

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY



Transformation Office

GENDER IDENTIFIED, EXPRESSIONS AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

2026



Inclusion of Non-Binary Gender in the Workplace

Gender Identities, Expressions, and Sexual Orientation

26 June 2026

Legal Framework

Constitutional Mandate

Rooted in the Preamble of the SA Constitution, 1996, and sections protecting dignity, equity, and bodily freedom.

We actively strive to foster a non-sexist, non-racial, and equitable environment where human potential is decoupled from past inequalities.

Employment Equity Act

The EEA prohibits unfair discrimination and harassment directly or indirectly based on gender and sex. Dismissal or negative career consequences based on gender identity are classified as "automatically unfair"

The Code of Good Practice on the Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace

The code explicitly recognises that misgendering can constitute actionable harassment

The University's Core Duty

The university holds a lawful responsibility to protect against unfair discrimination

We commit to safe operational pipelines and proactive mechanisms to address any rights violations with sensitivity.

Understanding Diversity in Gender and Sexual Orientation

Understanding Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expressions and Sexual Orientation

Concept	Question it Answers
■ Sex	What biological characteristics was a person assigned at birth?
■ Gender Identity	Who am I?
■ Gender Expression	How do I express myself?
■ Sexual Orientation	Who am I attracted to?

Practical Workplace Guide

No one needs to know everything about a person's identity to treat them with respect.

Every person deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness regardless of their sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation

Challenges Non-Binary Employees Face

1. Self-identification

Forms and systems that only offer "M" or "F"



2. Misgendering

Repeated misgendering by colleagues.



3. Allies

Lack of visible role models or allies



4. Gender Networks Exclusion

Exclusion from "women in leadership" or "men's network" groups



What Inclusion Looks Like

- **Pronouns:** Normalise sharing and respecting pronouns (e.g., they/them, he/him, she/her)
- **Policies:** Audit dress codes, parental leave, and benefits for gendered language.
- **Training:** Educate all staff and not just HR.
Systems: Add non-binary/custom options in HR systems, email signatures, badges
- **Facilities:** Provide gender-neutral restrooms

Allyship in Action

- Share your own pronouns first
- Correct misgendering gently, even when the person isn't present
- Amplify non-binary voices in meetings and decisions
- Advocate for policy changes, not just individual kindness
- Listen more than you assume



Reflection



What is one common misconception about non-binary identities you have encountered?"



How can each of us contribute to a workplace where people feel safe to be themselves, respected for who they are, and able to perform at their best?

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