

THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO  
**TRANS\***  
**LIFE**  
AT STANFORD

sponsored by the LGBT-CRC at Stanford University

This is an unofficial guide to trans\* life at Stanford. As allies and members of the trans\* community on campus, we intend for this guide to be useful for trans\* students and allies of all gender identities.

We decided to use the term TRANS\* throughout this guide to be as inclusive as possible of our diverse community. We have chosen to use TRANS\* as an umbrella term to describe those who transgress social gender norms in a variety of ways, including those who experiment with gender; defy rigid, binary gender constructions; and who express or present a breaking and/or blurring of culturally prevalent gender roles. We use TRANS\* to include the following identities, but not limited to: transgender, transsexuals, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, gender variant, trans-masculine, trans-feminine, bi-genders, no-genders, androgynes, cross-dressers, gender-benders, shape shifters, bayot, sadhin, hijra, bantut, mahu, bakia, travesty, kathoey, two-spirit, drag queens, drag kings, butch, aggressives, stud, fairy, feminine men, masculine women, those who see gender as having more than two options, and those who live between or beyond the existing options.

## **Is Stanford an accepting place for trans\* students?**

While being a trans\* student at Stanford (or most places) isn't without some difficulty, you're going to have enough advocates and friends that the one bad apple isn't going to be a real problem. Though it might be a little uncomfortable having to come out multiple times, professors and other students are usually understanding. Stanford also has a nondiscrimination policy that protects students against discrimination based on gender identity, as well as an Acts of Intolerance protocol that prevents students from getting away with implicitly and blatantly transphobic behavior.

## **What is the trans\* community at Stanford like?**

The trans\* community at Stanford, while small, is fairly active and engaged – there are usually a small number of out trans\* undergraduates in any given year; in addition, there are out trans\* graduate students, post-docs, staff and faculty on campus. At the same time there are some trans\* students and grad students who have come out earlier in their lives, who choose to only share their trans\* identities with their close friends. There are a number of opportunities for trans\* students to be get together, currently, there is a quarterly dinner; and every winter quarter there is also a Trans\* Awareness Week organized by queer students groups on campus. All in all, Stanford is a good place to be trans\*!

## **How can I stay in the loop with trans\* events and discussion on campus?**

You can sign up for the mailing list ([transgender@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:transgender@lists.stanford.edu)). Attending the queer events and joining queer student groups (for example, CASA, Stanford Students for Queer Liberation, Queer-Straight Alliance, etc.) will mean you'll hear about most events. Visit the LGBT Community Resources Center online calendar at [lgbt.stanford.edu](http://lgbt.stanford.edu).

## **What if I have personal questions about trans\* life at Stanford that I don't feel comfortable sending to the entire 'trans\*' mailing list?**

Please send your personal, confidential questions to [transgender-owner@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:transgender-owner@lists.stanford.edu). A trans\*-identified Stanford student will respond to any and all questions, and will keep your exchange private.

## **How do I go about telling my Professor and TAs that I'd like to be called by a name that doesn't match what they have on their class roster?**

Here is an email template that students at the University of Cincinnati composed to help trans\* and genderqueer folks explain their preferred name to Professors and Teaching Assistants:

Professor \_\_\_\_\_,  
I am a student in your (insert class name here). I am getting in contact with you to let you know that I identify as (insert identity here). My name will probably show up on your roster as (insert legal name here), but I would prefer to go by (insert chosen name here) and (masculine/feminine/neutral) pronouns. I will be putting (insert chosen name here) on my assignments and would appreciate it if you called me that in class.

Thank you very much.  
(Sign with chosen name)

*The University Ombuds is also a good resource for this issue. Email David Rasch at [ombuds@stanford.edu](mailto:ombuds@stanford.edu).*

## **How can I change my name at Stanford?**

You may request that your preferred name be different from your primary name, which is your legal name of record in

Axess. Your preferred name can be changed by visiting the Student Services Center (SSC) with a valid photo ID or by submitting a HelpSU ticket to the SSC. Changing your preferred name via a HelpSU ticket will require confirmation of your identity as directed by a SSC Specialist.

Your preferred name will display on a student's main directory listing, Axess, Coursework, grade and class rosters, unofficial transcripts, academic advisement reports, and as the student's email display name. However, changing your name on your dining account, housing records, official transcripts, financial aid records, and medical forms requires documentation of a legal name change. As a student at Stanford, you are technically a California Resident, therefore you can legally change your name in California (learn more at the Transgender Law Center).

You may change your preferred name on medical records by making a request to the Vaden medical services front office staff or a Vaden clinician. Your legal name will remain in the Vaden system along with a note about your preferred name.

### **How do I change my name that appears on my Stanford email?**

Go to preferences. Select the 'Mail' tab. Select 'Accounts'. Under 'Primary Account Settings' it lists a 'From' field. The name in the 'From' field is the one that anyone who receives an e-mail from you can see. This can be changed as many times as you want, and be sure to send out a test e-mail to double-check whether the process worked.

### **How can I get a new ID card that has my preferred name on it?**

Visit the Student Services Center, located on the 2nd floor of Tressider next to Kinko's. If you bring a valid ID, you can change your preferred name on your Stanford ID and receive

a new card *free of charge*.

### **Are there gender-neutral housing options on campus?**

First year undergraduate students who would like to live in gender-inclusive housing, or would like a roommate of a particular gender should contact frosh gender identity liaison Koren Bakkegard (koren.bakkegard@stanford.edu), who will help find housing that meets the students' needs.

Information about applying for gender-inclusive housing including an optional confidential process for trans\*/gender-queer students is available on the Housing website. This site also provides a list of upperclass undergraduate residences and graduate residences that are gender-inclusive.

### **What do I do if I'm uncomfortable with my current housing situation?**

If you are uncomfortable with your current housing situation, don't worry! Stanford Student Housing can meet your needs, and can help you change your housing situation at any point during the year. Please contact Justin Akers (Undergraduate Assignments Specialist, jakers@stanford.edu) for assistance.

### **How do I come out to my roommate? To my new friends? To my family?**

While coming out is different for everyone, some general recommendations are as follows:

*Roommate:*

- Your roommate probably needs to know right away. Assuming that you haven't met them before, while you're exchanging your get-to-know-yous, you should be upfront and honest with them. Housing isn't going to assign you

with someone who isn't okay with trans\* people if you put that you are trans\* on your housing form.

#### *Dormmates and new friends:*

- You may want to wait on telling dormmates until you've gotten to know them and they've gotten to know you as a person. It may feel better to be Amber, who happens to be transgender-identified, than the transwoman named Amber.
- Or you may choose to come out right away, because it feels like an important fact about yourself that you would like to share with others, or you want to set a tone that this is not a secret part of your identity. Ultimately the decision of how to handle this lies with you, and you should only share what you feel comfortable with.
- When coming out to your roommate or friends, be sure to have both an explanation and resources handy. Although most people know about LGB issues, they might not be as aware of trans\*/genderqueer issues, and so be ready to explain your situation to more than a couple confused faces.
- It's a good idea to have a simple explanation about your identity and pronouns prepared for when you come out. For example, some people might not know what trans\* means or have never heard of gender-neutral pronouns.

#### *Family:*

- It depends on your family. Every family is different, and some families are more accepting than others. Speak to a family member you trust and ask them how to best come out to the rest of your family.

### **What if my parents have threatened to stop paying my tuition if I decide to transition?**

The Financial Aid Office will work to adjust your financial aid if you are no longer a dependent of your parents. Contact

Jeff Shelby (jeff.shelby@stanford.edu), the LGBT liaison in the Financial Aid Office for more information.

### **I don't feel comfortable going home anymore. Where can I stay when campus is closed during winter break?**

Hammarskjold and Theta Chi are usually open during winter break. Some funds may also be available through the Financial Aid Office for students to stay at the Stanford Guest House. You should contact your Resident Dean or the LGBT Community Resources Center professional staff (lgbtcrc@stanford.edu), as appropriate, with any questions.

### **How can I access trans\*-specific psychological and medical care at Stanford?**

Vaden Health Center offers many medical services for trans\*-identified students on campus. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is available for psychological needs, offering short-term counseling. Students can request a therapist who specializes in sexual orientation and gender identity. As for medical care, Vaden has recently partnered with a transgender specialist, Christian M. Pariseau, MD. Students should call 650-694-0600 to make an appointment. Cardinal Care, the comprehensive student health insurance plan sponsored by the University, now includes coverage for hormones and gender confirmation surgery. For more information, visit Vaden's website: <http://vaden.stanford.edu/medical/specialty.html#transgender>.

### **Where can I go to meet other new LGBT-identified students?**

If this is your first year as an undergraduate at Stanford, you're invited to join the CASA program. Attend free, weekly lunches offered at the LGBT Community Resources Center (Fire Truck House, 2nd floor) every Wednesday from 12 – 1 PM,

and learn about LGBT life at Stanford. The CASA program is a fun way to get to know your LGBTQ and allied classmates. This program is open to students of all classes in the spring, and the CASA mentors typically encourage students who are newly out to attend CASA during all three quarters regardless of whether they are frosh. Also, the LGBT-CRC is always a great place to hang out and meet other LGBTQ and allied members of the Stanford community. Also, join a Queer Voluntary Student Organization (QVSO)! Check out [queerguide.stanford.edu](http://queerguide.stanford.edu) for a comprehensive list of QVSOs.

### **Is there any sort of trans\* activism happening on campus?**

Yes! The Transgender Task Force is a group of students committed to making Stanford more accessible to trans\* students. To join the mailing list, contact Holly Fetter ([hfetter@stanford.edu](mailto:hfetter@stanford.edu)). Also, Stanford Students For Queer Liberation, a queer activist collective, makes a concerted effort to be inclusive of trans\* and genderqueer students, and plans awareness weeks and direct actions that target transphobia on campus. To get involved, join the mailing list ([queer\\_liberation@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:queer_liberation@lists.stanford.edu)). And the LGBT•CRC has a program called Safe and Open Spaces at Stanford (SOSAS) which brings panels of LGBTQ-identified students to various residences and offices. To get involved, visit [lgbt.stanford.edu](http://lgbt.stanford.edu) and contact [lgbtsosas@stanford.edu](mailto:lgbtsosas@stanford.edu). It's relatively easy to get your voice heard on campus—if you see an issue, rally your friends, allies, and approach a group like SSQL to help you speak out and fight back.

### **Are there a lot of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus? Where are they located?**

There are many gender-neutral bathrooms available on campus. Every residence has at least one, and many centrally-located buildings have them as well. For example, Old Union, the Nitory, Stern dining, the Haas Center, and several aca-

ademic buildings in the Quad have multiple gender-neutral bathrooms.

### **What sort of LGBT academic resources are there at Stanford?**

Stanford offers many queer-related courses across disciplines – check out [queerstudies.stanford.edu](http://queerstudies.stanford.edu) for a complete list of past, present, and future courses, as well as a list of professors that specialize in queer studies. There are also transgender-identified professors as well – Dr. Ben Barres in the Medical School and Dr. Joan Roughgarden of Biological Sciences are the most famous.

### **What are some off-campus resources for trans\* students?**

The Bay Area is rife with resources for trans\* and genderqueer folks! Check out the Transgender Law Center, TRANS:THRIVE, Transgender San Francisco, Brown Boi Project, Fresh Meat Productions, El/La Programa para TransLatinas, and the San Francisco Trans March – just to name a few.

### **Where can I go to learn more about trans\* sexual health?**

The Sexual Health Peer Resource Center (SHPRC), located on the second floor of Vaden, provides resources, pamphlets, condoms and lube for all students, including trans\* students. You also get \$2 worth of free condoms and lube every quarter. Sometimes trans folks have to be creative with safer sex supplies, which are not designed with our bodies in mind.

### **What is the dating scene like at Stanford for trans or genderqueer students?**

Dating as a trans\* person at Stanford is not much different than regular dating at Stanford. We will tentatively recom-



mend staying away from fraternity parties, but that's good advice for anyone. The unofficial LGBT co-op, Terra, hosts a party every quarter which is generally a safe space to have fun.

### **I want to study abroad while at Stanford. Will my trans\* identity make that process difficult?**

Living for an extended period of time in any new culture, regardless of gender identity, requires adjustment and transition. You should keep in mind that staying with a family (most BOSP programs) or in a dormitory-type setting (Beijing, Cape Town, and Oxford) require additional considerations. A number of individuals on campus are available to assist you with thinking about and planning for study abroad on a BOSP program. The professional staff at the LGBT Community Resource Center ([lgbtcrcc@stanford.edu](mailto:lgbtcrcc@stanford.edu)) or BOSP can assist you in contacting those individuals. Also, Lee Dukes (Student Relations Specialist, [ldukes@stanford.edu](mailto:ldukes@stanford.edu)) is a great ally at BOSP to contact.

*I actually had a very positive experience studying overseas. It was uncomfortable at first, since I basically had to out myself to the overseas coordinators. However, they were very understanding, and walked me through the process of getting resources ready for my study abroad. When I arrived at Oxford (where I went), I found that the administrators there had printed my preferred name on my Oxford ID. It was a very simple gesture, but something I appreciated. However, some of my other trans friends have had negative experiences working with the Bing Overseas Program, and there isn't a set protocol yet regarding transgender/genderqueer students.*

~testimonial from a transgender Stanford student

### **What is the athletic department policy regarding trans- athletes?**

Based on the new NCAA rules, transgender student athletes should be granted equal access and opportunities to play

college-level sports without any obstacles based on the following guidelines.

Under the policy:

- A transgender male student athlete who has a medical exception for testosterone hormone therapy may compete on a men's team, but is no longer eligible to compete on a women's team without changing the team status to a mixed team.
- A transgender female student athlete who has taken medication to suppress testosterone for a year may compete on a women's team.
- Transgender student athletes who are not undergoing hormone therapy remain eligible to play on teams based on the gender of their birth sex and may socially transition by dressing and using the appropriate pronouns that match their gender identity.

There is a group of students lobbying the athletic department to create a policy about the inclusion of transgender athletes. That said, the University policy does have a non-discrimination clause and it is as of yet unclear how this applies to club sports at Stanford.

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For more information, subscribe to the Stanford Transgender list at [transgender@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:transgender@lists.stanford.edu)