

Frequently Asked Questions

An individual student wishing to transition while studying at Lancaster University

- I identify as trans and I wish to transition, who do I need to contact first for support?

As a student, you can refer to a Key Contact who will support you and discuss with you which steps you think it appropriate to take in relation to your transition. Every decision will be agreed only with your explicit written consent.

The Key Contact can be whoever you consider more appropriate between:

- Academic/Personal Tutor; PGT Director; College Advisory Team or College Managers (Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught students)
- Supervisor; PGR Director; College Advisory Team or College Managers (Postgraduate research students)

The Key Contact will have received appropriate training to support you during transitioning. Your conversations with your Key Contact will remain confidential.

For an example of Transition Support Plan, including possible issues that you may want to discuss with your Key Contact, see Appendix V of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#).

- Where can I get confidential advice around transitioning?

You can discuss and ask for advice around transitioning with your Key Contact, which can be whoever you consider more appropriate between:

- Academic/Personal Tutor; PGT Director; College Advisory Team or College Managers (Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught students)
- Supervisor; PGR Director; College Advisory Team or College Managers (Postgraduate research students)

The Key Contact will have received appropriate training to support you during transitioning.

Your conversations with your Key Contact will remain confidential. If you agree a Transition Support Plan, this will be documented in writing, and a follow up communication with a summary of the actions agreed will be sent to you.

Other internal sources of information and support are listed at Appendix IX of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#).

Beyond Lancaster University, there are many organisations that can provide personal support. Some are listed at Appendix X of the Guidance.

For an example of Transition Support Plan, including possible issues that you may want to discuss with your Key Contact, see Appendix V of the Guidance.

- Will other students, and staff members be informed of my transition?

Other students and staff members will only be informed according to your wishes. If you wish them to be informed of your transition, you can agree when and how with your Key Contact, e.g. your Academic Tutor or your College manager. You may prefer to inform people yourself or ask the Key Contact or another person of your choice to do it on your behalf. It is also up to you whether you prefer your transition to be communicated in writing, e.g. via e-mail, or during a meeting.

You can also discuss with your Key Contact when staff would need training or briefing, and when other students or service users will need to be involved. Please note that you are not responsible for educating staff members or other students. Discussing when the training or briefing will be organised for staff and students does not entail that you will be the person responsible for delivering it.

For further information, please consult the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#), including an example of transition support plan at Appendix V.

- Can I use the facilities, for example changing rooms and toilets, which align with my gender identity?

Yes, you can. The University offers people the option to choose the toilets and changing facilities that align with their gender identity.

The University also offers gender-neutral facilities on campus. All major refurbishments and new buildings are designed with gender-neutral facilities on the ground floor.

Where gender-neutral facilities are not available, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that trans people who do not feel comfortable with using gendered (typically male or female) facilities can access dedicated spaces. Non-binary students will be able to access the facilities they are most comfortable using in this situation (e.g. accessible toilets: however, there is no expectation that they will always use them).

- Who do I go to if I am being bullied or harassed about my transition or gender identity?

As a student, if you feel you have experienced bullying, harassment, victimisation, sexual misconduct or other forms of discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression, you should contact the

Student Conduct Officer (studentconduct@lancaster.ac.uk). Incidents can be reported anonymously by using the Unisafe App through iLancaster.

Emotional support and advice can be provided through the College Advisory Teams (CATs). They will liaise with the Student Counselling and Mental Health Service to ensure that students have access to the right level of support.

Further information on the University bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct policy can be found at Section 4 of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#). You can also check the [Dignity in Student Life Policy](#) and the [Student Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

- What support will the organisation offer me if I am transitioning?

As a student, the University intends to support you during your transition. You can approach your Key Contact to discuss your situation in confidence and to agree the process for supporting your transition. You will lead every step of the process to create a support plan. A timeline for transitioning will be arranged, with the understanding that timescales may change considerably in some cases if medical intervention is required.

You can discuss time off for transition with your Key Contact, and whether special arrangements to continue your programme of studies are necessary. Temporary adjustments if you are experiencing fatigue or if you need recovery time during hormone treatments can also be discussed.

It will be agreed when training or briefing of staff, fellow students or service users will be necessary, and which actions will be planned to communicate the changes to students and staff. These arrangements will be detailed in writing and kept confidential.

Support will be provided to update any records with new gender, name and titles at a point decided upon by you.

- Which of my records need to be changed?

When you notify your intent to transition, your student records should be changed to align with your affirmed gender.

It is recommended that you discuss when and how to update your personal records with your Key Contact (Academic/Personal Tutor, PGT Director, College Advisory Team or College Managers for undergraduate and Postgraduate taught students; Supervisor, PGR Director, College Advisory Team or College Managers for Postgraduate research students), which can liaise with the University services on your behalf.

You can also apply for a change of name and gender on your own by filling in the 'Change of Name and Gender Identity' form and submit it to the Base. However, the University encourages you to discuss these changes with your Key Contact to avoid inconsistencies.

For further information on changing name and/or gender in University records, please consult Section 3.2 of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#).

An individual staff member wishing to transition while working at Lancaster University

- I identify as trans and I wish to transition, who do I need to contact first for support?

As a staff member, you can refer to a Key Contact who will support you and discuss with you which steps you think it appropriate to take in relation to your transition. Every decision will be agreed only with your explicit written consent.

The Key Contact can be whoever you consider more appropriate between your line manager and your HR Advisor. You can also require that the HR Advisor is present when you meet with your line manager.

The line manager and the HR Advisor will have received appropriate training to support you during transitioning.

For an example of Transition Support Plan, including possible issues that you may want to discuss with your Key Contact, please check Appendix IV of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#).

- Where can I get confidential advice around transitioning?

You can discuss and ask for advice around transitioning with your Key Contact, which can be whoever you consider more appropriate between your line manager and your HR Advisor. The line manager and the HR Advisor will have received appropriate training to support you during transitioning.

Your conversations with your Key Contact will remain confidential. If you agree a transition support plan, this will be documented in writing, and a follow up communication with a summary of the actions agreed will be sent to you.

Other internal sources of information and support are listed at Appendix IX of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#).

Beyond Lancaster University, there are many organisations that can provide personal support. Some are listed at Appendix X of the Guidance.

For an example of Transition Support Plan, including possible issues that you may want to discuss with your Key Contact, please check Appendix IV of the Guidance.

- Will all my colleagues be informed of my transition?

Colleagues will only be informed according to your wishes. If you wish your colleagues to be informed of your transition, you can agree when and how to inform them with your Key Contact (your line manager or HR Advisor). You may prefer to inform your colleagues yourself or ask the Key Contact or another person of your choice to do it on your behalf. It is also up to you whether you prefer your transition to be communicated in writing, e.g. via e-mail, or during a meeting.

You can discuss with your Key Contact when colleagues would need training or briefing, and when other students or service users will need to be involved. Please note that you are not responsible for educating your colleagues. Discussing when the training or briefing will be organised for colleagues and students does not entail that you will be the person responsible for delivering it.

For further information, please consult the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#), including an example of transition support plan at Appendix IV.

- Can I assume a different role within the organisation while I am transitioning?

You can discuss changes in your tasks within the organisation with your Key Contact (your line manager or HR Advisor). Adjustments to your role may be considered whenever possible.

Temporary or permanent changes to your workload can be arranged (e.g. avoid heavy lifting).

- Can I use the facilities, for example changing rooms and toilets, which align with my gender identity?

Yes, you can. The University offers people the option to choose the toilets and changing facilities that align with their gender identity.

The University also offers gender-neutral facilities on campus. All major refurbishments and new buildings are designed with gender-neutral facilities on the ground floor.

Where gender-neutral facilities are not available, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that trans people who do not feel comfortable with using either male or female facilities can access dedicated spaces. Non-binary members of staff will be able to access the facilities they are most comfortable using in this situation (e.g. accessible toilets: however, there is no expectation that they will always use them).

- Who do I go to if I'm being bullied or harassed about my transition or gender identity?

As a staff member, if you feel you have experienced bullying, harassment, victimisation, sexual misconduct or other forms of discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression, you should contact your line manager. If you do not feel that you can speak to your line manager, then it is recommended to speak to their manager, your HR Advisor or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team. You may also seek for advice through your trade union.

Further information on the University bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct policy can be found at Section 4 of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#). You can also check the [Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy](#) (Staff Procedure).

- What support will the organisation offer me if I am transitioning?

As a member of staff, the University intends to support you during your transitioning. You can contact your line manager and/or your HR Advisor to discuss your situation in confidence and to agree the process for supporting your transition. You will lead every step of the process to create a support plan. A timeline for transitioning will be arranged, with the understanding that timescales may change considerably in some cases if medical intervention is required.

You can discuss time off for transition with your line manager or HR Advisor. Transition-related absence will be considered as special leave and will not count towards an individual's sickness absence record, nor will it be subject to normal absence processes such as disciplinary or capability.

It will be agreed when training or briefing of colleagues, fellow students or service users will be necessary, and which actions will be planned to communicate the changes to students and colleagues. These arrangements will be detailed in writing and kept confidential.

Support will be provided to update any records with new gender, names/s and titles at a point decided upon by you.

You can discuss what kind of additional support you would need in terms of time off to transition, health and wellbeing, payroll and pension, and changes in your workload.

- Which of my records need to be changed?

When you notify your intent to transition, your staff records should be changed to align with your affirmed gender.

It is recommended that you discuss when and how to update your personal records with your line manager or HR Advisor, which can liaise with HR on your behalf.

For further information on changing name and/or gender in University records, please consult Section 3.2. of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#).

A colleague of a staff member who is transitioning while working at Lancaster University

- What does it mean if someone is transitioning and what does it involve?

Transitioning refers to the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's 'transition' will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.

Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

The exact steps involved in 'transitioning' vary from person to person.

For further information on what transitioning involves, please consult the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#), including Appendix I – Terminology.

- What happens after a person has transitioned?

After a person has transitioned, they will live in the gender they identify with rather than the sex assigned at birth. They will decide together with their Key Contact (line manager or HR Advisor) when and how to communicate the news to their colleagues.

As a colleague of a staff member who has transitioned, you should respect their gender identity. Address and refer to your colleague using the appropriate pronouns and title. Respect their privacy. Do not ask about their dead name (i.e. their birth name after they have changed it) or if they have a Gender Recognition Certificate.

- Someone has told me they want to transition, what do I do?

If someone's told you they want to transition, they trusted you with very personal information. Be thankful that they have decided to share it with you.

You can discuss with your trans colleague what name and pronouns they prefer to be referred to. You are not expected to become an expert on the use of correct pronouns from the start, so if you make an occasional mistake, just apologize and move on. However, repeatedly using the wrong name and pronouns can be seen as an intentional form of discrimination rather than an honest mistake.

Do not ask too intrusive questions (e.g. relating to any surgeries, other treatment, or of private nature), and avoid overloading your colleague with questions concerning their transition. Although it is commendable that you want to know more about your colleague's experience, they are probably answering these questions with many other people, and this can be exhausting after a while. Think of learning new information yourself. For example, the University Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#), provides a list of resources that can be helpful.

If your colleague asks you for advice on where to find support in relation to transition, you can point them to a Key Contact (e.g. their Line Manager or HR Advisor) who can help them to create a Transition Support Plan. You can also suggest consulting the Guidance, where they can find detailed information on University support for transitioning staff and students.

- Is there training about transitioning and trans equality/issues?

All staff is asked to complete a Diversity online training within three months from their appointment, and to refresh the training every three years. The training includes trans equality – related examples. You can also refresh your training earlier than three years from your appointment, if you want to.

In the past, Colleges have organised trans awareness sessions open to staff. As part of the implementation of the University Policy on Gender Identity and Expression, the University will provide periodic trans awareness sessions open to all staff.

Appendix X of this Guidance, available [here](#), includes some examples of organisations that provide freely available resources with information on gender identity and expression.

- What is a pronoun and how do I know which one to use?

Pronouns are words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation, for example 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as 'they/them'.

In general, we cannot assume someone's pronouns in the same way we cannot assume someone's name. If you have a doubt on which pronoun to use to address someone, either listen to what pronouns others are using or politely ask what they prefer. If you make a mistake, do not worry too much, apologize and move on with the conversation.

- How do I respond if a student or staff member is using inappropriate language in relation to a colleague who is transitioning?

You should inform your manager immediately of the issue. You may also want to speak to your HR Advisor or to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to ask the student or staff member to stop using inappropriate language as it goes against the university's policy on bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct.

You can also seek for advice through your trade union.

For further information on the University bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct policy, you can consult Section 4 of the Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression, available [here](#).

- When do people who are transitioning start to use the facilities, like changing rooms and toilets, which match their affirmed gender?

A person who is transitioning may want to start using the facilities that align with their preferred gender. This step may be taken at a different time than the change of name and/or gender in records, and/or

than the change in dress code. Even if staff can choose toilets that align with their gender identity, the University also provides gender-neutral facilities across campus.