

Working Paper # xx

Policies for Transgender Students and Employees at NUST

1. Introduction

The transgender community in Pakistan faces discrimination at the hands of the masses, they are considered to bring shame to the family and are abandoned at an early age. Most of them do not get an opportunity to get a good formal education and start their life with this disadvantage. They are, therefore, forced to work demeaning jobs like begging on the streets and dancing at functions.

It should be noted that although the notification of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020, pursuant to Transgender Persons Act 2018, has been recently notified by the federal government, all organizations in Pakistan are yet to formulate any groundwork for the implementation of these rights or acceptance of transgenders on university campus. Thus, NUST has come up with the proposition of appropriate policies that would allow our transgender members on campus to have a pleasant, secure and remarkable experience.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for how the university will support staff and students identifying as transgender.

This policy is formulated keeping in view the Transgender Act 2018 (Protection of Rights) Point 17 and Point 18, “inclusion in educational institutes” and “right to employment” respectively. The policy’s objectives are as follows:

1. Identify transgender students in educational institutions under NUST.
2. Protect the identity and self-respect of transgender students.
3. Provide transgender students with proper educational ambience and thus help them to gain confidence, acceptance, and acknowledgement in society.
4. Provide them with support systems to bring them into the mainstream societal framework and to provide adequate platforms for their overall development.
5. Provide ample opportunities for their education and employment.
6. Sensitize the teaching, non-teaching staff and student community in all educational institutions so that there is no discrimination and that the TGs are treated as normal citizens with self-respect and dignity.
7. Ensure the removal of impediments existing in the society against transgenders from pursuing higher education.

8. Ensure penal action against persons who discriminate, harass, deny or violate the special rights given to the TGs.

9. Establishment of proper mechanism and its effective implementation to address the issues of violence and harassment faced by transgender students.

3. International Best Practices

Universally majority of the educational institutes have employed a number of policies and rules which ensure that they are granted equal rights and security on campus.

The following are examples of renowned universities with their respective policies.

Serial No.	Name of Institute	Policies
1	University of Oxford, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The university aims to provide support and understanding to those individuals who wish to take, or have taken, steps to change the gender identity they were assigned at birth. The university recognises that the period of transition can be very complex and difficult for the individual, and will act in a supportive and sensitive way to ease any transition period.• The university aims to create an inclusive trans-friendly culture, workplace and learning environment, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation, where all transgender people are treated with dignity and respect.• Transphobic bullying and harassment can be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion or dismissal.
2	University of New York, NYC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The university provides various methods of filing complaints against discrimination, harassment (including sexual/gender harassment), retaliation or sexual assault prohibited by their policy. The contact methods include by phone, email, online complaint form and filing a complaint with an Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) professional.

3	University of Kerala, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include the transgender category in the Application Forms and in all types of Certificates for courses in all the educational institutions under the University. It should be given as – He/She/Mx. Use the pronoun TG, instead of ‘He’ or ‘She’ in certificates issued to them. ● Additional seats should be reserved for TG students in all courses offered by the University/Colleges ● Implement anti-ragging laws for the protection of TG students. Establish Counseling Centers to TG students in every institution. ● Provide admissions to TG students by reserving seats to them in all courses with scholarships. Provide hostel facilities for transgender students in Colleges/University at subsidized rates.
4	Brunel University, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The University recognizes the right of every individual to choose whether to be open about their gender identity and history. To “out” someone without their express permission may amount to a form of harassment and a criminal offence. ● Trans issues should be included in University Equality and Diversity training and specialized transgender training should be delivered to those working with and supporting trans students. ● Any student undergoing medical and/or surgical procedures related to gender reassignment will receive positive support from the University to meet any evolving needs during this period and all reasonable adjustments will be made as required. ● The way each student may transition will vary depending on a range of factors, including whether a person chooses to socially transition but not undergo any medical treatment, opt for medical procedures, or alter their gender expression without undertaking any other steps of transition. The University recognizes that all journeys are valid and all students will be supported. ● Brunel University London takes a zero-tolerance approach to any abuse, harassment or bullying. Transphobic bullying and harassment could be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion under Senate Regulation 6 and/or the Staff Disciplinary Policy and Guidance s.3, or dismissal under the University’s Disciplinary Procedure 21.

5	Asia Pacific University, Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rooms in AP House are on three types of floors: male, female, and mixed gender floors (floors for students of any gender). If you are concerned about the floor, you will be/were assigned to live on or about your life in AP House, please consult with the LGBT+ Liaison Officer(s) listed below or a staff member in AP House. • APU Colors is a student club that supports LGBT+ students. It holds various events such as lectures and exhibitions on gender and sexual diversity, as well as networking events to make the environment at APU more comfortable for LGBT+ students.
6	University of West London, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not necessary for an individual to be under medical supervision, or to undertake reassignment surgery, to benefit from the legal protection which commences from the point at which they first indicate their intention to transition. • The university has a responsibility to protect both staff and students from harassment and bullying generally and in relation to gender reassignment. It is unlawful to discriminate against someone because they are transgender or are perceived to be transgender, whether or not the perception is accurate. • If an individual notifies the university in writing of their intention to transition during their employment or education, UWL will agree with them the date from which their gender is changed on all records. Individuals' files should reflect their current name and gender. Any material that needs to be kept related to the person's transgender status, such as records of absence for medical reasons, should be stored confidentially. No records should be changed without the permission of the member of staff or student concerned. • Transphobic bullying and harassment could be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion under the Student Disciplinary Regulations or dismissal under the University's Disciplinary Procedure.
7	University of South Florida, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure commitment to diversity at the highest level of the institution through approval of this Diversity Plan via a resolution of the USFSP Campus Board. • Institute diversity advancement as a standing agenda item for all units and sub-units headed by members of the leadership team. • Establish sustainable funding for diversity and inclusion initiatives, including but not limited to staffing, programs, grants, research, scholarships, and awards. • All units continue to complete and file annually, a report of all diversity-related activities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise a comprehensive plan to enhance diversity and multicultural prominence in all university communications, including websites, publications and social media platforms. • Establish and publish a comprehensive Diversity Calendar of events, celebrations, historic dates, trainings and holidays.
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4. Recommendations

Administration

- Collaborate with hostel administration to develop transgender-friendly living alternatives, including as gender-neutral rooms or floors. Transgender students frequently have limited safe and comfortable on-campus living options because all hostels in NUST are defined as "single-sex" by building.
- Allocate unisex or single occupancy bathrooms on campus as gender neutral so transgender students and employees can use them without feeling uncomfortable especially since designated 'male' and 'female' bathrooms on campus can leave trans individuals at risk of violence and harassment. It is also important to make sure that the location of these gender neutral bathrooms is publicized for ease of use and accessibility and that all new and renovated buildings include them.
- Allow transgender people to self-identify according to their gender identity on application and record forms, whilst also urging Student Affairs offices to change the 'gender' category on their standardized forms to enable transgender students to fill the field as they see fit. College forms that ask students to indicate whether they are 'male' or 'female' blatantly ignore the existence of transgender persons leading them to believe they are unwanted at the institution. Gender inclusive language not only fosters inclusivity, it also educates the campus community about gender diversity.
- A one-step procedure for students to change their gender and/or name on they campus records and documents should be established by working alongside the registrar's office. Transgender students should have their appropriate gender identity reflected on their ID cards, transcripts, financial aid and employment forms. An accurate gender designation in college files is critical to avoid discrimination when transgender students apply for jobs, grad school or any other time they have to show college documents. Similarly, employers must give their transgender employees the ability to change their name on documents to maintain an updated CV.
- Bind existing cafes and concordias (C1, C2, CSD etc) to set a certain quota in their jobs for transgenders, this will include hair dressers, chefs, tailors, cashiers etc. Also, set a certain jobs quota for transgenders in girls' hostel and mess staff.
- Help members of the TG community learn to drive through the NUST driving classes initiative and hire them as drivers for shuttle service, ambulance etc. This will help break stereotypes in the young generation of Pakistan and set a model for the entire South-Asian region.

- Designation of a model café, an all-transgender staff will be hired for this café, including chefs, delivery-persons, cashiers for this community to show and polish their culinary skills, all the while providing employment and breaking stereotypes.
- Identify opportunities for vocational training and potential employment in all NUST departments for this community.

Human Resources

- Make trans-inclusive policies on campus widely known. If individuals are uninformed of the changes, developing transgender-supportive policies will have a limited impact. The most efficient strategy to inform students about the policies is to build an online transgender resource guide. For staff and faculty, utilize the institutionalized methods of information sharing and communication (e.g. department head meetings, presidential memo, newsletters).
- It is crucial that each and every faculty member is creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere wherein all students can thrive. Transgender students should be provided with a proper educational ambience to help them gain acceptance, confidence and social standing in society. Thus, it is imperative that teachers and lecturers identify transgender students, protect their identity, ask for their pronouns (he/she/they) and use gender inclusive language to set an example in their classrooms, ensuring that their transgender students are not misgendered, helping them feel like they belong.
- Have a specific number of seats in all majors and courses allocated for transgender students with incentives like scholarships, grants and financial aid readily available to be provided to them. It is also necessary to ensure that transgender students are not discriminated against when it comes to opportunities like TA positions, learning and research provisions. Moreover, these should be publicized fairly so that transgender students are able to seize them.
- With regard to staff, it is vital that on campus jobs be advertised to transgender members of the community and they be fairly considered for recruitment and selection as long as they are qualified and skilled enough to perform said job. Employers cannot dismiss potential employees over something as insignificant and irrelevant as their gender identity and thus should not be allowed to discriminate against transgender people on the basis of age-old stigmas.
- Transgender employees have just as much a right as all their other coworkers to opportunities like promotions in order to climb the corporate ladder. They must be paid an equal wage, receive health benefits, fair conditions of service, grievance and sick leave and advanced notice on termination of employment. It is also a necessity of the employer to train trans employees on in any tasks they might have to perform or skills they'll have to learn.
- Employers must teach other employees how to recognize and eliminate discrimination against their trans coworkers in the workplace. This will help build tolerance and understanding between the transgender folks and their coworkers and lead to a more productive, friendly and safe working environment.

- Some transgender individuals are abandoned by their families from an early age so it is quite possible that they do not have the name of their parents or direct family member in official documentation, in this case the university should facilitate transgender persons member by recording the name of guardian noted in the relevant official documentation.
- Hundred percent scholarship for Transgender students who qualify for an admission.

Mental Health

- For students who are in the midst of transitioning it is important for the administration to understand that they are going through an extremely sensitive and tumultuous process. It is essential that healthcare workers like counsellors, nurses, psychologists or therapists be available on campus to help guide transitioning students and help them navigate this journey. These professionals are essential for the health and well-being of all students on campus as well as certain employees, especially transgender ones and should be on hand to provide consultations to them. For this purpose, a support center for at C3A is proposed for transgender students.
- Greenlight a Transgender-Allies Society which transgender students can join to meet other individuals much like themselves and understand that they are not alone. At meetings, transgender students can share their experiences and help guide one another while simultaneously helping allies understand ways in which they can aid and uplift their marginalized classmates and community members. The Society can also hold events like Trans Visibility Day to educate the university masses on issues faced by the trans community on a day-to-day basis both inside and outside the university campus.
- Set up a helpline for transgender students and employees which other students can also call or text on in order to report any transphobic acts of bullying, violence or harassment. Similarly, set up a security force that will swiftly arrive at the scene of the incident to ensure the safety of the at-risk trans person. This will not only make transgenders feels safe it will also highlight the seriousness and severity with which any acts of hate will be dealt with.
- Any acts of transphobic bullying, violence or harassment should be dealt considered as matters of utmost urgency and be dealt with as quickly as possible. Students caught committing such acts of intolerance should be brought before a disciplinary committee and present their case before either having to face a fine, suspension or expulsion based on the severity of the situation. Similarly, employees caught discriminating against transgender workers must face the risk of being fired.
- The transgender community has been neglected for decades and so have been their problems, NUST should consider offering new degree programs, like Gender Studies, at S3H to promote research related to the social and behavioral inclusion of transgender persons.

Proposal for a DNI committee

- Enhancing the inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) within NUST will make our department more resilient and productive while enhancing the education we provide to students and strengthening our research and extension programs. The first step in this process is the formation of an official departmental committee focused on these issues. While we acknowledge that simply forming a committee and make performative statements will do little to move the needle, we also recognize that taking this first step is necessary in order to codify the importance with which the faculty of our department treat these issues. Upon formation, the committee will develop and recommend specific, actionable items/programs which the department can undertake to enhance IDEA throughout NUST.

Hoping these policies will bring a positive change to our institute and set a benchmark for other institutions in the country to follow.