

Trans Equality Policy statement

This policy statement supports the delivery of the University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022 in pursuit of our vision to use our collective talents, expertise and shared endeavour in research and education to address local and global challenges, achieve social justice, reduce inequalities, and help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and to enable our students to thrive through a sense of belonging. This policy statement sets out our commitment, intent and principles for trans equality and it applies to all our prospective applicants for employment and study, employees and students, contractors, visitors and partners.

The University of Leeds will not discriminate against people on the grounds of their trans or non-binary status, gender identity or gender expression. Where this policy statement refers to 'trans people', it has in mind everyone whose gender identity is not expressed in ways that are typically associated with their biological or sex assigned at birth. This includes those who have non-binary, non-gender, agendered or gender-fluid identities.

The University celebrates and values the diversity of its staff and students and believes that the employment and inclusion of trans people at all levels of responsibility and trans students within our community will enrich our University environment. The University will treat all trans employees and students with respect and strive to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation, to enable them to achieve the best outcomes. To this end, the University undertakes the following:

- Students will have access to opportunities, courses, progression to other courses, and fair and equal treatment while on courses regardless of their gender identity, gender expression or because they propose to, or have, transitioned.
- All trans staff will be included in opportunities for employment or promotion and will not be redeployed against their wishes because of their gender identity or gender expression.
- The University will provide a supportive environment for staff and students who wish their trans status or non-binary gender identity to be known. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender identity, trans status or trans history. To 'out' someone, whether staff or student, without their permission is a form of harassment and, in a number of contexts may amount to a criminal offence.
- The University will respect the confidentiality of all trans staff and students' identities and will not reveal information relating to their trans status without the prior agreement of the individual.
- The University recognises that trans staff and students come from diverse backgrounds, and will strive to ensure they do not face discrimination on the grounds of their gender identity or in relation to other aspects of their identity, for example, their age, disability, ethnic background, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. In addition, assumptions will not be made about the gender of partners of trans staff or students.
- The University will ensure that its environment, in terms of its pictures, images, publicity materials and literature, reflects the diversity of its staff and students.



- The University welcomes and will provide inclusive facilities for trans students and staff groups.
- Bullying or harassment of staff and students relating to trans or non-binary status, gender identity or gender expression will not be tolerated. Instances of such behaviour will be dealt with under the procedures set out in the University's Dignity and Mutual Respect policy and relevant procedures. Whether bullying and harassment has occurred will be assessed on an objective basis, taking into account the full circumstances of the case. The nature of this objective assessment may vary depending on the specific type of harassment concerned but will in essence involve considering whether it is reasonable in all the circumstances to conclude that the conduct in question was bullying or harassment. (For example, when considering whether unwanted conduct related to trans or non-binary status, gender identity or gender expression has had the effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, this will be determined by considering (i) the perception of the individual affected, (ii) all the other circumstances of the case, and (iii) whether it is objectively reasonable in all of those circumstances for the behaviour or conduct to have that effect.) The University will remove material or content on its premises which is reasonably considered, on an objective assessment, to be bullying or harassing or otherwise not within the scope of freedom of speech, or academic freedom, within the law.
- Requests to change staff and student titles, name and gender on records will be handled promptly and individuals will be made aware of any implications of the changes.
- Staff and students undergoing medical and surgical procedures related to gender reassignment will receive positive support from the University to meet their particular needs during this period, in line with our regular HR procedures.
- The University will strive to ensure that its curriculum is inclusive and respects the dignity of trans people and other members of the community, in a manner which is compatible with its legal and regulatory obligations in relation to free speech, and academic freedom, within the law.
- In providing accommodation for students, any concerns or issues raised by trans students will be handled by the accommodation office and will be treated fairly and in line with the University's obligations under equality law.
- Having consulted with trans staff and students and the trans community, the University will include gender identity in relevant internal attitudinal surveys and when monitoring complaints of harassment.
- The University will include gender identity issues in equality training.

The University is committed to securing, promoting and positively encouraging free debate, enquiry and protest for all members of its community. To make this possible, the University of Leeds aims to uphold an environment where intellectual engagement with sensitive or controversial issues is enabled but discriminatory behaviour and harassment is not tolerated. The framework is set out in the Freedom of Expression protocol, which sets out our legal and regulatory obligations:

- to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students and employees of the establishment and for visiting speakers

- to ensure that academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and put forward new ideas including controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges at the University.

This policy statement is therefore intended to promote the fair and equal treatment of trans people in a manner that is compatible with the University's legal and regulatory obligations in relation to free speech and academic freedom.

For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this policy statement should be taken to justify sanctioning academic staff for questioning or testing received wisdom or putting forward new ideas including controversial or unpopular opinions within the law or sanctioning staff and students for exercising their rights to freedom of speech within the law.

Any person concerned that their rights of academic freedom or freedom of speech within the law have been restricted may lodge a complaint and/or raise such concerns in relevant conduct/disciplinary procedures.

The University will review this policy statement periodically. Further information, advice and guidance on this policy statement is available from the Equality and Inclusion Unit at equality@leeds.ac.uk

Please also contact the Unit if you require this document in an alternatively published format.

Equality and Inclusion Unit
University of Leeds

February 2017, updated in May 2025.

References to the 2020-25 E&I framework and the Equality and Inclusion Unit added May 2021.