

## Department of Philosophy Gender Identity Policy<sup>1</sup> (May 2021)

### The Policy

*This policy relates to all transgender people, in line with their own identity and including those with non-binary identities, regardless of whether or not that person has transitioned legally or medically. Stonewall (see link to glossary in Appendix 2.b.) characterise trans as “[a]n umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth”.<sup>2</sup> The Department of Philosophy aims to operate in accordance with the University’s commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Excellence Through Inclusion policies and in compliance with the Equality Act (2010). This policy is supplementary to the [University’s Transgender. Guiding principles document](#), and to the [Students’ Union trans policy](#).*

- 1) We will ensure that all staff and students, including visiting staff and students, are treated with dignity and respect, and will not tolerate any discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. We will ensure that this protection extends to people who are perceived to be transgender, and to people who are associated with transgender people, such as friends, partners, relatives. We will provide a supportive environment for staff and students who wish for their trans status to be known. Information about reporting, as well as support for students in relation to, hate crimes can be found [here](#). Bullying and harassment can be reported (anonymously, if preferred) [here](#), where links to further University support can also be found.
- 2) It is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender identity. The department will **respect the privacy of all transgender members of staff and students (including visiting staff and students)**. It will ensure that confidential and protected information (see Appendix “Excerpt of relevant legal legislation” below and [TGP document principle 5](#)) relating to their gender identity is never disclosed without prior written consent from that individual. This includes information about whether

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<sup>1</sup> This policy was formulated by the Department of Philosophy’s Equality, Diversity & Inclusion committee, after wide consultation including with members of Sheffield University & College Union, members of the University of Sheffield Students’ Union LGBT+ network, members of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, the widening participation team, and of the Department of Philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, two-spirit, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

they are or are intending to transition, previous pronouns or names, reasons for leave of absence from their studies, or that they are transgender.

3) In support of inclusivity, the department commits to undertake the following steps:

- a) All members of the department will endeavour to use individuals' correct pronouns, as determined by individuals' expressed preferences. E.g., staff are asked to be attentive to email signatures which might indicate correct pronouns. Further, staff are asked to foster respectful classroom practice in line with the University's policies. This will be addressed through ongoing training for staff teaching assistants in the department.
- b) The department will appoint a trans students' tutor who can be contacted if any individual has concerns, complaints or wishes to receive further support. The trans students' tutor will liaise on a termly basis with the SU LGBT+ committee to be aware of any issues reported to them (that they have permission to share). See the [website of the EDC and Gender Identity Policy](#) for contact details of the current trans student tutor.
- c) The department will appoint a suitable student rep who can be contacted if any individual has concerns they do not feel comfortable raising with staff. See the [website of the EDC and Gender Identity Policy](#) for contact details of the current trans student rep.
- d) The department will ensure that all students are aware of support for transgender students in and outside of the department, by circulating relevant information and advertising relevant information around the department. Personal tutors, MA & PhD supervisors will be aware of information relevant to their students regarding relevant support mechanisms in the university. (See *Appendix* for more details, including how to make changes to student records).
- e) The department will ensure all incoming students receive information about the relevant university and departmental policies and resources outlined in the *Appendix*, e.g. by circulating information by email at the start of each term, indicating the availability of those resources on the [Philosophy Hub](#) (see 'Resources' tab).
- f) The E&D committee will annually review the publicity materials (for electronic circulation, and posters for display around the department)

and update as necessary. In particular, attention will be paid to staying up to date with preferred community terminology.

- 4) In addition to the above, in supporting trans staff, the department commits to:
- a) Ensuring staff are aware of the [processes and support](#) available for members of staff who are considering transitioning by circulating this information by email.
  - b) Ensuring that staff are aware of points of contact in HR to discuss this: in 2021, the HR contacts for the Department of Philosophy are Gayle Balkow ([g.balkow@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:g.balkow@sheffield.ac.uk)), Rachael Convery, ([r.m.convery@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:r.m.convery@sheffield.ac.uk)) or the general faculty HR address can be used ([hrfacultyandh@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:hrfacultyandh@sheffield.ac.uk)).<sup>3</sup>
  - c) Ensuring that staff are aware of the LGBT+ staff network which can provide further support and community to LGBT+ staff members. Their website is linked [here](#) for further information.

## Appendix

### ❖ Excerpt of the relevant legal legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010 protects a trans person who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender confirmation [referred to in the Equality Act as 'gender reassignment'] from the moment they decide to start the process. It is unlawful for the University, or anyone at the University, to treat a person less favourably because of gender confirmation, or to harass them because of it. The person also must not be treated less favourably by reason of their absence from work or study while transitioning, in comparison to someone absent due to illness or for some other similar reason.
- In addition, the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation against trans people, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between trans people and others.
- Under the Data Protection Act, trans identity and gender confirmation constitute 'sensitive data' for the purposes of the legislation. Therefore information relating to a person's trans status cannot be recorded or

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that HR are undertaking an ongoing review of the University's LGBT+ support, and the linked HR policy documents and contacts may change. This policy will be reviewed for consistency in light of this as appropriate.

passed to another person unless conditions under schedule 3 of the Data Protection Act for processing sensitive personal data are met.

❖ **Further Resources:**

**1. University related resources:**

- a. [The University and Student Unions' ACT campaign](#)
- b. [Student Services support for LGBT students](#)
- c. [University policies on diversity and inclusion](#)
- d. [The students' union LGBT society](#)
- e. [University level administrative support for trans students](#), including financial support for estranged students.
- f. Students are able to change details of their gender on their student record. The contact details in Student Administrative Support for 2020-2021 is [gender-identity@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:gender-identity@sheffield.ac.uk) .
- g. The faculty of Arts and Humanities also provides a less centralised method of informing your department about what pronouns you use. For details, see [here](#). NB, providing this information will not change your student record (see f. above for that.)
- h. The faculty has also [provided information](#) on how to change your details on online platforms (google, Blackboard), to ensure that through online learning platforms, your used names and pronouns can be respected (see last three sections of document linked).
- i. The Philosophy-Department also provides an anonymous form for feedback and concerns to be raised with the E&D committee. This is available [here](#).
- j. University of Sheffield has a Report and Support Service for reporting harassment, bullying, abuse, or sexual violence, linked [here](#).

**2. Other general resources:**

- a. Some useful explanatory videos:  
[Basics, definitions and explanations of identities](#)  
[On being trans and a person of color in Australia and elsewhere](#)  
On pronouns: [here](#).  
[On making events less gendered](#)  
[On dysphoria](#)  
[On harmful language and slurs](#) (content warning for slurs)  
[Personal experiences of homophobia casual and otherwise](#) (content warning for homophobic slurs)  
[Being an ally](#)

[A website where people can practice with pronouns they struggle with](#)  
(which involves fun exercises!)

- b. [Stonewall's glossary of terms](#)
- c. [Guide on using more gender neutral language](#)
- d. [LGBT language do's and don'ts](#)
- e. [The trans unicorn](#)
- f. [SAYIT. Emotional Wellbeing Support for LGBT+ Young People in Sheffield](#)
- g. E-Book by Mardell, Ashley: [The GayBC's of LGBTQ+. An Accompaniment to The ABC's of LGBTQ](#)
- h. [A Guide to Gender Identity Terms](#)

**3. Other philosophy specific resources:**

- a. [The Trans Philosophy project](#)
- b. [Contrapoints youtube channel](#)

Please do contact the departmental EDI committee if you have any further recommendations for resources that you think would be valuable to include.