



# Building a Gender Inclusive Culture Gender Identity & Gender Expression Guidelines

TU Dublin is committed to developing a gender inclusive culture across the university. This requires us all to think about and better understand how gender currently works. Building a gender inclusive culture where the expression of one's gender is embraced will enable us all to experience wellbeing and fulfilment in our work and study environments.

**TU Dublin's Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy outlines the supports and services for people in a gender transition process. It also outlines the rights and responsibilities of all members of the TU Dublin Community.**

**All Staff are required to read, understand and adhere to all provisions in this policy and to uphold the highest level of confidentiality.**

## How are sex & gender currently organised?

### Sex & Gender

People are generally assigned a sex at birth and their gender is often understood as linked to their sex i.e. male/female = boy/girl. However, organising sex and gender in line with this binary (male/female) is a historically and culturally specific way of understanding sex and gender. It excludes people who are intersex for example or those whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not fit within a binary framework.

### Transgender

A transgender person's gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. This term includes diverse gender identities. Not all individuals with identities that are considered part of the transgender umbrella will refer to themselves as transgender. This could be because they identify with a particular term e.g. gender fluid, which they feel more precisely describes their identity (TENI).

### Cisgender

A cisgender person is a non-trans person (i.e. a person whose gender identity and gender expression is aligned with the sex assigned at birth). The term cisgender acknowledges that everyone has a gender identity (i.e. a non-trans identity is not presented as normal or natural which stigmatises a trans identity as abnormal or unnatural) (TENI).

### Are you about to embark on or are already undertaking a gender transition process?

Please see TU Dublin Gender Identity and Gender Expression for details of the supports and services available or contact [equality@tudublin.ie](mailto:equality@tudublin.ie) in confidence for general information.

## Support Your Colleagues

- **Be aware** of how language is used and behaviours that might suggest transphobic attitudes.
- **Be respectful**, use appropriate language and where appropriate, challenge negative attitudes that may be uninformed or incorrect.
- **Do not pressure** anyone to share personal information beyond what is offered.
- **Understand** TU Dublin's equality, diversity and inclusion policies particularly the Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy; complete available training; and become a champion in your work team.
- **Be visible** in your support e.g. display posters, wear badges, speak up about key networks e.g. LGBT+ network

You notice one of your colleagues has recently changed their email sign-off to include (they/ them) after their name. Until now, you have always referred to them using masculine pronouns (he/his). While your colleague hasn't said anything to you in person, you decide that this is obviously important to them and make a conscious effort to use the correct pronouns in future interactions with or about your colleague.



## How do we build a gender inclusive culture?

Respecting the gender identity a person presents in is a key part of building a gender inclusive culture. You may not be able to determine a person's gender identity immediately so it is acceptable to ask questions, if necessary, in a polite and non-intrusive manner. You can also listen to see how the person refers to themselves.

*Using considered language particularly when referring to names and pronouns creates a safe and respectful environment and can avoid unnecessary hurt and discomfort. An individual may not be 'out' as a gender diverse or transgender person. By using incorrect gender identifying language, you may actually breach their confidentiality.*

Excuse me, how do you wished to be addressed?

Excuse me, which pronoun do you use?

**Name:** An individual may not introduce themselves with the same name that exists on university records. Always refer to their self-identified name when engaging in conversation or unofficial correspondence. Never ask about names that someone may have been assigned or used in the past. To intentionally address a transgender person by their deadname is hurtful and disrespectful.

**They/She/He:** If you are not sure what pronouns to use, listen to how a person refers to themselves. If you're unsure you can use gender neutral pronouns i.e. they/their.

**Making mistakes:** As we adjust to changes in name and/or pronouns we may make mistakes. Adjusting our language is about respect, not perfection. If you accidentally use the wrong pronouns, just apologise once and continue with the conversation. Make a real effort not to make the same mistake again.

**Be aware of your own pronouns:** Many University staff have adopted the practice of identifying their own pronouns (e.g. she/her) as part of their email signature. This highlights how we all have a gender identity and some are not more 'normal' than others. This is one way of cultivating a gender inclusive culture.

**Being Out or Not:** Some people are open about their gender identity or expression and others are not. Always respect the person's choice. Remember there is no legal requirement for someone to reveal their gender identity. They may only have provided information to certain individuals within the University.

**Respect people's privacy:** Do not disclose a person's trans status without their consent. Be very cognisant of privacy. Do not ask what stage a person is in transition and do not tell others (without permission) of an individual's gender status.

**Be non-judgemental:** Do not assume that a person's gender identity is problematic, or that it is at the root of other issues. Always think of a person as being the gender that they want you to think of them as. This applies to conversations with and about a person.

**Designing forms:** When designing forms or questionnaires, questions on gender should include further options in addition to 'male' and 'female' such as 'non-binary', 'self-defined (state)' and 'prefer not to disclose'. Titles are not generally included in TU Dublin forms. If there is a requirement for a title please include Ms/Mr/Dr/Mx