

Guidance to Support Transgender Students

A trans* person is someone who expresses their gender identity differently to their sex at birth – whether they have commenced and / or undergone the process of gender reassignment or express themselves as gender fluid or non-binary.

The University is committed to welcoming and supporting students who express their gender identify differently to their sex at birth, have commenced and/or undergone the process of gender reassignment, or express themselves as gender fluid or non-binary at any stage of the student lifecycle. The University is working to create an inclusive trans-friendly culture and learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation, where all transgender and non-binary students are treated with dignity and respect in the gender in which they choose to present themselves.

If you are a student: see advice for students below.

If you are a member of staff and need support: seek help from your line manager, the equality and diversity team or HR who will be publishing a policy to support staff in 2020.

If you are a member of staff supporting a student: see advice for students and staff below.

**Advice
for**

students

You do not have to disclose that you wish to take, or have taken steps, to express yourself in a gender different to your sex at birth. It is your right to keep your gender identity confidential. However, if you would like your new gender identity to be recognised by the University and recorded on our data management systems, you are encouraged to notify the University as soon as possible so that we ensure that the most appropriate support and advice is made available. You can do this at any point of application, at registration, or at any point in the course of study or research.

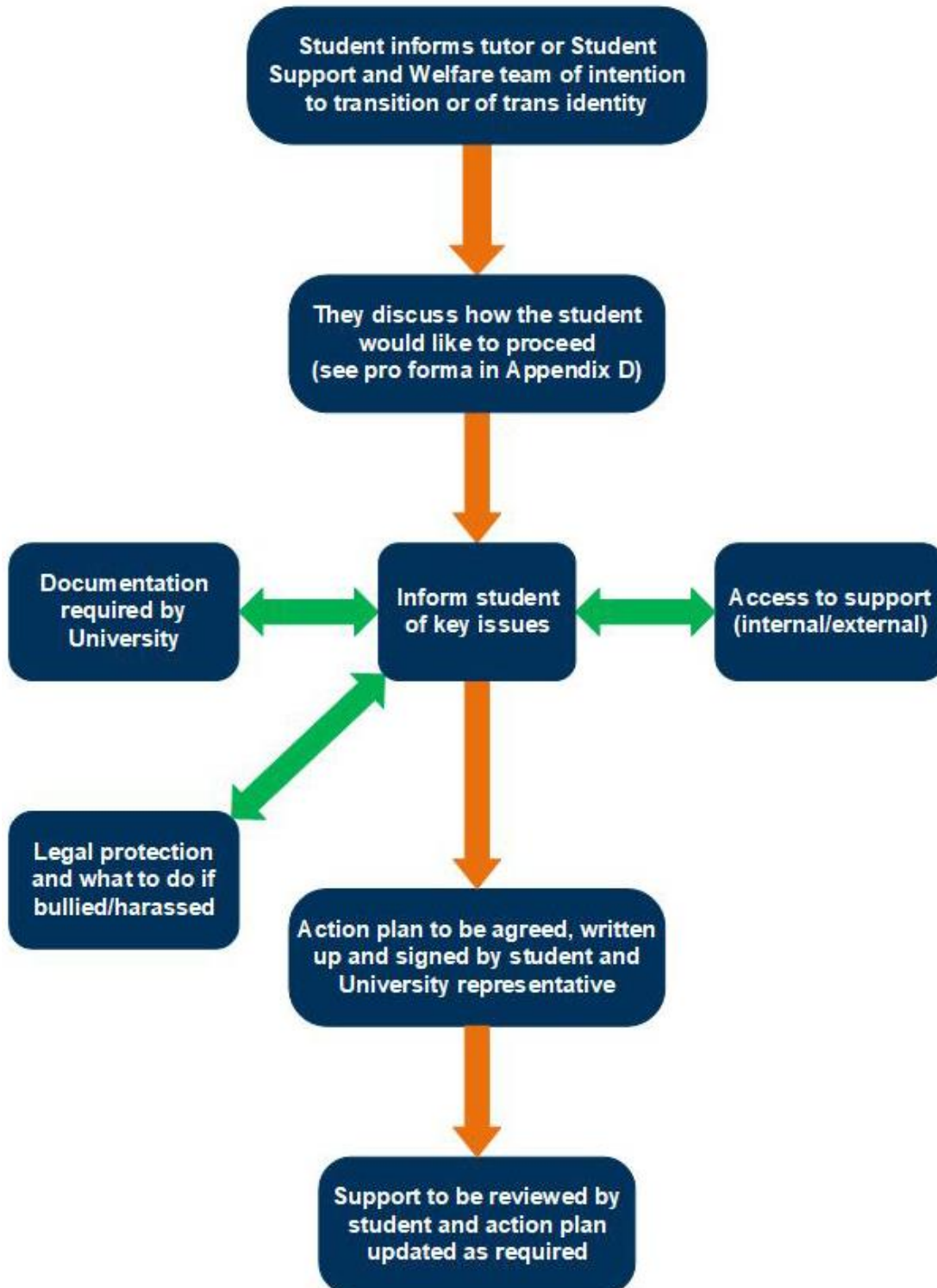
You can talk to:

- A personal tutor, a lecturer, or another member of staff, such as those working in the TPO in your College
- the Student Support and Welfare Team either face to face by visiting the Student Centre, or via phone 67045 or by email to studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk

An important part of this conversation will be to discuss what support you might need and who will liaise with other University staff as required. A support plan should be completed and signed by you and the member of staff. This can be updated as required.

Flowchart to support students who express that they have a trans identity or want to transition

The flowchart aims to guide discussions during transition.



Advice for staff

A student may contact you who is indicating / has indicated a wish to live and / or is already living in a gender other than their sex at birth or wishes to express their gender as non-binary.

They might be looking for one of the following – note this list is not exhaustive:

- support with transition

- to inform the University of a change of gender identity or expression
- support to help with bullying or harassment which they are experiencing.

1. A student wants support with transition

Use the flowchart above which aims to guide discussions.

The way each student may transition will vary for each person, including whether they choose to socially transition but not undergo any medical treatment, opt for medical procedures, or alter their gender expression without undertaking any other steps of transition. All journeys are valid and we will support all students prior to and at any and every stage of their transition.

Legally a student does not have to disclose that they wish to take, or have taken steps, to express themselves in a gender different to their sex at birth. It is important that staff understand that this information is confidential unless the student explicitly gives permission for it to be shared. However, the student is encouraged to notify the University as soon as possible if they would like their new gender identity to be recognised on University data management systems (see section 2 below).

If required, emotional support should be offered to the student and the student should also be signposted to speak to the Student Support and Welfare team by visiting the Student Centre or via phone 67045 or email studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk.

2. A student wants to notify the University of a change of gender identity or expression and / or change their name / gender

The student should discuss how they want to proceed and a student support plan should be completed. See pro forma available in appendix D in the policy. You can either complete the support plan yourself with the student or signpost the student to Student Support (see details above).

An important part of this meeting will be to look at how to support the student through their studies and to agree how the student would like to let their department and fellow students know about their change of gender identity or expression and/or change of name/gender. In most cases it is recommended that this be student led but there may be some circumstances when it is more appropriate for the Student Support and Welfare Team to notify the department. This must be with the student's

written consent. The student support plan may require regular reviews and revisions, should be student led and must be confidential.

Key issues might include:

- **Change of name and / or gender or use of a different pronoun**

Students are more than welcome to change their name and / or gender at any stage formally. But they will need to notify the University.

Alternatively they can elect to use a “known as” name but not change their details formally. Staff should use the student’s known as name / gender as soon as they are made aware that the student has requested this change. If they are unsure of the gender, they should use gender neutral language such as “the student...” or “they / them” rather than “he / she”. Occasionally they may inadvertently use the old name or incorrect pronoun. They should simply apologise and move on and use the new / known as name or gender. Note it could be a disciplinary offence if a member of staff repeatedly uses the former name / gender.

- **How do they change their details**

The request for a student to change their name and / or gender must be made in writing to Head of the Student Centre, and must be accompanied by documentary evidence of the new name.

For a home / EU student: this could be a passport, a deed poll (this can be done free of charge) or a statutory change of name. The date of change for current and accessible University records, and for the updating of current documentation including their identity cards should be agreed with the student. They will be able to register, within the “known as field” on the student record system, a preferred name which differs from the legal or official name and these changes will be passed onto other University data management systems as far as is possible.

International Students on a Tier 4 Visa and in the UK short term may wish to use a preferred name and gender within the University but make no changes to their documentation from their own country. If they want to make a formal change, they need to align their passports and other identity documents to reflect their acquired name and gender so that they can use one name for all purposes. Specialist external advice is recommended for these students.

Note regrettably that there are some University data management systems where it is not yet possible to migrate the change of name / gender data. Please apologise to the student but assure them that we are working hard to address this.

- **How can do they let their department know about their gender identity?**

In most cases it is recommended that the student leads this discussion e.g. via a meeting or an email, but there may be some circumstances when it is more appropriate for the Student Support and Welfare Team to notify the department. However this must only be with the student’s written consent.

- **Are there dedicated accommodation and facilities for trans* students?**

All students who live on campus have the choice of mixed sex accommodation. If they are placed in single sex accommodation and / or do not feel comfortable with their residence, they should contact their Residences Ambassador and / or the Accommodation Office to request a change on 01895 267900 or email: bac@brunel.ac.uk.

There are some gender neutral facilities on campus, though not in every building. However the University is committed to providing appropriate facilities with new builds and / or refurbishment projects as far as it is able.

3. A student wants support for transphobic bullying or harassment

Signpost them to the Student Support and Welfare Team by email studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk or phone: +44 (0) 1895 267045 and / or encourage them to use the Report and Support portal - <https://reportandsupport.brunel.ac.uk/>.. Feel free to accompany them to Student Centre in the Howell Building if that would be helpful.

Following your meeting or phone conversation you should send the student an e-mail summarising what was discussed with any guidance given and any follow up required. You should keep a copy of the e-mail in a secure location in case you need it in the future.

For further information about this guidance, please contact the Student Support and Welfare Team by phone on or email studentssupport@brunel.ac.uk.