



Curtin University

Curtin Gender Affirmation Guide

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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge all First Nations of Australia and we recognise the many nations who have looked after Country for more than 60,000 years.

We are honoured and grateful to have the privilege to maintain campuses operating in Boorloo (Perth) and Karlkurla (Kalgoorlie) in Western Australia. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present, as Custodians and Owners of these lands.

We recognise their deep knowledge, and their cultural, spiritual and educational practices and we aspire to learn and teach in partnership with them.

We also acknowledge First Nations peoples connected to Curtin's global campuses. We are committed to working in partnership with Custodians and Owners to strengthen and embed First Nations' voices and perspectives in our decision making, now and into the future.

1.

CURTIN'S COMMITMENT TO YOU

Curtin is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender are welcomed, respected and valued. Curtin embraces diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. We recognise that when individuals are able to bring their whole and authentic selves to study and work, they thrive, and the University thrives.

This Curtin Gender Affirmation Guide is designed to provide information and support to anyone who has previously, is currently, or may in the future affirm their gender whilst studying or employed at Curtin, regardless of the language they use to describe their identity or where they are in their personal journey. 'Gender affirmation' refers to the process whereby a person begins to live and behave consistent with their gender identity, which differs from the gender assumed by their sex assigned at birth. This may also be known as 'gender transition' or 'transitioning', but 'gender affirmation' is generally accepted as the most inclusive term and will be used in this Guide.

This Guide includes information for students and employees affirming their gender, as well as information for peers, managers and the broader Curtin community. Curtin acknowledges the diversity of Trans*, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary (TGDNB) experiences and respects that there is no single way to affirm gender. Curtin respects everyone's gender and gender identity irrespective of any intervention or how people explore, express and/or affirm their gender.



1.1

SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT

If you need help or support throughout the gender affirmation process, we encourage you to reach out to one of the following contacts.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Student Wellbeing Advisory Service

Provides advice and support on any issue impacting on your studies or wellbeing in a confidential and safe environment. They can refer you on to relevant internal and external services where necessary to assist you further.

Phone: 1800 244 043 (free call)

Email: studentwellbeing@curtin.edu.au

Website: curtin.edu.au/students/personal-support/counselling-wellbeing/wellbeing

Curtin Connect

Curtin Connect can assist with student services, support and advice or refer you on to services that may assist you further.

Phone: 1300 222 888

Location: Building 102

Website: curtin.edu.au/students/connect

Curtin Student Guild Queer Department

Provides advocacy and support for all LGBTQIA+ students across campus, including organising social events and being a voice for queer students in meetings and committees at various levels in the Curtin Student Guild.

Email: qd@guild.curtin.edu.au

Curtin Safer Community Team

For help on campus at any time, 24/7.

Phone: 9266 4444

Download the [SafeZone app](#)

Curtin Counselling Services

Provides free psychological and counselling services in a safe, professional environment to deal with any issues affecting your life or study.

Phone: 08 9266 7850

Email: counselling@curtin.edu.au

Website: curtin.edu.au/students/personal-support/counselling-wellbeing/counselling

Student Assist

Provides free support and advocacy services run by the Curtin Student Guild.

Phone: (08) 9266 2900

Free call: 1800 063 865

Email: student.assist@guild.curtin.edu.au

Location: Building 106F

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

Employee Assistance Program

(Run by Assure Programs) for free, external and confidential counselling or wellbeing coaching with a 24/7 crisis hotline.

Phone: 1800 808 374

Website: assureprograms.com.au

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Team

For confidential discussions related to gender affirmation for employees.

Email: staffdiversity@curtin.edu.au

Employee Wellbeing

For wellness and mental health support, health services (log in required) and assistance if you are experiencing difficulty in the workplace due to either a physical or psychological injury or illness.

Email: employee.wellbeing@curtin.edu.au

LGBTQIA+ Ally Program

for LGBTQIA+ training, events, advocacy, community outreach and resources.

Email: lgbtqi-training@curtin.edu.au

The Curtin Services on this page work together to provide you with safe and confidential assistance to navigate Curtin systems and administrative processes, and support you when they do not work as planned.



2.

GENDER AFFIRMATION

For some people, the gender assumed by their sex assigned at birth does not exclusively fit their gender identity, who they are, how they feel about themselves, or how they want to express themselves to the world. This is the experience of Trans*, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary (TGDNB) people.

Gender affirmation is a personal journey a person takes to confirm the gender they identify with. This process may include:

- Social affirmation, which can involve changes to the way a person identifies outwardly, such as changing names and pronouns, trying new clothing and hairstyles, using their voice differently and adjusting mannerisms.
- Medical affirmation, which can involve medical interventions such as hormones or surgery.
- Legal affirmation, which can involve changing their legal gender marker and name in official documents and records.

There is no right or wrong way to be TGDNB. Any and all of these methods of gender affirmation are valid and will be accepted and supported at Curtin.



2.1

UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE

As our understanding of sex and gender continues to evolve over time, the language we use may also change. Language can be extremely powerful for giving people the words to describe their experience, to find community, and to advocate for change. Language can also be limiting, as it tries to capture what are often complex and diverse human experiences in a simplistic way, with only a single word or definition. Language that may have been widely used historically may no longer be appropriate. At the same time, language that has historically been used as a slur or insult may be reclaimed by a community or group and used as a positive or empowering term.

If you are ever unsure about what language to use, consult [Curtin's Inclusive Language Guide](#) and keep the following points in mind:

- You do not need to know every term or definition; you just need to be open to learning.
- If you are unsure about the term a person uses to describe themselves, reflect the language the person uses about themselves back to them.
- Avoid making assumptions about a person based on their appearance, voice or mannerisms.
- Only ask questions about someone's gender affirmation if you genuinely believe the answer is directly relevant to their ability to conduct work or study at Curtin. If a genuine professional need exists for the question, then ask respectfully, but also respect that the person may not be comfortable replying. Do not ask questions if you are just being "curious".



2.2

UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality recognises how various aspects of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, age, and disability, may intersect, and together can compound disadvantage or discrimination. These different facets of identity do not exist separately; they interact to form dynamic experiences of privilege and discrimination. This means that how we experience one part of our identity can be entirely different from other individuals based on other parts of our identity. Identity factors can vary in visibility, and may be ascribed by society or self-ascribed. While this guide generalises the experiences of TGDNB individuals, it is acknowledged that TGDNB experiences are not homogeneous, and are not mutually exclusive to other experiences of marginalisation.



2.3

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (POLICIES AND LEGISLATION)

At Curtin, everyone within our community has the right to have their gender identity respected and acknowledged, without fear of negative consequences. As such, there are rights and responsibilities which must be upheld by all Curtin community members with regard to TGDNB students and employees.

All Curtin community members are encouraged to refer to the *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: How to be an Ally (Appendix C)*. This Guide contains information for Curtin employees, students and community members, outlining the role we all have in fostering inclusivity and safety for TGDNB people.

Legislation and Curtin's policies and procedures protect the rights of TGDNB individuals to be free from discrimination and harassment.

The University is committed to preventing discrimination of employees and students based on sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This is outlined in our policies and procedures pertaining to discrimination and harassment.

Trans and gender-based harassment, such as disclosing an employee's gender affirmation without consent, will not be tolerated. The University encourages reporting of behaviour that is harmful and disrespectful so it can be addressed to ensure the University is a safe and respectful environment. All members of the University community should be aware of their responsibilities in compliance with Curtin's policies and procedures as well as:

1. Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
2. Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
3. Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)
4. Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)
5. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
6. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
7. Gender Affirmation Clause (clause 43) in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2022 – 2025.

2.3

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (POLICIES AND LEGISLATION CONT.)

Right to Privacy

TGDNB individuals have the right to be who they are without unnecessary sharing of medical or personal information. Curtin may require proof of identity for verification purposes; however, evidence of gender affirmation surgery or treatment is never a requirement.

Curtin respects each individual's right to privacy throughout the gender affirmation process. Any shared information is considered confidential and will be handled in accordance with our privacy obligations as set out on our [website](#). Individuals may approve disclosure in their gender affirmation plan, if they choose to have one.

Professional standard of dress and appearance and access to amenities

TGDNB individuals are free to dress in alignment with their gender identity, and are required to comply with the same standard of dress and appearance that applies to all other members of the Curtin community. In line with legislation in Western Australia, all Curtin community members are permitted to use facilities that correspond to their gender identity. You can view the locations of bathrooms on campus on the Curtin Properties website, including *All Gender* toilets.



2.4

STUDENTS AFFIRMING THEIR GENDER

At Curtin, students will be supported to update their preferred name, their formal (legal) name, their title and their gender on relevant system/s if they wish to do so. For a complete overview of the main processes related to affirming your gender at Curtin as a student, please see the *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: Student Processes (Appendix A)*.

It is important to note that changing details with the University does not change details with government agencies and could lead to delays in services with agencies whilst verifications take place. Curtin does not have control of this process. For example, Centrelink student support payments may be interrupted if name and gender records do not match in both Curtin's and Centrelink's systems. Please carefully consider any potential consequences of changing details with Curtin without changing personal details with government agencies.

To assist with aspects of their gender affirmation including, but not limited to, medical appointments, recovery from medical procedures, wellbeing support and undertaking any legal processes, students can access the following.

Leave

All applications for leave will be treated with confidentiality and sensitivity.

Coursework students may apply for one or more periods of Leave of Absence (LOA) from their course. LOA is approved by the Head of School (or authorised delegate) for a maximum of 12 months. A student on LOA will be considered to have maintained their admitted status in the course. Please refer to the [Leave of Absence Procedures within the Admissions and Enrolment Manual](#).

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students may apply for a period of one month to a maximum of 12 months' leave of absence from their course. LOA is approved by the Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Excellence (ADVCRE). A student can apply for single or cumulative leave of absence periods longer than 12 months under exceptional circumstances, which are approved by the ADVCRE. Please note: students who are in overtime will require approval for all periods of LOA by the ADVCRE. Please refer to the [Higher Degree by Research website](#) for more information.

HDR students are permitted to take up to 20 days' annual leave each year. Students must obtain their Principal Supervisor's approval prior to taking any leave. Students who wish to apply for sick leave for a period less than 20 days, do not require formal approval, however it is recommended that a discussion is held with their Principal Supervisor. For periods of sick leave over 20 days, it is recommended students apply for LOA. Please refer to the [Higher Degree by Research website](#) for more information.

2.4

STUDENTS AFFIRMING THEIR GENDER (CONT.)

Assessment Extension

Coursework students can apply to their Unit Coordinator for an Assessment Extension if they are not able to complete an assessment task prior to the assessment due date/time.

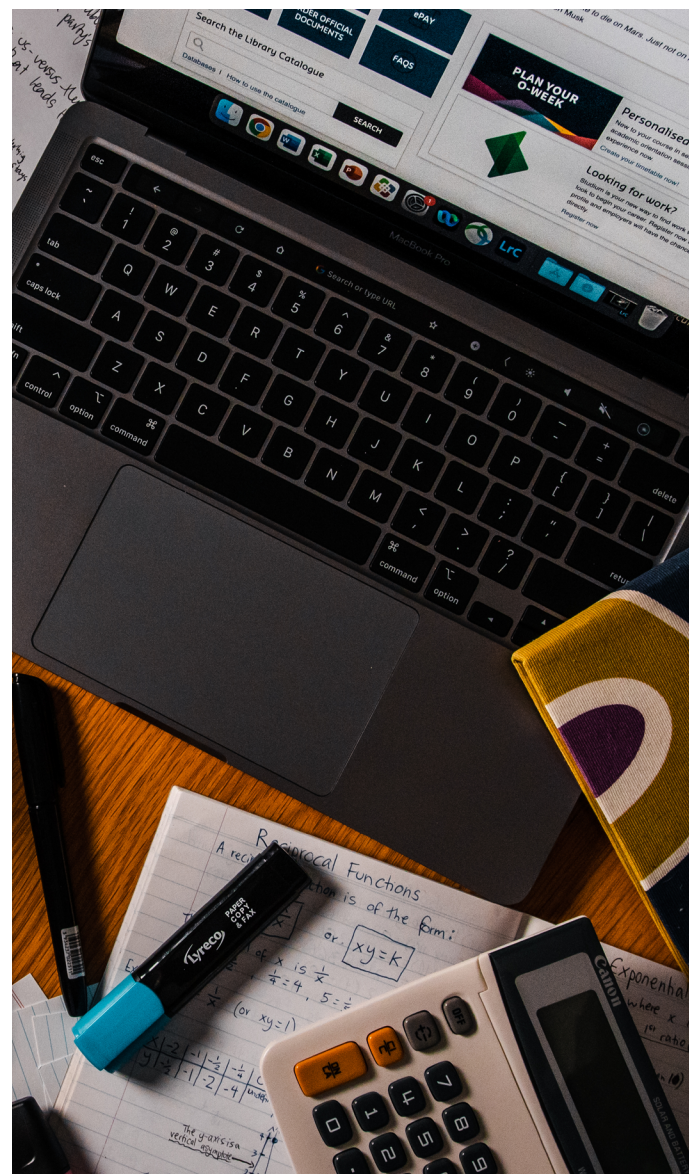
Where special circumstances exist, the Academic Registrar may, in consultation with the Unit Coordinator, approve an Assessment Extension with or without application, or will determine the required level of documentation to be provided.

HDR students are required to ensure they meet milestones or formal progress points during their enrolment. Students should contact their Principal Supervisor if they are unable to apply for each milestone within the specified time frames.

Students can apply for an extension of time to submit their thesis, for exceptional circumstances (having taken any LOA into consideration), approved by the ADVCRE.

All applications for Assessment Extensions will be treated with confidentiality and sensitivity.

For instructions on how to apply for this leave or an Assessment Extension and for further information, please refer to *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: Student Processes (Appendix A)* and *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: How to be an Ally (Appendix C)*.



2.5

EMPLOYEES AFFIRMING THEIR GENDER

At Curtin, employees will be supported to update their preferred name, their legal name, their title and their gender (on the People and Culture system) if they wish to do so. For a complete overview of the main processes for affirming gender at Curtin as an employee, please see *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: Employee Processes (Appendix B)*.

To update a preferred, formal name and/or gender marker, fill out the [Employee details form](#) on the Staff Portal and submit it directly to the relevant faculty People and Culture inbox or contact. Gender and preferred name can be updated without any supporting documentation. To update your legal name, however, supporting documentation is required.

Gender Affirmation Plan

A gender affirmation plan (or transition plan) is an optional tool that may be useful to set expectations, manage planned absences, provide clarity on personal preferences, and create a support network. There is no set template for a gender affirmation plan. Some individuals may opt for an informal discussion, while others may write an email documenting key points from a conversation/s between them and their line manager.

If employees do choose to make a gender affirmation plan, it is important that it be personal and relevant to their own affirmation and guided by the individual transitioning, including the level of detail they feel comfortable sharing. Gender affirmation is not a linear process, and individuals should not feel tied to any specific detail of their plan, as it may evolve and change over time.

The Gender Affirmation Plan: Guiding Notes in the *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: Employee Processes (Appendix B)* contains information which may be useful in discussing an employee's gender affirmation, as it includes things to consider regarding affirming your gender at work. A gender affirmation plan may be particularly helpful if the employee intends to access Gender Affirmation Leave under Curtin's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2022-2025 (the EBA) as it may provide managers with an idea of when leave is likely to be taken.

Managers should also reference the *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: How to be an Ally (Appendix C)* when discussing gender affirmation with an employee. *The Gender Affirmation Plan: Guiding Notes* presents a range of questions which may assist with navigating university procedures and systems, contacts and timelines, but is not exhaustive.

If support is needed throughout this process, please contact the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging team through [email](#).

Leave

Eligible employees on fixed-term or continuing contracts are entitled to paid leave to assist with aspects of their gender affirmation including, but not limited to, medical appointments, recovery from medical procedures and undertaking any legal processes. A maximum of 20 days can be taken each year (non-accruing); this being in addition to any other leave available, as per clause 43 of the [EBA](#).

Applications will be handled with confidentiality and sensitivity. For instructions on how to apply for this leave, please refer to *Gender Affirmation at Curtin: Employee Processes (Appendix B)*.

2.6

INFORMATION FOR ALUMNI

Alumni who have changed their formal (legal) name after the date of conferral may have their award certificate re-issued with approval of the Academic Registrar. The original award certificate must be returned to the University. For assistance with this process, contact Curtin Connect.

The Alumni Office receives updated details from the Graduations Office once a month and your details will be automatically updated. If you receive information from the Curtin Alumni and Friends Mailing List, your new legal name and contact details (if applicable) can be updated directly via [the online form](#).





3.

REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The University is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all members of its community, as outlined in the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy and other policies pertaining to anti-discrimination.

Anyone who has experienced or observed unacceptable behaviour is encouraged to report and/or seek advice from the resources listed on the Integrity and Standards Unit webpage.





4.

RESOURCES

Australian Human Rights Commission

Website: [humanrights.gov.au](https://www.humanrights.gov.au)

Curtin Inclusive Language Guide

Diversity Council Australia

Website: [dca.org.au](https://www.dca.org.au)

The Gender Centre

Website: [gendercentre.org.au](https://www.gendercentre.org.au)

Minus18

Website: [minus18.org.au](https://www.minus18.org.au)

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia

Website: [lgbtiqhealth.org.au](https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au)

Pride in Diversity

Website: [prideindiversity.com.au](https://www.prideindiversity.com.au)

QLife

Phone: 1800 184 527

Website: [qlife.org.au](https://www qlife.org.au)

Sexual Health Quarters

Website: [shq.org.au](https://www.shq.org.au)

Trans Folk WA

Website: [transfolkofwa.org](https://www.transfolkofwa.org)

Freedom Centre

Website: [freedom.org.au](https://www.freedom.org.au)

Rainbow Futures WA

Website: [rainbowfutureswa.com](https://www.rainbowfutureswa.com)





5.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A

Gender Affirmation at Curtin: Student Processes

Appendix B

Gender Affirmation at Curtin: Employee Processes

Appendix C

Gender Affirmation at Curtin: How to be an Ally



6.

GLOSSARY AND TERMINOLOGY

Gender

Gender is a social and cultural concept. It is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience as a man, woman or non-binary person.

Gender Affirmation/Transition

The personal process or processes a trans* or gender diverse person determines is right for them in order to live as their gender and so that society recognises this. Transition may involve social, medical/surgical and/or legal steps that affirm a person's gender.

Gender Diverse

Gender diverse is an umbrella term that includes all the different ways gender can be experienced and perceived. It can include people questioning their gender, those who identify as trans*/transgender, genderqueer, non-binary, gender non-conforming and many more.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is about who a person feels themselves to be. This may be different to the gender assumed by the sex recorded at birth and may be different to what is indicated on legal documents. Man, woman, and non-binary are common gender identities.

Non-Binary

Genders that sit outside of the man/woman binary are often called non-binary. This includes people whose gender is not exclusively female or male. A person might identify solely as non-binary, or relate to non-binary as an umbrella term and consider themselves genderfluid, genderqueer, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender, bigender, or something else.

Sex

A person's sex is based upon their sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. While typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy, a person's reported sex can change over the course of their lifetime and may differ from their sex recorded at birth.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella concept that encapsulates:

- *sexual identity (how a person thinks of their sexuality and the terms they identify with)*
- *attraction (romantic or sexual interest in another person)*
- *behaviour (sexual behaviour)*

Stakeholders

For the purposes of this Guide stakeholder/s refer to anyone related to and/or involved in the process of gender affirmation at Curtin. This can include a person's co-workers, their classmates, administrative staff etc.

Transgender/Trans*

An umbrella term that describes people whose gender is different to the sex assigned to them at birth.



Acknowledgment of Contributions

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Curtin employees and students with lived and/or professional experience who generously contributed to the creation of this guide. Your perspectives and insights played a pivotal role in shaping a resource that reflects the diversity of the Curtin community. We appreciate your courage, wisdom, commitment and collaborative spirit.