



## Athlone Institute of Technology Student Policy on Gender Identity and Gender Expression

**Status: FINAL**

<b>Document title:</b>			
<b>Athlone Institute of Technology Student Policy on Gender Identity and Gender Expression</b>			
The Institute aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and is committed to maintaining an environment of dignity and respect where all students can develop their full potential.			
<b>Originator: Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager and Director of Marketing and Communications</b>		<b>Status: FINAL</b> <b>Immediate Implementation</b>	
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1	October 2019	<i>(Addition of Appendix 2)</i> Appendix of gender related terms, which cover in some way the vast nature of human experience.	25.10.2019

## Introduction

The Institute aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and is committed to maintaining an environment of dignity and respect where all students can develop their full potential.

This policy outlines the institute's formal commitment to recognise and support an individual's gender identity and gender expression so that all members of the Institute's community experience a positive and tolerant environment where every member is treated with dignity and respect.

AIT promotes and is committed to supporting, a collegiate environment and this student policy forms part of a wider suite of gender identity and gender expression policies which covers our students, alumni, staff, service users and other stakeholders within our community.

## Scope

AIT is committed to supporting a collegial environment and this policy forms part of a suite of policies that encompasses the entire Institutes community; colleagues, students and all visitors. This policy applies to students specifically however additional policies on gender identity and gender expression encompass:

- All applicants for employment, current employees and former employees;
- All student applicants, all students and alumni; and
- All service users, service providers, visitors, customers and clients of our Institute.

## Context

This policy is in response to the growing need for Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) to recognise the range, type and nature of gender diversity within its student body and in particular to form a policy framework to ensure good practice in its approach to diversity. This policy will establish the philosophy and values that the Institute applies to its operations, in recognition of the need for respect and dignity for each student. Its purpose is to guide institutional action and to direct procedures that impact on gender identity and expression. It also recognises the legal and regulatory framework within which the Institute operates and the obligations, constraints and opportunities that the legislation creates.

## Definitions (Appendix 2 contains an expanded list of definitions as a point of reference)

The words people use to describe themselves and others are very important. Using the incorrect words can (often unwittingly) undermine peoples' dignity and reinforce exclusion. When in doubt, asking a person how they self-identify is generally the most respectful approach. The following are examples of some gender identities only, and do not capture all that exist.

**Gender** refers to expectations and stereotypes about behaviours, actions and roles linked to being a "man" or "woman." Social norms related to gender vary across cultures and can shift over time.

**Gender binary** refers to the predominant social system whereby people are thought to be one of two genders: male or female. This system is restrictive for many people who feel that their natal sex (sex they were labelled with at birth) does not match up with their gender or that their gender is fluid and not fixed.

**Gender expression** refers to how a person represents or expresses their gender identity to others, such as through behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics.

**Gender identity** refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body. Gender identity is different from a person's sexual orientation.

**Gender Recognition Certificate:** A certificate issued under the Gender Recognition Act 2015 which enables trans people's binary gender to be legally recognised from age sixteen.

**Gender/Sex affirmation surgery**, also called gender confirmation surgery, refers to surgical interventions undertaken by some people as part of the transitioning process. It is a process that is undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reaffirmation of a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex.

**Intersex** refers to a number of different variations in a person's sex characteristics that do not match strict medical definitions of male or female. These characteristics may be chromosomal, hormonal and/or anatomical and may be present to differing degrees. Intersex people are typically coercively assigned as male or female at birth. Some intersex people identify with their assigned sex, while others do not. Some choose to identify as intersex.

Intersex people, like the general population, may or may not identify as trans. Trans people undergoing transition are not considered to have an intersex condition as a result of their transition. (see transition below).

**Non-binary and/or genderqueer** describes any gender identity which does not fit within the binary of male and female. The term is not a synonym for trans and should only be used if someone self identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

Sex is the designation of a person at birth as male or female usually based on their anatomy or biology.

**Trans** is an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that differ from stereotypical gender norms. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary or genderqueer. Trans is shorthand for 'transgender', however, 'transgender' should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. For instance, 'transgender people' is appropriate but 'transgender' or 'Mary is a transgender' could be viewed as disrespectful.

**'Transition'** refers to a process that entails living in one's actual gender identity rather than in the sex one was assigned at birth. The process generally occurs over a lengthy period of time and can include some or many of the following steps: telling one's family, friends, and colleagues; using a different name and different pronouns; dressing differently; changing

one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery.

**Transphobia** is a term used to describe an aversion to, fear or hatred or intolerance of trans people and communities.

**Transsexual** is a term for people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth and who seek to transition. The term may not be acceptable to many members of the trans community since it has clinical or medical overtones.

For further definitions see, for example, the Glossary of Terms of Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), <https://www.teni.ie/resources/trans-terms/>.

## Statement of Policy Principles

The following principles underpin all activities of the Institute:

1. We adopt the philosophy of *inclusive environments* - promoting equality and diversity as well as being committed to maintaining, for students, an environment of dignity and respect;
2. We support a student's gender identity and gender expression, ensuring that students experience a positive and tolerant environment within the Institute;
3. We endeavor to use gender neutral terms as far as is practical and to use non-gender key student identifiers (such as Student ID Number), in preference to gender-laden identifiers;
4. We recognise that students may identify with any or no gender, and that each student has their own unique identity;
5. We will balance the dual needs of the students' desire to have a preferred name, while also maintaining an accurate account of the academic record and achievements of each student.

In defining these Principles, the Institute recognises its obligations, specifically under the Equal Status Act 2000-2015, as well as the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. In support of these Principles the Institute will:

- be non-discriminatory on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression;
- facilitate students to express their gender identity without fear of consequences;
- not tolerate harassment or bullying of students on the basis of gender identity and expression;
- respect the privacy of all students;
- Provide a safe and respectful environment in which any students can choose to be open about their gender identity;
- provide access to medical and counselling supports to individuals who may be in the process of gender transition or who may be experiencing difficulties related to gender expression;
- encourage student training and awareness to ensure a supportive environment;
- remove unnecessary gender distinctions within the Institute environment;
- develop best practice and policy in line with legislation.

In making choices the student should also be cognisant of corresponding obligations that they may have, as a result of their choices. These include:

1. The need to adequately engage with the Institute in respect of following policy and procedural processes;
2. The impact of decisions on their legal record within the Institute and future needs to connect their preferred identity to their formal record;
3. The students' personal obligation to ensure they have a sufficiently informed basis for making their decision and that they have adequate supports in place. While the Institute may be able to support the student to some degree, the primary obligation for engaging and seeking support rests with the student.

## **Implementing the Policy**

The Principles underpinning this policy should inform all decision-making within the Institute and should be incorporated, as far as is practicable, into the routine operations of the Institute. Specifically, the issue of student choice in gender assignment should inform the institute's record system and permit the student to be recognised as a unique, non-gender, identifier rather than a name on the record system. While recognising that students will be known in the recurrent operations of the institute, by a name, the official record of the institute should have limited gender connotations. Such an approach facilitates the student to make informed decisions. The Institute Procedures' document in Appendix I and related process permit the student to change the official gender recorded on entry to the Institute.

While it is appreciated that many students may wish to use a preferred name for the duration of their studies, the Banner Student Record System does not currently have the functionality to support this request.

The Institute may for some categories of changes defined in the Procedures Document (Appendix 1) require particular documentation which may include:

1. Professional or medical reports to establish the nature of any reasonable supports to be put in place for a student;
2. Gender Recognition Certificates;
3. Deed Poll.

The implementation date of the policy is Academic Year 2019 -2020.

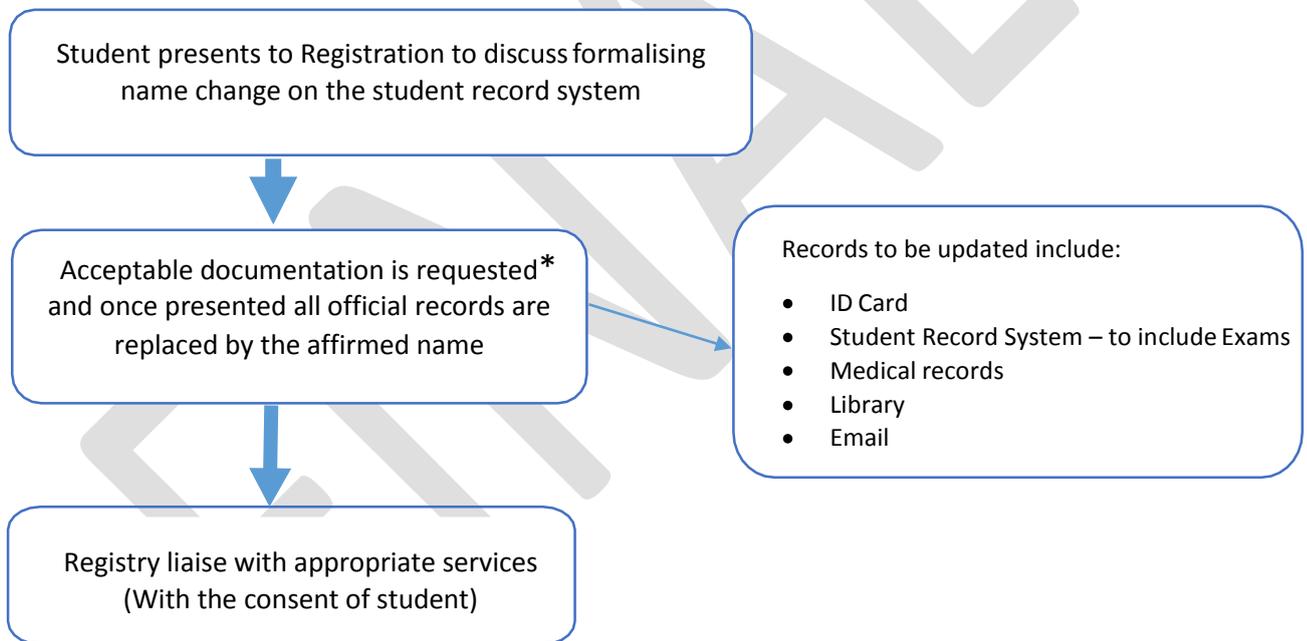
# Appendix 1 Procedures Document

## Introduction

The issue of student choice in gender assignment will inform the institute’s record system. While recognising that students will be known in the recurrent operations of the institute, by a name, the official record of the institute will have limited gender connotations. This procedures document refers to the procedure for enacting a formal name change on the student record system. This name change will permeate all relevant activities of the institute and will be produced on class lists, institute correspondence, ID card etc.

## Process Flowchart

The student will understand that once a change is effected on the student record system all correspondence and communication will issue in that name. The flowchart below represents the process to be employed to formalise a name change.



## Documentation required\*

The Institute has a right to request documentation from you which is necessary to change your records. To change all records **two** of the following documents will be acceptable:

1. Gender Recognition Certificates;
2. Deed Poll;
3. Evidence of **two years** use of name, which could include driving licence, passport, public services card, bank statements, letter from public service organisation.

### **Retrospective Changing a Parchment:**

Alumni wishing to change the name on parchment or transcripts from original issue must submit a formal request to the AIT Examinations Office. The process as outlined in Standards, Assessment and Awards and outlined below will be employed in this instance supported by the presentation of required documentation to support the name change request.

It is important to note that there is only one original parchment which is the parchment presented to the graduand on the day of the conferring ceremony or conferred in absentia and posted out to the graduate by secure post or courier. Additional copies thereafter are made available in circumstances where the original parchment is irretrievably lost or destroyed. This principle should apply to all circumstances where graduates look for another parchment for a variety of reasons including a change of name subsequent to the conferring ceremony.

Athlone Institute of Technology has a process in place for the authentication of requests for duplicate parchments. Any graduate seeking such a duplicate parchment will be required to provide authenticated reason for seeking same. The institute may elect to employ secure channels through which it will transmit such a duplicate parchment.

A replacement parchment will involve the exchange of one original parchment for another original parchment.

## **Appendix 2 Gender Identity & Expression Definitions**

Please Note: Staff and students are not expected to be familiar with all terms below; (some already mentioned in the policy document above) rather this appendix provides a point of reference for appropriate language use and concepts related to gender identity and expression. This appendix is not exhaustive, and can be added to over time.

- Androgynous: Having neither a clearly masculine or feminine appearance or blending masculine and feminine.
- Agender: Some agender people would define their identity as being neither man or woman while others would define agender as not having any gender.
- Bigender/Trigender/Pangender: People who feel they are two, three or all genders. They may move between these genders or be all at the same time.
- Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth, someone who is not trans.
- AFAB/FAAB: Assigned female at birth and female assigned at birth respectively. These terms refer to what gender you were assigned at birth (in this case female, thus you were expected to be a girl/woman). The terms are important because trans people use them to talk about their gender identity without being pinned down by their 'sex' or what gender they "used to be".
- Gender Identity: An individual's personal sense of what gender they are. One's gender identity may or may not align with their assigned gender, and one's gender identity is not always visible to others.
- Gender Expression: How one expresses their gender outwardly and/or the facets of a person's expression which have gendered connotations in our culture. There is no right or wrong way to express your gender.
- Gender Fluid: A term used to describe non-binary gender identity. Gender fluid individuals experience different gender identities at different times. A gender fluid person's gender identity can be multiple genders at once, then switch to none at all, or move between single gender identities.
- Gender nonconforming (GNC): Not fully conforming to gendered social expectations, whether that be in terms of expression, roles or performance.
- Hijra: A term used in the Indian subcontinent to refer to persons or communities who are neither male or female through traditional and cultural understandings of gender roles and identity. Often used to describe a third sex, used with an understanding of the specific cultural role of hijra persons and communities in South Asian societies.
- Intersex: an umbrella term that refers to a variety of people who have one or more of a range of variations of sex characteristics that fall outside of traditional, binary conceptions of male or female bodies. For example, chromosomal variations, internal organ/genitalia variations. Intersex individuals do not always identify as transgender or Trans.
- AMAB/ MAAB/: Assigned male at birth and male assigned at birth respectively. These terms refer to what gender you were assigned at birth (in this case male, thus you are expected to be a boy/man). These terms are important because trans people use them to talk about their gender identity without being pinned down by their 'sex' or what gender they 'used to be'.

- Non-binary: Non-binary people are those who identify as a gender that is neither male or female exclusively.
- Trans and Transgender: An umbrella term which can be used without offence for people without offence for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from that which is usually associated with the sex assigned at birth. Can include transsexuals, cross dressers, drag kings/queens and all those who defy what society tells them their 'gender' should be.