



S A G E

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

SAGE Cygnet Award Application

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Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Queensland (UQ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society

The University of Queensland: SAGE CYGNET #2



Key Barrier: Lack of consistent support for gender-diverse and transgender staff

Barrier type:

- Institution-wide Barrier ⁱ
- Sub-group specific Barrier ⁱ

Barrier description: Gaps in inclusive policies and practice to achieve an inclusive culture of visibility, awareness and support for trans and gender diverse people.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AAC	Ally Action Committee
AWEI	Australian Workplace Equality Index
EA	Enterprise Agreement
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
EOY	End of Year
GAL	Gender Affirmation Leave
HCMS	Human Capital Management System
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HR	Human Resources
ITS	Information Technology Services
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic +
TA	Talent Acquisition
TGD	Trans and Gender Diverse
UQ	University of Queensland
WDI	Workplace Diversity and Inclusion
Workday	UQ's Human Capital Management System

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1. KEY BARRIER

Lack of consistent and visible support for trans and gender diverse staff

Sub barriers

- A lack of inclusive policies and practices
- The need for a more inclusive workplace culture via increased visibility, awareness and support

2. EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

During the assessment for the Athena Swan Bronze application, it was identified that staff perceptions regarding UQ's support for trans and gender-diverse staff (TGD) could be improved.

Action DS1 – Improve support for gender-diverse and transgender staff and students was included in the SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze plan with subsequent sub-actions (see Table 1).

Summary of Relevant Actions from UQ Action Plan – (Chapter 10)	
DS1	Improve support for gender diverse and transgender staff and students
DS1.1	Include gender neutral bathrooms/facilities in the building standards for all new UQ buildings and refurbishment plans for existing buildings
DS1.2	Make explicit in the special paid leave procedure, that paid special leave is to be used to support gender transitioning activities
DS1.3	40 percent of all HR staff undertake UQ's Ally Action Training to enhance their awareness of administrative considerations and support requirements for transitioning staff and students

Table 1 Actions identified in SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze plan

Following the Bronze award application, actions to support TGD staff were refined and expanded to respond to new survey data and stakeholder consultation as indicated below:

The Australian Workplace Equality Index

The Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI), administered by Pride in Diversity, serves as a national benchmarking instrument that enables organisations to evaluate and enhance their LGBTQIA+ inclusion practices. The Index establishes best practice standards and provides a comparative framework for assessing employer performance across all sectors in Australia.

The Australian Workplace Equality All-Staff Survey

The AWEI Employee Survey, administered by Pride in Diversity, is the largest and only national instrument specifically designed to measure the perceived impact of LGBTQIA+

inclusion initiatives on organisational culture for both LGBTQIA+ identifying and non-identifying employees. At UQ, the survey is promoted through 'UQ Update,' the University's weekly all-staff newsletter coordinated by Marketing and Communication. In addition, the survey is directly distributed to all members of the Ally Network by Workplace Diversity and Inclusion (WDI). The table below presents an overview of the survey respondent demographics (Table 2).

	2019		2025	
	Responses	Percentage	Responses	Percentage
Survey Respondents	433	100.00%	330	100.00%
Women	269	62.10%	233	70.61%
Men	144	33.30%	84	25.45%
TGD[1]	11	2.50%	15	4.55%
Non-Binary	not collected	not collected	7	2.12%
A different Term	not collected	not collected	3	0.91%
Prefer not to respond	9	2.10%	3	0.91%

Table 2 AWEI Survey Respondents by Gender 2019 and 2025

UQ Ally Network

The award-winning UQ Ally Network provides a visible network of well-informed staff who create a safe, welcoming and inclusive space for people of diverse sexuality, sex characteristics and gender at UQ and in the broader community. The network celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 2024. The network consists of 1180 staff, accounting for approximately 12.23% of the UQ FTE cohort. All UQ Allies have undertaken a 6-hour workshop on LGBTQIA+ Allyship.

UQ Ally Action Committee

The Ally Action Committee (AAC) oversees the Ally Network and includes 24 members: 9 academic staff, 10 professional staff, 4 students (including 2 HDR), and 1 WDI representative. Most members have lived LGBTQIA+ experience. The committee is supported by four Ally Executive Champions who meet quarterly with the Chairs and WDI representative. The committee acts as a consultative body for the University on matters relating to LGBTQIA+ Inclusion. It reports to the EDI Management Committee, which advises the University Senior Executive Team and Senate through the Senate Committee for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

2.2 A lack of inclusive policies and practices

As Table 3 indicates, leave and recruitment were highlighted as key areas for improvement in the 2019 AWEI survey, with the following recommendations made by Pride in Diversity:

- **Special transition leave (gender affirmation leave):** UQ does not have gender affirmation leave (GAL) and can only avail themselves by applying for "special leave" (paid or unpaid), with approvals at the discretion of the supervisor.

- **Recruitment documentation:** UQ does not have an LGBTQIA+ recruitment guide. The guide needs to include information about barriers for trans and gender-diverse employees.









1.10	Support of gender diverse employees (leading)		 FULL SCORE ACHIEVED  ADDITIONAL MARKS AVAILABLE  NO MARKS GIVEN
a	Special transitioning leave		
b	Trans/Gender Diversity documentation for HR		
c	Recruitment documentation		
d	Dress codes for gender diverse employees		
e	Activities promoting inclusion of Intersex & Trans/Gender Diverse employees		

Table 3 AWEI Index Results 2019

The 2019 AWEI all-staff survey provided the following results, indicating an opportunity to further strengthen policy and process related to gender affirmation (See Table 10 for 2025 comparative data):

- 50% (n12) of TGD staff were aware of UQ's inclusion of transition policy.
- 50% (n12) of TGD staff were satisfied with the gender affirmation process at UQ.

2.3 The need for a more inclusive workplace culture via increased visibility, awareness and support

The 2019 AWEI all-staff survey provided the following results related to trans and gender diverse staff's experiences, showing areas for improvement (See Table 10 for 2025 comparative data):

- 75% (n16) believe UQ fully supports TGD employees
- 75% (n16) of employees would recommend UQ as a place where trans/gender diverse people could comfortably work
- 18.8% (n16) of trans/gender diverse staff have been a target of mild bullying and harassment in the last year

3. PROGRESS (ACTIONS AND OUTPUTS)

Table 4 Developing and implementing inclusive policies and procedures for TGD staff

Action name	SMART elements	Barrier(s) addressed
Developing and implementing inclusive policies and procedures for TGD staff	<p>Specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an LGBTQIA+ Recruitment Guide accessible for the recruitment team and external candidates. The guide is published on the externally accessible LGBTQIA+ inclusion at UQ website. • Implement GAL in the Enterprise Agreement (EA) and UQ’s leave system • Implement gender-inclusive categories in Workday and in the recruitment portal. • Include gender neutral bathrooms/facilities in the building standards for all new UQ buildings and refurbishment plans for existing buildings. 	A lack of inclusive policies and practices
	<p>Measurable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQIA+ Recruitment Guide developed, made publicly available and socialised with the Talent Acquisition (TA) team. • GAL included in the EA agreement and added to available leave types in Workday. • Gender-inclusive categories implemented in the recruitment portal and HR systems. • Gender neutral bathrooms/facilities are included in the building standards for all new UQ buildings and refurbishment plans for existing buildings. 	
	<p>Achievable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGBTQIA+ recruitment guide was developed jointly by the WDI and the TA Team. Consultations were held with the AAC in constructing the guide. • The EA negotiations were led by the Provost. A project group led by the Workplace Relations team was responsible for implementing the required system and policy updates. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HCMS team, in consultation with WDI and the AAC, was responsible for implementing the required system changes. • Revisions of the UQ design standards were developed by the Properties and Facilities, with formal responsibility held by the Chief Property Officer. 	
	<p>Relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGBTQIA+ recruitment guide clearly steps out the recruitment barriers and considerations during the recruitment process for the TA team. For TGD applicants, it provides a clear overview of UQ inclusive systems, policies and how their personal information will be handled during the recruitment process. The guide is published on our publicly accessible LGBTQIA+ Inclusion website for prospective candidates to access. • GAL benefits all TGD employees who need to take leave to attend appointments or procedures relating to their affirmation. • Gender-inclusive categories in HR systems ensure candidates can accurately reflect their gender identity at work. The option to include their pronouns on their profile also enables cis-gendered peers to show allyship at work. • Including gender neutral bathrooms/facilities in the building standards allows for a better sense of inclusion and safety for gender diverse staff and students. 	
	<p>Time-bound</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGBTQIA+ Recruitment guide was completed and published in 2023. • GAL was included in the 2024-2026 EA. • Gender Inclusive categories were included in UQ's system by the EOY 2022. • The revised Design Standards were completed in 2021 and are publicly available on the UQ Website. 	

Table 5 Building an inclusive culture for TGD staff

Action name	SMART elements	Barrier(s) addressed
Building an inclusive culture for TGD staff	<p>Specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow the Ally Network HR membership to 40% and increase the visibility of the network through Ally Network posters, email signatures, lanyards and pins • Increase the visibility of organisational LGBTQIA+ support across our campuses, including rainbow flags and digital assets such as screensavers and digital screens 	The need for a more inclusive workplace culture via increased visibility, awareness and support
	<p>Measurable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of HR staff to attend the Ally Workshop and join the Ally Network. • 10% of all staff to attend the Ally Workshop and join the Ally Network. • Posters email signatures, lanyards and pins to be shared with all new network members. • Digital assets developed, pride flags flying permanently across our campuses. 	
	<p>Achievable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ally workshop and Ally Network are resourced through WDI. Volunteer facilitators from across the university are trained by WDI to assist with the delivery of the workshop. The AAC formally oversees the network. • Increased visibility through digital and physical assets are leveraged through the UQ Marketing and Communications team in collaboration with WDI. 	
	<p>Relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ally training increases our pool of well-informed staff who create a safe, welcoming and inclusive space for people of diverse sexuality, sex characteristics and gender at. Ally network members are encouraged to visibly show their membership using email signatures, lanyards, displaying pronouns and posters. • Visible signs of LGBTQIA+ inclusion manifest UQ's institutional support and create a welcoming environment. 	
	<p>Time-bound</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR membership in the Ally network to exceed 40% by EOY 2021• 10% of all UQ staff to attend the Ally Workshop and join the Ally Network by EOY 2024• Permanent visible signs of LGBTQIA+ inclusion fully implemented by EOY 2023.	
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4. OUTCOMES

4.1 A Lack of Inclusive Policies and Procedures

Recruitment Guide

A UQ-developed LGBTQIA+ recruitment guide was made available to candidates and hiring managers in 2023. The guide addresses barriers to recruitment for TGD candidates, such as legal vs preferred names and confidentiality around identification documentation. The guide also provides an overview of the application process at UQ to ensure transparency during the process (See Figure 1).

1.4 Application Process at UQ

The below flowchart demonstrates a typical application process when applying for a role at UQ. Please note that this process may change depending on the role and work area.

Any accessibility requirements can be directed to recruitment@uq.edu.au.

If you ever have any concerns or questions related to LGBTQIA+ inclusion at UQ, please don't hesitate to reach out to ideals@uq.edu.au for a confidential discussion.



Figure 1 LGBTQIA+ Recruitment Guide Excerpt. Application Process at UQ

The guide may offer support to trans and gender-diverse applicants who prefer to see a clear step-by-step guide, particularly those who are neurodivergent, a population shown to have a higher representation within the TGD community¹.

WDI and TA developed the guide in consultation with members of the AAC to ensure that it met the needs of the target audience. Members of the TA team were trained in using this resource. Upon finalisation, it was made publicly available for prospective candidates on the LGBTQIA+ Inclusion at UQ page (figure 2).

Our initiatives include:

- the [UQ Ally Network](#)
- educating staff on gender, sex and sexuality diversity inclusion through [Ally workshops](#) and [LGBTQIA+ Awareness Training](#) to create a well-informed and inclusive UQ community
- policies that use a definition of partner and families that is inclusive of same-sex partnerships and family units
- policies, informed by legislation, that demonstrate UQ's strong commitment to removing any barriers that LGBTQIA+ community members may face
- support for gender affirmation/transition in the workplace
- events to celebrate and recognise national and international days of significance
- [gender-inclusive categories in HR systems](#).
- The [LGBTQIA+ Recruitment Guide](#), developed for LGBTQIA+ candidates and recruiters.
- The [Ally Award](#)

Figure 2 UQ's LGBTQIA+ Initiatives, as stated on our website

In the 2019 AWEI survey, 8.33% (n12) of TGD respondents answered yes to the question, "During the recruitment process for your current employer, did you disclose that you were gender diverse?". In 2024², this number had increased to 24% (n24), perhaps indicating greater comfort in disclosures to UQ or a general increase in comfort in the expression of gender diversity across Australia. This question was not included in the 2025 AWEI survey.

Gender Affirmation Leave

In 2019, UQ offered 'special leave' (paid or unpaid) for the purpose of gender affirmation appointments or procedures. The approvals were at the discretion of the supervisor.

In 2024, UQ introduced GAL as part of our new EA. Employees are entitled to 20 days of paid non-cumulative leave for attending medical appointments, recovering from medical procedures, attending legal matters and any other activity related to the employee's gender affirmation. The aim was to make it easier for TGD people to affirm their gender whilst working at UQ and enable a standardised approach across the organisation. The leave was

¹ Warrier, V., Greenberg, D. M., Weir, E., Buckingham, C., Smith, P., Lai, M. C., Allison, C., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2020). Elevated rates of autism, other neurodevelopmental and psychiatric diagnoses, and autistic traits in transgender and gender-diverse individuals. *Nature communications*, 11(1), 3959. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-17794-1>

² Survey respondents 2024: 273 (total). 62.6% (n171) women, 27.8% men, 8.8% (n24) TGD, 6.2% (n17) non-binary, 1.1% (n3) used a different term, and 2.2% (n6) preferred not to respond. Total exceeds 100% as TGD employees were counted in the gendered categories.

implemented in line with other leave requests following the implementation of the EA agreement.

In the 2025 AWEI survey, 66.6% (n15) of TGD staff agreed that UQ has well-communicated policies to support gender affirmation, reflecting growing awareness and trust in these initiatives. Since its introduction, [redacted] staff members have accessed gender affirmation leave. Future actions will focus on promoting this offering to ensure all TGD staff are aware of and feel confident accessing this support (Future Action 1).

Inclusive HR Systems

In 2022, UQ introduced gender-inclusive categories in UQ’s HCMS (Workday) and the online job application portal (Figure 3). The project was supported by the Workday development team after consultation with WDI and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. In May 2025, 23.6% of full-time and part-time staff indicated their pronouns in Workday. This is an encouraging result that reflects organic uptake without a specific communications strategy to request staff to complete the pronouns field. Work to increase the uptake has been identified in the future action section (future action 4).

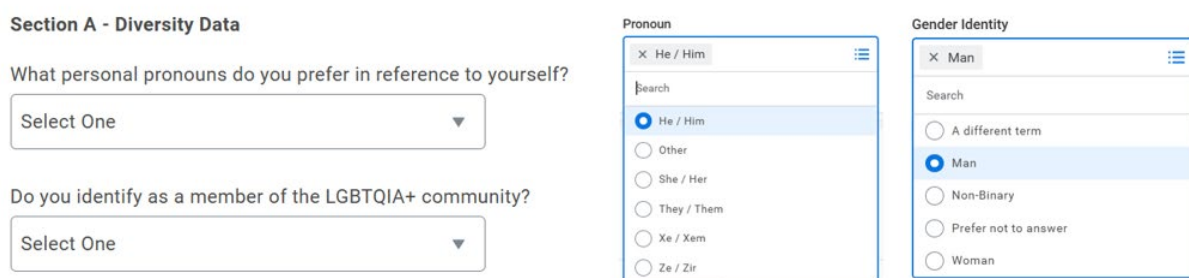


Figure 3 Left side: gender-inclusive categories in the application portal. Right side: gender-inclusive categories in Workday

In 2024³, 8.6% of candidates indicated that they were LGBTQIA+ during the recruitment process, whilst 9.7% of appointments were offered to LGBTQIA+ candidates (See Table 6). This is an indication that selection processes for LGBTIQ+ candidates result in equal or greater success for LGBTIQ+ candidates. This will be further explored in an upcoming Cygnet on inclusive recruitment.

Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community?	Candidates	Offers
Yes	8.6%	9.7%
No	80.7%	80.6%
Prefer not to respond	5.9%	6.0%

Table 6 Breakdown of LGBTQIA+ candidates in 2024

³ Internal data from UQ’s application portal. Data reported on an annual basis only.

4.2 The need for a more inclusive workplace culture via increased visibility, awareness and support

Increase in Allyship

UQ aimed to increase the LGBTQIA+ Allyship of HR professionals from 30% to 40% by 2021 to enhance this critical cohort’s awareness of administrative considerations and support requirements for transitioning staff and students.

To become a member of the Ally network, employees need to enroll in a full-day in-depth LGBTQIA+ training program. The program was established to promote inclusion for LGBTQIA staff and students through awareness-raising. The content is partly derived from Pride in Diversity’s accredited trainer program, with additional UQ-specific content added. It includes a dedicated section on TGD inclusion in the workplace, as well as topics such as heteronormativity, the LGBTQIA+ acronym, allyship and the case for workplace inclusion. Intersectionality is also discussed to raise awareness of the additional barriers faced by some members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The program was developed by the former UQ Equity Office in 2004 in collaboration with the UQ Union. Today, the governance and administration of the training sit with WDI in collaboration with the AAC. Pride in Diversity provides updates to the content to reflect current trends and best practices. To ensure that the UQ-specific content is up to date, a separate action will be included in the future planning section (future action 5).

WDI runs Ally Workshop facilitator training annually, aimed at expanding the offering across UQ. A challenge for the program has been the high demand, resulting in waitlists for each workshop, impacting the 40% membership target for HR. Since 2019, the available offerings of the workshop have gradually increased (see Table 7). The training has also been embedded as a suggested Citizenship goal in our Annual Performance and Development process for staff, helping to increase participation in the program.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Workshops	7	7	8	9	9	11	12

Table 7 Number of Ally Workshop Offerings

In line with DS1.3, as shown in Table 1, 38.3 % (n180) of HR staff are now part of the Ally Network. This is an increase of 8.3 percentage points (see Table 8). The 2019 percentage was taken from the Bronze plan, where headcount numbers were not available.

2019	2025		
Percentage	Percentage	Headcount	Percentage Points Increase
30%	38.30%	180	8.30%

Table 8 Increase in HR Ally Network Membership 2019 vs 2025

The increase in Ally Network membership for UQ’s full-time equivalent cohort increased from 5.80% in 2020 to 15.23% in 2025, an increase of 9.43 percentage points (see Table 9).

2020			2025			
Ally Members	Percentage of FTE	FTE	Ally Members	Percentage of FTE	FTE	Percentage Points Increase
415	5.80%	7208	1180	15.23%	7748	9.43%

Table 9 Increase in Ally Network members as a percentage of permanent and fixed-term staff as of 31 March 2025.

As the Ally Network is an important mechanism to improve the inclusion of TGD and LGBTQIA+ staff more broadly, ongoing membership targets will be set for both the HR and all-staff cohorts (see future action 4).

Increased Visibility

The continued growth of the UQ Ally Network has contributed to increased visibility of LGBTQIA+ inclusion across the institution. Members of the Ally Network are encouraged to display their support by incorporating the UQ Ally logo in their email signatures, wearing rainbow lanyards, Ally Network pins and positioning Ally Network posters in their workspaces. In 2023, the University also introduced a suite of new visual assets designed to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion. These materials are available for use by all staff. The assets include email signature templates, social media graphics, Zoom backgrounds, posters, and screen savers displayed on personal devices and digital screens throughout UQ's campuses (Figure 4). Additionally, in July 2023, the Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Deborah Terry AC, announced that the Progress Pride Flag would be flown permanently at UQ's four main campuses, further demonstrating the University's visible and ongoing commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion.



Figure 4 Left Side: LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Poster. Right side: LGBTQIA+ inclusive screensaver

AWEI Survey Results

Table 10 shows a significant improvement in TGD employees' views regarding UQ's support for them and their comfort in recommending UQ as an employer, sitting at 80.0% respectively. While the awareness of TGD employees around gender-affirming care has increased, further work is required to continue positive progress. A communications campaign to increase awareness of the GAL procedure has been included in the future action plan (future action 1).

A concern is the decrease in comfort around the sharing of gender, which may reflect an increase in global ideological attacks on DEI and TGD people. This indicates that UQ will need to bolster active support for the TGD community aligned with our institutional values, which include Respect and Inclusivity. A continued focus on expanding the Ally Network has been identified (see future action 4).

A 1.2% increase in the percentage of TGD staff who have been targets of bullying and harassment was reported (see Table 10). Based on these results, bullying and harassment for TGD individuals and LGBTQIA+ people more broadly will be included in Ally Workshop training (future action 5).

2019	%	n	2025	%	n	Percentage Point Difference
I believe UQ fully supports trans/gender-diverse employees	75.0%	16	I believe a person with diverse gender would be welcome in my team	80.0%	15	5%
I would recommend UQ as a place where trans/gender diverse people could comfortably work	75.0%	16	I would recommend UQ as a place where trans/gender diverse people could comfortably work	80.0%	25	5.0%
% of trans/gender diverse staff have been a target of bullying and harassment in the last year	18.8%	16	% of trans/gender diverse staff have been a target of bullying and harassment in the last year	20.0%	15	1.2%
I am aware of UQs gender affirmation policy	50.0%	12	There are well communicated policies to support those affirming their gender	66.6%	15	16.6%
I am satisfied with the gender affirmation process here	50.0%	12	I am happy with the gender affirmation process here	64.3%	14	14.3%
I feel comfortable or somewhat comfortable about being open about their gender diversity at UQ	83.0%	6	I am open to most or everyone about my gender diversity	66.6%	15	-16.40%

Table 10 UQ staff responses to the AWEI survey 2019 vs 2025

Recognition of Trans and Gender-Diverse Inclusion Initiatives

As a result of our efforts to improve LGBTQIA+ inclusion, UQ reached gold status for the first time in the 2022 AWEI Index and has retained this status since. UQ was also recognised as the Trans and Gender Diverse Employer of the Year by Pride in Diversity in 2024 (figure 5). This award is presented to the organisation achieving the highest score in the "Inclusion of Trans and Gender Diverse Employees" section of the Index. This assesses areas such as gender affirmation leave, access to all-gender bathrooms, and support for trans and gender-diverse applicants. UQ received full marks across all these categories, with additional points awarded for work beyond the Index criteria. This additional work included a formal submission from the AAC to the Queensland Parliament in support of amendments to the

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022, advocating for legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people, diverse family structures, and updates to the Anti-Discrimination Act. UQ also hosted a guest lecture by internationally recognised trans cartoonist and author Sophie Labelle and produced a video for Transgender Day of Visibility, further strengthening the visibility and inclusion of trans and gender-diverse staff.

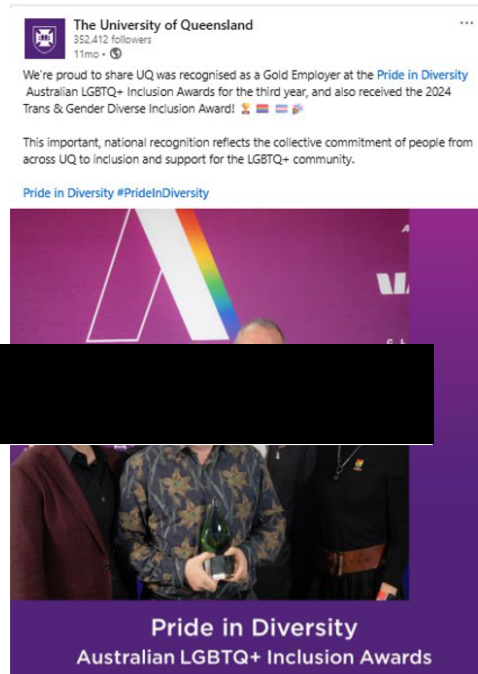


Figure 5 Left side: Example of UQ’s media campaign after winning TGD employer of the year. Right side: AWEI TGD employer of the year and gold awards

5. IMPACT

In April 2025, a UQ researcher in the social sciences discipline with lived experience as a gender-diverse person and expertise in LGBTQIA+ inclusion conducted a focus group with TGD staff. WDI, in consultation with the researcher, created a focus group guide, which was used during the session. The guide included questions related to awareness of gender-inclusive policies and experiences with recruitment, HR systems, Ally Network, gender-inclusive facilities and safety on campus. The group was also asked to provide commentary on what is working well and areas for improvement.

The invitation was shared with the 1100 members of the UQ Ally Network. One focus group was held with six attendees from the academic and professional staff cohorts. The focus group was held as a hybrid meeting, with four people attending online and two in person. The group had access to a Padlet where they could share their thoughts on each question anonymously following a group discussion. The content of the Padlet was shared with WDI for a manual thematic analysis.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), Estimates and characteristics of LGBTI+ populations in Australia⁴, 0.9% of the Australian population identifies as TGD. This means that approximately 80 of UQ's 8869 (2024 number) full-time and part-time staff may fall into this category. This focus group represents 7.5% of the estimated TGD staff cohort and 40% (n15) of the TGD response rate to the anonymous AWEI survey. Overall, UQ is happy with the level of representation in the focus group, but acknowledges that an anonymous survey may reach a broader audience.

5.1 Inclusive Policies and Procedures

Inclusive Recruitment

Focus group participants described UQ's recruitment processes as inclusive and affirming for gender-diverse and transgender applicants. One participant noted,

"When I came for my job interview, I saw UQ Ally posters, and that reinforced my decision to work at UQ" (Academic staff_3).

Positive experiences included being able to select "Mx" as a title when applying for roles and during interviews, which helped reinforce a sense of welcome and belonging. Several participants noted that diversity and inclusion were referenced during interviews, contributing to an overall positive impression of UQ as a supportive employer. Some described recent promotion processes as particularly inclusive, with one participant sharing that their identity as a trans and queer woman was recognised and valued by the committee.

"My experience in my [redacted] promotion was excellent. I felt validated, and my experience as a trans/queer woman was absolutely recognised and valued by the committee. My diversity was seen as a plus, but I never felt like I was being promoted -because- I was trans" (Academic Staff_ 1).

However, it was reported that some promotion and career progression programs for women could be improved to better reflect diverse non-binary experiences (see future action 3).

"The promotion and career progression programs aren't very inclusive in their wording. They seem like they're targeted at a specific type of non-binary person" (Academic Staff_3).

Overall, participants highlighted that UQ's recruitment experience has become more inclusive over time while noting the importance of continuing to ensure consistency and sensitivity in inclusive practices.

Gender Affirmation Leave

Awareness of GAL among focus group participants was mixed. Some were familiar with the policy and appreciated its inclusion in the EA. Those who had accessed the leave described it

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Estimates and characteristics of LGBTI+ populations in Australia*. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/estimates-and-characteristics-lgbti-populations-australia/latest-release>.

as valuable and affirming, with one participant noting they were comfortable applying due to support from their supervisor.

"I'm aware of it and comfortable with my direct supervisor approving it, but if I didn't have that relationship with my supervisor, I probably wouldn't apply for it" (Academic Staff_3).

However, others reported low to no awareness of the policy

"I have been completely unaware" (Professional Staff_1).

Several participants described the application process as unclear, with limited guidance on what types of appointments or procedures were eligible.

"I'm aware of the gender affirmation leave allowance. I have used it a couple of times, just a day here and there. Applying for GAL is a bit difficult and opaque" (Academic Staff_2).

Concerns were also raised about the potential for being "outed" through administrative processes, and whether the leave was only available to transgender staff. Casual staff were identified as a group with limited access to paid leave, exacerbating the financial burden of gender-affirming care.

"Casual staff lose pay when they can't work due to gender-affirming care appointments (on top of paying for gender-affirming care)" (Academic Staff_3).

Participants also expressed apprehension about the long-term viability of the policy if uptake remains low. Overall, while gender affirmation leave is seen as an important support, participants highlighted a need for clearer communication, more inclusive access, and greater procedural transparency (see future action 1).

Inclusive HR Systems

Participants generally found UQ's systems, particularly Workday, to be inclusive when it comes to reflecting their names, pronouns, and gender markers. Several respondents reported positive experiences, including being able to select the "Mx" honorific, and noted that updates were reflected consistently across their records, even retrospectively.

"I have found that the systems are quite good at allowing me to represent myself and appreciate that when changing titles, it has backdated old notes" (Professional Staff_2).

Staff who supported trans colleagues also described feeling reassured that their team members were accurately represented within the system. Where issues were raised, such as difficulty updating across multiple disconnected platforms, participants reported that these were resolved promptly when brought to the attention of relevant teams.

"When I brought this issue to the attention of the appropriate people, the systems were updated quickly" (Academic Staff_1).

However, concerns remain about the fragmented nature of UQ's digital environment, with participants noting the need to manually update multiple systems and uncertainty about who can access sensitive information, especially within third-party platforms like Workday.

I do find that it can be exhausting to interact with the multiple different systems that don't interact, as there are many different points of updating" (Professional Staff_1).

In contrast, older systems were reported to still display incorrect names (e.g., deadnames), with limited options for change. Overall, while significant progress has been made, participants emphasised the need for ongoing coordination and oversight across all systems (see Future Action 2).

5.2 Inclusive Culture

Participants described UQ's culture as inclusive and affirming for gender-diverse and transgender staff.

"The UQ culture of support for gender-diverse and trans people has been simply fantastic. I've been told by my Head of School that they wanted to know immediately if I received trouble during my transition – it was unambiguously clear that they genuinely cared" (Academic Staff_1).

Many felt safe on campus, appreciated visible signs of inclusion such as UQ Ally posters and all-gender bathrooms and noted a strong sense of institutional support, including from senior leadership and supervisors.

"I at least know that if I face adversity, the university supports me" (Professional Staff_1).

Several participants highlighted feeling recognised and valued, both in their roles and through opportunities to contribute to education and advocacy. The ability to be "out as much or as little" as they chose was seen as empowering. Engagement with the UQ Ally Network was widely praised.

"Any Ally business feels like a treat" (Academic Staff_2).

However, concerns were raised around inconsistency in the language used in promotion programs, limited access to support for casual staff and HDR students, and barriers to finding resources without prior knowledge or network connection.

"I have often felt that there is a lack of support for casual staff and HDR students and they get left to the wayside a little bit" (Academic Staff_2).

Overall, UQ was viewed as having emerged as a leader in trans inclusion, with ongoing opportunities to strengthen visibility, access, and intersectional support.

6. FURTHER ACTION

With anti-Trans sentiment emanating strongly around the globe, additional vigilance and attention will need to be dedicated to ensuring UQ continues to make positive progress. The following further actions have been identified in this direction.

Objective: Improve support for gender-diverse and transgender staff					
Actions	Sub-Action	Rationale	Who	Measure of success	When
1. Conduct a review of the gender affirmative leave procedure and process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a communications campaign to increase awareness of the GAL procedure Review the procedural transparency in Workday Review the GAL guideline to include clarification on what types of appointments or procedures are eligible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 66.6% of TGD staff are aware of the gender affirmation leave. A greater need for procedural transparency has been identified through the TGD focus group 	Lead: WDI in consultation with the AAC and the Ally Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% of TGD staff are aware of the gender affirmation leave. Procedural transparency is clearly outlined in Workday. Greater clarity and guidance on what types of appointments or procedures are eligible included in the UQ's GAL guideline 	July 2026
2. Improve inclusion of TGD staff in UQ's Digital environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review digital platforms used across UQ to identify opportunities to improve inclusion Review access and use of sensitive personal information in HCMS Communicate on the collection, access and use of sensitive personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected digital platforms still displaying "deadnames" Clarification on who can access and use sensitive information needs to be clarified. 	Lead: ITS, HR & M&C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified systems can display preferred names A review of the collection, access and use of sensitive data is completed and communicated to the UQ community. 	July 2027

	information to the UQ community.				
3. Better reflect the needs and experiences of all women and non-binary people in career development programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and consult on career development programs to understand how to better reflect the needs of our diverse community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns regarding inconsistency in the language used in promotion programs for women and the examples used therein need to better reflect diverse and non-binary experiences. 	Lead: OCC & WDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and consulted with women and non-binary people on their experiences in our career development programs Reduced the gap by 50% between ‘all women’ and CALD women, women living with a disability and non-binary people in UQ’s Pulse survey on questions relating to career development and learning opportunities. 	EOY 27 EOY 28
4. Increase the impact and visibility of LGBTQIA+ Allyship and the Ally Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the membership of the network to 20% of the FTE cohort and 45% of HR by EOY 2028 Increase the percentage of staff who have indicated their pronouns in Workday to 35% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A visible Ally Network improves the sense of inclusion for LGBTQIA+ staff. Indicating your pronouns sends a clear message of LGBTQIA+ Allyship 	Lead: WDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% of the FTE cohort and 45% of HR are members of the Ally Network by EOY 2028. An annual review of the Ally Workshop is completed 35% of staff have indicated their pronouns in Workday 	EOY 28

5. Review the Ally Workshop Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of bullying and harassment of TGD and LGBTQIA+ people to be included in the Ally training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual review to ensure the workshop content is current, reflecting any UQ internal or external changes. 	Lead WDI, AAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual review is completed. 	EOY 2025, then annually
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