



Gender affirmation guide

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Purpose

This guide has been developed by People and Culture to support positive affirmation experiences for staff. It is designed to create awareness and the fair and inclusive treatment of affirming staff.

This document should be read in conjunction with the gender affirmation leave provisions under the [ANU Enterprise Agreement](#).

Principles

1. ANU provides a safe, positive, and inclusive environment for all staff. This includes providing a safe space for staff to be their authentic self.
2. As a University we value learning and the pursuit of new ideas. Fostering a diverse workforce and understanding the perspectives of others improves creativity and innovation.
3. In line with ANU values, we are inclusive, open and respectful, reflecting the diversity of our nation. A diverse workforce provides a safe learning environment for our student population.
4. The University provides a culture that is supportive of transgender and gender diverse staff.
5. ANU recognises and protects the privacy of gender affirming staff members at all times.
6. The University provides a mechanism where staff feel safe to report misgendering or other harassing, inappropriate actions caused through systems, processes, or individual behaviours in the workplace.

Understanding gender affirmation

Gender affirmation processes

Gender affirmation describes the actions and possibilities that an individual determines is right for them in order to live as their identified gender. This may be different to the gender presumed at birth.

Gender affirmation is a personal experience and is different for each individual. Possible actions can include:

- Medical affirmation - this describes medical actions such as attending doctors' appointments, blood tests, surgery, or hormone therapy.
- Legal affirmation - this can involve working with legal processes or systems such as changing or updating records with their name, title and/or gender marker on their passport, drivers' licence, birth certificate, and banking, tax and medical records.
- Social affirmation - this describes how an individual introduces their authentic self to the world around them. It could include using a new name or pronouns, wearing new clothing, and cutting or shaving hair.

Names and personal pronouns

An individual's former name is often referred to as their "dead name". It is offensive and usually distressing to call someone by their dead name, also known as "deadnaming". It is also inappropriate and potentially distressing to misgender someone including the incorrect use of pronouns (he, she, they, them).

If a staff member or supervisor makes a mistake when addressing an affirming colleague, ensure that you acknowledge your mistake and refer to the correct name or pronoun.

Awareness and resources

Staff and supervisors are encouraged to build their awareness of gender affirmation. Being open to new information and building knowledge reduces tension and uncertainty.

Further information is available through:

- [Transhub](#),
- Transhub [language resources](#) such as [Words Matter](#) and the [Trans style guide](#),
- [How to be human: Talking to people who are transgender or non-binary](#),
- [A Gender Agenda, a Canberra based, community organisation, and,](#)
- [ANU Ally training](#).

If you are unsure about the information provided in this guide, please speak to your local HR team. HR staff can access support from the Staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team in People and Culture.

If you have any feedback on this guide, please contact [Staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#).

Use of facilities

All members of staff may use the facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Preventing any employee from using the facilities aligned to their gender identity is unlawful. It is not appropriate to require transgender, gender diverse or non-binary employees to use disabled or any other particular bathroom or changing facilities.

Gender-neutral bathrooms are available across campus, if staff prefer this option. The full list of gender-neutral bathrooms is available [here](#).

Leave and flexibility

Staff may require leave or flexible working arrangements to support gender affirmation.

Full time and part time staff are entitled to up to 20 days of gender affirmation leave per calendar year, which can be applied through HORUS. Staff may also access personal leave or annual leave in addition to this.

Casual staff may access up to 20 instances of gender affirmation leave per calendar year, which can be applied via their timesheet.

Staff may also request a flexible working arrangement, which could include a change of hours, change of work pattern, remote work and hybrid working arrangements (working both on campus and remotely). Supervisors cannot unreasonably refuse such requests.

For more information, please refer to [clause 45 of the ANU Enterprise Agreement](#).

Gender expression

Staff are supported to present themselves in a manner that best expresses their gender identity.

The University has no policy or procedure that sets a specific dress code, but an individual should demonstrate professional behaviour and dress standards. It is also important to note that staff may be required to wear certain clothing to comply with health and safety requirements, for instance in laboratory settings, or in certain work settings such as student facing areas that wear ANU branded clothing. These items of clothing are gender neutral. Where a gender neutral option is not already available, supervisors must work with their staff to develop a solution.

Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment

All staff are entitled to a safe, respectful and inclusive work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or vilification.

Staff and visitors have a responsibility to act in accordance with the ANU Code of Conduct to ensure that others are treated with courtesy, fairness and respect. This includes respecting an individual's [protected attributes](#).

Under the Sex Discrimination Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their gender identity, sex, intersex status or sexual orientation.

Staff should be considerate and appreciate if an individual discloses their gender identity. This includes the use of new names, gender markers or personal pronouns, if requested. Deliberate misuse of these elements, as well as other discriminatory and/or harassing behaviour, will be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct and will be addressed under the [ANU Procedure: Managing misconduct, serious misconduct and suspension](#) and may also be considered sexual harassment under the [ANU Policy: Sexual Misconduct](#).

Staff wishing to disclose inappropriate behaviour, or are unsure whether the behaviour they are experiencing is discrimination and/or harassment, may book a free, confidential discussion with the [Staff Respect Consultant](#). You can also discuss concerns with your local HR team or your supervisor in line with the [ANU Procedure: Staff grievance resolution](#).

For affirming staff

Who should I speak to about affirming at work?

You should communicate affirmation plans with staff who are responsible for supporting you in the workplace. This would be your supervisor in the first instance.

When disclosing information to your supervisor, you should communicate your needs and concerns, including any leave or flexible work arrangements that you may need. If you are unsure how to approach your supervisor, you can speak to your local HR team. They can provide advice on how to stage this discussion.

When is the best time to raise this?

Every affirmation experience is different. There is no right or wrong time when you choose to disclose this. Communicating your intention to affirm as early as possible will provide your supervisor with time to prepare for your needs and cover operational requirements for any planned or unplanned absences.

How can I prepare for my gender affirmation?

The Staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team have prepared a Workplace Affirmation Plan, see appendix A. We recommend you complete this plan to identify and prepare for important conversations and to help create a support network around you. Further information on creating a plan is located below.

You may also want to explore external resources to help you prepare through organisations such as [Transhub](#) and [A Gender Agenda](#).

What do I have to say to people?

It is entirely your decision as to what information you would like to disclose. Staff may not be aware of gender affirmation processes and experiences. You may wish to share information such as this guideline and other external resources. You do not have to share information or answer questions if you choose.

What support options are available?

This can be a challenging time for staff. Affirming individuals are encouraged to develop a support network and focus on activities that you love and promote your wellbeing.

For further support, staff can:

- access free [counselling services](#) through the Employee Assistance Program and Adviser to Staff,

- seek free, confidential and trauma informed support through the [Staff Respect Consultant](#). The consultant can provide options for advisory and counselling services as well as to explain the process for reporting bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

What should I do if I am not receiving the right support from my team?

If you feel you are not receiving the support you need from your supervisor or colleagues, you can contact your local HR area for assistance. Our HR teams can help you with support options and how to stage conversations.

For supervisors

What should I do if my staff member discloses that they are going through gender affirmation?

This can be a daunting experience for the individual. Show your appreciation to the staff member for sharing this information with you.

Gender affirmation is a personal experience and is different for each individual. There is no set process or timeframe. It is important to ask your staff member what support they need from you.

How can I support my staff member?

If you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with gender affirmation, you can seek additional information by:

- educating yourself through external resources such as [Transhub](#),
- being open to allowing the staff member to explain their journey and their needs,
- asking your local HR area for support options,
- completing [ANU Ally training](#).

Ensure that you have the staff member's permission before disclosing any information to others, including HR partners. Your local HR area can provide advice on a number of areas including flexible working arrangements, gender affirmation leave, and counselling support.

It is important to:

- listen carefully to what the individual is telling you,
- avoid distractions such as walk ins from other staff or email and Teams notifications,
- conduct the discussion in a private area where others will not hear you,
- be open minded, to new information and perspectives, and,
- discuss with the individual their needs and concerns.

What is my responsibility as a supervisor?

As a supervisor, you have a duty of care to your staff. This includes a responsibility to create a safe, supportive work environment. You should create a safe space for staff to disclose information and express their concerns. This can be achieved through the points outlined above, including listening carefully without judgement and avoiding distractions. You must be receptive to these conversations and open to hearing about an individual's needs.

You should partner with staff to develop an affirmation plan, see appendix A. This plan should be encouraged but no individual should be forced into completing the template.

You must maintain the privacy of staff at all times. Do not disclose personal information until you have received permission from the staff member.

What is appropriate to ask?

Supervisors are encouraged to ask questions in a manner that is respectful, compassionate and maintains the privacy of the individual.

You can ask the staff member:

- about their needs and concerns,
- whether they require any leave or flexible working arrangements during the affirmation process,
- what they feel would be the best method and time for informing co-workers about the process (if they choose to do so),
- if appropriate, ask the staff member for their opinion on seeking further information or resources.

What questions would be inappropriate?

It is important to create a safe space, where an individual feels comfortable to be their authentic self at work.

It is inappropriate to ask probing or overly personal questions such as an individual's sexual orientation, religion, family background, how long they have identified as transgender or gender diverse, or details regarding any medical processes that an individual may be planning or undertaking, for instance, any plans regarding medication or surgery.

Consider why you need to know something. Focus on questions that will help you support a staff member to perform their duties and support their wellbeing. If you think a question could make the person feel uncomfortable, than avoid raising it.

How do I support other team members?

When the affirming staff member has disclosed information to colleagues in a manner that they decide, provide colleagues with a safe space to talk to you about their feelings and challenges. Listen to your staff and provide resources and training to build awareness and promote a safe, respectful and positive work environment.

For colleagues

This is new to me, what should I do?

Resources are provided in this guide to help build your understanding of gender affirmation processes. It is not appropriate to ask an individual about their specific journey unless they have given you permission to discuss these matters.

I want to support my colleague and ask a lot of questions. What can I say?

Staff are encouraged to be open to new information and build their awareness of gender affirmation. If the affirming colleague is willing to share information, you can show your support by listening to understand how you can support that person.

It is understandable that you will be curious, particularly if this information is new to you. However, privacy must be respected at all times. The circumstances of an individual's life are not for you to act on or make decisions about. You do not have the right to ask personal questions about an individual's gender, body, anatomy, or health plans such as medication or surgery. You are not expected to share details about previous experiences in your life. The same privacy is expected for transgender staff.

Preparing for your gender affirmation

Affirmation processes will be led and informed by the individual. The primary focus of the University is to ensure that affirming staff feel supported at work. The information provided in this document is only presented as an option to help guide staff and present useful resources. You are not alone in this journey and the University is here to support you.

Below are some things you may like to consider in preparing for or to communicate your gender affirmation:

Developing a plan

Appendix A provides a template gender affirmation plan. This is a useful resource that can help you consider when you would like to communicate certain messages and to which individuals. It will also help you consider which systems and documents will need to be updated and when. Stepping through tasks sequentially, can reduce stress by helping you to feel that processes are manageable and that you have ownership over your decision making.

This plan can be developed as a brainstorming exercise on your own or in discussion with your supervisor, local HR area or members of your support network.

Developing a support network

During the planning process, it can be helpful to nominate key individuals that could form a support network for you. It is important to feel supported and comfortable, so you need to trust these individuals and be able to have open and honest discussions. You may find that you can confide in people on certain topics, so consider listing a few individuals. You may also wish to involve different people at various times in your affirmation.

People who may form part of your support network in the workplace include:

- Your supervisor,
- A mentor,
- A colleague that you have a close working relationship with and that person is willing to support you.
- Your local Diversity Consultant or a champion for diversity and inclusion in your area or college, and,
- Your local HR Business Partner.

Appendix A:

Gender affirmation plan

Name of staff member:	
Personal pronouns:	
Timeframe of plan*:	
Review date*:	
Key support contacts:	

**Gender affirmation is not a linear process and can be an ongoing journey. Timeframes may need to be reviewed and updated.*

Actions	Notes	Contacts	Timeframe
What support will help the affirmation?	<p><i>Who will be included in your support network?</i></p> <p><i>At what time in the process will different people be involved?</i></p> <p><i>Will you need leave or flexible working arrangements?</i></p>		
Are there any changes to how you would like to be referred to?	<i>Would you like to change your display name, title, and/or personal pronouns?</i>		
Who are the key individuals, internal and external, that you would need to contact during the gender affirmation?	<p><i>Who will undertake the communication (you personally, your supervisor or another individual)?</i></p> <p><i>What information should be communicated</i></p>		

	<p><i>(what level of transparency and confidentiality would you like)?</i></p> <p><i>How and when will this message be communicated (face to face, by email, in a meeting, private conversations or in a social setting)?</i></p> <p><i>Will individuals need further support (training, links to additional resources, someone to talk to)?</i></p>		
<p>Will you need any leave to support your gender affirmation journey?</p>	<p><i>Consider if you will need leave for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Medical or counselling appointments,</i> • <i>Medical or surgical procedures,</i> • <i>Recovery from procedures,</i> • <i>Side effects associated with hormone therapy,</i> • <i>Wellbeing activities,</i> • <i>Updating personal or legal records or documents.</i> 		
<p>Will you need flexible work arrangements during the affirmation?</p>	<p><i>Will you need to work remotely through the approval form in eForms?</i></p> <p><i>Will you need to change your hours through the approval form in Horus?</i></p> <p><i>What will be the timeframe for this?</i></p>		

	<p><i>Will this be a regular pattern of work or an ad hoc?</i></p> <p><i>What is the best method (and how often) for you to connect with your supervisor and colleagues?</i></p>		
Which ANU systems will need to be updated? (see below)			
Updating your preferred name and title.	<i>Your local HR team can update this in HRMS.</i>		
Updating your legal name and gender	<i>Certified documentation can be sent to your local HR team to update your name and gender in HRMS and forward these details to payroll for tax and superannuation purposes.</i>		
Updating your email address, email distribution lists and mailing lists	<p><i>Staff (or your local HR team on your behalf) can log a ticket via the Service Desk Portal to update your email alias.</i></p> <p><i>If you have any issues, please contact the IT Service Desk.</i></p>		
Update your staff directory details, internet pages with your contact details, email and teams notifications (out of office messages) and your voicemail message	<i>Consider any places that may list your dead name or an incorrect title.</i>		
Ask colleagues to update their contact details	<i>You may prefer that your supervisor requests this on your behalf.</i>		
Update your name on any organisational	<i>Consider any internal or external documents or</i>		

charts, business documents or team plans	<i>reports that may need to be updated.</i>		
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