

**Reflections  
on including  
rainbow  
students in  
academia**

**JJ Eldridge**

LGBTQITakatāpui+

LGB Q T I Takatāpui+

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Queer  
Transgender Intersex  
Takatāpui

LGB Q T I Takatāpui+

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Queer

Transgender

Intersex

Takatāpui

# Definitions: sexuality

- Homosexual – sexually attracted to people of the same sex/gender.
- Gay – common term for (especially men) homosexual.
- Lesbian – a homosexual woman.
- Bisexual/ambisexual – attracted to both sexes.
- Pansexual – not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity.
- Ambisexual – can be bisexual but also androgynous.
- Asexual – without sexual feelings or associations.
- Hetrosexual – sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.
- Queer – a complex catch all phrase... do not use unless you are in the community or sure of it's use.
- Am I missing any...?

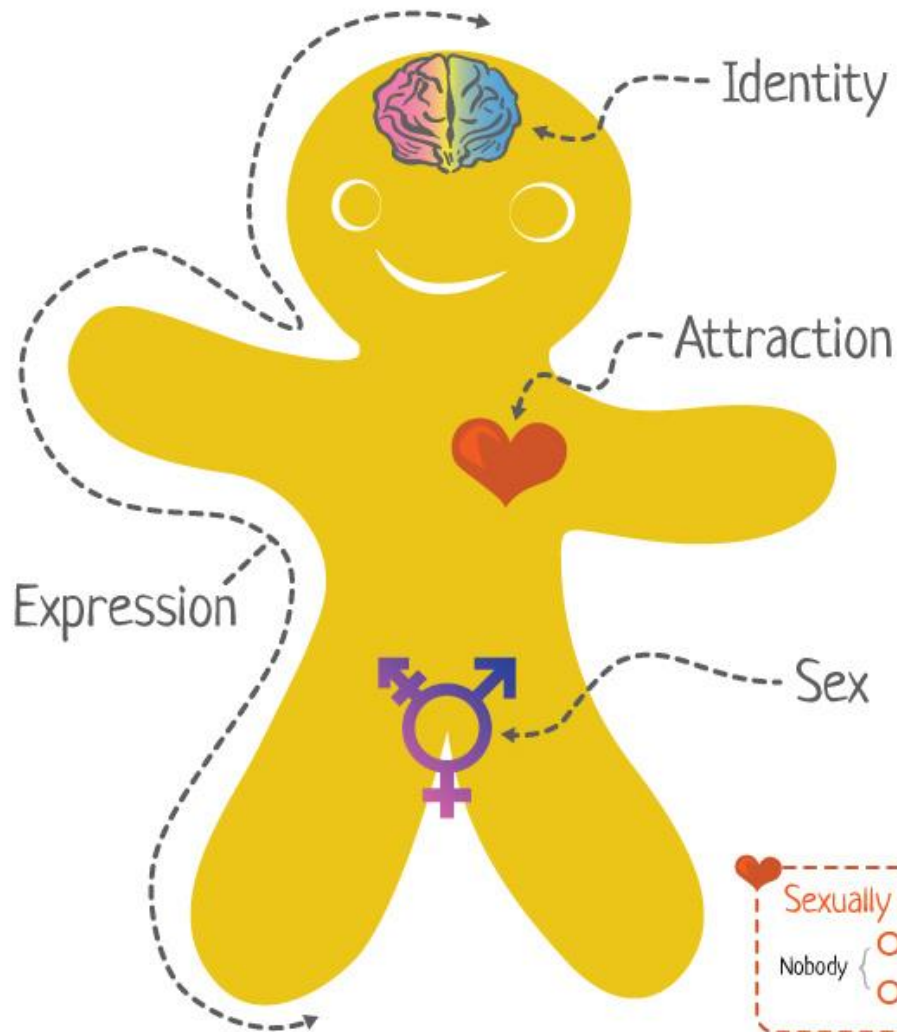
# Definitions: identity

- Sex refers to the sex that people are assigned at birth, i.e. whether they are male, female or intersex.
- Gender refers to the social construct that people would like to present as, i.e. either male, female or somewhere between these. We note that sex and gender do not have to be equal.
- Transgender individuals are taken to be those whose sex and gender are not aligned.
- Cisgender are individuals whose sex and gender are aligned.
- Intersex persons do not have a clear sex based and have some characteristics of both sexes in many variations of combinations.
- Gender diverse and non-binary persons believe they are outside the gender binary and include people who believe they are androgynous a mix of genders or who are gender fluid, where the gender they wish to present as varies with time.
- Am I missing any...?

# The Genderbread Person v3.3

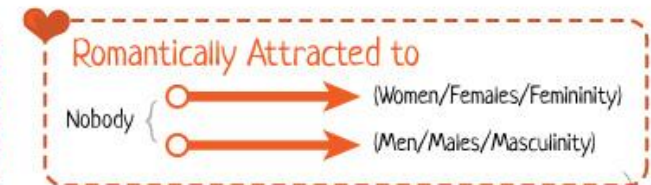
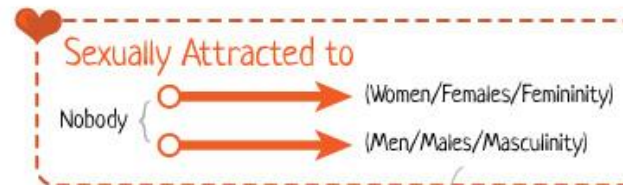
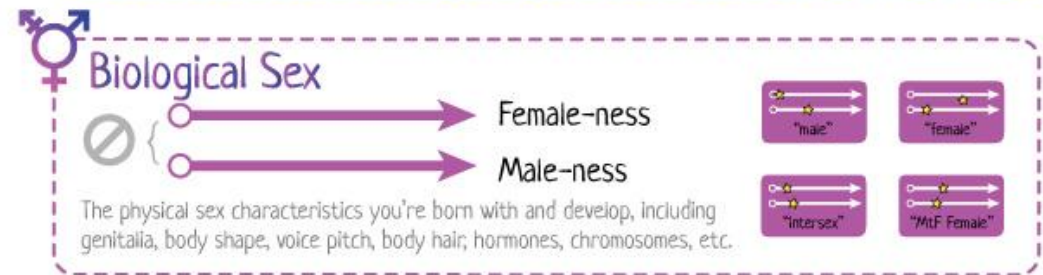
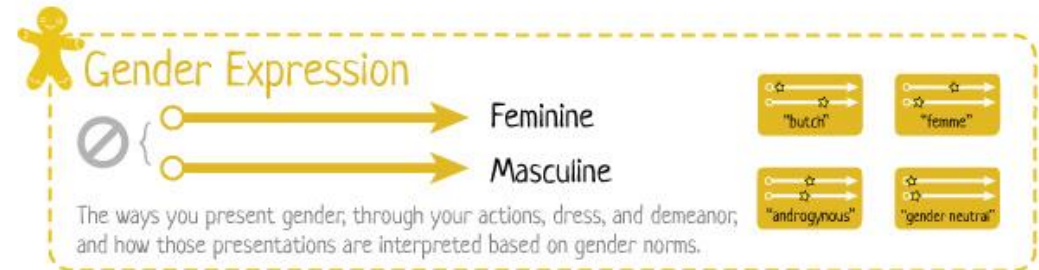
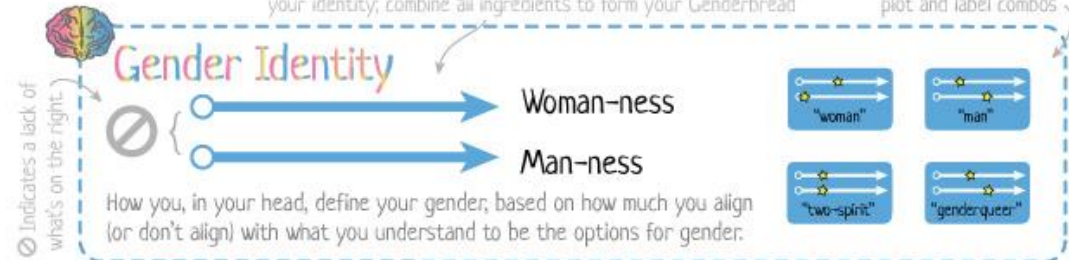
by its pronounced **METROsexual**.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.



Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread

4 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos



In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.

For a bigger bite, read more at <http://bit.ly/genderbread>

# A few incorrect myths...

- People only become LGBTI after seeing other LGBTI people.
- LGBTI people are experts in the entire rainbow community.
- Bi people are just confused (bi-erasure).
- Bisexual people must be promiscuous.
- All LGBTI people are activists.
- We have all the answers and know who we are.
- We don't have family life to consider.



# Correcting more myths...

- There are more than two sexes.
- A person's gender, sex and sexuality don't have to be related.
- Gender is a mix of biological and social constructs.
- Non-binary genders have been in multiple cultures for a long, long time.
- Not everyone wants to transition.
- Our understanding of ourselves changes with time.

# Moving academia beyond the gender binary

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Transgender and gender diverse (T&GD) people have an increasing profile in the public consciousness. In tertiary education it has become apparent that to give all students an equal chance to succeed in their studies, education providers must make changes to include T&GD students and staff. Over the past several years the University of Auckland has undertaken many initiatives in collaboration with a student group “Trans on Campus” to make academia more inclusive of T&GD people. The initiatives undertaken include formally recognizing T&GD identities as well as providing procedures and guidelines to ensure their safety. This paper identifies important steps that can be taken to make the academic environment welcoming for T&GD students and staff, as well as presenting examples where these steps have been successful.

**Keywords:** equity, inclusion, transgender and gender diverse (T&GD) people

## Introduction

Transgender and gender diverse (T&GD) people have an increasing profile in both society and academia. However, they face distinct obstacles that many in the rest of society do not, because of the culturally normative assumptions that everyone’s sex and gender are aligned and that everyone fits into the female and male gender binary. In the tertiary education environment these obstacles can cause T&GD people to experience minority stress which has been shown to affect their performance (Powell, 2016). Making academia more inclusive of T&GD people is important for achievement and successful careers, and many of the changes also improve the environment for all in academia.

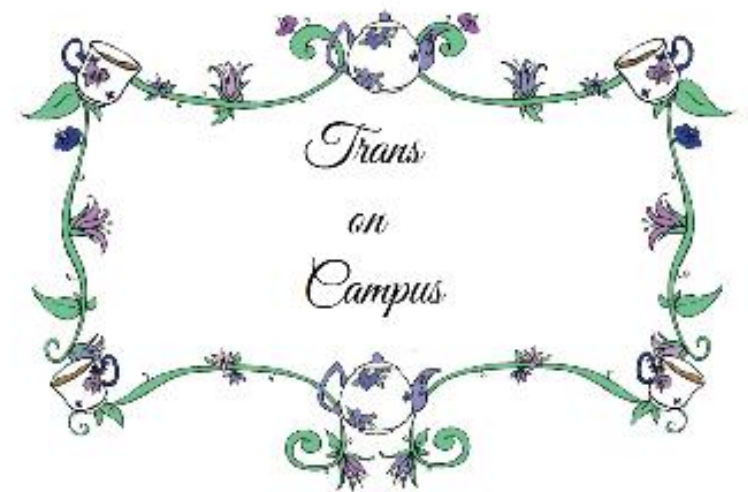
I am an Associate Professor studying astrophysics in the Department of Physics at the University of Auckland and I am transgender. My understanding of my identity has grown with time and I am non-binary, which means I don’t neatly fit into the male/female gender binary. Since 2015 I have become increasingly open regarding being transgender and increasingly aware of the problems encountered by T&GD people at all levels of academia. This awareness has been gained by personal interaction and experience with T&GD students and staff, both in person and on social media, particularly Twitter.

<https://www.herdsa.org.au/publications/conference-proceedings/research-and-development-higher-education-next-generation-2>


# What has the University done?

- LGBTI staff/student network.
- Faculty groups.
- Trans on Campus – name changes, sports inclusion.  
([transoncampus@Auckland.ac.nz](mailto:transoncampus@Auckland.ac.nz)).
- Preferred names normal default.
- Big Gay Out and Pride Parade.
- Toilets.
- <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/lgbti>

Key consideration: student safety.



← → ↻ <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/student-support/personal-support/lgbti-students.html> 🔍 ☆ ⌵ 📄 📱 📺 📺 📺 📺 📺



Students

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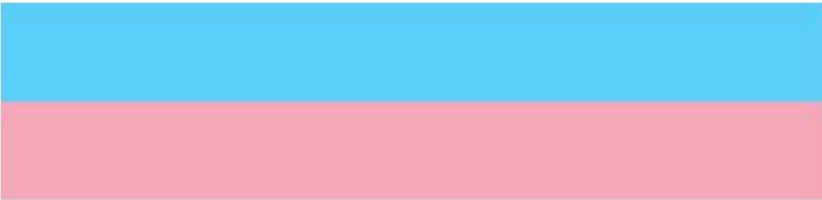

News and opinion

Giving

... / [Student support](#) / [Personal support](#) / [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex \(LGBTI\) students and staff](#) +

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) students and staff

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## Campus connections

Clubs and societies

Recreation and fitness services

Leadership and mentoring

Make international connections

Representation

Study support

Wellington Global Exchange

Wellington International Leadership Programme

Wellington Plus Programme

## Student communities

— New students

— Māori hub

— Pasifika hub

— International students

— Refugee-background students

— Rainbow students

· Rainbow and inclusion adviser

· Gender diverse bathrooms

· Rainbow community groups and events

— Students with families

— Clubs and societies

Have your say

Volunteer

Graduation and beyond

myTools for students

# Rainbow students

We offer a range of services and resources for students who identify with diverse sexual orientations and sex and gender identities.

## Online appointments

Rainbow and inclusion is offering online appoints on Zoom during the University closure. You can book an appointment through rainbow and inclusion advisor Georgia Andrews. Call **027 359 6739** or email [georgia.andrews@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:georgia.andrews@vuw.ac.nz).

At Victoria University of Wellington, our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual/agender (LGBTQIA+), and takatāpui communities are known as the Rainbow community.

The University's rainbow and inclusion adviser supports LGBTQIA+ and takatāpui students and works with our community to make sure our campuses are a safe and inclusive environment for students of all sexualities, genders and sex characteristics.

Slide 7



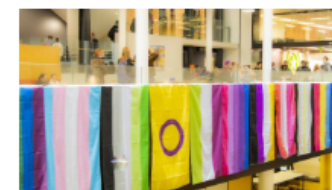
## Rainbow and inclusion adviser

Learn about the role of our rainbow and inclusion adviser and how you can



## Gender diverse bathrooms

There are gender diverse bathrooms located at all our campuses. See the full list



## Rainbow community groups and events

See upcoming Rainbow events and discover Rainbow community groups

Thought experiments from sci-fi...

(i.e. the fun bit).

(see for an older version

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAMiWRi7\\_Yo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAMiWRi7_Yo)).



# ST:TNG - “The Outcast”



- Androgynous species the “J'naii” who believed they have evolved beyond male/female identities.
- Riker and Soren have a relationship but Soren is discovered and is forced to undergoes “psychotectic therapy”.
- In humans we know that gender is not a binary and there is a range. So this is not unrealistic, just a rebalanced version of the gender populations so that male/female are minorities.
- But scary parallels with treatment of trans, gender diverse and intersex people today. i.e. treatments to become “normal” if they don't fit into expected boxes.
- Note: Jonathan Frakes thinks episode not daring enough and Soren should have been more male.
- Accuracy: Good.

# Parasites/symbiotes

- "Perhaps it is a Human failing, but we are not accustomed to these kinds of changes. I can't keep up. How long will you have this host? What would the next one be? I can't live with that kind of uncertainty. Perhaps, someday, our ability to love won't be so limited."
- **Dr Beverley Crusher,**  
**ST:TNG "The Host"**





# Parasites/symbiotes

- Dr. Lenara Kahn: Dax, I am not like you. I don't have a little Curzon inside me telling me to be impulsive, to ignore the rules, to give up everything that I've worked for.
- Lt. Commander Jadzia Dax: Can you really walk away from me? From us? After all this time we're together. Don't throw that away!
- Dr. Lenara Kahn: I don't want to! Maybe I need more time. Maybe if I go back to Trill for a while, I... I'll think it over, I... I can always come back later.
- Lt. Commander Jadzia Dax: I wish I could believe you. But ultimately it comes down to this: if you feel about me the way I feel about you, you won't go on that transport tomorrow. And if you do leave, I think we both know... you're never coming back again.
- **ST:DS9 “Rejoined”**



# ST:DS9 – Blood Oath



- DAX: How about just a great big hug.
- KOR: Curzon, my beloved old friend!
- DAX: I'm Jadzia now.
- KOR: Well, Jadzia, my beloved old friend.

**Doctor:** “You should have seen me a few hours ago. My whole body’s changed. Every cell in my body burning. Some of them are still at it now, reordering, regenerating”.

**Grace:** “Sounds painful love.”

**Doctor:** “You have no idea... there is this moment when you’re sure you’re about to die and then... you’re born, it’s terrifying. **Right now I’m a stranger to myself, the’s echos of who I was, and a sort of call towards who I am and I have to hold my nerve and trust all these new instincts, shape myself towards them. I’ll be fine. In the end... hopefully...** but I have to be cos you guys need help and if there’s one thing I’m certain of, when people need help I never refuse. Right! This is going to be fun.”



# Things to consider in the University context:

- Be nice! Don't treat us differently.
- Don't expect students to be a mirror image of you.
- Students at University for the first time feel able to be/work out themselves.
- Do not out people without their consent.
- Try to not assume hetro-normativity in your classroom.
- Use preferred names and pronouns.
- Do not ask intrusive questions – test this: would you answer a similar question yourself?
- Consider if activities are safe for rainbow students.
- Use inclusive language: partner, spouse, them/they.
- Use inclusive examples.
- Do not make jokes or use extreme stereotypes.
- Toilets – push for all gender and make gendered safe.
- Intersectionality.

# Why not put in some Rainbow history into your course?

Leonardo da Vinci

Sir Francis Bacon

Sir Isaac Newton

Florence Nightingale

Sara Josephine Baker and Louise Pearce

Alan Turing

Sally Ride

Angela Clayton

Benn Barres

Sophie Wilson (she is one reasons I'm here today).

Alan Hart

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:LGBT\\_scientists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:LGBT_scientists)

# How to be an **ally**?

**Don't** try to do **everything at once**.  
Make change and challenging your  
biases a **habit**, it's not about doing  
one thing, it's **enduring action**.

These changes benefit and  
**improve** the environment and  
**academia for everyone!**