

Benchmarks for LGBT Equity in Academic Institutions

Increasingly, academic institutions wish to extend fair and equal treatment to LGBT faculty, staff, and students. In doing so, they not only make their institution more welcoming but also provide an important model for society as a whole. And while there can be initial hesitation about extending full LGBT equality, the process of educating institutions about LGBT people and concerns, and transforming their policies and practices, can be very rewarding for everyone concerned. What constitutes fair and equal treatment of LGBT people within academic institutions? Key indicators include:

- Mention of “sexual orientation” in the institution’s non-discrimination policy
- Mention of “gender identity and expression” in the non-discrimination policy
- Procedures for publicizing the policy, monitoring compliance, and responding to violations
- Health insurance benefits for same-sex partners that equal any provided for legally married spouses
- Removal of the “transsexualism exclusion” found in almost all group health insurance policies
- Equal retirement benefits for same-sex partners and spouses
- Equal sick and Family Medical Leave policies for same-sex-partnered employees and students
- Adoption benefits and parental birth leave
- Forms, procedures, and policies for swift and respectful accommodation of transgender employees and students, including handling of name/sex changes, bathroom accommodations, and support and training around transitions
- Equal, sensitive accommodation of LGBT employees and students in institution-provided housing
- Proactive attention to LGBT equity in recruitment, retention, mentoring, and advancement of LGBT faculty and students
- Inclusion of LGBT people and concerns in institutional diversity initiatives

Beyond legal equity, institutions can ensure a welcoming environment by attending to concerns like the following (see reverse for benchmarks in medical education settings):

- Support for LGBT employee and student groups
- Designation of a dedicated LGBT resource
- Development and distribution of LGBT educational materials
- Training in LGBT concerns for key administrators and managers

For more information about LGBT institutional equity, contact UCSF’s LGBT Center (below), or visit www.hrc.org for model policies and comparative institutional data.

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