

# Transgender Student Inclusion in the Classroom

# Faculty Guide



**ASU CHARTER:** Arizona State University is a comprehensive public research university measured not by whom we exclude **but rather by whom we include and how they succeed.** We concentrate on the overall public value, maintaining a deep fundamental responsibility: economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities we serve.

# INTRODUCTION

At Arizona State University, we strive to create an open, accessible community - a community where everyone (especially our students) can obtain the resources they need and a community that evolves to meet the needs of the diverse constituencies that we serve.

This guide is a resource providing guidance - and opportunities - for faculty and staff to address the needs of LGBTQIA+<sup>1</sup> students with a special emphasis on enhancing the inclusion of transgender<sup>2</sup> and gender-nonconforming<sup>3</sup> student in the classroom.

**This guide was developed by transgender and trans-allied students - reflecting on their own experiences in the classroom to help faculty and staff better understand the needs of transgender students in their courses.**

We believe that by affirming gender inclusive<sup>4</sup> classroom spaces, we will foster a greater sense of safety among all students, encouraging more innovative learning experiences, and invite a greater depth of student experience to classroom discourse.

While the population of trans<sup>2</sup>/LGBTQIA+ students has risen every year at ASU, it is important to remember that this demographic has always been represented in our classrooms. In fact, based on current survey estimates, the odds are that in every class offered at ASU there will be at least one if not more trans/LGBTQIA+ identifying student.

By using inclusive language and practices in your classroom, you will be fostering a more engaging environment that will make your trans student feel both safe and welcomed. You will also set a positive example for cisgender<sup>5</sup> students in your classroom.

Our hope is that by using this guide, more faculty and staff will attune to the importance of transgender-inclusion in the classroom and realize the positive impact that these efforts will have on our campus and the wider ASU community.



See more definitions/terms in *Appendix B*.

**1 LGBTQIA+:** Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual (sometimes abbreviated to LGBT or LGBTQ+) with "+" indicating the full spectrum of gender identities and sexual orientations.

**2 Transgender:** An adjective that is an umbrella term used to describe the full range of people whose gender identity and/or gender expression do not conform to what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth. Can also be shortened to trans.

**3 Gender-nonconforming:** Denoting or relating to a person whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate to their gender.

**4 Gender Inclusive:** Welcoming to all, regardless of their gender identity and/or expression.

**5 Cisgender:** An individual whose gender aligns with the gender assigned to them at birth based on their sex. For example, a female (sex) who identifies as a woman (gender).



# Setting up a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

An important step in creating a welcoming environment for trans-inclusion is introducing yourself as an ally to the community in the ways that are accessible to you. There are many different ways that you can show your classroom is an affirming space for students of all gender identities and expressions. We've included a list of possibilities below. These all have an impact on how trans and gender nonconforming students will approach your classroom and can help cisgender students develop more respectful, informed ways of working with their transgender and gender nonconforming peers.

## Self Presentation: How You Present Yourself As A Trans Ally

The following strategies show transgender and gender nonconforming students in your classroom that you are an ally to their community and willing to show them respect.

### Email Signature



Include the pronouns you prefer to be referred to as part of your e-mail signature (e.g., she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc.)

This sounds simple, but it goes a long way to showing your students that you are aware of the importance of respectful pronoun use. This awareness will allow students to be more open about what their asserted pronouns are to you. This will demonstrate to:

**Trans Students**, that you are an ally to them and are putting effort into creating a welcoming environment in which they can safely participate and succeed.

**Cisgender Students**, that you maintain an inclusive classroom and, potentially, serve as a guide for them to emulate in their own signatures to continue this cycle of respectability.

It is highly suggested that if you have had attended SafeZONE training and have obtained the ally placard, that you add you are a SafeZONE Ally in your signature if you feel that is appropriate. SafeZONE allies value all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions as part of the rich tapestry of ASU. Trans students might inquire through email or directly if your class is a SafeZone.

### Signature Example:

Name

Title

Department

Contact Information

Pronouns: She/Her, He/Him, They/Them, It/Its, etc.

(If Applicable) SafeZONE Ally



## Introducing Yourself on the First Day of Class

Verbally sharing your pronouns in your introduction to the classroom on the first day of class is a great way to introduce all students that you are aware of pronoun usage. This introduction also creates a dialogue for students to reflect on what pronouns they are using and gives an affirmation to transgender and gender nonconforming students that you are an ally to them. Now, you can facilitate these dialogues with these predicted parameters in mind:



**If you have a classroom where students introduce themselves to the classroom:**

Encourage students to share their pronouns in their introductions *if they feel comfortable doing so.*

**If you have a classroom where students introduce themselves to their classmates/tablemates:**

Encourage students to share their pronouns in their introduction to their classmates/tablemates *if they feel comfortable doing so.*

**If you have a classroom where students have no need to introduce themselves to the classroom/classmates:**

You are welcome to say that students can introduce themselves to their nearby classmates, but it is up to your discretion if you want this discussion had.

## Syllabi

**YOUR** class syllabus can be the starting point for all students to know **YOUR** class to be a safe zone. As you are creating/revising your syllabus, please consider these “inclusive” suggestions to aid in your document:

*Add a Trans student inclusion statement that promotes an open and inclusive classroom space. An example from Professor Cammy Bellis is offered in **Appendix A**. Feel free to use and adapt it as needed!*

**i. Please reference that bullying will not be tolerated in your classroom. Bullying can include:**

Transphobic terms, phrases and questions, negative commentary, and intentionally using incorrect pronouns

**ii. Discussions among classmates that cause any trans student to feel uncomfortable:**

Statements such as “who cares” “why is it so important?” “I don’t want to work with him/her”

**iii. Include a statement indicating that all students should dress appropriately for the class and in attire in which they are comfortable.**

**iv. Avoid using gender specific pronouns (he/she) on course documents, assignments, notes, powerpoints and replace these gender specific pronouns with the gender neutral “they”.**

For example instead of “should he/she choose” use “should they choose”.





# IT'S THEIR NAME, WHY NOT CALL THEM BY IT?

Misgendering/Outing a student in front of the classroom creates an unsafe environment for the student, which is later explained in the Potential Impacts of Misgendering in the Classroom portion of this guide. Keeping yourself and the class up to date with students' asserted (correct) name and their pronouns, can be a game changer for the entire communication process.

Some trans students prefer to inform their instructors of an asserted name through email before the first day of class. Should a student enrolled in one of your courses email you asking to be referred to with an asserted name or an asserted set of pronouns, please let the student know you've read their request and will make a note on your list of enrolled students (\*) with asserted names and pronouns in order to avoid outing or misgendering students when they come to class.

## EXAMPLE:

"I wanted to let you know that although my name listed on the class roster is Jason T. Prince, I go by Krystina Jasmine and I use the pronouns they/them.

### To establish inclusion of trans students in your classroom,

send an email to the entire class prior to first day to request asserted (sometimes called "preferred") pronouns and names from all enrolled students in the course. Update your roster to reflect all pronoun and name requests and be flexible in making these changes as some students might not be able to respond with this information right away. This strategy works well for both face-to-face and online courses.

### Pay attention to student signatures in emails and on course assignments.

If a student uses an email signature or includes their asserted name on their assignments please reference that as a guide to that student's asserted name and further avoid using their "dead name," or the legal/assigned name with which they do not identify. Please be conscious of students right to express their gender.

### This is especially important for online courses.

Because ASU's intranet identifies students and faculty based on their legal names, the name that you see on email recipient lines, blackboard, and online assignments might be one with which a trans student would prefer to not be referred, also known as their "dead name." To avoid accidentally misgendering a student in an email or a discussion board post, be aware of the name with which students sign their emails or assignments and use that asserted name when replying or writing comments.

### Attendance and Roll Call:

If you plan on taking attendance the first day of class or as part of a participation grade, consider the following options for ensuring you are recognizing and respecting all students' identities:

**A. In a small class:** give students the opportunity to introduce themselves with an asserted name (and pronouns if they feel comfortable doing so) before calling out names from your course list.

**B. Distribute note cards:** on first day and ask students to write their asserted name and pronoun in addition to the legal name with which they are registered. This is also an opportunity to have students write down the pronunciation of their name which can benefit both trans and cis students.

**C. Create a Sign in Sheet:** that includes a column(s) for asserted name/pronouns.

No matter which option you utilize, or if you develop your own system for students to share their name and pronouns, it's imperative that students have an opportunity to clarify the name they would like to use in your course in order to avoid "outing" or "dead-naming" trans students who haven't yet legally changed their name to their asserted name.





# Potential Impacts of Misgendering in the Classroom

Misgendering<sup>6</sup> students in the classroom can be a very traumatizing event. Not only are you blatantly disrespecting a student and their identity when you misgender them, you are hindering their performance in your classroom. **Misgendering a student can cause them to feel unsafe participating in the course, limiting their ability to succeed.**

## If you've accidentally misgendered a student,

Please be sure to catch and correct yourself and also follow up face-to-face after class or through an email instead of drawing more attention to it with a long apology in front of the classroom.

## Don't single out based on identities as "representative"

Especially in a discussion-based course where gender or transgender issues are a topic, don't rely on trans or gender nonconforming students in your class to speak on behalf of other trans or gender nonconforming people or expect them to correct or call out misused or incorrect information or terminology.

## Call out hostility in the classroom (or creating a safe, affirming classroom):

From day one of your class, students should know your specific policy on respectful behavior. If you need to spell it out in your syllabus you can do that. Discuss your classroom policy the first week of class. Specifically state that any type of harassment, teasing, name-calling, blatant and deliberate misgendering and negative comments about gender expression/identity/sexual orientation are strictly prohibited and will be dealt with swiftly.

*From Prof. Cammy Bellis: I will not tolerate misgendering or transphobic comments in my class. If this happens, a student will be given a warning. If this persists, the student will be asked to leave and will be reported to the director of undergraduate student affairs in the department for further disciplinary actions. Blatant misgendering and transphobic comments create an unsafe and hostile learning environment for all students.*

## Students feeling threats to their safety and gender identity may exhibit behaviors such as:

- Missing class; which can often seem the safest option for the student as they remove themselves from a hostile environment.
- Missing assignments and deadlines
  - Lack of Participation
- Arriving late and sitting in the back

**If you have a concern for a student who may be experiencing harassment they are facing in your classroom then you have the capability to reach out to the student for a private discussion to address it.**

Having a clause in your syllabi that you will not tolerate hostile behavior will allow transgender and gender nonconforming students to feel more comfortable approaching you when they are facing it. Having these discussions at the beginning of the term helps assert that this class is for all students encompassing all identities and that they can reach out to you.



<sup>6</sup> Misgendering: Referring to an individual with gendered vocabulary, including pronouns, that do not match their gender identity.



# Resources

For more information about LGBTQIA+ identities, being an ally, and ASU and community resources for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff please consider utilizing the following resources:

## **Out@ASU:**

An in-depth listing of ASU, local, and national resources for LGBTQIA+ members of Sun Devil Nation. The site includes information about student/staff/alumni LGBTQIA+ organizations, health and wellness, scholarships, community groups, trans student resources, and a list campus allies, among other resources. Visit [eoss.asu.edu/out](https://eoss.asu.edu/out)

## **SafeZONE:**

A three-hour, in-depth workshop designed to increase the overall campus community's understanding and awareness of issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/allied (LGBTQIA+) and other marginalized students. SafeZONE was created to encourage a more inclusive and accepting campus climate. For more information and a calendar of trainings visit: <https://eoss.asu.edu/safezone>

## **Making the Invisible-Visible:**

A 90 minute workshop that addresses the needs of transgender students at ASU, the current research on campus climate and vulnerability rates for these students. The workshop provides an opportunity for staff to ask questions and receive implementation steps to support and affirm transgender and gender nonconforming students here at ASU. Check ASU Training and Professional Development Calendar for workshops throughout the academic year. <https://asu.gosignmeup.com/Public/Course/Browse>

## Appendix A: Syllabus Statement Regarding Transgender/Gender Nonconforming Students:

It is understood that for some students the name and/or gender marker on official documents does not match their gender identity. If any student needs help changing their name or gender designation in ASU's system, please visit the following links:

### **Name change at ASU**

<https://students.asu.edu/sites/default/files/namechange08162016.pdf>

(if you do not have a legal name change yet (court order) you can call the registrar and ask them to shorten your first name to an initial, same last name; this is what ASU can do at this time although we are trying to change it)

### **Gender marker change at ASU:**

Call the registrar and let them know you are requesting to change your gender designation in the system <https://students.asu.edu/contact/office-university-registrar>

### **For additional support and resources related to transgender/GNC issues,**

Please visit Out@ASU <https://eoss.asu.edu/out>

If the name on the course roster is not your preferred/asserted name, please let me know so that I can address you properly and in accordance with your asserted name. I see this as a basic human right.



# Appendix B: Glossary of Key Terms

**Ally:** Someone who advocates and supports a community other than their own. Allies are not part of the communities they help. A person should not self-identify as an ally but show that they are one through action.

**cis-:** Derived from the Latin word meaning “on the same side.” Cis or cis is also used as a term to describe cisgender individuals. E.g. cis person, cis students, cis man, cis woman

**Cisgender:** An individual whose gender identity matches the gender assigned to them at birth based on their sex. For example, a female (sex) who identifies as a woman (gender).

**Dead name:** The name given to a trans individual at birth with which they no longer identify and which they do not use.

**Dyadic:** An individual whose sex is either male or female; not intersex.

**Gender:** Culturally determined identity category often expressed as the binary of Man-Woman. Gender is created through the summation of expressive acts that range from an individual's preferred style of dress, choice in makeup, speech patterns, body language, hairstyle, etc. Although gender is often used interchangeably with sex, the distinction of gender as an identity constructed through performative acts is important in understanding transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming individuals.

**The Gender Binary:** The process of societally prescribing onto individuals the performative expectation based on the visibility of “male” or “female” sex characteristics at birth. Individuals are expected to perform gender within the context of what is culturally expected for a “man” or a “woman” or risk facing discrimination and transphobic violence.

**Gender Expression/Gender Identity:** Although gender refers to an identity constructed through expressive acts and encompasses, the distinction between Gender Expression and Gender Identity is important to make because within the context of a transphobic culture, an individual might not be safe outwardly expressing the way they experience themselves (identity) through a certain style of dress or behavior (expression).

**Gender inclusive:** Describes language, spaces, fashion, trends, etc. that don't cater specifically to one particular gender identity or identities. An example of gender inclusive language would be using gender neutral pronouns like they/them/theirs instead of “his/hers” on course materials.

**Genderfluid:** A changing or “fluid” gender identity/expression. A person who identifies as genderfluid might change their preferred manner of presentation day to day or more gradually throughout their life depending on their situation.

**Gender nonconforming:** Denoting or relating to a person whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate or expected in relation to their perceived position within the sex-gender binary.





# Appendix B: Glossary of Key Terms

**Intersex:** A general term used for a variety of conditions when a person's genitalia are deemed unacceptable or indeterminate or do not fit the typical definitions of male or female. Although some intersex people do also identify as transgender, intersex is not a synonym for transgender.

**LGBTQIA+:** A collection of identities short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual (sometimes abbreviated to LGBT or LGBTQ+) with "+" indicating the full spectrum of gender identities and sexual orientations.

**Nonbinary or Non-Binary:** Preferred umbrella term for genders other than woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Sometimes (and increasingly), nonbinary can be used to describe the aesthetic/presentation/expression of a cisgender or transgender person.

**Preferred/Asserted Pronouns:** The terms preferred or asserted pronouns refers to the pronouns by which an individual feels most comfortable being referred to by others, i.e. whether or not a person wants to be referenced by he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, or other gendered pronouns. The distinction between preferred and asserted is made, and asserted is used in this guide to indicate that while pronoun use can be described as a preference, it's imperative to use pronouns that a student has asserted in order to facilitate a safe, welcoming classroom environment.

**Sex:** Sometimes referred to as "assigned sex" or "biological sex", sex is the historical categorization of bodies based on reproductive function. Sex is assigned to a person based on visible sex characteristics at birth as either male, female, or intersex.

**trans-:** Prefix derived from the Latin word meaning "across from" or "on the other side of." Trans or trans is often used as an umbrella term for transgender, gender nonconforming, gender fluid, or other noncisgender identities.

**Transgender:** An adjective that is an umbrella term used to describe the full range of people whose gender identity and/or gender expression do not conform to what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth.

**transphobic:** Referring to systemic discrimination and violence against trans people, associated with attitudes such as fear, discomfort, distrust, or disdain. This word is used similarly to homophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, etc.

**Two Spirit:** An identity specific to several North American Indigenous societies for individuals possessing both male and female spirits. term indexing various indigenous gender identities in North America.



# Co-Authors

## **Samedi Johnson** (They/Them/Their)

Herberger College of Art and Design

B.A. Digital Culture (Art)

Class of 2018

*Co-Author and Designer*

## **Bree Abraham** (She/Her/Hers)

W. P. Carey School of Business,

B.A. Business (Communication)

Class of 2017

## **Christopher Dozier** (He/Him/His)

Herberger Institute for Design & the Arts

B.A. Theatre (Acting)

Class of 2019