

Being trans and/or non binary at the Guildford School of Acting

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some questions we get asked here at GSA. Seeing the questions and the answers may help avoid worry. If you have additional questions, please share them with your Programme Leader or Personal Tutor or you can email GSA's staff Gender Champion, Dr Georgia Bowers via g.bowers@gsa.surrey.ac.uk, and your question will be answered and included in a future version of this FAQs list.

QUESTION 1

How do I change my name on my ID card and email, if I've already registered in an old name?

You can change your name and pronouns via the [online self-help option](#). This will generate a new email address for you, and you can get a new ID card. You do not need to have a legal name change to do this.

QUESTION 2

I'm a bit worried about costume fittings when I get into the 3rd year. How will that work for me?

The Costume team is fully committed to inclusive practice. When you first attend a session with them, they will ask for your pronouns. Your initial fittings will be based on the character(s) you've been cast as in your production, which will already have been decided. Before fittings begin, Costume Supervisor; Carina Wells, will send out a guidance note outlining what to expect during your first session - this is a measurements session - as well as how to get in touch with her if you have any questions or concerns. The guidance includes, for example, information about wearing a binder during the measurements session, if that applies to you. This session takes place at the start of 3rd year for undergraduate students, and in Term 2 for postgraduate students. Please refer to the guidance note for full details.

QUESTION 3

Might someone inadvertently read out my deadname at Graduation?

No, the university is firmly committed to making sure this does not happen. You can check with the graduation team that the name they have on the list for the ceremony is correct by emailing ceremonies@surrey.ac.uk (ideally some weeks before, to avoid last minute worry).

QUESTION 4

What is the process of casting, and how can I ensure that directors cast me in the correct roles?

Programme Leaders for courses involving public productions will directly ask students if there are aspects of their identity they would like represented, provided suitable titles can be found. This might occur through an email to the year group, inviting responses, or during one-to-one tutorials, for example.

“Aspects of identity” can include heritage, gender, or various other dimensions, with staff guided entirely by what the student chooses to share. For trans and/or non-binary students who do not express a specific preference, their stated gender pronouns will be used as guidance.

New staff, associates, or freelancers casting students for projects or shows generally consult with the Programme Leader or the students themselves to understand the gender roles students are interested in. This is a recurring conversation, and preferences may evolve throughout the year if a student’s gender expression changes.

QUESTION 5

What do I do if my tutors misgender me despite being told and reminded?

No member of staff should have to be reminded multiple times. Please speak to your Programme Leader, (or another member of staff that you feel comfortable talking to) who will carefully deal with this for you in conjunction with the line manager of the staff member.

QUESTION 6

What is the process for reporting any trans or non-binary related abuse at GSA or at the University of Surrey?

As with any inappropriate conduct, you can use *Report & Support* or you can speak with your Year Group tutor and/or Programme Leader. You can also contact GSA’s staff Gender Champion, Dr Georgia Bowers (g.bowers@gsa.surrey.ac.uk) or Prof. Catherine McNamara, Head of GSA.

QUESTION 7

Will I be involved in discussions about my character's gender portrayal?

This can vary across programmes and productions. Typically, you will be involved in conversations about the production(s) you will be part of, and you will have the opportunity to tell a Programme Leader/ Year Group Tutor what you think and feel, with regard to way gender might be a factor in your casting. You can bring this topic up at any point with your tutors.

Once you are cast in a production, if you want to talk about the gender portrayal and it isn’t coming up as part of rehearsals, speak with the director and/ or your Programme Leader. It’s absolutely fine to have these conversations, and initiate them if they are not happening.

QUESTION 8

Can I get vocal support if/when I have voice changes due to hormone treatment while I'm at GSA?

Our Voice and Singing staff provide relevant and appropriate vocal support for all students, which is included in your regular classes. If you are taking testosterone or oestrogen and begin to experience changes in your voice, it's completely normal to feel uncertain or uncomfortable. If this happens, you can arrange for additional, tailored vocal support if you like. Simply speak with a member of staff to request, and they will help set up the support you need.

QUESTION 9

Are there gender neutral toilets at GSA?

Yes. There are a variety of toilet facilities in the GSA building, Ivy Arts centre, PATS and all other university buildings. These include: gender-neutral single toilets for use by anyone (a toilet and sink inside a small room with no other cubicles next to it), toilets with "gender neutral" signs on them, and toilets that are differentiated by the "male" and "female" symbols.

QUESTION 10

Will information regarding my gender identity be shared?

Your consent will always be requested before any information about your gender identity, transition, or plans to transition is shared with anyone - either within the University or externally. If you would find it helpful for others to be aware of your gender identity, your Personal Tutor can support you in sharing this with your year group, programme, or the wider GSA community, if that's what you choose. You should discuss your preferences for how this information is shared with your Personal Tutor or Line Manager. They can also seek confidential advice from the Head of GSA or the University's Equality and Diversity Team to ensure the process is handled appropriately.

QUESTION 11

Can I get my degree certificate in my chosen name?

Degree certificates can only be issued in your legal name. In order for the University to issue a degree certificate in your chosen name, you must provide the Academic Registry with proof of legal name change no later than 3 months before the date of your graduation. [Contact My Surrey Hive](#).

If you legally change your name due to transitioning after graduating, we can arrange this. Contact [My Surrey Hive](#) to request the issue of new certificates. This will require you to send the University your original certificates.

More information

- The University of Surrey: [LGBTQA+ equality](#).
- The University of Surrey: [Trans and Gender Identity Policy](#).
- Equity's advice on your [rights and best practice in casting and auditioning processes](#) within industry, including a section on 'working with LGBTQ+ performers', aimed at employers.