Gender Recognition FAQs

At UC San Diego, we are steadfast in our dedication to cultivating a community with heart, where all can thrive.

Below you will find questions and answers regarding gender recognition on campus.

What is the California Gender Recognition Act?

The Gender Recognition Act (California Senate Bill 179) went into effect January 1st, 2019.

The text of the bill is available here:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB179

In brief, the bill changes the process for Californians to apply to change their gender markers, and *creates a nonbinary gender category on California birth certificates, drivers' licenses, identity cards, and gender-change court orders (the letter "x")*. This enables many in our community—including transgender, intersex, and nonbinary people—to have full recognition in the state of California.

The law was authored by Sens. Toni Atkins (D-San Diego) and Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) and was sponsored by Equality California and the Transgender Law Center.

What does gender recognition mean for UC San Diego?

Our campus is working to improve processes, practices, and policies in order to serve students, faculty, staff, and patients who are transgender, intersex, and nonbinary, and to be more inclusive. Many parts of employment processes, housing, sports facilities, payroll systems, and recreational areas are designated by gender in a binary way (men and women), and people across campus are reviewing and working to update those systems. For example, we are striving to do the following:

- include a nonbinary option in systems which store and use gender;
- include nonbinary people in reports which indicate gender;
- update name fields to default to preferred names unless there is a legal or regulatory requirement to use legal name; and
- educate the campus community about and encourage the use of personal pronouns and names.

What are preferred names, lived names, and names in use?

Preferred names, **lived names**, and **names in use** are names other than legal names that many people use for a variety of reasons, including:

- It is a shortened/alternate version of their legal name.
  - Robert = Rob or Bob
  - Elizabeth = Liz
  - Francisco = Paco or Pancho
  - Jesús = Chuy

- It is a cultural, religious, personal, or familial preference/practice.
  - Eleanor Roosevelt (first name: Anna)
  - Mindy Kaling (first name: Vera)
  - Rihanna (first name: Robyn)
  - Reese Witherspoon (first names: Laura Jeanne).

- A scholar/student who selects another name for campus use because people often mispronounce their given/birth names.

- A given/birth name does not reflect one's gender identity.

I think my department, unit, or division needs to make some changes to ensure we are being inclusive and recognizing all genders. What should I do?

Reach out to your supervisor. They may need to first assess places where your area uses gender in a binary way (i.e. male and female, or men and women). Then, they would need to determine what steps might need to be implemented in order to ensure inclusion of nonbinary people and an "x" category into these systems. This might entail updating campus data systems, reformatting reports, including nonbinary people in surveys and assessments, and/or addressing physical spaces and facilities. This may also require training for frontline staff to ensure appropriate implementation of inclusive policies and customer service practices.

What's the difference between transgender, nonbinary, and intersex?

About the term transgender: This is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity or gender expression do not match the gender they were assigned at birth. For example, some people who were assigned to be male at birth are female (trans women). Some people who were assigned to be female at birth are male (trans men). Some transgender people have medically transitioned, undergoing gender-affirming surgeries and hormonal treatments, while other transgender people do not choose any form of medical transition. There is no uniform set

of procedures sought by transgender people who pursue medical transition. Transgender people may identify as female, male, or nonbinary; may or may not have been born with intersex traits; may or may not use gender-neutral pronouns; and may or may not use more specific terms to describe their genders, such as agender, genderqueer, gender fluid, Two Spirit, bigender, pangender, gender nonconforming, or gender variant.

About the term nonbinary: Gender identity and expression may be thought of in binary terms, such as male and female, men and women, masculine and feminine. Many transgender people fall on this binary. Trans women are women, trans men are men. Some transgender people do not fall on this binary because they identify as nonbinary, agender, gender fluid, gender nonconforming, etc. Nonbinary people's gender identity and expression may not conform to societal norms of masculinity or femininity. Nonbinary people may prefer to be addressed by the pronouns "they/them" in the singular, or simply by their name. Some people use the term "genderqueer" to describe this identity. Queer is a term that is offensive to some when used as a derogatory term, while others have reclaimed and self-defined the word as a form of empowerment.

About the term intersex: Intersex people are born with sex characteristics (including genitals, gonads, and chromosome patterns) that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies. Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, intersex traits are visible at birth, while in others they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal intersex variations may not be physically apparent at all.

For more information, please visit:
https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UNFE-Intersex.pdf

Do any other states or governments recognize genders other than male and female?

Yes. Oregon created a nonbinary gender option in 2017 through an administrative action applying to drivers' licenses and identification cards. Similarly, the DMV for Washington, D.C. began offering an "X" in addition to "M" and "F" in June of 2017. Other countries, like New Zealand, moved in a similar direction in 2016.

Does this mean UC San Diego will create new restrooms?

By University of California policy, the conversion of all existing single-occupancy or single-stall restrooms in all UC-owned buildings from gender-specific to gender-inclusive facilities is complete.

For more information, visit:
http://blink.ucsd.edu/facilities/services/general/personal/restrooms.html.

However, access remains an issue, as some people must go from the top floor of a building, outside, across a street, and into another building to access a single-occupancy or single-stall restroom. Conversion of some multi-stall restrooms into multi-stall gender-inclusive restrooms, or remodeling facilities to add additional single-occupancy or single-stall restrooms, addresses this issue.

What does nonbinary mean?

Gender identity and expression may be thought of in binary terms: Male and female, men and women, masculine and feminine.

Many transgender people fall on this binary. Trans women are women, trans men are men. However, some transgender people do not fall on this binary because they identify as nonbinary, agender, gender fluid, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, etc.

- Nonbinary people's gender identity and expression may not conform to societal norms of masculinity or femininity.

- Nonbinary people may prefer to be addressed by the pronouns "they/them" in the singular, or by their name.

What does intersex mean?

Sex may be thought of in binary terms: Male and female, boys and girls. This is typically assigned at birth.

Some people are born with chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, and/or genitalia that do not meet the medical standards of male or female. These infants are intersex.

- Best practice is: Perform no non-necessary medical intervention, avoid gender designation, and provide age-appropriate education about an intersex child's body as they develop, then give them choice in adolescence.

Intersex persons often may not know their gender identity until adolescence.

"Hermaphrodite" is an outdated and inappropriate term for the community.

What are the policies of the University of California and UC San Diego?

The University of California and UC San Diego do not tolerate discrimination based on:

- Gender
    - including nonbinary

- Gender identity and expression
    - including pronouns and preferred names
    - including gender-neutral pronouns

*These policies include but are not limited to: Academic Personnel M015 – The University of California Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline; the University of California Personnel Policies for Staff Members and UC San Diego Implementing Procedures, Appendix II – Personnel Policies for Senior Managers; the UC San Diego Student Conduct Code; UC San Diego House Officer Policy and Procedure Document; and applicable university collective bargaining agreements.

How can I be respectful in the use of pronouns?

A quick and easy way to communicate that you have some level of knowledge around our trans, nonbinary, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming community is to share your pronouns in signature lines, business cards, name tags, and introductions.

On signature lines, business cards and name tags:

> Shaun Travers, Ed.D.
> Campus Diversity Officer &
> Director, LGBT Resource Center
> A Unit of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
> 858 822-3493, stravers@ucsd.edu
> http://lgbt.ucsd.edu
> Pronouns: **He/Him/His**

In introductions:

- "Hi, my name is Shaun and I use he, him, and his pronouns."
    - Avoid saying "masculine pronouns" or "feminine pronouns."
    - Avoid saying "I don't care," unless it is well considered.
    - Avoid saying "preferred," because they are not preferences.

- If you are unsure what pronouns to use:
    - Ask, "What pronouns should I use to be respectful?"
    - Say, "I use she, her, and hers pronouns. Are you comfortable sharing your pronouns with me?"

- If you make a mistake:
    - Apologize and do better next time.

- In group introductions:
    - "Please share your name, and we invite you to share your pronouns as well," and then lead the way. *Do not force people to share pronouns.*

For more information on gender-neutral, inclusive pronouns, please see:
- http://nonbinary.wiki/wiki/English_neutral_pronouns
- https://mypronouns.org

What about titles and salutations?

Gendered
- Mr.
- Miss
- Ms.
- Mrs.

Inclusive
- Mix (abbreviated Mx.)
- Pronounced *mix*
- Used by some nonbinary and trans people as gender-inclusive title. Should not be applied to all people generally.
- For more information, please see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mx_(title).