

# Developing a Trans+ Policy

## Guidance for universities and colleges

You may be planning to update your institution's existing policy or to develop an entirely new policy. You may be in Student Services, Human Resources, Equality and Diversity or the academic faculties, or you may be otherwise interested in equality policy development. This resource provides a series of provocations and considerations to assist and inform the development of a robust and effective Trans Policy for your college or university.

**Why a Policy?** It is common practice across the public sector to produce policies to enshrine the equality, rights, support and provision for diverse and marginalised groups. Trans people in colleges and universities are protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. A Policy applies these legal protections to the operational function of an institution.



**Treat your Trans Policy as just the beginning of the conversation.** The Policy should be accompanied by an Implementation Plan – a set of practical steps for integration of trans equality objectives into operational practice. For more ideas and insight into supporting trans, non-binary and gender diverse students and colleagues, visit: [www.trans.ac.uk](http://www.trans.ac.uk).

**But, is there not a template I can use?** There is no 'one-size-fits-all' policy or checklist that is suitable for every college and university, and policy templates cannot adequately respond to the unique context of and considerations for each institution. You might, however, find it beneficial to read the policies of institutions similar to yours – for example, a University that delivers Nursing degrees, or an FE College in Scotland – to gain insight into how they respond to subject-, area- and jurisdiction-specific considerations.



# Initial considerations

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## Purpose and Mission

**What is the purpose of the Policy?** Consider drafting a **Mission Statement**. This can be a useful and concise way for the institution to articulate its support for this group; something that the organisation can subscribe to on a senior level. This will also

## Scope

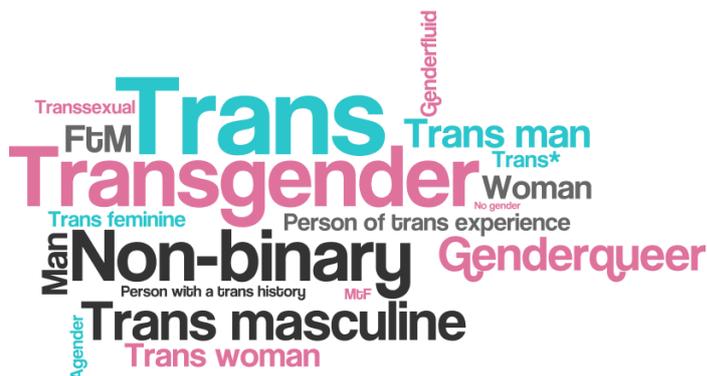
- **Who does the Policy apply to?**
- **Will you make one Policy for all students and staff, or have separate policies for different cohorts?**
- **Will the Policy apply to visitors and contractors?**
- **Will the Policy include guidance and information to support Line Managers to support their staff?**
- **Will the Policy function only as a guidance document, or will the Policy be empowered to impose an obligation on someone?**
- **Will you develop a Code of Conduct to outline how the institution expects the campus community to behave and engage with one another?**

**Framing** What will you call your Policy? How are you approaching trans equality?

Many institutions choose to develop a specific Trans Policy, which covers those whose identity or experience can be self-defined as trans, non-binary or gender diverse. Some institutions beyond the UK - such as Trinity College Dublin - have developed 'Gender Identity and Gender Expression' Policies. The difference can be whether the Policy specifically pertains to those who identify as trans or non-binary, or whether the Policy is to protect *all* members of the campus community in their gender expression (whether or not they self-define as trans). These considerations and questions should form part of the consultation.

## Terminology

What terms will you use? How are you defining 'trans' and other terms? You may wish to consider including a glossary of terms used within the Policy. For further information and resources on terminology, visit [www.trans.ac.uk/](http://www.trans.ac.uk/). You can then ask for feedback on the terminology and glossary during the consultation stage.



## Legal and policy context

What is the relevant legislation and policy in this area?



You may wish to refer to the Equality Act 2010 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004, alongside data protection and human rights legislation. See the [ECU's 2016 trans staff and student guidance](#) for more information about relevant legislation and what this means in FE and HE contexts.

## Your institutional policy context

It is important, too, to consider and understand your institutional policy context. This includes:

- Identifying and understanding in advance the different 'hoops' you need to go through in order to draft, consult upon, and obtain institutional approval for policies.
- Understanding time-scales, including being cognisant of when relevant management, committee and court meetings are scheduled to occur.
- Consulting at the right point – it is advisable to have a draft Policy ready before consultation, and have colleagues, students and other stakeholders (as detailed below) comment on the draft.



# Factors the Policy should address

Below are areas that you should consider and consult upon when developing your Policy. This is not an exhaustive list, as there are likely further specific areas and issues for each college and HEI to consider.

## General

- Mission Statement
- Code of Conduct
- Glossary of terms (as appendix)
- Obligations to support and promote the policy

## For all cohorts

- Processing documentation and identification
- Processes for changing name and / or gender on systems
- EU / International exchanges and travel
- Gender-neutral titles and gender options
- Facilities (toilets, changing rooms etc.)
- Dress codes and uniforms
- Bullying, victimisation and harassment
- 'Unconscious' bias and prejudice
- Protections for partners and families of trans people
- Leave entitlements, sick leave and taking "time off" to access gender-affirming healthcare
- Existing equality training and/or trans-specific staff training

## Specifically for students:

- Disciplinary, School and Faculty-specific considerations
- Professional and industrial placements
- Qualifications and degree certificates

## Specifically for staff:

- Recruitment and induction
- Providing and receiving references
- Evidence of qualifications
- Support via Occupational Health

## Practical Applications & Implementation

Consider the specific journeys of students and staff, through their education and careers.

Developing a thorough understanding of the Learner Journey and the Staff Journey in your specific institution will provide great insight into the areas the Policy should address.

By completing the ['Mapping the Journeys'](#) exercise on the [TransEDU website](#), you will be able to examine all elements of the student and staff experience, and consider the specific areas where trans and gender diverse people may face barriers in your college or university.

# Consultation

It is important to engage with and consult teams, colleagues and groups from across our institutions and campus communities to pool all relevant factors of student, staff and campus life. It is advisable to draft a Policy and use this document as the basis of your consultation activities, in order to provide a framework from which to have constructive conversations and feedback sessions.

We suggest you include the following in consultation activities:

- Student Services
- Human Resources
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- All Departments and Faculties
- Estates Services
- Legal Team / Representatives
- Students' Union & LGBT+ Society
- Trade Unions & LGBT+ Staff Networks
- Individual students and staff members
- Any other groups relevant to your particular institution.



## Practical Applications & Implementation

Consulting across the institution will also provide insight into practical applicability of the Policy, and identify specific areas that require development.

For example, the intended Policy might state: "Any trans student / staff member can change their e-mail address upon request". However, upon consulting the IT Team you learn that changing names on e-mail addresses / accounts is a complicated technical process, and so the IT Team does not routinely agree to undertake this. We might, then, wish to liaise with the IT Team to establish and set guidelines on how this process can be facilitated for trans students / staff.

You can employ a range of methods to consult on the Policy. This might include:

- Policy development workshops;
- Visits to team, departmental and faculty meetings;
- Focus groups;
- One-to-one meetings;
- Online surveys.

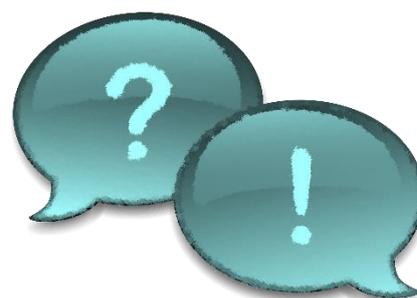
You should specifically contact departments, teams and individuals you wish to involve in the Policy consultation. Policy Development Workshops should be publicised across student and staff mailing lists, and should be open to all

students and staff in the college or university. You may wish to host separate workshops and focus groups for staff and students.

It may be useful to consider ways in which to facilitate others' reflections upon possible barriers and provision for trans students and staff. For example, you can deliver a short workshop including the **'Mapping the Journey' exercise** to gather insight into the specific areas the Policy may need to address in your institution.

## Making the Policy accessible

Consider a lecturer or line manager who is seeking concise guidance on how to support a trans, non-binary or gender diverse student or colleague. For those with many responsibilities and busy working lives, it is useful to produce a condensed version of the Policy highlighting the key mandates, considerations, responsibilities, and contacts. This may be accessibly presented as a simple 'Frequently Asked Questions' and/or a flow-chart diagram to outline key processes.



## Translating into practice



The Policy should be followed by an Implementation Plan, which will address the issues identified during the Policy development and consultation process. Further information and resources can be accessed from [www.trans.ac.uk](http://www.trans.ac.uk). As noted at the beginning of this guide, consider your Policy development as just the beginning of the conversation about trans equality in your college or university.

## Reviewing existing policies

Alongside developing a specific trans policy, it is advisable to review existing policies to:

- Ensure language used throughout is accurate and in-line with the language used in your new policy;
- Signpost to the new policy in existing policies (e.g. absence / leave policies, harassment policies, data protection);
- Identify any possible inconsistencies or conflicts.

Your Strategy, Policy, Legal, Human Resources teams / staff should be able to assist you with this process.

## Where to find out more:

The following resources may also assist you in developing a policy for your college or university, particularly with respect to legislative considerations. A full list of resources about supporting trans staff can be found accessed at: [www.trans.ac.uk/supportingstaff/resources](http://www.trans.ac.uk/supportingstaff/resources).

- Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) – *Trans staff and students in HE and colleges: Improving experiences*: <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/trans-staff-and-students-in-he-and-colleges-improving-experiences/>
- Government Equalities Office – *Recruiting and retaining transgender staff: a guide for employers*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recruiting-and-retaining-transgender-staff-a-guide-for-employers>
- Scottish Trades Unions Congress (STUC) – *Supporting Trans Workers: A guide for trade unionists*: <http://www.stuc.org.uk/files/LGBT/webpage/A%20Guide%20for%20Trade%20Unions%20on%20Trans%20Equality%2007052015.pdf>
- Stonewall – *Supporting trans staff in the workplace*: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/supporting-trans-staff-workplace>
- Unite the Union – *Trans Equality at Work: A Unite Guide*: <http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/Job%206190%20Unite%20Trans%20guide%20201411-16305.pdf>

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## To reference this document

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