Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity - Gender Affirmation Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) Victoria University (VU) is committed to creating an inclusive, respectful and safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+) and gender diverse staff and students. This will enable better inclusion and support of LGBTIQA+ and gender diverse students. The University recognises that those who identify as transgender and gender diverse (TGD) may experience particularly unique challenges and the university is committed to providing support and setting up foundations for an inclusive and safe environment.

(2) The objectives of this Procedure are to ensure that:

a. Those in-scope of this Procedure are aware of gender affirmation provisions and understand their responsibilities;
b. A safe, inclusive and respectful environment is provided for people seeking to affirm their gender;
c. Appropriate support is provided for staff and students who identify as trans or gender diverse, and may be undergoing or considering gender affirmation.

Section 2 - Accountability

Accountable/Responsible Officer	Role
Accountable Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital
Responsible Officers	Chief People Officer (for staff) Chief Wellbeing Officer (for students)

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to all staff and students of the University.

Section 4 - Policy/Regulation

(4) Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity Policy

Section 5 - Procedures

(5) VU strives to be an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff. The University endeavours to ensure the workplace is safe, inclusive and promotes understanding of the LGBTIQA+ community. The University aims to provide

a work environment free from discrimination, harassment or bullying. The Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Management Policy outlines the behaviours expected of all staff members. It is unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex status. In addition, all staff are expected to abide by the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy.

(6) Unacceptable behaviour can come in a number of forms. If staff experience inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour, they are encouraged to report this. Examples of gender-based harassment may include, and is not limited to, the following:

a. Verbal or non-verbal;
b. Graphic;
c. Intimidating;
d. Physically aggressive;
e. Hostile;
f. Visual;
g. Online actions, which demean;
h. Belittling or threatening to an individual or group.

Please note, these behaviours do not have to indicate sexual interest or intent.

(7) Examples of unacceptable behaviours towards trans and gender diverse staff that constitute gender-based harassment include:

a. 'Outing' someone, without their permission by deliberately disclosing gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex status.
b. Changing the nature of a staff member's job, e.g. removing customer facing staff member to a back of house role due to their gender identity.
c. Intentionally using incorrect names or pronouns.
d. Obstructing learning and development opportunities, including promotion, due to a staff member's gender identity.

(8) Staff and students are encouraged to report discrimination, harassment or bullying behaviour. There are a number of people who can be contacted if a staff member wishes to raise an issue as listed in the Gender Affirmation Guide.

(9) All staff and students are encouraged and supported to use facilities which align to their gender identity. The University also has a number of gender-neutral toilets and shower facilities available, as listed in the Gender Affirmation Guide.

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Employee	For those who choose to disclose their gender affirmation: 1. Discuss the process with manager/ support group/ People and Culture. 2. Create a gender affirmation plan for the workplace in consultation with People and Culture and Manager. 3. If leave or flexible work arrangements are requested, make the request in writing, along with any evidence required e.g. medical certificate.

Roles	Responsibilities
Manager / Supervisor	Respond to an employee's requests with sensitivity, respect, support, confidentiality and understanding. Assist with an employee's gender affirmation process as appropriate. Seek support and advice from People and Culture. Assist with leave and flexible work arrangement requests as appropriate.
People and Culture	Provide information and advice to managers and staff to support gender affirmation. Provide advice on policy, guidelines and university and on particular requests.
Student	For those who choose to disclose their gender affirmation: 1. Discuss the process with VU Support person (Senior Advisor Welfare). 2. Create a gender affirmation plan to address enrolment and study issues.
Student Support / Senior Advisor Welfare	Support and provide information to a student in their gender affirmation process as appropriate. Liaise with Professional units to complete required administrative personal and enrolment details changes. Liaise with College to support student in determining academic and learning support.
Safer Community	Receive reports of concerning, threatening or inappropriate behaviour.

Part B - Gender Affirmation Principles

(10) VU is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all members of the transgender and gender diverse (TGD) community at the University.

(11) VU will provide resources to assist TGD staff through their gender affirmation, including affirming access to the appropriate gendered facilities for TGD staff and students and, where possible, the provision of gender neutral facilities for non-binary staff.

(12) TGD staff and students' gender identities will be affirmed by VU staff through the use of preferred names, pronouns and descriptors.

(13) VU will be proactive in ensuring that TGD staff and students will not be discriminated against in any way on the basis of their gender identity.

(14) The University acknowledges that gender expression is a significant part of gender affirmation and can manifest in diverse ways, including non-binary presentations.

(15) VU is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all forms of gender expression consistent with a person's identification.

(16) VU will not host events, which argue against TGD rights or existence.

Part C - Staff Gender Affirmation Plan

(17) Staff are not obliged to disclose that they will be affirming their gender. Those who choose to inform their colleagues, manager(s) or workplace and would like to discuss their options, a gender affirmation plan, or any other

queries or concerns, have a number of people who may provide support to access support:

a. Manager;
b. P&C Business Partners;
c. Diversity & Inclusion Team;
d. Ally Network Contact Officers.

(18) Staff are encouraged to develop a Gender Affirmation Plan in consultation with their Business Partner and/or manager. The plan can support a TGD staff member's gender affirmation and can include:

a. when and whom to invite to be part of a support group (e.g. trusted colleague/ a VU Ally Contact Officer/ P&C Business Partner/ Diversity & Inclusion representative);
b. outline estimated timeframes for gender affirmation;
c. proposed leave plans (if/as required);
d. when to communicate the change to relevant staff, what to include and how to go about this;
e. recommended awareness training, to whom it should be delivered and when;
f. expectations and timeframes in relation to IT system changes (such as gender and name);
g. proposed date the staff member will present in the workplace in their affirmed gender.

A plan can involve consultation with a number of areas and support services and can involve a number of contributors if desired.

Part D - Student Gender Affirmation Plan

(19) Students are not obliged to disclose their gender affirmation journey. Those who choose to inform their peers or the University, and would like to discuss their options for enacting this may contact a Senior Advisor, Welfare for support 03 9919 6100.

(20) A Senior Advisor, Welfare will be nominated as a point of contact. Students are encouraged to develop a Gender Affirmation Plan, with support in the development and implementation from the Senior Advisor, Welfare.

(21) Senior Advisors, Welfare are trained in gender affirmation support and will manage the process in a sensitive and confidential manner. They may support students with:

a. Administrative requirements including change of name, title, gender, email address and student cards;
b. Academic and personal matters;
c. Assessment and progress issues.

Part E - Changes to Records

(22) Staff and students can make a request for their personal details to be changed. Evidence may be required, and where relevant the documentation will be specified by external agencies.

(23) Staff and students who are updating personal details with the University, may also need to ensure they have updated their details with relevant government agencies, particularly the Australian Taxation Office, and their Superannuation fund. There are potential consequences to updating personal information, and it is the responsibility of the staff member or student to make a careful and informed decision before updating their information. The Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender provides further information.

(24) Personal details may include:

a. Title
b. Preferred name
c. Given name (documentation is required)
d. Gender (documentation is required)
e. Email
f. Phone display

(25) Changes to staff personal records will be made in line with Victoria University Name Change form. Changes to student's personal records will be made online using the Personal Details Amendment form.

Part F - Staff Leave

(26) Reasonable flexibility and access to leave will be available to staff requiring time off in relation to gender affirmation in accordance with existing leave policies. This may include leave for:

a. Medical affirmation
b. Legal affirmation
c. Social affirmation

(27) If a staff member requires leave, they may wish to speak with their manager and together contact their P&C Business Partner to discuss flexible work arrangements, leave entitlements, and the associated documentation required.

(28) Continuing and fixed-term staff can access up to 30 days paid leave (pro-rata) over the course of the staff member's employment to undertake gender affirmation or to define their gender identity.

(29) The University may require reasonable evidence in support of a request to take Gender Affirmation Leave.

(30) Casual and Sessional staff may apply for provisions of Special Leave.

Part G - Student Leave

(31) Reasonable flexibility and access to leave will be available to students requiring time off in relation to gender affirmation in accordance with existing leave policies.
This may include leave for:

a. surgery;
b. medical appointments;
c. counselling;
d. name changes;
e. legal documentation.

(32) If a student requires leave, they are encouraged to contact a Senior Advisor, Welfare to discuss their leave options.

Part H - Confidentiality and Privacy

(33) Aligning with the University's existing policies, an appropriate level of confidentiality and privacy will be maintained in relation to all staff and student matters. Information should only be disclosed to those who need to know, are involved in the process, or have the consent of the person who is affirming their gender.

It should also be noted that individuals are not required to disclose medical information to their manager or the University.

(34) People affirming their gender will be treated with support, sensitivity, respect and an unbiased attitude. Discriminatory attitudes will not be tolerated.

Section 6 - TEQSA/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(35) HESF: Standard 2.2 Diversity and Equity; Standard 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety; 6.1.4 Corporate Governance

(36) ESOS National Code of Practice 2018: Standard 6 Overseas Student Support Services

(37) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 2.5 Diversity and Inclusion; Standard 2.6 Wellbeing; 2.7 & 2.8 Feedback, complaints and appeals. Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: Standard 20 Compliance with Laws.

Section 7 - Definitions

(38) Agender: Agender people find that they have no gender identity, although some define this more as having a gender identity that is neutral.

(39) All gender facilities: Toilets, showers, or other amenities which do not have gendered signage and can be used by a person of any gender or gender identity.

(40) Gender affirmation: A personal process where a trans or gender diverse person implements steps to live as their defined or affirmed gender identity, rather than the gender assigned to them at birth. Gender affirmation may involve social, medical/surgical and/or legal steps that affirm a person’s gender.

(41) Transgender: The term is sometimes shortened to trans, and is used to describe those who define their gender identity differently to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Common terminology includes Trans women (M to F) referring to those who were born male but identify as female; although many will identify only as female. Trans men referring to those who were born female but whose gender identity is male (F to M); although many will only identify as male and not trans men.

(42) Gender diverse: People whose understanding or expression of gender does not conform to social expectations based on their sex assigned at birth.

(43) Sex: Refers to the chromosomal, gonadal and anatomical characteristics associated with biological sex.

(44) Gender: The socially constructed categories assigned to individuals at birth based on their apparent sex.

(45) Gender identify: A sense of an individual’s self as trans, genderqueer, woman, man, or another identity, which may or may not differ from the sex and gender they were assigned at birth.

(46) LGBTIQA+: LGBTIQA+ is an acronym for: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual. The plus (+) serves to capture the many other groups within the gender diverse community.

(47) Non-binary: This is an umbrella term for any number of gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the male and female binary.

(48) Gender non-conforming: A term to describe people who have a gender expression that does not conform to traditional gender norms. For example, exhibiting behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits that do not correspond with the traits typically associated with one's sex.

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