

Gender Transition Guidelines

I. Purpose

Gender transition is a major life decision which affects not only the transitioning individual, but their families, friends, colleagues, peers, and community. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to students and employees regarding gender transition.

This transition may affect the transitioning individual's personal and work/campus environment. Consequently, supervisors, coworkers, academic, and/or student services personnel may become involved in the process. These guidelines are provided to build awareness and outline the rights and responsibilities of all individuals involved in the transitioning process.

II. Definitions

A "transitioning individual" refers to an individual who initiates the process of becoming a member of the gender with whom they identify.

III. Rights and Responsibilities

a. Transitioning Individual

As a transitioning individual, you have the right to express your gender identity without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

- i. **Employees:** It is your responsibility to notify the appropriate personnel who can assist you during your transition. Your first point of contact may be your first or second level supervisor. Alternatively, you can contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, who can support you in building your support team and developing and implementing a transition plan. Communication is key during this process.
- ii. **Students:** It is your responsibility to notify the appropriate personnel who can assist you in adjusting to your campus environment during your transition. If you are living on campus, your first point of contact should be the Director of Residence Life to aid you in creating a strategy to adjust to various stages of residence life. If you live off-campus, your point of contact should be the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, who will assist you by working with you directly, as well as referring you to the appropriate resources to support you during your transition.

b. Supervisors and Residence Life Staff

If an employee or student informs you of their intention to transition, your support is critical. If you have questions about the transition process, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access to arrange a meeting between you, the transitioning individual, and an Equal Opportunity and Access member to gain a better understanding, communicate effectively, and identify goals. To the extent possible, conversations between you and the transitioning individual are confidential.

In your leadership role, it is your responsibility to communicate Western's zero tolerance policy regarding discrimination to the transitioning individual's colleagues or peers that you oversee or supervise. Encourage individuals with questions regarding the process to voice their concerns to you or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, so that they can be addressed in an appropriate manner.

It is your responsibility to work with the transitioning individual to implement their transition plan.

c. Academic Personnel (faculty, advisors, and academic student service personnel)

If a student notifies you of their intent to transition to the gender with which they identify, you may refer the student to the appropriate departments which can provide resources and assistance: the Director of Residence Life for students living on campus or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access for those living off campus. Please remain cognizant of WIU's zero tolerance policy regarding discrimination based on an individual's membership in a protected class, including gender expression and identity.

d. Colleagues, Co-Workers and Peers

You have the right to discuss with the appropriate official any concerns you have regarding your role/involvement in your colleague's/peer's transition process. You may even discuss any concerns or questions you have with your transitioning colleague/peer, as appropriate.

II. Guidelines

a. Appearance Standards

Transitioning individuals may assume the role of their identified gender in accordance with the medical transition plan devised by their health care provider(s).

Regardless of their choice of gender, transitioning individuals must maintain the same standards of dress in terms of professionalism and appropriateness for the environment as all other individuals on campus.

Supervisors have the right to review and insist upon compliance with standards of dress as they would with any other employee. Professional concerns with appearance standards should be addressed to the transitioning individual directly to correct any issues concerning appropriate workplace attire.

b. Restroom and Locker Room Access:

Transitioning individuals must be afforded the same level of access to restroom and locker room facilities as any other individual.

Persons who have questions regarding facility use should be referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access to discuss their concerns.

c. Name, Gender, Photograph, and Other Administrative Changes

Employees must initiate the name change process through the Payroll Office, where they will complete new W-4 and personnel forms. The Payroll Office then routes this information to the appropriate offices.

Students (including employees enrolled in classes) must process their name change through the Office of the Registrar.

Employee and student identification cards may be updated at University Housing and Dining Services, Seal Hall.

As soon as possible, all online and print records and references that can be changed will be corrected. This means, for example, that information and photographs will be updated online and in print to reflect the completed transition.

Employee insurance coverage and other benefits must be addressed through the Benefits Office. Student insurance benefits must be addressed through the Student Health Insurance Office (after name changes are complete with the Office of the Registrar).

III. Confidentiality

The transgendered status of an individual is considered confidential. The individual's status should only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis, and only with the transitioning individual's consent. However, transitioning individuals are free to educate their colleagues, co-workers and peers about their experience to whatever degree they feel comfortable.

IV. Anti-harassment/Retaliation

Pursuant to Western Illinois University's Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy, the University will not tolerate any discrimination against or harassment of students or employees undergoing gender transition.

Retaliation against any individual for reporting discrimination or harassment or participating in an investigation into such allegations is strictly prohibited.¹

¹ Western Illinois University, "Anti-Harassment Policy," available at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/harassment.php>