Supporting Trans Employees at Macquarie University
A GUIDE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS
At Macquarie, we value diversity and inclusion and the creation of a safe workplace for all. When an employee works in an inclusive workplace they have the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

We do not discriminate against people because of their gender, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. We do not discriminate in the provision of working conditions, employment benefits, training or opportunities. It is on this basis that we have developed a guide to gender transition for trans employees, their managers and colleagues who are seeking guidance on issues associated with transitioning at work.

This document outlines key terminology and points of contact relating to gender transition. It details the responsibilities of the transitioning employee and their manager and some guiding questions to help in developing an action plan for transitioning in the workplace.

We hope this guide will help all involved to feel more confident and supported throughout the process of transitioning at work.

1. GENDER DIVERSITY BASICS:

We understand that terminology is important and we aim to be as inclusive as possible. In this guide we use the word “trans” to acknowledge that there are many ways in which individuals might define and understand their gender identity. Trans is an umbrella term that includes (but not limited to) people who identify as transgender, gender queer, gender fluid, non-binary, sistagirl, brotherboy, transman or transwoman.

Gender is an abstract and complex idea that means something different to each person. Gender identity (how you understand your own identity or sense of self), gender expression (how you express your identity) and biological sex (chromosomes, hormones and genitals) are all separate concepts.

A trans person may not feel comfortable talking about their gender expression, identity or biological sex with work colleagues or managers. It is usually not necessary to know personal information to support a trans person in the workplace.

We have outlined the meaning of some terms you may encounter.

TERMS USED:

- An Ally is an educator, promoter and supporter of LGBTI inclusion. They are an advocate for change and are role models of inclusive behaviour.
- Affirmed gender means the gender that matches a person’s gender identity. For example if a person is biologically male and identifies as female, their ‘affirmed gender’ is female.
- Biological sex means the physical and biological characteristics that define males, females and intersex conditions.
- Cisgender means that a person’s gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person understands herself to be female, expresses herself as female, and is also biologically female.
- Gender dysphoria is when someone experiences a mismatch between physiological sex and their gender identity or expression. This is also a recognised medical diagnosis.
- Gender expression is the way in which a person communicates their gender identity to others through behaviour, clothing, appearance, voice and other forms of presentation.
- Gender identity means a person’s innermost concept of self as male or female – both or neither, how an individual perceives themselves, and what they call themselves.
Transgender means a person who does not identify with the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

Transitioning is the process a person goes through when changing their public gender presentation, to match their affirmed gender. A person who is transitioning may dress and live as their preferred gender. They may alter their physical appearance or take hormones. Some, but not all trans people, may choose sex affirmation surgery.

2. POINTS OF CONTACT:

We are committed to ensuring employees have access to individuals who can be contacted confidentially for assistance. Below are the relevant contact points for those considering transitioning and for their managers and others involved in the transition process.

INTERNAL:

- Your HR Representative
- Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team workplacediversityinclusion@mq.edu.au
- Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

EXTERNAL:

- Pride in Diversity, Macquarie University’s partner in LGBTI workplace inclusion

3. INFORMATION FOR TRANS EMPLOYEES:

You have the right to be yourself at work. You also have a right to feel safe in your workplace. If you have decided it is time to transition, or you want to start presenting as your affirmed gender, we are committed to supporting you through this process.

Your manager and HR Representative will work closely to provide personalised support, aid in establishing an action plan and setting expectations. This document serves as a guide and is designed to be flexible based on individual needs.

INTRODUCTION:

Every individual’s journey is different and the expectations and responsibilities of each party will be unique to each transition. We hope to ensure that this journey at Macquarie is as simple and supportive as possible. The key to this is to maintain an open and honest relationship with your manager. This doesn’t mean you’re required to share personal details or information, but that you keep one another informed, what support you need, how they could help you and what help or information they need from you.

Your HR Representative, along with the Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team, are available to support these conversations, and/or we can work with our partner organisation Pride in Diversity for external support and advice.
SOME AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION AND GUIDANCE FOR WORKPLACE GENDER TRANSITION:

Support person or ally
It can help to find a support person or ally at work who can help you through the transition process. Is there someone at work who you have a strong relationship with who will be open and supportive? If there’s no-one at work you may be able to ask someone from outside the University, or contact a member of our Ally Network.

Your initial discussion
To create a safe and supportive workplace we have employee and support networks that can help you with your initial conversation with your manager about transitioning. Your HR Representative or a member of the Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team can act as a confidential contact. Likewise, a representative from Pride in Diversity is available to facilitate the initial discussions related to workplace transition. These points of contact can then, in consultation with you, provide comprehensive support. Our EAP provider is an LGBTI Inclusive Employer and member of Pride in Diversity, so is well equipped to provide support for transitioning at work.

Developing a Workplace Transition Plan
An important step is developing the time frame for your workplace transition, the key milestones and communication and education factors. This does not need to be developed by any one individual alone. It can involve consultation from various areas, support services and with your manager. We have included some questions at the end of this guide as examples of things to consider in your planning.

Education
Many of your colleagues and stakeholders may have little to no awareness or education in LGBTI matters. They may not be aware of the role they can play or what your needs and expectations are. When developing your plan, consider how involved you would like to be in the education process and what you are willing to share. The Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team are able to assist you and your manager, and/or run bespoke sessions with your team if needed.

Informing your co-workers
Be prepared for co-worker reactions to your transition – whether good or bad. Most people are not well educated about trans issues, and although it is not your role to educate others, you may need to set some clear boundaries with people about what is not okay, and what is acceptable to you. It is important to tell people if they are making you feel uncomfortable or crossing a line with their comments, questions or actions towards you. If there are persistent issues, discuss them with your manager.

You can also point people to the tips for transgender inclusion on our website or use this as the basis for a talk with your colleagues.

Names and pronouns
Consider developing a standard response to say to people if they get your name wrong, or use the wrong pronoun (such as using ‘he’ instead of ‘she’). Be prepared for slip-ups, but also correct people if they keep getting it wrong. Speak to your manager if there are repeated and intentional incidents of mis-gendering.

Records, login and email address
You can request to change your preferred name, title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Mx), and/or gender in the University’s HRIS records at any time by sending an email to payroll@mq.edu.au. Amendment to these records does not require verification of any evidence. Payroll will ask if you also want to change your email address to reflect your new name and if yes, will log a OneHelp ticket on your
behalf and cc. you. Once your name has been changed in HRIS, the change will feed through to update other systems across the University. You can request a new OneID card from Student Connect and if you would like a new photo on the card, upload the photo via CaptureMe. You will receive a notification email when the card is ready to collect from Student Connect. Discussions with your manager will help identify any other requirements and changes that need to be implemented.

Please Note – Changing your name and/ or gender with us will only change your details in the University’s system and will not be transferred to any external organisations. Please be aware that this may create some unexpected consequences with records of Government and other agencies (i.e. Australian Taxation Office, Centrelink) not matching with our records. You should carefully consider and understand these potential consequences prior to making a change. It is your responsibility to communicate changes to your personal details with these organisations.

Appearance and Dress
You may dress consistently with your affirmed gender, following your workplace dress codes or standards. If your area has a uniform, you can wear the version that matches your affirmed gender at any time.

Toilets and change rooms
You have the right to use a toilet that matches your affirmed gender. Some trans people prefer initially, or even in the long term, to use a gender neutral toilet. This is a personal choice, and you should not be told that you cannot use the toilet that matches your affirmed gender; and you shouldn’t be required to use an accessible toilet. You can find a list of gender inclusive facilities at Macquarie University on our website.

Colleagues and contacts
Think about how and when you will communicate your transition to key contacts and colleagues, and who you would like to be part of these conversations. Internal and/or external people that you deal with on an ongoing basis may need to be engaged during your transition and notified of your new identity after this period. Your manager or HR Representative can assist in developing an appropriate communication plan.

4. GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS:

INTRODUCTION:
We support diversity and inclusion, and a workplace where employees feel safe, comfortable and valued. If an employee you manage approaches you with the intention to transition, your support is critical – they may have real fears about the process ahead, and may look to you for support and guidance. The most important thing you can do is treat the employee with respect and an attitude of care, and have open and honest conversations so that you can understand their needs and concerns. Below are some of the key areas your assistance is required in this process.

SOME AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION AND GUIDENCE FOR WORKPLACE GENDER TRANSITION:

Support person or ally
Ask the transitioning employee if they would like someone to be a support person or ally during the process. This could be a colleague they have a close relationship with, or an external person such as a partner, friend or family member. They could also be another trans person.

Confidentiality and privacy
As a manager and in accordance with existing policies, you are required to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality and privacy in relation to employee matters. Information should only be disclosed to those who need to know, are involved in the process, or have the consent of the transitioning employee. Individuals are not required to disclose medical information to the university.

Talk with the transitioning employee about whether they are comfortable with disclosing their trans status. For practical reasons, colleagues present around the time of the transition will become aware of the transition. However, after the transition there is no good reason for a new employee who knows the person as their affirmed gender to be told about the employee’s trans history.

**Communication**

Clear, open and honest communication from managers, employees and the transitioning individual is essential. Communication will be different in each context; and dialogue can help alleviate any potential difficulties or issues.

It may be useful to work together with the individual to develop a communications plan – for example how and when to tell colleagues or partners. Hosting information and awareness sessions for team members and other colleagues should be considered when developing the plan. Other fundamental communication areas to consider are what the transitioning employee is comfortable and willing to share.

**Having an initial conversation**

Ask the trans person what their preferences and intentions are. The person may have firm views about their transition, or they may be unsure what exactly they want to happen. Before coming to any conclusions about the best way forward, have open discussions about options and consider what will work best for everyone.

Your HR Representative or a member of our Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team can act as a confidential contact. Likewise, a representative from Pride in Diversity is available to facilitate the initial discussions related to workplace transition and help coordinate support. Our EAP provider is an LGBTI Inclusive Employer and member of Pride in Diversity, so is well equipped to provide support for staff and managers around transitioning at work.

**Involvement in developing a workplace transition plan**

When an individual approaches you with their intention to transition, it is imperative that you are supportive, open-minded and honest. Be prepared to discuss their aims and expectations, and what they intend your role to be in the transition. We have included some questions at the end of this guide as examples of things to consider in the planning. Make sure to consider stakeholders, colleagues, policies and procedures existing in the workplace. Contact your HR Representative or the Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team for guidance and support as needed. Pride in Diversity is also available for support with planning.

**Addressing questions from colleagues – education and awareness**

A lack of knowledge and awareness can lead to misunderstandings, discomfort and tension amongst employees, and a lack of support or understanding from colleagues can significantly affect the individual who is transitioning. Education and awareness are critical for all employees involved, in order to achieve a positive outcome. While everyone is expected to behave in accordance with policies, there should also be an opportunity for learning and questions to be asked related to the transition process.

Be available to answer questions and be aware of differentiating between personal beliefs and appropriate behaviour. You can use the tips for transgender inclusion on our website as the basis for a talk with your team.
Supporting Trans Employees @ MQ

Workplace Diversity & Inclusion

The Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team coordinates LGBTI Awareness and Ally Network training sessions, and its members are equipped to assist with LGBTI matters. Our EAP providers are also available to provide support and guidance on workplace transition. Involving the transitioning employee in the education of colleagues is recommended and the level of involvement will differ in each instance.

Try to provide this information prior to the start of the transition process so that employees are clear about what the expectations of them are. If there are negative reactions by co-workers, the organisation risks being vicariously liable (under the Anti-Discrimination Act) for the actions of employees.

Here are some tips:

- Develop standard responses to employees who raise issues about toilet use or physical appearance.
- Encourage staff to raise concerns privately with you, so that the transitioning staff member is not placed in an uncomfortable or harmful position.
- Anticipate that mis-gendering (calling the person by the wrong name or pronoun) is likely to occur by accident to begin with; but be aware that these mistakes can be hurtful. Any consistent and intentional mis-gendering could be unlawful discrimination.
- Consider and plan for what consequences there may be for a co-worker who treats the transitioning employee unfavourably.

Records, logins and email address

The employee can request to change their preferred name, title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Mx), and/or gender in the University’s HRIS records at any time by sending an email to payroll@mq.edu.au. Amendment to these records does not require verification of any evidence. Payroll will ask if they also want to change their email address to reflect the new name and if yes, will log a OneHelp ticket on their behalf and cc. them. Once their name has been changed in HRIS, the change will feed through to update other systems across the University. The person can request a new OneID card from Student Connect and if they would like a new photo on the card, upload the photo via CaptureMe. They will receive a notification email when the card is ready to collect from Student Connect. Discuss with your employee whether there are any other requirements and changes that need to be implemented.

Leave entitlements and benefits – some considerations

Managers should provide information and reasonable flexibility to meet the employee’s needs, in accordance with existing leave policies. Long service leave, annual leave and personal leave entitlements may be available for use in line with existing processes.

As a manager, you do not necessarily need to know if a person is undergoing surgery to change their biological sex. Only discuss it if the employee raises the issue themselves. Sex affirmation surgery is not chosen by all trans people. You would not ask a cisgender woman about a gynaecological procedure; it is simply information you do not require as their manager.

However, a transitioning employee may require some flexibility when it comes to taking time off for medical appointments and surgery. Gender dysphoria is a recognised medical condition, and as with other medical conditions, an employer needs to make reasonable adjustments to allow leave to occur.

Also be aware that when a person starts hormone treatment, they go through an experience similar to puberty. This may affect mood in some people, but the effects will decrease over time. Be patient as the person adjusts to the hormones, and be mindful that behavioural changes will settle down in time.
Supporting Trans Employees @ MQ

Workplace Diversity & Inclusion

Appearance and dress
If the workplace has a uniform, a trans employee may need a new uniform to match their affirmed gender. They should not be expected to continue dressing in a uniform that does not match their gender identity.

If you require a professional standard of dress in the workplace, it is reasonable to expect the transitioning employee to wear appropriate clothing in line with what other people of their affirmed gender wear at work. If you require protective clothing, shoes etc., the transitioning employee will also have to meet the expected standard for workplace health and safety in the way they dress.

Transitioning is not like ‘flicking a switch’; it is a process that can take time. The transitioning employee may experiment with levels of masculinity and femininity, and style of dress until they find what works best for them.

Toilets and change rooms
Once the transgender employee returns to work presenting in their affirmed gender it would be expected that they use the facilities of their affirmed gender. They may express a preference to use a gender-neutral or accessible toilet, but should not be required to use one. Cisgender employees are not required to use a gender-neutral toilet, so neither should a trans employee. Also, do not direct a transitioning staff member to only use a toilet on another floor, or a toilet outside the office space. If the trans person is treated differently from others it does not create an inclusive environment and there is a risk that this may be direct discrimination. Ask the transitioning staff member at what point they would like to start using the toilet of their affirmed gender, and if they would prefer to use a gender-neutral toilet in the short or long term.

Colleagues and contacts
Discuss with your employee how and when they will communicate their transition to key contacts and stakeholders, and how you can support them with this. Internal and/or external people that they deal with on an ongoing basis may need to be engaged during their transition and notified of their new identity after this period. Other potential areas to consider relate to identification with their stakeholders (for example email contact information etc). Your HR Representative can assist in developing an appropriate communication plan.

5. GUIDANCE FOR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS
At Macquarie, we want to foster an inclusive, supportive and diverse community, where everyone feels safe and respected. Here are some suggestions and ideas for friends and colleagues to think about:

- ‘Trans’ is an umbrella term describing someone whose gender identity or gender expression is not the same as, or doesn’t sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. A Trans person may use a wide verity of terms to describe their gender identity, for example Transgender, Non-binary, Gender queer, or Gender fluid.
- **Respect how someone identifies** - remember that gender identity is not limited to male or female.
- **Avoid personal or intrusive questions** - not all Trans people will have had or ever intend to have gender affirmation surgery. It is not appropriate to ask personal or intrusive questions about anyone’s body or any other personal or intrusive questions.
- **Use their pronouns** – some people choose to use pronouns you may not be familiar with, such as They / Their Ze / Zir. If someone has stated their preferred pronouns, use it. If you’re
unsure, mirror their language or ask what they would prefer. If you make a mistake, apologise and move on.

- **Respect boundaries** – don’t assume that the person will be willing to discuss their identity with you. If you know the person well, and feel it is appropriate to ask a personal question, ask them first if it is ok.
- **Respect privacy** – if someone has confided in you, or has disclosed something about their identity – don’t share this with others.
- The person is entitled to use the bathroom or changing facilities that is appropriate to their preferred or affirmed gender.
- **Be an Ally** – do not participate in, and where possible, challenge any inappropriate jokes or comments about the individual or gender identity
- **Question the gender binary** - not someone’s ability to ‘pass’ as male or female – someone’s gender identity should be respected regardless of whether they meet social expectations of gender identity, expression and presentation.

6. **IN SUMMARY:**

Additional resources and links are identified below. The tone and support that each of us demonstrates will eventually determine the experience of the gender transition for an employee. We support individuals based on their abilities, their skills and experience not their gender, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

7. **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

**INTERNAL:**

- Our [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP)
- [Leave entitlements / policies](#)
- Macquarie University [website](#) information on Sexuality and Gender Diversity
- Macquarie University [Ally Network](#)
- [Student Diversity and Inclusion Team](#) for support for trans students

**EXTERNAL:**

- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) www.humanrights.gov.au
- [Gender Centre](#) www.gendercentre.org.au
- [National Centre for Transgender Equality](#) www.nctequality.org
- [Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians and Gays](#) www.pflag.org
- [Pride in Diversity](#) www.prideindiversity.com.au

**DEVELOPING A TRANSITION PLAN WITH TRANSGENDER EMPLOYEES – GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

These guiding questions can help you create a plan to support transgender employees who are affirming their identity and to help prevent discrimination from occurring.
They cover key points relating to transition such as name changes, use of toilets and facilities and communicating with other employees. You may wish to customise, add or remove topics or skip any questions that are not relevant to your specific situation.

Before using this document, you should ask the employee whether they want to develop a transition plan with you and if they would like a support person to attend these discussions.

1. Does the employee want a support person to be involved in discussions about the transition plan? E.g their HR Representative, HR Diversity and Inclusion Team representative or a close colleague? Who will this be?

2. Does the person want to set a date from which they will start presenting as their affirmed gender, or would they prefer it to happen over time? When will the employee commence transitioning? What will this involve? (The employee only needs to disclose information they feel comfortable with and which might be necessary to ensure they are supported at work during their transition).

3. Name and pronouns - Will the person have a new name and pronoun? What will these be, and when should managers and staff start using them? What name or pronouns should not be used?

4. Advising other employees - Does the person want to inform their colleagues of their transition themselves? Would they like the news to be shared by email, or would they like a meeting to be held in their absence where the news is provided to staff?

   Here are some options to discuss with the transitioning employee. Consider the pros and cons of each option together.
   - the transitioning employee informs each staff member themselves on a one-on-one basis (Note: this may be more practical in a small workplace.)
   - the transitioning employee informs only some trusted staff individually
   - a staff meeting where the transitioning employee announces and discusses their transition with the group
   - a staff meeting (with or without the transitioning employee present) where a manager, HR person or other person of authority informs staff
   - an email notification to staff and relevant stakeholders to be sent by the employer or transitioning employee

   What questions or topics of discussion about the employee’s transition are acceptable/unacceptable? Which aspects of the transition can be discussed directly with the employee? Which aspects should be discussed with someone else e.g. human resources?

   What resources will be made available to other workers who have questions about the employee’s transition?

5. Use of toilets and facilities - When will the employee commence using toilets and facilities that are appropriate to their affirmed gender? How will other employees be advised that the employee will commence using toilets and facilities that are appropriate to their affirmed gender?

6. Has the employee who is transitioning been advised of access to an Employee Assistance Program or other relevant supports?
7. Checking in - How will you follow up to ensure the transition is going well, or discuss any issues or concerns?

Feedback on this guide is welcome at any time and can be provided via email to workplacediversityinclusion@mq.edu.au or phone 9850 9703.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

This document has been produced with guidance from Pride in Diversity and we acknowledge the information made available publicly on the following sites:


- Charles Sturt University. Supporting Gender Transition at the University: Information for Staff and Students. Available at: https://www.csu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/845642/Supporting-gender-transition-at-CSU.pdf


The Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team support the university in progressing towards an inclusive, respectful and diverse workplace.

FIXING THE SYSTEM
We are tackling inequality at its core by changing the systems, processes and culture that underpin and reinforce inequality. This means working with university leaders, addressing policies and practices that may be creating or sustaining inequality.

EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH
We interrogate our own workforce and recruitment data and metrics, and we listen to staff at Macquarie to understand their experiences and perspectives.

EMPOWERING OTHERS
We work with colleagues across the university to help provide guidance and information, supporting and enabling them to work towards our shared goal of inclusion and equality.

COLLABORATIVE
We are informed by sector leaders and the research of our own academics at Macquarie. We also hope to contribute back to academic research as case studies - this enables us to identify what works, and to ensure our initiatives create real change for a more inclusive culture.

FIND OUT MORE
Workplace Diversity and Inclusion
HR, Level 4, Building C5C, 17 Wally’s Walk
Macquarie University
NSW, 2109
Australia

Web: https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/diversity-and-community
Email: workplacediversityinclusion@mq.edu.au

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