



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MIT has added “Gender Identity” to its Nondiscrimination Policy

Text of the MIT Nondiscrimination Policy

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The Institute does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, *gender identity*, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other Institute administered programs and activities, but may favor US citizens or residents in admissions and financial aid.*

Why did MIT make this addition to the Nondiscrimination Policy?

MIT has added this language to reaffirm its enduring commitment to maintaining an environment of respect for *all* members of the MIT community. It is against MIT’s policy to discriminate against *anyone* on the basis of their gender identity.

UNDERSTANDING GENDER IDENTITY: USEFUL TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

Sex

The common, but imperfect, sorting of people as male or female, usually based on anatomy and/or chromosomes.

Conforming examples: males, females

Non-conforming examples: intersexed people, people with varying chromosomal makeup (XX-males, XY-females, XXY-people), “hermaphrodites”

Gender

The collection of traits, behaviors, and characteristics that are culturally associated with maleness or femaleness.

Gender traits considered masculine or feminine can differ from culture to culture or in different historical periods.

Conforming examples: sports as masculine, nurturing as feminine, blue as a boy’s color, pink as a girl’s color

Non-conforming examples: women’s rap music, men’s high fashion

Gender Identity

A person’s internal self-awareness of being either male or female, masculine or feminine, or something in-between.

Gender Expression

The external behaviors and characteristics (i.e. dress, mannerisms, social interactions, speech patterns, etc.) that a person displays in order to indicate their gender identity.

Everyone has a *gender identity* and a *gender expression*. Most people experience their *gender identity* as conforming to their *physical sex*. That is, most people who are born with female bodies also have a female gender identity (i.e. an internal sense that “I am a woman”), and most people who are born with male bodies have a male gender identity (i.e. an internal sense that “I am a man”).

Some individuals experience their *gender identity* as not conforming to their physical sex (i.e. a person who is born female but does not have the internal sense that they are a woman, or a person who is born male who does not have the internal sense that they are a man). These individuals are sometimes referred to as “transgendered” people. Such people’s *gender expression* may vary from traditional expectations of *sex* and *gender* in order to effectively indicate their *gender identity*. Individuals with non-traditional gender identities may:

- change their use of pronouns (i.e. from “she” to “he” or vice-versa)
- legally change their name and/or gender designation
- change their physical appearance and/or manner of dress
- engage in a medical sex reassignment process

All people can have varying *gender expressions* that may or may not conform to societal expectations of *gender* or *sex*. A non-conforming gender expression can be as simple as behaving in ways that run counter to traditional beliefs about gender. It can include acting, speaking, or dressing in ways that don’t fit the conventional practices of gender in the prevailing culture, or that don’t fit the accepted manners of presenting gender in certain work or social situations.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

MIT Staff and Faculty
Human Resources Office: x3-1594

Anyone in the MIT Community
lbgt@mit: x3-5440
Ombuds office: x3-5921

Support for MIT Students
Counseling & Support Services: x3-4861

Trans Issues Group at MIT
<http://web.mit.edu/trans>
trans-info@mit.edu

The Trans Issues Group is a group of MIT staff, faculty, and students (trans people and allies) who are working to explore and assess the areas of MIT policy and community life where trans concerns may be better addressed. The Group also advocates for improvements as needed in those areas.

Community Support
A group of MIT community members who identify as transgendered are forming a group. If you are interested in participating, please contact John Southard, Professor Emeritus, at 508-339-0615 or southardjb@aol.com.

(*The ROTC programs at MIT are operated under Department of Defense (DOD) policies and regulations, and do not comply fully with MIT’s policy of nondiscrimination with regard to sexual orientation. MIT continues to advocate for a change in DOD policies and regulations concerning sexual orientation, and will replace scholarships of students who lose ROTC financial aid because of these DOD policies and regulations.)

For more information:
web.mit.edu/lbgt/genderid/

