

Trans Matters

Guidance for Staff & Students

King's College London is committed to equality of opportunity and values the diversity of its staff and student body. King's commits to providing a safe and inclusive environment where students and staff are able to achieve their potential. This commitment includes the provision of support to individuals who wish to take, or have taken, steps to present themselves in a gender different to their gender assigned at birth. Furthermore, the university will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the basis of a person's gender identity or history.

This document outlines the commitments King's College London has made in order to embed equality for trans students and staff across the institution, and provides practical guidance for staff supporting trans individuals.

Defining our terms

'Trans' describes people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from their sex assigned at birth and includes people who live permanently or temporarily in one or more genders. The term trans might be used to describe people who are undergoing, or have undergone gender transition at any stage (this refers to medical treatments related to transitioning) identify as having a gender different from that which they were assigned at birth, but who may have decided not to undergo medical intervention do not conform to a fixed, binary (male or female) concept of gender, but who may identify with one or more from a spectrum of gender identities including those that are fluid.

Under the Equality Act (2010), trans people fall under the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment'. This means that anyone who is transitioning or has transitioned from the gender they were assigned at birth, (whether or not this involves any medical interventions), is protected by law. Protection includes people at any and all stages of their transition process. People who are connected to a trans person (their partner, perhaps) are also protected under the law against any discrimination on this ground.

Embedding and promoting trans equality at King's

King's undertakes the following practical steps, to ensure that trans staff and students are part of a supportive and inclusive work/study environment, and do not face discrimination on the grounds of their gender identity:

Data and Confidentiality

- King's recognises the right of the individual to choose whether or not to disclose their gender identity or trans status to the College, and to whom.
- King's commits to monitor the gender identity and trans status of staff, students, and those applying to study and/or work. King's commits to developing systems to provide appropriate options for staff and students to disclose their gender identity and trans status if they wish, and to provide appropriate gender-neutral titles.

Recruitment, Admissions, Retention, and Success

- Trans status will not be viewed as an impediment for the purpose of staff recruitment, selection and promotion, or access to training.
- Student applicants will not be: denied access to programmes, or progression to further study, or treated unfairly based upon their gender identity/trans status.

Accommodation and Facilities

- King's commits to providing trans students with access to gender specific accommodation according to the gender with which they identify, should they request it.
- A trans person will have access to gender specific facilities (e.g. toilets and changing rooms) according to the gender with which they identify. The College is committed to providing gender-neutral toilet and changing facilities where possible on each campus. These facilities can be used by all staff and students ¹

Learning and Teaching

- Programme content will not rely on, or reinforce, stereotype or assumptions about trans people.
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¹ A map of these toilets is available [here](#); they are also listed on the King's Mobile App which can be downloaded [here](#).

HR and Healthcare

- King's recognises that trans people may not hold the full range of documents reflective of their current name/gender. In circumstances where the university requires official confirmation of a person's identity subject to legislative requirements, staff and students will be given the option of providing more than one type of official identification. Suitable options include a statutory declaration of name change, deed poll, driving license, passport or birth certificate.
- King's commits to supporting staff and students undergoing medical and surgical procedures related to gender transition. Occupational Health will provide support in obtaining adjustments, be they temporary or permanent, to trans staff during this period.
- The College will take steps to ensure that dress codes can be flexibly applied to reflect the gender presentation of all staff and students, and do not reinforce binary gender stereotypes.
- Where students have already been provided with uniforms to wear during their programme/placement, they will have the option to request a set of new uniforms that are appropriate for their gender at no extra charge.
- Where a person needs to take time off work or study for medical assistance because of gender reassignment, they will not be treated less favourably than if the absence was due to another cause (such as sickness, injury, or parental leave). For staff, the College's sickness absence management and doctor's appointments policies and sickness pay provisions will apply.
- Reference requests for current or former trans staff/students who have transitioned will make no reference to the individual's former name, gender or pronouns.

Promoting Trans Equality

- King's will include gender identity issues in equality training, and raise awareness of the importance of using trans people's chosen name and pronoun(s).
- King's welcomes trans student and staff groups and networks, will encourage celebration of trans calendar events and engagement with the LGBT+ Staff Network.
- King's commits to ensuring College publicity materials, literature and images reflect the diversity of our staff and students.
- King's will consider trans issues in our published equality objectives.

Sport

- Competitive sport at King's falls under the remit of KCLSU, and is managed in accordance with the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) Transgender Policy. Other sports activities organised by the College (through King's Sports) are gender neutral.

Harassment and Complaints

- Harassment or bullying of staff and students because of their (perceived) gender identity, or trans status will not be tolerated by the College. Such behaviour will be dealt with under the [Guidance on Bullying & Harassment for Students](#) and/or the [Dignity at Work: Statement of Commitment](#) (for staff). Where appropriate, the College will pursue disciplinary action against perpetrators of bullying, harassment, or victimisation.
- The College will act on complaints brought by trans people, or their representatives, where these commitments are not being honored.

Supporting trans people at King's

The following practical guidance is designed for staff in a variety of roles supporting trans people at King's. The guidance covers support for both students and staff who are trans. Whilst staff in a variety of roles across the college might provide support for trans students and colleagues this guidance focuses, in particular, on supporting trans students as a personal tutor and supporting trans staff as a line manager².

Whilst trans people, their circumstances, and support needs are diverse and varied, this guide presents a set of common initial steps for the immediate, practical support of trans people at King's.

Receiving a disclosure of trans status

As a personal tutor or line manager, a student or member of staff may disclose to you that they are trans. An individual's trans status is sensitive, and should be treated in confidence. You might sensitively discuss the reasons for disclosure with an individual and offer support where you are placed to do so. The support you might offer is detailed later in this document.

Trans staff and students might approach you to ask that you: call them by an alternate (chosen) name and to refer to them with alternate pronouns, to notify you of their intention to transition between genders, and/or to support them in their transition between genders.

Transitions can be a long, gradual process or shorter and more immediate – it varies from person to person. You might be notified of a person's transition at any point prior to, during, or after this process; it's important not to assume that someone will want to visibly transition at all times, or that you are being told at the start of this journey.

Someone who has already taken the steps they feel necessary to transition between genders, and has 'completed' a transition might describe themselves as having a 'trans history'. Whilst staff and students with a trans history might not require additional support, it remains important to hold this information in confidence.

If you feel you need more information about someone's identity or transition, be clear how this information will be used to inform their support and benefit them, and who this information might be shared with.

Staff receiving a disclosure of trans status or trans history can refer to the dedicated trans [webpages](#) or contact the Diversity & Inclusion Team for advice and further guidance.

² This guidance is designed to support personal tutors and line managers in their regular duties and responsibilities; personal tutors and line managers are not expected to provide trans individuals with advice. Rather, students should be signposted to [KCLSU Advice](#) and the [Student Advice Service](#) and staff to HR Advisers.

Discussing support options

Once a disclosure has been made to you, it is important to sensitively follow up and check that the individual is receiving the support they might need. A disclosure may have been made to elicit support from you as a tutor or manager. It's important you are accommodating and open to discuss this. A face-to-face meeting in a private space can be arranged to discuss how the individual anticipates their transition impacting upon their work/study, and how support might mitigate negative impacts. The discussion might cover:

- Any important dates/deadlines, and arrangements for medical appointments.
- An action plan covering any arrangements that need to be made, who will be responsible for these and who else needs to be involved.
- Any changes required to College records and systems to reflect the individual's name, gender or title (if applicable)³.
- Arrangements for notifying classmates and colleagues of an individual's change of name and/or pronouns, and how an individual might navigate 'coming out' (if applicable).

Any action plan should be kept confidential and discussion should take place with the individual to agree where copies should be kept and who should have access. Each individual's circumstances will be unique so it is important that any agreed action plan is, (where possible), tailored to their needs and that a flexible approach is used. Additional meetings may be required to update on progress and consider any further issues. Any agreements between staff and their manager should be recorded in writing and shared with the individual.

The individual (staff and student) may seek additional support and guidance from the [Diversity and Inclusion Team](#). Staff may contact their HR Adviser/HR Administrator to request changes to their documents or records, and students can contact the [Registry Services](#). Once notification is provided, this is sufficient to arrange a change of details on all systems and documents, apart from official documents. In some cases the individual may also have to show a previous form of identification (such as a staff or student identity card in their original name/sex assigned at birth) to prove their identity, before the changes are made. No records can be changed without the permission of the staff member or student concerned.

It should be noted, in order to change details on official university documents, such as a degree certificate, evidence of a legal gender or name change will be required. Any official document, including those listed under Embedding and Promoting Trans Equality at King's, may be provided as proof of this.

The Trans Disclosure Checklist & Guidance provides a framework for discussing support for trans staff and students. Staff supporting trans individuals can refer to the dedicated trans [webpages](#) or contact the Diversity & Inclusion Team for advice and further guidance.

³ The Trans Disclosure Checklist & Guidance provides a checklist of points that you may wish to consider at the meeting

FAQs

Q: I'm not sure of the correct language to use when talking about trans issues, how can I be sure I am saying something in the correct manner?

A: Trans issues can be complex and you might encounter words you aren't familiar with. The Trans Terminology document is a glossary of key terms to help you support trans staff and students. If you are unsure, you can contact the Diversity & Inclusion Team for further guidance.

Q: How does King's support student applicants who plan to transition?

A: Applicants who wish to change their details between submitting an application to UCAS and enrolling will need to provide a previous form of identification to prove their identity and submit written notification of their intent to transition or request changes to their documents. The applicant should initiate this by sending a message via the King's Admissions Portal, [King's Apply](#).

Q: How does King's support alumni who transition?

A: Alumni of the university who wish to request a change of details on their degree certificate will need to provide a note of explanation about the changes required, evidence of their former identity, and any official document, as listed under Embedding and Promoting Trans Equality at King's, as evidence of the details they wish included on the degree certificate. This should be sent to: transcripts@kcl.ac.uk. The original certificate must be returned before a replacement can be issued.

Q: Who can I contact if I feel these commitments aren't being honoured?

A: If you feel King's isn't honouring the commitments detailed in this document, you can contact the Diversity & Inclusion Team.

Or,

If you feel a specific member of the King's Community (staff or student) isn't honouring the commitments detailed in this document you can contact the Diversity & Inclusion Team, or a HR Adviser if you are a member of staff.

It is important to note that the process(es) outlined in this document are guidance and a framework designed to shape support for trans staff and students – rather than exhaustively detail King's support offer. Individual cases might diverge from the contents of this document based on the individual's needs and situation.