

Transgender Equality Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) will at no time discriminate against people on the grounds of their gender identity or gender expression. Where this policy refers to 'trans people', it has in mind a broad range of people whose gender identity is not expressed in ways that are typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. This includes those who have non-binary, non-gender or genderfluid identities. The RVC celebrates and values the diversity of its workforce, and believes that RVC will benefit from employing trans people at all levels of responsibility, thus hoping to provide role models for students who identify as trans. RVC will treat all employees and students with respect and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. RVC undertakes the following:
 - 1.2 Students will not be denied access to courses, progression to other courses, or fair and equal treatment while on courses because of their gender identity or because they propose to or have transitioned. Requests to change name and gender on records will be handled promptly and staff and students will be made aware of any implications of the changes. The curriculum will be checked to ensure that it does not rely on or reinforce stereotypical assumptions about trans people, and that it contains material that positively represents trans people and trans lives.
 - 1.3 The RVC will respect the confidentiality of all trans staff and students and will not reveal information without the prior agreement of the individual. Staff will not be excluded from employment, training or promotion or be redeployed against their wishes because of their gender identity.
 - 1.4 Transphobic abuse, harassment or bullying (name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intentional misgendering and intrusive questions) are serious disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure. The Dignity at Work and Study Policy [link](#) and of Dignity at Work and Study Ambassadors [link](#). These links provide useful and supportive information.
 - 1.5 Transphobic propaganda, in the form of written materials, graffiti, music or speeches, will not be tolerated. The RVC undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises. The RVC will provide a supportive environment for staff and students who wish their trans status 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 RVC will include gender identity issues in equality training.

- 1.6** The RVC welcomes and will provide appropriate facilities for, trans student and staff groups. The RVC will consult with trans staff and students and the trans community, in developing any further practical trans guidance. The RVC will include gender identity in employee surveys, and when monitoring complaints of harassment. In providing accommodation for students, any concerns or issues raised by trans students will be handled by the Advice Centre and will be treated fairly and in line with RVC's obligation under the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.7** Staff and students undergoing medical and surgical procedures related to gender reassignment will receive positive support from the RVC to meet their particular needs during this period. It 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 race, age, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. In addition, assumptions will not be made about the gender of partners of trans staff or students.
- 1.8** We will endeavour to improve our gender-neutral facilities, as time, budget and fixtures allow, and we will ask that all new buildings and facilities consider including gender-neutral facilities from the date of completion, rather than retro-fitted.
- 1.9** As terms and understanding change with time, if there is any uncertainty, ask a student or staff member how they wish to be identified and what their preferred pronouns are.
- 1.10** The RVC will aim to ensure that the diversity of its staff and students is reflected in all publicity materials and literature.

Glossary of Terms

It should be noted that the glossary of terms over time may evolve or change, the policy will therefore be reviewed annually.

AFFIRMED GENDER

The new gender of a person who has socially transitioned and had their gender reassigned and/or legally recognised. It is possible for an individual to transition and receive legal recognition of their affirmed gender without medical assistance.

CROSS-DRESSER

The term cross-dresser refers to someone who dresses in the clothing typically worn by the opposite sex. Generally, people who are cross-dressers do not wish to alter their body and do not necessarily experience gender dysphoria.

GENDER

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. It consists of two related aspects: gender identity, which is a person's internal perception and experience of their gender; and gender expression, which is the way a person lives in society and interacts with others. Gender does not necessarily represent a simple binary choice: some people have a gender identity that is neither clearly female nor clearly male or others prefer not to even identify themselves in masculine or feminine terms. It should be noted that currently, for the purposes of the law, gender is binary – people can only be male or female.

GENDER DYSPHORIA

Gender Dysphoria is the medical diagnosis for people who do not identify with the sex and/or gender they are assigned at birth. A person with gender dysphoria can experience anxiety, uncertainty or persistently uncomfortable feelings about their assigned gender. They may feel that their gender identity is different from their anatomical sex. This dysphoria may lead to a fear of expressing their feelings and a fear of rejection and in some cases deep anxiety or chronic depression. Sometimes a person with gender dysphoria assumes an identity in the opposite sex. This may involve undergoing hormone and, perhaps, surgical procedures to change their sex. Gender dysphoria is not related to sexual orientation.

GENDER FLUID

Gender fluidity refers to change over time in a person's gender expression or gender identity, or both. (Nonbinary means a person's gender identity doesn't fit into strict cultural categories of female or male.) Not everyone who experiences changes in their gender expression or identity identifies as gender-fluid.

GENDER NEUTRAL

Suitable for or shared by people of both sexes, not making a difference between men and women.

GENDER QUEER or NON-BINARY

Non-binary or genderqueer is an umbrella term for gender identities that are neither male or female identities that are outside the gender binary. Non-binary identities can fall under the transgender umbrella, since many non-binary people identify with a gender that is different from their assigned sex.

GENDER PRESENTATION/EXPRESSION

While gender identity is subjective and internal to the individual, gender presentation, either through personality or clothing, can determine how a person's gender is perceived by others. Typically, trans people seek to make their gender expression and presentation match their gender identity, rather than their birth sex.

GENDER RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE

Gender recognition certificates (GRC) are issued under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 by the gender recognition panel. The holder of a full GRC is legally recognised in his or her affirmed gender for all purposes. This means that the person in question now belongs to their affirmed gender in both a legal and a social context. A full GRC is issued to an applicant if they can satisfy the panel that they fulfil all the criteria outlined in the Gender Recognition Act 2004. The act requires that the applicant has, or has had, gender dysphoria, has lived in their affirmed gender for two years prior to the application, and intends to live permanently in their affirmed gender. It is unlawful to ask a trans person for a GRC, as once a person has obtained a certificate they are required to disclose their past only in very rare circumstances.

GENDER/SEX REASSIGNMENT

Gender reassignment is a process undertaken under medical supervision to reassign a person's gender by changing their physical sexual characteristics. Gender reassignment or transition includes 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; hormone therapy; hair removal, voice therapy and possibly (although not always) chest and/or genital surgery.

Gender reassignment is also referred to as sex reassignment. In fact, the term gender reassignment is considered by some to be inaccurate, as people with gender dysphoria do not change the gender with which they identify; they change their sexual characteristics to match their gender identity.

INTERSEX

Intersex is a biological condition that people are born with. Intersex people can have a combination of male and female anatomy. As a result, their biological sex cannot easily be classified as either male or female. Until recently, the medical profession encouraged parents to elect for surgery on their intersex baby so that their child would conform to stereotypical male or female appearances. Subsequently, many intersex people encountered difficulties later in life as the gender prescribed by the medical profession and their parents was different from the gender with which they associate. Today, parents are advised to delay surgery until their child reaches puberty so that the child can inform decision-making. Not all intersex people opt for surgery, and many will consider themselves to be intersex rather than male or female.

While trans issues are different from intersex issues, intersex people who had their gender incorrectly prescribed at birth may decide to transition to the gender with which they identify later in life.

LEGAL GENDER

In the past, a person's legal gender was defined by their birth certificate and could not be changed. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 means that people can now apply to gain recognition of their affirmed gender for all legal purposes.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANS (LGBT)

While trans status is different from sexual orientation, the forms of prejudice and discrimination directed against trans people can be very similar to those directed against lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Historically the two communities have coexisted and supported each other. As a result, action and support groups often have a broader remit than sexual orientation.

PHYSICAL (ANATOMICAL) SEX

The term sex refers to a person's physical or anatomical sex (male, female or intersex).

REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE OR TEST

Real-life experience is a phase during gender reassignment in which the individual must live, work and study in the gender with which they identify before they can start hormone therapy and/or undergo surgery. Trans staff and students may require confirmation from their institution that they are undertaking real-life experience. Real-life experience can also be called the real-life test.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation is different from gender identity, and the two are not related. Trans people, like any other people, can be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer.

TRANS

An inclusive term for those who identify themselves as transgender, transsexual or transvestite, but not only. In fact, it is also used as an umbrella term to be more inclusive of people with more fluid and/or non-conforming gender identities (for example genderqueer people). The term 'trans' can be used without offence but should only be used as an adjective, for example 'a trans student'. Sometimes it is considered as an abbreviation of transgender understood as an umbrella term.

TRANS MAN

A person may describe themselves as a trans man – this is a person who is transitioning, or has transitioned from female to male. The term female-to-male (or FTM) indicates the direction of a person's transition and may occasionally be used to describe a trans man.

TRANS WOMAN

A person may describe themselves as a trans woman – this is a person who is transitioning, or has transitioned from male to female. The term male-to-female (or MTF) is a medical term indicating the direction of a person's transition and may occasionally be used to describe a trans woman.

TRANSGENDER

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression are different to ones associated with the assigned sex at birth. People may use a variety of terms including transsexual or transgender. Many transgender people decide to take hormones prescribed by doctors. Others even undergo surgery. However it is important to remember that not all transgender people will take medical steps for their transition and others might not want/need to transition at all. Some people who see themselves as not clearly fitting into a male or female identity might use this term as well. The term transgender should only be used as an adjective, for example, 'transgender people'.

TRANSITIONING

Transitioning is the term used to describe someone changing from one gender to another, with or without medical intervention.

TRANSPHOBIA

Transphobia is a term used to describe discrimination that can be experienced by trans people, which arises as a result of their expression of their gender identity. Transphobia derives from a combination of cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes and aggressive behaviours based on prejudice, disgust, fear and/or hatred

directed against individuals or groups who do not conform to societal gender expectations and norms. It can manifest itself through violence, aggression, insulting use of language or social exclusion

TRANSSEXUAL PERSON

Transsexual is a person who experiences a mismatch between their assigned sex at birth and who seeks to permanently change their outward physical appearance through hormone therapy and/or various surgeries to transition from male to female or female to male (in order to proceed with the process of medically transitioning they will have to be diagnosed with gender dysphoria). However, transsexual is an older term which originated in medical and psychological communities. Even though it may be preferred by some people who have changed (or are in the process of changing) their bodies, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Some people in fact might prefer the term transgender. It is always best to ask a person if they identify with any term in particular. This term should only be used as an adjective; individuals should be referred to as 'transsexual people' not 'transsexuals'.