



Resources for Career Conversations with LGBTQ+ Students



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

We want to see students thrive, grow and build meaningful lives and careers. This guide offers a starting place to improve your literacy about the way that identity intersects with job search and career navigation. Enhance your learning by referring to the [student-facing version](#) of this document.

Just as you would with any other student you're coaching or advising, respect the individual's knowledge about their experiences. Take a strengths-based approach and support the student to identify and leverage their talents.

For many students who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, in addition to finding meaningful employment, factors such as workplace disclosure and "coming out," and finding workplaces with inclusive and LGBTQ+ friendly cultures may be added elements to career navigation.

TIPS TO GET STARTED

1. Understand that the decision to disclose one's sexuality and/or gender identity is completely personal and individual. Consider asking questions like these:
 - What's important for you to know?
 - What strengths can you bring to this situation?
 - What resources do you need?
 - How can UBC Support?
2. Attend a UBC Positive Space Workshop through UBC's [Equity & Inclusion Office](#)
3. Be an ally. Participate in an active bystander workshop, speak out when you encounter inappropriate behaviour and share your knowledge with others.
4. Rather than making assumptions, ask students: "How can I refer to you" (or "Which pronouns do you use?").
5. Consider adding your pronouns to internal processes/systems (e.g. in your email signature) and offering them when you facilitate workshops
6. Are there forms or systems in place at your workplace that have spaces to ask for pronouns? If not, ask students how they would like to be referred to.
7. In groups, use gender inclusive terminology. Try using "folks" or "everyone" instead of guys. If you're addressing a more formal crowd you can use "distinguished guests" in place of "ladies and gentlemen."

UNDERSTAND THE TERMINOLOGY

Language evolves over time and may differ depending on historical, cultural, and regional context. The terms we've outlined below are reflective of popular terms and definitions in a North American context, and more specifically, a British Columbian context. Please note that students may come from or launch their careers in regions where language and definitions may differ from the below terms.

It's not essential to know everything – our knowledge and awareness of identities is constantly growing, and so too are the definitions and terms that come with new information about identities.

Understanding umbrella terms is a great start towards your own awareness of LGBTQ2SIA+ identities, here are a few key terms you should be familiar with:

- Ally/Allies
- Cisgender (adjective)
- Gender Identity
- Non-binary
- Gender Expression
- Genderqueer
- Queer
- Sexual Orientation
- Trans-identified, Transgender or Trans (adjective)
- Two-spirit

Did you know? UBC's Equity & Inclusion Office has curated a list of relevant resources and content on a number of gender diversity topics. Find out more [here](#).

Find a full set of definitions on [UBC's Positive Space](#) website.

Further Terminology Resources can be found here: [Human Rights Commission Glossary of Terms](#).

Mistakes happen. If you misgender someone accidentally, apologize and move on. Do not engage the person in a conversation about how challenging learning their pronoun may be. Learn more about how to navigate misgendering through [UBC's Equity & Inclusion Office](#).

Did you know? According to a [2017 report](#) by Deloitte on inclusion and diversity in the workplace, approximately 62% of LGBTQ+ workers report “witnessing or experiencing discrimination, with almost one-third of those reporting that it happens at least a few times a month”. *Source: Canada175.*

LEGAL NAMES AND RESUMES

Students do not have to use their legal names on job applications and resumes/cover letters in Canada, because these documents are not legally binding. If a student wants to use a name other than their legal name, invite them to research the jurisdiction they’re applying to and in most cases, preferred names are acceptable. The student should refer to their own preference and comfort level when deciding which name they will use on their resume.

Read more about legal versus preferred names [here](#).

ENHANCE YOUR COACHING SKILLS

If a student discloses to you that they’re transgender or gender-variant (e.g., non-binary, genderqueer) consider asking these questions:

- How can I accommodate/support you?
- How can I refer to you (or, what name and pronouns do you use?)
- How can I respect your confidentiality with this information (i.e., discuss what type of information you are required to record for the meeting so the student can feel comfortable discussing their career goals with their gender identity in mind)
- Never ask about the student’s personal experiences, such as the student’s plans for hormones, surgeries, or what being gender-variant has been like for them.

THOUGHTS FROM AN ALUMNA:

Q: What advice have you received that resonated with you and helped you navigate the early years of your career journey?



My father always encouraged me to view academic and work-related experiences as building blocks; going through one will provide you with the skills and capability required to get the next one, and then the next one, and then the next one. You have to start somewhere in order to get anywhere at all. Whether that is a volunteer role, or an internship, or a role in a company that could be viewed as ‘far from’ where you’d like to end up. It’s okay that what you are doing right now is not what you want to do forever – the real question is, what can you learn and takeaway from the experience you are in right now that will help propel you towards where you want to be?

- Robyn Begg, BA ‘18

PROVIDE APPROPRIATE RESOURCE REFERRALS

In addition to the essential resources outlined in the career navigation guide for LGBTQ+ students, the following resources may be useful to familiarize yourself with and refer students to, depending on their individual case.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

- Province of BC Guide: [Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Employees in the Workplace](#)
- Government of Canada Guide [Support for Trans Employees](#): a guide for employees and managers
- [The 519 Creating Authentic Spaces](#)
- [Canada's Top 100 Employers for Diversity](#)



RESOURCES BEYOND CAREER NAVIGATION

- [UBC Equity & Inclusion Office](#) for educational resources and support on systems change, conflict engagement and human rights.
- [UBC Health and Wellness](#) for support and counseling.
- [UBC Pride Collective](#): for building student peer community
- [UBC Student Services](#): includes information on changing personal information such as name changes/gender marker changes on student ID and other campus systems
- Equity and Inclusion's [Educational Programming](#)
- [Trans Focus Consulting](#) (BC-based): organization that provides transgender resources to organizations (e.g., support for an employee transitioning at the workplace).
- [Qmunity](#): Vancouver-based community and resources for LGBTQ2SIA+ folks

This guide was developed on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Musquaem peoples.

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