

COMPREHENSIVE
MODEL POLICY ON
**TRANSGENDER
STUDENTS**

FOR FOUR-YEAR
COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES

TSER

Trans Student Educational Resources

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INTRODUCTION

WHY ARE THESE POLICIES IMPORTANT FOR TRANS STUDENTS?



Transgender students in higher education face disproportionate violence, victimization, and discrimination. Having a comprehensive policy regarding these students can be vital for their health and wellbeing. With these recommendations, we encourage every institution to explore additional ways to promote transgender health and wellbeing that are unique to their campus.

In 2014, the Department of Education announced that transgender students are protected until Title IX. This document simply enumerates these protections and should not be considered transgender students' only defense against transphobia.



ABOUT TSER

Trans Student Educational Resources is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment. In addition to our focus on creating a more trans-friendly education system, our mission is to educate the public and teach trans activists how to be effective organizers. We believe that justice for trans and gender nonconforming youth is contingent on an intersectional framework of activism. Ending oppression is a long-term process that can only be achieved through collaborative action.



We speak at conferences, train teachers, collaborate with other advocacy organizations, host the only national trans youth activist summit, support trans-related events, provide leadership training for trans youth, host scholarships for trans students, publish materials about trans education, help create transgender policies, and promote trans representation in media. Trans Student Educational Resources is your organization for contacting schools, getting information, and taking action! We supply trans resources and provide support for creating change in your school and beyond.



Additional TSER publications include:

Diamond, Danie, Eli Erlick, Calliope Wong, and Alex Sonello. "Model Policy on Transgender Students at Women's Colleges." *Trans Student Educational Resources*, 2015. www.transstudent.org/womenscolleges.

Pan, Landyn, and Anna Moore. "The Gender Unicorn." *Trans Student Educational Resources*, 2014. <http://www.transstudent.org/gender>.

DEFINITIONS

CISGENDER/CIS

Adjective that means “identifies as their sex assigned at birth” derived from the Latin word meaning “on the same side.” A cisgender/cis person is not transgender. “Cisgender” does not indicate biology, gender expression, or sexuality/sexual orientation. In discussions regarding trans issues, one would differentiate between women who are trans and women who aren’t by saying trans women and cis women. Cis is not a “fake” word and is not a slur. Note that cisgender does not have an “ed” at the end.

TRANSGENDER/TRANS

An adjective describing people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth (e.g. Janet is a transgender woman). Someone identifying as transgender gives no indication of that person’s sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life. Transition paths and identities differ from person to person. Note that transgender does not have an “-ed” at the end and should never be used as a noun.

NONBINARY

Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/ man; used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Sometimes (though rarely), nonbinary can be used to describe the aesthetic/presentation/expression of a cisgender person.

TRANS WOMAN/TRANS MAN

Trans woman generally describes someone assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman. Trans man generally describes someone assigned female at birth who identifies as a man. Sometimes trans women identify as male-to-female (also MTF, M2F, or trans feminine) and sometimes trans men identify as female-to- male (also FTM, F2M, or trans masculine). Please ask before identifying someone. Use the term and pronouns preferred by the individual.

TRANSPHOBIA

Systemic violence against trans people, associated with attitudes such as fear, discomfort, distrust, or disdain. This word is used similarly to homophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, etc.

CISSEXISM

The social system that privileges and normalizes cisgender bodies and identities, and by extension, brands trans people as abnormal, deviant, and unnatural. Cissexism can include assumptions about people’s bodies and how they relate to them, and what sort of transgender bodies are deemed “acceptable” in society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ADD “GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION” TO NONDISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT/VICTIMIZATION POLICIES

College nondiscrimination and harassment/victimization policies include “sex” and often “sexual orientation” as protected categories. The reference to “sex” has historically not been applied to transgender people. Likewise, “sexual orientation” does not necessarily cover transgender people, who encounter discrimination, harassment, and victimization due to their gender identity and expression, rather than or in addition to their sexuality. Having transgender-inclusive policies gives legal recourse to students who experience discrimination because they are (or are perceived as) transgender. This creates a clear and documented rationale for institutional responses to discrimination or harassment of transgender students and indicates to all students that anti-transgender discrimination is not acceptable.

REQUIRE THAT POLICY OFFENDERS COMPLETE EDUCATIONAL TRAINING

Zero tolerance policies have been shown to be ineffective at preventing violence or discrimination against transgender people. Instead, mandatory comprehensive educational training will help everyone become better allies to the trans community. This training can be provided by institutional resource centers or individuals trained in transgender education. Including education on transgender people and identities during first year orientation and during training for student organizations demonstrates the institution’s commitment to the safety of transgender students while providing a non-judgmental atmosphere for cisgender students to learn about the experiences of their trans classmates. Similarly, allowing those who do violate policies protecting transgender students to undertake educational programs in lieu of punishment will keep transgender students safer and give offenders room to learn and grow into better members of the educational community.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

This college seeks to maintain an environment of mutual respect among all members of its community. All forms of harassment and discrimination against those who are marginalized on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sexuality, religion, disability, age, marital status, military status, medical history, immigration status, national origin, citizenship, genetic information, or language are unacceptable.

Those who are found to have discriminated against individuals or communities on these bases will be required to go through mandatory, comprehensive educational training.

ASK “GENDER IDENTITY” ON COLLEGE FORMS AND SURVEYS

Increasingly, college and university students are identifying as transgender, but do not have the ability to indicate this identity on admission forms or other institutional documents. As a result, they do not feel welcomed or included, and institutions remain unaware of the presence and needs of these students.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

When asking “gender” on forms and surveys, it is best to use a fill-in-the-blank model:

Gender Identity: _____

If you are required to have checkboxes on the form, use the following format:

Gender Identity (select all that apply):

- Agender
- Cisgender Man
- Cisgender Woman
- Genderqueer
- Gender Fluid
- Hijra
- Man
- Nonbinary
- Transgender
- Trans Man/Transmasculine/FtM
- Trans Woman/Transfeminine/MtF
- Two Spirit
- Woman
- Another identity (please specify: _____)

Are you transgender, nonbinary, and/or genderqueer?

- Yes
- No

CAMPUS RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

ENABLE STUDENTS TO USE CORRECT NAMES AND PRONOUNS

Revise software and processes to allow students who have not legally changed their name and genders to easily have a preferred first name and gender on course and grade rosters, online directory listings, identification cards, and other institutional records and documents. Otherwise, students may be outed as transgender when an instructor takes attendance, sees their student identification card, or looks them up in the college's online directory. This is an issue of privacy and safety for the student. Also note that name, gender, and pronouns are not "preferred" but are correct as designated by the student.

Students should not be forced to choose between "F" and "M." If they do not identify within the gender binary, and you need to minimize the number of genders you include on your form, there should at least be an "other" option (often designated as "X" or "O").

PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to change records, the student should not need a recommendation from a mental health or medical professional as many transgender students do not want to or are not able to have access to mental health or medical institutions. This means:

- Students are not required to have a note from a therapist or physician designating that they are transgender.
- Students are not required to have changed the gender on their birth certificate or driver's license prior to changing campus records.
- Students do not have to produce proof that they have modified their body through surgery, hormones, or other means.

Having this policy is important because states often require evidence of gender affirming surgery before changing legal documents, and several states refuse to reissue birth certificates altogether. Moreover, many people transition without undergoing surgery or hormones, because they cannot afford to do so, are not satisfied with the aesthetic results, or just do not see the need. In addition, some individuals have to wait to revise documents because of legal and medical concerns.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

This institution allows students to use their preferred name and gender in school records regardless of documentation, sex assigned at birth, or medical history. Students are not required to have legal documentation changes or professional recommendations to change this information.

A student's correct gender and chosen name should be used and respected without documentation in all situations. A student's legal name (that differs from their chosen name) should only be shared with necessary administrators and authorities if required by policy or law and should be kept private in all other cases. A simple documented system should be put in place and all registrar staff should be trained in handling official name changes for students who wish to do so.

HOUSING AND FACILITIES

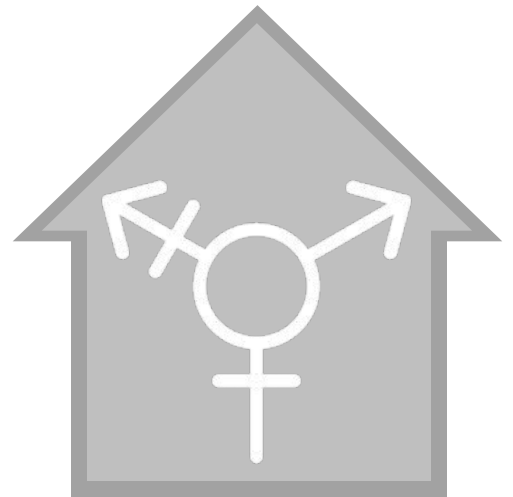
OFFER GENDER-INCLUSIVE HOUSING

Gender-neutral or gender-inclusive housing enables two or more students to share a multiple occupancy room, suite, or apartment, in mutual agreement, regardless of the students' sex assigned at birth or gender identity. Although many students may take advantage of this housing option, it is particularly beneficial to students who identify as transgender, who are questioning their gender identity, or who do not wish to classify their gender. Gender-inclusive housing should be open to both incoming and returning students as well as available in different areas of campus and in a range of different types of housing. Gender-inclusive restrooms/shower rooms (either single- or multiple- user) should be readily available to the individuals in gender-inclusive housing.

Many institutions throughout the United States currently have systems for gender-inclusive housing. Each system is unique to its institution, and many may serve as helpful models for establishing gender-inclusive housing in an institution that has not yet developed such a system. A list of these institutions and their respective policies can be found at <https://www.campuspride.org/tpc/gender-inclusive-housing/>.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

_____ floor(s) of _____
Hall are designated as gender-neutral housing. Students living in these halls will not be segregated by gender or sex.



PROVIDE GENDER-INCLUSIVE RESTROOMS

Gender-neutral, gender-inclusive, or all gender bathrooms are single- or multiple-stall restrooms that are open to people of all genders. Colleges and universities should create at least one gender-inclusive restroom in each campus building by changing the signage on existing men's and women's restrooms and require all newly constructed buildings to include at least one gender-inclusive restroom. These restrooms should be marked explicitly on all campus maps so students know their locations. To protect the rights and privacy of transgender people in women's and men's restrooms, institutions should also adopt a policy that enables students to use the campus restrooms that are in line with their gender identity and expression.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

Students are allowed to access programs and facilities that correspond with their gender identity. This institution offers gender-neutral restrooms in every building with restrooms on campus. These restrooms will be explicitly marked on all campus maps.

ATHLETICS

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS (NCAA)

In 2011, the National College Athletics Association (NCAA) released comprehensive guidelines for allowing transgender students to access to sports and athletic programs consistent with their gender identity. These guidelines detail why it is so important for transgender people to be included in college athletics and how transgender people do not have a competitive advantage or disadvantage to their cisgender peers. The guidelines can be found at: www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Transgender_Handbook_2011_Final.pdf.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

This institution allows transgender students to participate in varsity sports in accordance to the National College Athletics Association (NCAA)'s guidelines on the inclusion of transgender athletes.

MIXED TEAMS & TRAINING

Though the NCAA guidelines outline procedures for competing, they fail to address the rest of the experience of the transgender college athlete. Because NCAA only allows students to compete in accordance with their gender identity if the student has begun hormone replacement therapy, students who are assigned male at birth wishing to compete must currently have completed one full year of hormone replacement therapy in order to compete for the women's team. This means that for one year, these students must either compete for the men's team or not compete. There must be accommodations in place to ensure that transgender athletes are comfortable with their training environment during this period of time for athletes who are transitioning and in general for those who are not. For this reason, transgender athletes, whether transitioning or not, should have the option to train with the team that they are most comfortable on.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

This institution allows transgender students to train on intercollegiate teams in accordance with their gender identity regardless of which team they compete for without any penalty to the transgender student athlete's position on the line-up or play time.

CLUB ATHLETICS

Colleges and universities should abide by the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) guidelines for transgender athletes which can be found at: <http://nirsa.net/nirsa/wp-content/uploads/here.pdf>. These guidelines explain the importance of allowing transgender students to compete in accordance to their gender identity regardless of legal status, medical status, or sex assigned at birth.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

This institution allows transgender students to participate in club sports and train for club sports in accordance with their gender identity regardless of sex assigned at birth, medical status, or legal documentation.

INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS

Students should be allowed to compete on teams in accordance to their gender identity regardless of legal status, medical status, or sex assigned at birth.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

This institution allows transgender students to participate in intramural sports and train for intramural sports in accordance with their gender identity regardless of sex assigned at birth, medical status, or legal documentation.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES

LOCKER ROOMS

Locker rooms can be stressful for transgender students and every effort should be made to ensure their safety in these environments. The lack of a gender neutral changing and showering facility can prevent transgender students from becoming athletes or using athletic facilities. Creating gender neutral showering and changing facilities will show a dedication to the wellbeing of transgender students. Additionally, publicizing policies which give the option for private showering and changing facilities will also make transgender students more comfortable using these facilities.

UNIFORMS

Regardless of the team that a transgender student competes on, they should be allowed to wear a uniform that they are comfortable in. Uniforms can often push transgender students away from athletics. Colleges and universities should do as much as they can to accommodate the student even if they must follow the NCAA guidelines. The institution should purchase the uniform immediately upon the request of the student.

TRAVEL

In order to show a continuing dedication to the safety of transgender students, universities and colleges should ensure that the rights which they extend to their students on campus are extended to their students when they travel for athletics.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

LOCKER ROOMS

This institution allows all transgender students to use changing and showering facilities in accordance to their gender identity. If a request is made, this institution will provide a private location for transgender students to use.

RESTROOMS

This institution has at least one gender neutral restroom in the main athletic facility.

UNIFORMS

This institution provides students with athletics uniforms in accordance to their gender identity at any level of athletics upon request. Coaches will consult transgender students on what uniform they will be most comfortable competing in and this institution will purchase the uniform accordingly.

TRAVEL

Coaches and athletic staff at this institution will arrange accommodations (locker room, showering, toilet, etc.) for transgender student athletes at any level of competition in accordance with their gender identity regardless of legal status, medical status, or sex assigned at birth at facilities the team competes at.

Coaches and athletic staff at this institution will make relevant personnel at facilities the team competes at aware of expectations for respect and accommodations for transgender student athletes while maintaining the privacy of transgender student athletes on the team.

ENABLE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR TRANS-RELATED THERAPY, HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY, AND GENDER AFFIRMING SURGERIES

Transgender students often seek to transition during their college years, but many are unable to do so because the expenses are not covered under student health insurance. Colleges and universities should remove the clause that insurance companies regularly include in their exemptions that denies coverage for trans-related medical and mental health care. The institutions, states, and companies that have done so already report that there is no or only a minimal additional cost.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

The student health insurance plan provides coverage for medically necessary gender affirming surgery (often categorized as sex reassignment surgery) and hormone replacement therapy for members with or without a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, covered in the same manner as other covered surgical benefits under the plan. This includes but is not limited to: estrogen (estradiol), androgens (testosterone), antiandrogens, antiestrogens, vaginoplasty, orchiectomy, phalloplasty, metoidioplasty, bilateral mastectomy, breast reduction, and breast augmentation. Students are not required to have therapist recommendations for approval of this care.

HIRE PAID STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

Just as many institutions hire paid staff responsible for supporting students of color, students of various faith groups, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual students, institutions should also ensure that a paid staff member is directly and specifically responsible for supporting transgender students. This ensures that efforts made by the institution to create better policies and practices for transgender students are consistent and sustainable. It also ensures that the transgender student population is not overlooked by staff members or the administration.

INFORM STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF ON TRANSGENDER ISSUES

Along with policies, there also needs to be educational initiatives to inform those who will interact with transgender students. This is through mandatory teach-ins/in-service days for faculty, job training for staff, and orientation for students. Policy alone is not enough to change popular opinion or comprehensively educate those who need to be trained on these issues. Training is particularly important for resident assistants (RAs), and equivalent or similar personnel. These individuals interact with students in their personal lives on a day-to-day basis and are responsible for supporting and assisting their residents, including those who are transgender. RAs must be capable of interacting positively with and providing support for those residents as well, but often struggle to without the proper training.

EXAMPLE LANGUAGE

At the beginning of each year, students, faculty, and staff are required to attend at least one hour of training on the topic of transgender issues

PROVIDE ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Even if an institution implements all of the above policies as recommended, students cannot benefit fully from those changes unless they are informed of their existence. Institutions should provide a central online location detailing the rights of their transgender students and the resources that are available to them, and these online resources should be clearly linked on campus websites and promoted in campus emails or publications. This should include the above policy topics as well as any student organizations, campus resources, locations of gender-inclusive facilities, and other resources relevant to trans students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SEE ALSO:

Trans Student Educational Resources:
www.transstudent.org

TSER Publications:
www.transstudent.org/publications

Definitions:
www.transstudent.org/definitions

Adapted From:
<http://www.campuspride.org/tools/best-practices-to-support-transgender-and-other-gender-nonconforming-students-2/>

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www.transstudent.org/college.

**READ THIS POLICY ONLINE AT:
WWW.TRANSSTUDENT.ORG/COLLEGE**

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