



GRAND CHALLENGES

Tackling 21st Century challenges together

CHALLENGING THE GENDER BINARY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER SPORTS CULTURE

Gender Inclusivity Compact for Sport at the University of Exeter

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Definitions

Disclaimer

These definitions are taken from sources we deemed credible. If however, you choose to identify yourself in a different way, these definitions are by no means set in stone. We recognise the fluid nature of identity terms but seek to add clarity for more uncertain readers.

The concept of gender binary relates to the division between two genders (traditionally male and female) in society and particularly in sports culture, consequently enforcing gender roles and stereotypes on them.

Sexuality-related terms

Lesbian refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards women. Gay refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards men. It is also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality, and some women identify as gay rather than lesbian.

Bisexual (or bi) refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards more than one gender.

Ace is an umbrella term used to describe a variation in levels of romantic and/or sexual attraction, including a lack of attraction. Ace people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, asexual, aromantic, demis and grey-As.

Gender identity-related terms

Gender identity is a person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Trans is a word that describes people whose gender is not the same as or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary is an umbrella term for a person whose gender identity does not fit naturally into the generic categories of male and female.

Intersex is a term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female and/or non-binary.

Definitions from Stonewall glossary of terms.

(<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms>)

Clauses

Identity

1. Create a supportive, respectful and nurturing environment for all people.
2. Avoid making an assumption about a person's gender identity. Encourage gender-neutral language.
3. Treat people as their self-determined gender. This includes the use of facilities, including toilets, the use of gender markers where they are allocated, and respecting the name, title and pronouns that have been requested.
4. Respect and have acceptance of (and flexibility for) mental and physical healthcare needs and make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Homophobia and Transphobia

1. There must be zero tolerance of homophobic and transphobic behaviours and attitudes within clubs/societies.
2. During any occurrence of homophobia and/or transphobia, clubs/societies must make the utmost effort to be respectful and supportive to the affected parties.
3. Any occurrence of homophobia and transphobia must be treated with appropriate severity and any participant in these behaviours and/or attitudes must be held fully accountable for their actions.
4. The occurrence of such behaviours and attitudes must be challenged by the club/society and addressed in full. Examples of bullying and harassment in this context may include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Deadnaming – referring to an individual's previous name
 - b. Misgendering – referring to an individual's incorrect gender identity
 - c. Denial of an individual's gender identity – for example denying that a person is trans, nonbinary or intersex
 - d. Intrusive questions
 - e. Transphobia – for example stating that particular genders are invalid or that trans men and women are not 'real'.
5. It is acknowledged that people make mistakes, however, people who are consistent and are found to be malicious will be subject to disciplinary action.

Intramural

1. Under circumstances where your club or society offers an intramural option: Provide insights for the LGBTQ+ society to gain access into your sport and highlight the inclusive nature of your club or society.

2. Under the circumstance of a lack of intramural option, there should be efforts made to ensure either further integration into an intramural option and/or equal and fair treatment to players of all genders.

Social Events

1. Ensure that clubs and societies adhere to existing regulatory measures over social events. Available from respective Student Unions such as the AU, Exeter Guild or FXU.
2. Social events must be as inclusive as possible of players of all genders, sexualities, races, classes and disabilities, with provision for adjustments for the benefit of such players.
3. Social events must not reinforce stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours that serve to oppress and infringe upon the rights of players of all genders, sexualities, races, classes and disabilities in order to be considered inclusive and consequently appropriate.
4. Incidents that violate EDI (Equality Diversity Inclusivity) guidelines and Student Union regulations must be reported by committee members at the earliest possible occasion.

Good Lad Initiative

We wish to be inclusive of all gender issues, therefore find that the issue of 'masculinity' can have damaging consequences on a male sporting culture. During our review of student feedback, a sense 'toxic masculinity' was alluded to. The 'Good Lad Initiative' aims to eradicate this issue.

1. Under circumstances where your club has a large male presence, reach out to the Athletic Union (AU) for access to the Good Lad Initiative.
2. Their aims are as follows:
 - a. Promoting positive, equal gender relationships
 - b. Transforming the behaviours, attitudes and skills of men and boys in university/ school settings.
 - c. Motivating them to become agents of positive change within their communities.
 - d. Delivering evidence-based, pragmatic, relatable interventions,
 - e. Reaching men and boys not typically engaged in conversations about gender.
 - f. Working with groups and individuals of all genders & backgrounds.
3. Find details for the Good Lad Initiative here: <https://www.goodladinitiative.com>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) training must be mandatory for all committee members.
2. Training must cover sexuality, gender identity, race, class, disability and the intersectionality between them.
3. Training must be interactive and inclusive to prepare committee members on how to address EDI issues within their clubs and societies, as well as come up with immediate and appropriate responses and/or solutions.

4. The Student Union(s) and Athletic Union must hold termly EDI meetings with club/society representatives to address issues and ensure adherence to the terms of this compact.

Responsibility and Accountability

Club and Society

1. Reviewing and amending policies, procedures and practices for which they are responsible, to ensure the compliance of the above clauses.
2. Amendments should be made on an annual basis and/or upon the arrival of new Committee members.
3. In accordance with the amendment process, clubs and societies have the opportunity to re-sign their compliance with the Compact.
4. Aim to go beyond this on a regular basis, ensuring equality and inclusivity within all practices and procedures.
5. Ensure that members are aware of their responsibilities under this Compact.
6. Seek assistance from the Provost Commission. Find more information here:
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/provostcommission/#a4>

Terms of Signatory

We are shaping a gender inclusive future. The aim of this Compact is to promote success within clubs and societies through inclusive action. This Compact is a voluntary commitment to gender inclusivity, aiming to provide a framework of action for clubs and societies hoping to increase their diversity.

Strategy Plan

Current State

The University of Exeter currently has an Equality and Diversity policy that outlines its commitment to the 2010 Equality Act, under which gender reassignment, sex and sexuality are protected characteristics.

At present, there is no specific policy by the University of Exeter that fully covers transgender students, including those who have not undergone the medical transition. Consequently, there are no guidelines expressing how to address the presence of transgender students, nor comprehensive protection from the University of Exeter and/or the Student Union(s).

This extends to the area of sport, where sports clubs and committees are allowed to self-regulate, within reason, as to its inclusivity to players of all genders, irrespective of their assigned gender.

In addition to these policies, several sports clubs have a hostile culture that prioritises toxic masculinity and traditional gender roles, which affects all gender identities and ultimately lacks inclusivity.

Stakeholders

The University of Exeter should embrace all students into their sporting culture. This must surpass gender identity, and where necessary, encourage those people who feel excluded.

Additionally, there is a need within the University to address an environment that has been reported as inciting intolerance amongst students that sport is a major component of.

Initial findings

Having found various statistics on LGBTQ+ inclusivity across the UK (from NUS and Sport+ Recreation Alliance data), we investigated the situation further within the University of Exeter.

Findings were varied but the most prominent idea that emerged regarded the heterosexual norm that persists in clubs and societies. Respondents particularly referred to the nature of socials, unintentional demeaning and stereotypical gender identities.

Mission Statement

According to our findings, we aim to promote an environment and culture of gender inclusivity in Sport at the University of Exeter.

Gender Inclusivity Compact

The 'Compact' is inspired by the United Nations Global Compact. Key points to take from this include its voluntary nature, its incentivisation prompted by the 10 Guiding Principles and accountability through annual review.

Providing a Compact at this stage can act as a stepping stone, for clubs and societies to engage with gender-inclusive activities. Additionally, it is voluntary in nature, for clubs and societies to make the necessary adjustments which adhere to our Compact's Guiding Clauses.

Implementation of the Compact

The plan is to implement the Compact by promoting it to sports clubs and societies. This would be done through briefings and open meetings to relevant committees and representations, explaining the aim of the Compact and benefits that would derive through signing. This would include, fostering an inclusive environment within their club space, and the wider university, as well as increasing their appeal to prospective members.

The promotion of the Compact to the student population would also increase the general awareness towards the issue of gender inclusivity in sport, reinforcing the need for this type and scale of action.

Strategy of Expansion

The objective of our Compact is to highlight the importance of this issue to the University. By gaining the support of clubs and societies through their voluntary commitment, this should highlight the prominence of gender inclusivity at the University of Exeter, and provoke serious action and policy implementation to take place university-wide.

A key aspect of our Expansion Strategy, is to incentivise clubs and societies to gain signatory status. This incentivisation would provide member clubs and societies with promotional material, by demonstrating their commitment to gender inclusivity.

It is likely that this will increase popularity among signatories and put greater pressure on other clubs and societies to follow suit.

Increasing the number of signatories to the Gender Inclusivity Compact will place greater pressure on the Student Union and the Athletic Union to implement and standardise this policy across all student groups and clubs.

University wide policy for Gender Inclusivity

