

## FAQ for Trans\* Students

(Updated August 2023; original October 2015)

### Is gender identity and expression a protected category by the University?

Yes. Vanderbilt University, as a whole, includes gender identity and expression in its policies against discrimination. The Divinity School also includes attention to gender identity and gender expression justice in its “Living the Commitments” document developed by students, faculty, and Deans. <https://divinity.vanderbilt.edu/about/purposes/>. Along with the Deans and Student Life staff at the Divinity School, the Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality welcomes conversations about trans\* resources across campus (Assistant Director, Rachel A. Heath [rachel.a.heath@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:rachel.a.heath@vanderbilt.edu)).

### Does VDS have “all gender” restrooms?

There are five all gender restrooms located throughout the Divinity School. On the first floor, there is an accessible, lockable, all gender restroom (G18) that also includes a washing (*wudu*) station; there is also a small, lockable all gender restroom (G19C) around the corner from the student lounge. There are three accessible, lockable, all gender restrooms are located on the second floor (rooms 130, 132, 134). For a listing of all gender restrooms throughout campus, see: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/all-gender-bathrooms>

### May I change to my preferred name in student academic records without having a legal “change-of-name” document?

Please see Asst. Dean Victor Judge for help with navigating student academic records. Additional resources for change of name at Vanderbilt may be found at: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/transvu/name-changes>

Without legal documentation, students have two (2) options:

- Secure an undocumented name change and have only their legal first and middle initials show in most university systems (i.e. from Marcus Jason to M. J.). To do this, students may print a Name Change form from the University Registrar website or pick one up in person. Write “undocumented” as the reason for the name change. This form must be dropped off in-person to the Office of the University Registrar.
- A chosen or preferred name request puts the name of a student’s choice on select internal university systems (i.e. from Olivia to Liv). To do this, students may complete the chosen or preferred name request form. There are separate processes for each change. Students can do one or both processes based on their needs.

For questions about navigating this process, contact:  
Matthew L. King, Director, Systems Operations, 615-322-7701  
Office of LGBTQI Life, 615-322-3330

### Will the class roster be able to show my preferred name?

If a student wishes to be registered on a class roster by a preferred name, the University Registrar’s office can record a “preferred name” that represents the student’s chosen name. Preferred pronouns can be indicated in Brightspace. Asst. Dean Judge can help facilitate this process.

**Do I have to provide medical documentation to change my preferred name and pronoun with the University or Divinity Registrar's office?**

No, medical documentation is not required to indicate a preferred name and/or pronouns.

**May I change to my preferred name on my Vanderbilt Student ID?**

The University's card office currently can print the first and middle initials and last name on student IDs. Preferred names are not currently allowed to be printed on the Commodore Card.

**If I have trans\*-associated medical needs, are there university resources available?**

If a student wishes to receive medical care for associated transgender needs, contact the Student Health Center (<https://www.vumc.org/student-health/lgbtqi-health-care>). For more general health concerns, contact Kristin Laurel Eckstrand, MD, PhD, or Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD with the Program for LGBTI Health at Vanderbilt Medical Center. The KC Potter Center also serves as an excellent resource for locating supportive communities and services throughout Vanderbilt/Nashville area. For more information: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/transvu/trans-health-on-campus>

**Does Vanderbilt student health insurance cover hormone therapy and/or gender-confirming surgery?**

If you are enrolled in the student health insurance plan and have questions regarding LGBTQ2s+ coverage, please contact [ship@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ship@vanderbilt.edu). Vanderbilt has an on-site student health insurance representative, Kristy Miller, who is reachable at (615)343-4688. VUMC also has a Trans Buddy Program, to help transgender patients navigate healthcare visits. For more information, see <https://www.vumc.org/lgbtq/trans-buddy-program>

**How should I answer questions about "sex" or "gender" on official university documentation?**

- The student should answer how the student self-identifies their gender identity, i.e. if you self-identify as a Transwoman that would be your response on a Vanderbilt document (or you may choose not to answer at all.)
- The federal government requires Vanderbilt to collect demographic information on a student's "sex" at several points (e.g., on applications to programs) and requires an answer of either "male" or "female" for federal purposes. Please answer with the option that matches your current federal documents (e.g. passport, birth certificate, etc.).
- Federal financial aid for a transgender individual is also complicated because of the issue of Selective Service. A student born male (regardless of their current gender status) is required to register with the Selective Service within thirty days of their 18th birthday to be considered for government benefits. They are also required to register with their legal name AND any name change. Because the FAFSA is based on biologic sex from birth, that form needs to be filled out in accordance with federal laws. More information can be found at: <http://www.finaid.org/fafsa/lgbtfafsa.phtml>.