



Trans Briefing

What does 'Trans' mean?

Generally speaking, 'Transgender' (trans) is an umbrella term for people whose identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. The term includes people who are taking or have taken steps to change the gender identity they were assigned at birth and people who do not identify with a permanent binary gender identity, including those who identify in other ways, such as genderqueer, gender variant, non-binary or agender. These terminologies are evolving and highly personal and this list is not exhaustive.

The Law

In the workplace the most recent relevant law is the Equalities Act 2010 which states that it is illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of gender reassignment.

Although proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act (2004) would only come into effect in 2019, Lincoln College expects its staff to recognise that non-binary, and other gender identities such as genderqueer, transfeminine and transmasculine (this list is not exhaustive) are valid as a gender identifier even if they don't fit a binary definition of being transgender. Lincoln College staff are expected to help transgender students live as their gender and recognise that being transgender does not necessarily equate with undergoing a medical transition. Staff are also expected to do their utmost in helping transgender students access funds and/or other forms of help if they seek it, in order to aid in their gender expression, whether that is through medical, or other channels.

What is transphobia?

Discrimination, harassment and bullying or hate crime experienced by trans people on the grounds of their gender identity and/or expression. Examples of transphobia may include:

- Making derogatory jokes
- Asking intrusive questions: 'So what surgery have you had?'
- Deliberately ignoring someone's preferred pronoun: 'He/she/whatever ...', or failing to use 'they' when asked to do so by someone who is non-binary;
- Speculating openly about their gender: 'Is that a man or woman?'
- Unlawfully disclosing their trans history: 'Oh, yes, he used to be a woman'.

Good practice in communication

Everyone should be treated with courtesy in daily interactions, including how they are

directly addressed and how they are spoken of. Any expressed preference on language or pronouns should be respected.

However sometimes things are more difficult when we are meeting people for the first time. We tend to make assumptions about gender, based on our perception of gender norms and we may sometimes get it wrong. If so, simply apologise and try to get it right next time.

Trans students and staff at Oxford have some suggestions for colleagues on how to be inclusive of trans people:

- Try not to draw attention to any apparent discrepancy between, for example, a 'male' name and a 'female' appearance.
- Trans people may use the toilet / changing facilities they feel are most suitable for them
- Some phrasing can avoid highlighting gender e.g. 'Your visitor [name] is waiting in Reception. Will you come and meet them?' not 'Will you come and meet him?'
- Those moderating public events might consider welcoming 'Colleagues and guests' or similar.
- When taking questions at a Q&A you can try to point someone out without identifying their gender, e.g. 'There's someone at the back in red; just keep your hand up until the microphone gets to you.' If you know the questioner's name, use that instead.
- This helps to include people whose appearance does not match gender norms, or who have a non-binary gender.

Lincoln College expects

- All staff to treat trans staff and students with respect and as they would treat anyone else
- Transphobia will not be tolerated
- If they witness transphobia, all staff have a responsibility to challenge it or report it to their line manager

If you have any questions about Trans issues please contact: the College HR Manager or Senior Tutor.

You may also find the University's Trans Guidance

useful: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/transgender/transgenderguidance/