Transgender and Gender-diverse Inclusion Statement

April 2024

Open University Student Union | Company number 12031028 | Registered Charity number 1183837/SC049546

At Open SU, we are dedicated to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment that values and supports Trans and gender-diverse students. We recognise the unique challenges and experiences faced by individuals within the Trans community, and we are committed to actively promoting their rights, dignity, and wellbeing, consistently with our duty to secure freedom of speech.

We believe that Transphobia refers to the irrational fear, hatred, prejudice, or discrimination directed towards Trans or gender-diverse individuals. It encompasses negative attitudes, beliefs, and actions that seek to marginalise, stigmatise, or invalidate individuals based on their gender identity or expression.

Transphobia can manifest in various ways, such as verbal abuse, social exclusion, denial of rights, harassment, violence, or the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes. It undermines the dignity, wellbeing, and equality of Trans people, and poses significant barriers to their full participation in society. Combating transphobia involves promoting education, empathy, acceptance, and advocating for inclusive policies and practices that affirm the rights and humanity of all gender identities.

You can find more information on Trans inclusion, and a glossary on the Trans Awareness page of the OU Pride website.

Open SU strives to create a safe and affirming space where Trans students can fully participate, thrive, and express their true selves without fear of discrimination or prejudice. We embrace and respect diverse gender identities, including but not limited to Trans, non-binary, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming individuals.

At Open SU, we are committed to creating a student environment where Trans and gender-diverse students are valued, respected, and celebrated. We believe that diversity in gender identities enriches our community, and we welcome all students to join us in creating a truly inclusive space that recognises and affirms the full spectrum of gender diversity.

We commit to the following principles as part of our Trans inclusion statement:

- Respect and Affirmation: We affirm each individual's self-identified gender and honour their chosen name and pronouns. We commit to using inclusive language and promoting a culture of respect and understanding for all gender identities.
- Education and Awareness: We recognise the importance of education and awareness regarding Trans issues. We strive to provide resources, workshops, and training opportunities to enhance understanding and foster empathy within our student community.
- Support Services: We endeavour to ensure comprehensive support services that address the unique needs of Trans students are available. This includes signposting to mental health support, and guidance in navigating university policies and procedures related to gender transition and documentation. We will provide appropriate training for staff to meet this aim.
- Advocacy and Representation: We advocate for policies and practices that uphold the rights and inclusion of Trans students. We actively engage with The Open University to ensure that policies are inclusive and that appropriate support systems are in place.
- Community and Connection: We create spaces and events that promote a sense of community and connection among Trans students.
- Zero Tolerance for Discrimination: We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment, or bullying based on gender identity or expression. We encourage individuals to report any incidents of discrimination within Open SU-run spaces using our Resolving and Settling Differences Procedure and commit to taking appropriate action to address such concerns promptly.
- Ongoing Learning and Growth: We acknowledge that Trans inclusion is an ongoing process. We actively seek feedback from Trans students and continuously strive to improve our policies, practices, and resources to better support their needs.
- Freedom of Speech: We believe that supporting Trans and gender-diverse students is supportive of and consistent with our duty to secure free speech. More information available in Open SU's Interim Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.
- Diversity of Opinion: We recognise and respect that students have a variety of viewpoints and may strongly disagree with each other; when there is disagreement, we believe it should be possible to maintain mutual respect and appreciation for diversity.
- We are committed to resolving complaints fairly and promptly as per our Resolving and Settling Differences Procedure.