



Supporting Transgender Students in Higher Education



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Earlier this year, [Lynne Regan](#) - a researcher at the Open University - delivered a webinar as entitled "Supporting Transgender Students in Higher Education in the UK" for LGBT History Month. This microCPD input shares some of key messages from their presentation and provides links to research, support and other services for staff and students at Strathclyde



Introduction

'Transgender' is used as an umbrella term for those whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth, or who do not conform to conventional gender binaries of man/woman. The terms 'trans' and 'transgender' are used as inclusive terms to reflect the full spectrum of identities within this, including but not exclusive to transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, gender fluid, non-binary and gender non-conforming.

The Office for Students figures 2020 suggest that 3,640 (1% of UK students) registered their gender as 'not the same as the gender assigned at birth'.

Creating an inclusive curriculum

While research has highlighted a number of important themes – from Institutional facilities and administration to harassment, bullying and transphobia, and Inclusion/exclusion – below are a number of recommendations for improving representation in the curriculum.

Teachers take steps towards creating an inclusive curriculum when they:

- Examine and reduce cisnormativity (how society is orientated around the assumption that a person's gender matches the biological sex they were assigned at birth) in the curriculum;
- Acknowledge and affirm differences;
- Address both lack of and resistance to knowledge;
- Address resistance to anti-oppressive change in teaching practices;
- Do not assume gender identity or pronouns;
- Work collaboratively with trans students around what inclusive teaching should look like.

Raising Awareness

The following small steps can go a long way to creating an inclusive environment:

Rainbow lanyards

Putting your pronouns in your email signature

Celebrating LGBT+ awareness days

Using inclusive language (see below)

Advice for Inclusive Language

Advice	Don't use	Instead use
Use gender neutral terms rather than those that make a sex distinction	Man, Workmanship, Man the desk, Man-made	Humans, humankind, quality of work/skills, attend the phones, synthetic
Use gender neutral pronouns and expressions	Anyone who wants his work evaluated; ladies and gentlemen	Anyone who wants their work evaluated; welcome friends and colleagues
Use person-centred language	The transgender	Trans people
Respect the preference of those people who want to be referred to by gender neutral pronouns	She, her, hers and he, him, his	They, them, theirs



Further Resources

- [TransEdu Scotland](#) – Research project undertaken at Strathclyde
- Strathclyde's [Access, Equality and Inclusion Service](#)
- The University of Strathclyde's 'Ask Alex' service for trans, non-binary and gender diverse students and staff connects named contacts working across the University who can provide advice, assistance and support in a range of areas. Email alex@strath.ac.uk