relation to any other support** that the individual may need that can be provided by the University.
- **Use of facilities (e.g. toilets).** The use of toilets and changing facilities during transition may be discussed and agreed in advance, as part of the staff and student transition action plan.

It is the policy of the University that individuals are able to use the toilet facilities that reflects their gender presentation during and after transition and the University provides single sex and (in many buildings) gender neutral toilets.

The details of the gender-neutral toilets can be located on the Campus Map on the internet.

- The **possibility of redeployment or temporary reallocation of duties** where reasonable and practicable and desired by the individual during the transition period.

The agreed transition actions can then be written up and shared with the individual to ensure the transition plan has captured all elements required. If necessary and as needs change, the plan can be amended and/or updated to support the individual through their transition appropriately.

The suggested template to record the discussion at the forward planning meeting and the gender transition plan is available at *Appendix A*.

### **3.1.4. Changing of Personal Information**

Once the transition period has been confirmed the individual is able to change their name and gender immediately. This enables all identification (except for birth certificate) to be updated.

This process of changing records in the University context will be treated no differently than if an employee had changed their name. Suitable evidence to account for the transition and new identity must be presented to Human Resources (HR) or the Student Support Centre, as appropriate. This should include evidence of a change of name which may be in the form of any of the following:

- A Name Change Deed (e.g. Statutory Declaration)
- Driving licence
- Passport
- Birth Certificate.

On receiving this documentation, the University will take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that all relevant records are updated as soon as is possible to reflect the acquired gender identity and to protect confidentiality.

There is also the option for students on RISIS and for employees on Employee Self Service to have a "preferred name" if individuals do not want to officially change their details by Deed Poll. The "preferred name" will then be reflected in the University email and related contact lists.

Once the period of transition has begun, the individual should be referred to by their new name and using their preferred pronouns.

An overview of Gender Neutral Pronouns can be found at *Appendix B*.

### **3.1.5. Transition Related Absence from Work or Studies**

Individuals will be able to take time off for transition related medical appointments and treatment in line with the sickness absence and attendance procedures in operation at the University.

The University will seek to provide appropriate and reasonable support for a person who is transitioning. For staff, this may include adjusting work hours, re-deployment or allowing the person to be absent during normal working hours for appointments. For students, this may include time-table rescheduling (as is reasonable and practicable), suspension of studies, extension of deadlines and working closely with their personal tutors to catch up on missed learning opportunities.

### **3.1.6. Informing Others**

Following agreement with the individual planning to transition, relevant colleagues / individuals should be briefed on the situation. This will normally include colleagues / individuals being sent a personal letter or departmental memo detailing the individual's intent to transition (including relevant dates) and the new name and title that the individual will assume. The letter may also cover:

- Details of the relevant person to whom they may direct questions (e.g. the individual, Personal Tutor, the Head of School/Line Manager or equivalent or Human Resources representative etc)
- Details of additional internal and external sources of information and support
- Instruction about the confidential nature of the communication and when, to whom and how details may or may not be shared.

### **3.1.7 Dress Code**

For staff, the University does not have a formal dress code and therefore employees may opt to dress as they wish, including choices reflecting their gender identity, ensuring that this is appropriate business attire in relation to their role.

### **3.1.8 Student Admissions**

In completing UCAS application forms for admission to the University a student can indicate their gender as that in which they live even where this differs from the sex recorded on their birth certificate. On registration, all students can use passports as the basis for proof of identity, and will not need to show their birth certificates.

## **4. Staff Recruitment**

### **4.1 Provision of documents to confirm identity/legal eligibility to work**

Human Resources guarantees confidentiality and discretion when asking for formal documents before commencing employment. All staff are required to provide proof of the right to work in the UK. There are various options for provision of documentation that can legally be provided to prove the right to work and individuals may choose to provide the documentation that is most appropriate for them from the list provided by the Government. The University may be required by law to share details of biological sex to third parties (for example, HMRC) where the individual does not have a gender recognition certificate.

### **4.2 Occupational Health**

Candidates who are successful at interview are required to complete an Occupational Health questionnaire based on their medical history. The completed questionnaire will be forwarded to Occupational Health for medical clearance.

Occupational Health will treat information about gender reassignment in confidence and therefore a person who has reassigned their gender can feel confident to be open on their questionnaire in the knowledge that any information will be kept within Occupational Health. Should any support be required for an employee then any needs will be discussed with the employee and disclosure of information will only be undertaken with the employee's agreement.

### **4.3. Occupational Pensions**

The Pensions Office will be notified of any relevant information needed in relation to a transition as part of the agreed transition plan with the individual.

Employees will be advised of any documents required for pension purposes and whether there are any implications or issues requiring their consideration relating to their University pension arrangements.



## 5. Supporting staff and students who are non-binary

As set out in section 2 above, some people will have identities on the gender spectrum other than female and male, for example, gender fluid (gender identity varies over time), gender queer (an umbrella term for non-binary identities or which can be an identity in and of itself) or agender, amongst others.

People with non-binary gender identities will not necessarily undergo a formal, permanent gender transition process, but may choose to express their gender identity by the way they present themselves, such as through their dress and appearance. It is polite and respectful to accept a person's gender identity as a legitimate expression of who they are, even if that identity is hard for you to relate to or understand.

The University is supportive of different gender identities and gender expression and is adapting its systems to recognise a wider range of gender identities and titles.

## 6. Sources of information and support

### 6.1 Internal Support

Assistance and support will be available to individuals before, during and after the transition and for the people that they work and study with as and when appropriate. Internal sources of support include:

For staff, internal support includes:

- LGBT Plus Staff Network for LGBT+ staff and allies  
<https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/diversity/diversity-networks.aspx>
- Human Resources Partners and Advisors
- Deans for Diversity and Inclusion and the Diversity and Inclusion Advisor
- Harassment Advisers
- Trade Union or Staff Forum representatives
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Occupational Health

For students internal support includes:

- Personal Tutors and School Senior Tutors
- The Wellbeing and Counselling Service
- University's LGBT+ Society.
  - Check the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/LGBT-Society-University-of-Reading-897798383588220/> or attend regular coffee hours and socials

- Society email: [uorlgbt@hotmail.com](mailto:uorlgbt@hotmail.com)
- [instagram.com/readinglgbt/](https://www.instagram.com/readinglgbt/)
- Student Union representatives
- *Essentials* Information on the intranet about [Gender Identity](#).
- Student's Union (RUSU) Diversity Officer
- RUSU Part-time LGBT+ Officer email: [lgbt@rusu.co.uk](mailto:lgbt@rusu.co.uk)

## 6.2 External Support and Resources

### Stonewall

Stonewall is a LGBT rights charity that works for acceptance without exception for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

- 020 7593 1850
- [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)
- [info@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:info@stonewall.org.uk)

### Support U

A resource service for those needing help with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues based in the Thames Valley.

- 0118 321 9111
- [supportu.org.uk](http://supportu.org.uk)

### Beaumont Society

The Beaumont Society is a national self-help body run by and for the transgender community.

- 01582 412220
- [beaumontsociety.org.uk](http://beaumontsociety.org.uk)

### Action4TransHealth

Action for Trans\* Health seeks to improve trans\* people's access to healthcare.

- [actionfortranshealth.org.uk](http://actionfortranshealth.org.uk)
- [info@actionfortranshealth.org.uk](mailto:info@actionfortranshealth.org.uk)
- [facebook.com/actionfortranshealth](https://www.facebook.com/actionfortranshealth)
- [twitter.com/act4transhealth](https://twitter.com/act4transhealth)

## Appendix A

<b>Template for forward planning meeting / the gender transition plan</b>	
1	<p>Initial Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who attended and date:</li> <li>• Make notes of the discussion and actions agreed</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the individual a copy of the University Procedure and record date.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is individual a member of staff or student?</li> <li>• Do other people need to be involved before action can be taken?</li> <li>• Reach agreement and set a date for next meeting</li> </ul>
4	<p>Check out the expectations of the individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would they like to be addressed? Use their name, personal pronoun and title in all future interactions.</li> <li>• Do they have specific requests regarding the transition? Record these, make it clear what will happen next and agree dates for further actions or meetings. In any event cover the following topics.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss if other people need to be involved before action can be taken</li> <li>○ Reach agreement and set a date for next meeting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does individual have experience or fear of harassment?</li> <li>• Inform them of the University's policies, standards and support systems</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the individual already transitioned and needs amendments to records, For instance a returning staff member or former student</li> <li>• If individual has the formal documentation agree dates by which changes will be made.</li> <li>• Ask if individual requires any further support? Agree with dates.</li> </ul>

## Template for forward planning meeting / the gender transition plan

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If individual is beginning or in transition, let them tell you where they are at and what support they want.</li> <li>• Find out if they have the formal documentation. If yes, tell them who needs to be informed and offer assistance to make this disclosure.</li> <li>• Agree process and date for this.</li> </ul>	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out - Does individual require support in introducing themselves in their new name and or gender? Agree this with individual.</li> <li>• This could take the form of a written statement or meetings.</li> </ul>	
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is individual requesting time off for medical or psychological treatment?</li> <li>• Agree how this will be managed and dates.</li> </ul>	
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree the use of gender specific facilities as appropriate.</li> <li>• Agree whether other staff need to be informed, for example in the case of changing rooms.</li> </ul>	
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the individual a copy of the discussion and support agreed and record date</li> </ul>	

## Appendix B

### Gender Neutral Pronouns

Pronouns are words we use in the place of a full noun. For example, instead of “woman” we use she/her/hers and instead of “man” we use he/him/his.

Gender neutral / inclusive pronouns are pronouns which do not associate a gender with the individual being discussed. Non-binary people may use they/them/their as their pronouns and therefore these pronouns can be used to refer to a singular person instead of he/him/his and she/her/hers.

Some languages including English do not have a gender neutral or third gender pronoun. The following gender-neutral pronouns are starting to be used in the English language:

- Per/pers/perself
- Zie/zir/zieself
- Sie/hir/hirself.

Individuals should first listen to the person talking to determine the correct pronoun when addressing or talking about the person. If in doubt then respectfully ask which pronoun the person uses.