

Guidance for staff on Gender Reassignment

If you are reading this it is likely that you have already been approached by a student who is adopting a different gender. As part of that process, they may need to change a large number of records, which may be held by the College, the University, and potentially other bodies such as Research Councils and/or those offering professional accreditation. This guidance provides advice on how to support those students in making those changes in as minimally disruptive way as possible.

Many students will be entirely comfortable with their decision to transition, and will view this as primarily an administrative process. Nonetheless, there is an obligation to protect their privacy as far as possible, both in the short term, and just as importantly, the more distant future in which many people may not be aware of the student's gender history. This imposes an obligation on you to seek explicit consent before sharing personal information with anyone else. Such consent should be in writing, and may be provided through a follow-up letter or email.

For some individual students, a range of welfare issues may also need to be considered in relation to the transition process, and the College should ensure that the student is offered appropriate pastoral support.

Those undergoing Gender Reassignment form a Protected Group under the [Equality Act 2010](#). The Act provides protection from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation to all individuals who intend to live their lives permanently as a different gender from their sex at birth.

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1 Disclosure and sharing of information

1.1 Disclosure

The nature of the collegiate University means that it is difficult to prejudge who a student may confide in initially. It is critical, however, to realise that whoever the student first discloses their intention to transition to, whether College or the University, their written consent must be obtained to allow the information to be shared.

A student may speak with their Tutor, Director of Studies, the Senior Tutor, the College Nurse, the College Chaplain, staff in the College office or another member of staff. Graduate students may choose to speak with their Supervisor, Director of Graduate Education, Departmental Administrator or other member of staff. To change their student record, the student should be advised to contact the College Tutorial Office either directly or through their Senior Tutor.

The College Tutorial Office, in consultation with the Senior Tutor, is likely to need to discuss with the student the date when the student will start living full-time in the new gender and how information about their transitioning should be shared.

Action: Member of College staff

1.2 Sharing Information

How information regarding transition will be managed, and who will reasonably need to have access to it within the College, central University and Faculty or Department should be discussed face to face with the student. The student must give written consent before the information can be shared. The student should not be asked to consent to share the information with third parties generally; **any consent should identify the persons to whom information may be disclosed with as much specificity as possible**. When dealing with information between the University and College, it is important to follow confidentiality, data protection and disclosure protocols.

It is important that whoever the student discloses their intention to transition to discusses with them **how and when** they want other colleagues/students in the College, Faculty/Department or central University to be informed. The student may want to do this themselves, or may want this to be done for them. Whichever option is chosen, it is important that the person transitioning retains control over what and when people are told and the language used to explain it.

The number of people who need to be informed about the gender reassignment of the student should be carefully managed. Details relating to an individual's transition should be given to other staff members only if this information is needed for their job. In such cases the sensitive nature of this information should be made clear to them. All records relating to the student's transition or transgender status should be kept confidential and treated as 'sensitive data' for data protection purposes.

Action: Student and College

You and the student may wish to consider whether the following individuals need to know, and the information which needs to be shared:

College

Tutor, and for undergraduates Director of Studies
Administrative staff with responsibility for / access to the student record on CamSIS
Porters (if there is a name change)
College Nurse
Domestic Bursar / Housekeeper
Domestic Assistant Bursar / Bedder, if the student is in residence
College financial staff

Faculty or Department

Head of Department
Departmental Administrator
Secretary with responsibility for undergraduate/graduate teaching
For Graduate students, colleagues who will be teaching/supervising the student
Staff and students in research group
Secretary with responsibility for graduate teaching
Undergraduate students, if the graduate student is a supervisor

Central University

Student Registry
For graduate students, Degree Committee Secretary
Research Operations Office

Other

For graduate students, Research Council
Scholarship fund
Professional institution, if the course carries accreditation
Placement institutions, if student's course involves working / studying elsewhere, e.g.
Head of Schools for PGCE students, Hospitals / GP surgeries for clinical medicine
students, and Veterinary practices for veterinary medicine students
Student Unions
Post – graduation: Alumni Relations, Careers Service

ACTION: Student and College

2 Records

All relevant records including the student's personal file, email details, swipe cards, identification passes, library cards, and other contact information should be changed to reflect their self-determined gender and name before the student transitions. No proof of gender change is required to change a person's gender, preferred name or title, except for change of legal name.

2.1 Change of Legal and Preferred Name on CamSIS

The student's formal record in the University's Student Record System (CamSIS) is held under the student's legal name as the University is required to ensure that legal documents, including the University Transcript and Degree Certificate, are issued in

the legal name. CamSIS can, however, also hold a preferred name, which will be used in all other cases.

If a student wishes to change their legal name on their record they will need to provide proof of their new name by production of a Deed Poll Certificate, passport or birth certificate. The evidence the student can or may have to provide may differ for international students.

A student can request to have a preferred name entered on their student record without formal documentation.

If a name, whether the legal name or the preferred name, is changed on the student record, the student should be informed that the previous name will be visible to those with history access to CamSIS and they therefore may become aware of the student's decision to transition. This is likely to include college staff, departmental/faculty administrative staff with responsibility for the teaching programme, supervisors, and administrative staff in the Student Registry. However, all staff with access to CamSIS have signed a data protection declaration and are aware that it is an offence to disclose information discovered as part of their normal work.

2.2 HESA Sex ID on CamSIS

As part of the HESA return the University is required to return data on the sex of the student. HESA gives three options, and students are asked to give one:

Male
Female
Other

The use of 'other' is more appropriate for people who identify as intersex or have a non-binary gender identity, including but not limited to, androgyne, intergender, ambigender, gender fluid, polygender and gender queer. It is not a proxy for 'prefer not to say' or 'information refused'.

If it is requested, either by the student or the College on behalf of a student, the Student Registry will update the sex id field on the student record. The student can request whether to (a) have the gender change applied to the entire record, including upto the date of the change; or (b) keep the earlier record in the previous gender.

Some evidence of change of gender is required to change the formal record of a person's actual gender. This might simply be a letter from the student, or some other more formal documentation. To comply with reporting requirements, a record will be retained of the reason for the change.

The University does not collect data on gender identity.

2.3 Title on CamSIS

A student may request their title to be changed on their CamSIS record; no proof of gender change is required for such a change. Students may choose either a gender-specific title (like Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms) or a gender-neutral title (like Mx (Mixter) or Misc (Miscellus)). Titles may be left blank but this does have implications, for

example if data are used for a mail merge the student would be addressed by their surname only.

For undergraduate students the College can change the courtesy title. The Student Registry can make the change for graduate students.

2.4 Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS)

There are some courses that require a check from the DBS (previously Criminal Record Bureau (CRB)) Check, e.g. PGCE, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. The Student Registry Help Desk can assist with these.

The DBS has a specific service to support transgender people. Those wishing to use this process must contact the DBS Transgender Line directly on 0151 676 1452 or via the dedicated email address for enquiries regarding applications from transgender people (sensitive@db.sgsi.gov.uk).

2.5 Degree Ceremonies and Certificates

The name to be used on degree ceremony programmes or read out during the degree ceremony should be discussed with the student beforehand.

However, as the degree certificate is a legal document, the University is required to issue it in the student's legal name. Evidence will be required to issue a degree certificate in a name that is different from that held by student record. This could be, for example, a copy of the person's Deed Poll Certificate. It is strongly advised to work in advance of the ceremony to confirm arrangements.

If it is not possible to issue the degree certificate in the student's chosen name or if transition occurs after graduation or course completion, the degree certificate can be re-issued.

2.6 Identification

When a student changes their name, title, or appearance it is important to identify which of the following cards, log-ins etc may need to be changed so that an individual's identity is consistently recognised throughout the Collegiate University. Where appropriate, this should include modifying records containing a title. Particular attention should be placed on photographic identity documents including:

- University ID card
- CUSU/Graduate Union ID cards
- Clubs/Society membership cards
- Professional membership cards
- College meal card

The following records may need to be altered or replaced:

- CamSIS (Cambridge student record system)

- Other University and College databases, e.g. departmental databases, libraries, student unions and MCR/JCR
- Supervisor records on CamCORS or, for graduate students CGSRS
- Welfare/disability/counselling records
- Student Loan Company/Student Finance England (etc.) or other funding body
- Payroll details (if appropriate)
- Personnel files in HR and Institutions (if appropriate)

The student and College Tutorial Office in consultation with the Senior Tutor and, for graduate students Departmental Administrator or Supervisor, should try to identify which of these, and others, will need altering and who is best placed to assist with this.

If a student wishes to change their CRSid, a request will need to be sent to the User Policy and Accounts Manager at the Information Services Division directly. This may be done by the student, the College or by the Student Registry.

The College Tutorial Office will also need to inform CamSIS so that the data on CamSIS is updated and that the student's new CRSid is active throughout CamSIS.

***ACTION: College liaise with the Student Registry
(student.registry@admin.cam.ac.uk) / Department or Faculty contact***

2.7 Gender Recognition Certificate

If a student has chosen to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate, it is a criminal offence to disclose to any other person any information about a student's gender history which has been acquired in an official capacity and a file note will need to be retained. All records relating to the student's previous legal identity (for example copies of qualification certificates, or documents relating to gender reassignment or transgender status) should be kept separate from the student's current record with restricted access.

(See also Appendix B.)

3 Understanding and awareness

3.1 Discrimination

All College and University staff should be proactive in preventing a student who is undergoing gender reassignment from becoming the target of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Student handbooks, whether collegiate, institutional or departmental, should reflect the University's commitment to Equality and Diversity, which establishes the appropriate norms for behaviour within the University community. The University's [Dignity at Study](#) procedure reflects these principles.

The student should not be asked intrusive questions relating to their transition or medical status and their chosen name, title and pronouns must be respected at all times.

3.2 Use of Facilities

Once the student has stated their intention to transition they should have access to the facilities of the acquired gender - the student does not need to be under medical supervision or to have undergone surgery. For example, when a student transitions they may want to use the facilities, such as toilets and changing rooms, for their self-determined gender.

If accommodation is organised around gender, it may be necessary to make new arrangements. In some cases it may be appropriate to consider a change of College.

ACTION: College and Department / Faculty contact

3.3 Process of transitioning

For some individual students, a range of welfare issues may also need to be considered in relation to the transition process, and the College should ensure that the student is offered pastoral support. The College and, in the case of graduate students the Supervisor, may need to consider with the student whether they need time off during transition; and the Impact on course commitments of any medical procedures or the recovery from such treatments.

If the student requires time off for medical treatment of surgery and recovery, this should be handled in the same way as any other request for leave.

A transitioning student should be supported in the same way that students who have time away from the University due to ill-health or for other reasons are supported, in order to ensure that the programme of study can be completed.

ACTION: College/Supervisor for graduate students

4 Sources of Information and Guidance

All College and University staff have a particular responsibility for supporting students who decide to transition and for dealing with any issues which may arise from this. However, it is recognised that support may be needed from others to do this effectively. Additional sources of information and guidance can be found below.

- the Equality and Diversity Section
- Occupational Health
- the Counselling Service
- the CUSU LGBT+ Campaign

There are a number of external organisations that provide information, support and guidance on gender reassignment and transgender issues for employers and individuals:

- Equality Challenge Unit www.ecu.ac.uk/subjects/trans
- Press for Change www.pfc.org.uk
- The Gender Trust <http://gendertrust.org.uk/>
- A:gender www.agender.org.uk
- GIRES www.gires.org.uk
- Gendered Intelligence genderedintelligence.co.uk
- Encompass Network www.encompassnetwork.org.uk/

Appendix A What is Gender Reassignment?

1 Gender Reassignment

A decision to undertake gender reassignment is made when an individual feels that their gender at birth does not match their gender identity. This is called 'gender dysphoria' and is a recognised medical condition.

What has been referred to as "transitioning" through this document is legally known as gender reassignment. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and refers to individuals, whether staff/students, who either:

- have undergone, intend to undergo or are currently undergoing gender reassignment (medical and surgical treatment to alter the body) or
- do not intend to undergo medical treatment but wish to live permanently in a different gender from their sex assigned at birth.

Transitioning is the term used to describe someone taking up a gender role and/or presentation that is different from the one they were assigned at birth and may or may not involve medical intervention. Transition may include some or all of the following: social, legal and medical changes, telling one's family, friends, and/or colleagues, changing one's name and/or gender on legal documents, voice therapy and changing one's style of dress. Not all people who transition choose to undergo medical or surgical treatment. For those individuals who decide to do this, the process may involve a number of medical or surgical interventions that may last several years and require ongoing care over the course of their lifetime. This may be done either privately or through the National Health Service. A person may also choose to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate, which changes their gender in certain legal circumstances (See Gender Recognition Certificate).

2 Protections in Law

The Equality Act 2010 provides protections prohibiting unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation of staff, students or visitors on the grounds of gender reassignment. This applies to employment, education (including higher education) and in the provision of goods and services. The University, as a public authority, also has public equalities duties in relation to gender reassignment.

The protection from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation is available to all individuals who intend to live their lives permanently as a different gender to their sex assigned at birth.

There is no need for the individual to be under medical supervision or intend to undertake reassignment surgery to benefit from the legal protections.

Additionally, the [Gender Recognition Act 2004](#) allows individuals who have undergone gender reassignment to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

Appendix B Gender Recognition Certificate

Under the [Gender Recognition Act 2004](#), an individual can legally change their gender by complying with the process outlined in the Act.

A Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) is issued by a Gender Recognition Panel made up of at least one legally and one medically qualified member.

There is no requirement for an individual to undergo medical or surgical treatment to obtain a GRC.

The effect of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate for an individual is significant. For example, a transgender woman will be:

- entitled to be issued with a new birth certificate reflecting the changed gender
- legally recognised as a woman 'for all purposes' including the criminal law
- entitled to state benefits and occupational pension schemes on the same basis as other women
- able to marry a man or enter into a civil partnership with a woman.

It is not appropriate to ask to see a Gender Recognition Certificate as holders will have a modified Birth Certificate which is evidence of gender. However, a holder of a Gender Recognition Certificate may volunteer to provide this as evidence of gender.

Appendix C Definitions and Terms

The following list provides a glossary of common terms associated with gender reassignment. The definitions are based on those provided by [Equality Challenge Unit guidance](#).

Cisgender

The antonym of transgender. Used to describe those whose gender identity is congruent with their sex assigned at birth. Should only be used as an adjective e.g. 'cisgender people'.

Gender dysphoria

Gender dysphoria is a medical condition in which a person has been assigned one gender at birth but identifies as another gender, or does not conform to the gender role society ascribes to them. Gender dysphoria is not related to sexual orientation. Gender dysphoria has replaced gender identity disorder as the word disorder is seen as stigmatising.

A person with gender dysphoria can experience anxiety, uncertainty or persistently uncomfortable feelings about their gender assigned at birth. This dysphoria may lead to a fear of expressing their feelings or of rejection and in some cases deep anxiety or chronic depression. It is effectively treated using methods such as counselling, hormone replacement therapy, surgery or simply social transition.

Self-determined Gender and Gender Identity:

A person's inner sense of their own gender identity, which is independent of their gender expression, biological makeup and any gender that may be externally attributed to them by other people, including legally and socially.

Transgender (or trans*)

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from that of their sex assigned at birth. Transgender people may or may not alter their bodies to better fit with their gender identity through means such as hormones or surgery. Some intersex people identify as transgender but the two are not the same. Identities such as transsexual or transvestite are distinct sub-categories of transgender and should not be used as synonyms.

Should only be used as an adjective e.g. 'transgender people'. The word "Transgendered" is used by some people but its use is discouraged.

Transitioning

Transitioning is the term used to describe someone taking up a gender role and/or presentation that is different from the one they were assigned at birth and may or may not involve medical intervention. Transition may include some or all of the following: social, legal and medical adjustments, telling one's family, friends, and/or colleagues, changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents, voice therapy and changing one's style of dress.

Transphobia

Transphobia is an irrational fear of, and/or hostility towards, people who are or are perceived to be transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms. Transphobia also includes actions that contribute to or perpetuate ideas, misconceptions or myths which disadvantage trans* people.