



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT

April 30, 2026

United States Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100

Via Email: OCR@ed.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a federal civil rights complaint pursuant to the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) discrimination complaint resolution procedures. Defending Education (DE) brings this complaint against the University of Washington (UW) for violating Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681 et. seq.).

DE brings this complaint as an interested third-party organization with members who are parents and students throughout the country. DE and its members oppose various forms of discrimination, including sex discrimination in America's K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. At the same time, Title IX also protects single-sex spaces: for example, female students are entitled to sex-segregated intimate spaces, single-sex membership in sororities, single-sex athletic teams, and single-sex admissions where an institution has held itself out to be single-sex and provides substantially equivalent educational opportunities.

But the University of Washington eschews these longstanding and unequivocal principles through its administration of dedicated LGBTQ scholarships, its bathroom facility policies that open private spaces to anyone on the basis of self-professed gender identity, and its pronoun policies that punish students for recognizing biological reality. UW treats Title IX as applying to both sex

discrimination and “gender identity” discrimination.¹ But gender discrimination is not the same as sex discrimination under Title IX, and the Supreme Court has never held otherwise.²

I. The University of Washington’s Bathroom Policy Violates Title IX

The University of Washington is violating Title IX by refusing to give its female students access to single-sex intimate spaces.

Congress passed Title IX “in response to evidence of pervasive discrimination against *women*.”³ The statute’s primary purpose is clear: “to prevent discrimination against *women* in public and higher education.”⁴ Nevertheless, UW insists on forcing female students to share intimate spaces—specifically bathrooms and locker rooms—with male employees, students, and even guests.

For example, the university’s “Transgender Resources for UW Employees” document (Exhibit A) clarifies that the University permits male employees to enter female students’ restrooms and locker rooms at will, based on the *employee’s* personal comfort level. The resource states that UW employees may use restrooms that are either “aligned with your gender or whichever choice you are most comfortable with.”⁵ In doing so, UW prioritizes its employees’ comfort levels over its own students’ Title IX rights, ensuring that the sex discrimination of old is new again at UW.

Similarly, UW’s Health Sciences Education building, which boasts 15 classrooms and almost 100,000 square feet of space, does not offer any single-sex bathrooms. According to the building’s webpage (Exhibit B), “[a]ll restrooms in the Health Sciences Education Building (HSEB) are all-gender.”⁶ This presumably forces female UW students who attend class in the building to share bathrooms with male students, employees, and even guests.

UW—like so many institutions flouting federal law and presidential directives on sex-based definitions and civil rights enforcement—attempts to justify its policies by citing Seattle’s “Public

¹ *Title IX at UW*, UW (accessed Mar. 30, 2026) (“Title IX is a federal law that, in concert with other federal and state laws, prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, pregnancy or related conditions, and LGBTQ identity.”), <https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/title-ix-uw/>; see also *Statement of Nondiscrimination*, UW Civil Rights Compliance Office (accessed Apr. 15, 2026), <https://www.washington.edu/civilrights/policies-and-guidance/statement-of-nondiscrimination/>; *EO No. 81 Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct*, UW (accessed Apr. 15, 2026), <https://tinyurl.com/vbxwvx7u>.

² See *United States v. Skrametti*, 605 U.S. 495, 516 (2025). And *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 590 U.S. 644 (2020), does not hold otherwise. Quite the opposite, in fact. *Bostock* confirms that “sex” refers “only to biological distinctions between male and female.” *Id.* at 655. And to the extent *Bostock* could be read to confuse gender identity with biological sex, its logic is confined to Title VII. See, e.g., *Skrametti*, 605 U.S. at 520 (explaining that *Bostock’s* rationale does not necessarily “reac[h] beyond the Title VII context”); *Department of Education v. Louisiana*, 603 U.S. 866, 867 (2024) (“all Members of the Court” agreed to enjoin a federal rule that extended *Bostock’s* reasoning to Title IX).

³ *McCormick v. School District of Mamaroneck*, 370 F.3d 275, 286 (2d Cir. 2004) (emphasis added).

⁴ *Texas v. United States*, 740 F. Supp. 3d 537, 548 (N.D. Tex. 2024) (emphasis added).

⁵ *Transgender Resources for UW Employees*, UW (accessed Apr. 14, 2026), <https://tinyurl.com/4b9m56rv>.

⁶ *All Gender Restrooms*, UW Health Science Services (accessed Apr. 15, 2026), <https://hss.washington.edu/building-management/all-gender-restrooms/>.

Accommodations Ordinance.”⁷ The ordinance requires public accommodations providers to let people use bathrooms based on gender identity rather than on biological sex. But as UW well knows, the Constitution’s Supremacy Clause dictates that Title IX—a federal law enacted with specific Congressional intent—preempts any contrary state or local law that would frustrate Title IX’s purpose and congressional aims.

As a result, UW’s bathroom policy “turns Title IX on its head,” stripping female UW students of their Title IX right to single-sex intimate spaces.⁸ Title IX recognizes the “enduring” differences that exist “between men and women.”⁹ As the Eleventh Circuit recently put it, “when Congress prohibited discrimination on the basis of ‘sex’ in education, it meant *biological sex*, i.e., discrimination between males and females.”¹⁰ UW ignores this distinction when it grants bathroom access based on “gender identity.”¹¹ Thus, UW’s bathroom policy appears to violate Title IX.

II. The University’s Unique LGBTQ Focus

Sadly, UW’s singular bathroom policy is part of a larger focus on LGBTQ activism at the institution. UW’s Services and Fees Committee gave the university’s “Q Center,” which hosts “Gayme Night” and distributes “[chest] binders,” “tucking underwear,” and “stand to pees,” a budget of more than \$600,000 for FY 2026.¹² The university also threatens to punish any student who does not use a fellow student’s preferred pronouns.¹³

In light of the above, UW is clearly violating Title IX. It is also violating various presidential Executive Orders on policies related to sex discrimination in federally funded programs¹⁴ and this Department’s stakeholder guidance on Title IX and the prevention of sex discrimination in

⁷ See Seattle Municipal Code § 14.06.030(B)(11) (“It is an unfair practice for any person to discriminate in a place of public accommodation by . . . [d]enying, directly or indirectly, an individual’s right to use gender-specific restrooms and other gender-specific facilities in places of public accommodation including but not limited to dressing rooms, locker rooms, homeless shelters, and group homes that are consistent with the individual’s gender identity or expression.”).

⁸ *Tennessee v. Cardona*, 737 F. Supp. 3d 510, 571 (E.D. Ky 2024).

⁹ *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515, 533 (1996).

¹⁰ *Adams v. Sch. Bd. of St. Johns Cnty.*, 57 F.4th 791, 812 (11th Cir. 2022) (en banc) (emphasis added).

¹¹ *Statement of Nondiscrimination*, UW Civil Rights Compliance Office (accessed Apr. 15), 2026, <https://www.washington.edu/civilrights/policies-and-guidance/statement-of-nondiscrimination/>; *EO No. 81 Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct*, UW (accessed Apr. 15, 2026), <https://tinyurl.com/vbxwvx7u>.

¹² Paris Apodaca, *University of Washington Boosts Mandatory Student Funding for LGBTQ ‘Q Center’ to \$651K*, Campus Reform (Jan. 22, 2026), <https://tinyurl.com/yenuydwu>; see also *Letter to Q Center*, UW Services and Activities Fee Committee (accessed Apr. 16, 2026), <https://tinyurl.com/4u5hix7a>.

¹³ See *Pronouns Basics and Best Practices*, UW Student Life Center (archived Mar. 15, 2026), <https://tinyurl.com/2s3cbrdf>; see also *SGP 210 Student Conduct Policy for Discriminatory and Sexual Harassment, Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Misconduct, Stalking, and Retaliation*, UW (accessed Apr. 16, 2026), <https://tinyurl.com/7rvw5w85>.

¹⁴ See Executive Order 14168, *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government* (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/defending-women-from-gender-ideology-extremism-and-restoring-biological-truth-to-the-federal-government/>; Executive Order 14201, *Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports* (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/keeping-men-out-of-womens-sports/>.



federally funded programs.¹⁵ As such, Defending Education respectfully requests that the Office of Civil Rights investigate UW's policies.

Thank you for your prompt assistance with this request for investigation and resolution. Please contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Parshall Perry", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Parshall Perry
Vice President and Senior Legal Fellow
Defending Education
Encl. Ex. A, Ex. B.

¹⁵ *U.S. Department of Education to Enforce 2020 Title IX Rule Protecting Women*, U.S. Dep't of Education (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-enforce-2020-title-ix-rule-protecting-women>.

Exhibit A

Transgender resources for UW employees

Last updated: July 24, 2025

The University of Washington is committed to providing an inclusive, safe and respectful work environment for all employees, including those of all gender identities and expressions. Transgender, cisgender and nonbinary—all employees of all gender identities and expressions—have the right to be who they are and express their gender identity openly.

University departments and teams should strive to create work environments in which employees can be their authentic selves at work. Employees who transition on the job can expect the support of management and HR staff, who will work with the employee to ensure a successful workplace transition.

If you are a UW employee who is considering or in the process of transitioning, here you will find information about University policies, procedures and resources that are available to you. Managers and colleagues of transitioning employees can also find guidance. Whichever role you are in, you are encouraged to read each section of this resource.

The University relied upon and referred to materials from the following organizations to create this resource: Transgender Law Center, Human Rights Campaign Foundation, the University of Washington Q Center and the Patient and Family Education Committee of UW Medical Center.

Need to know policies and principles

Executive Order No. 81: The University of Washington prohibits discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns, make complaints, or direct inquiries to the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#). Please refer to the University's official [notice of nondiscrimination](#).

Restroom and locker room access: You are welcome to use the restrooms, locker rooms, and changing rooms aligned with your gender or whichever choice you are most comfortable with. Gender-neutral restrooms are available for everyone to use.

- [Gender-neutral restrooms](#) on the UW Bothell campus
- [Gender-neutral restrooms](#) on the UW Seattle campus
- [Gender-neutral restrooms](#) on the UW Tacoma campus

Time off and leave of absence for transition-related care: Use of sick time off, unpaid time off, FMLA, shared leave and/or leave as a disability accommodation for medical appointments and procedures and recovery time associated with your transition will be approved on the same basis as for any other medical appointments and procedures.

If you need time off for transition-related medical care, notify your supervisor and/or department HR contact and they will help you get the proper forms to take to your provider for completion. You do not need to share medical details with your supervisor.

Completed forms from your health care provider do contain medical detail and should only be submitted to your unit's assigned leave and accommodations specialist (not your supervisor or departmental HR).

Gender affirming health insurance benefits: All of the health insurance plans offered by the UW provide medical coverage for gender transition services and procedures. Please contact your medical plan directly for more information regarding specific services and providers covered.

Privacy and confidentiality: You have the right to discuss your gender identity or expression openly, or to keep that information private. Your status as a transgender person (such as the sex you were assigned at birth) is considered confidential and should only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis.

Being you in Workday and UW systems

Legal name change: In order to get your legal name changed at UW, you will need a Social Security card with your new name on it (a receipt will not work).

Unless you are a medical centers employee, the name change process will be initiated in Workday. You will need to go through your department's Workday HR Partner.

If you are a medical centers employee, visit a Medical Centers HR Office to initiate the process: at Harborview, go to HR in the Patricia Steele Building; at UWMC, HR is in BB150; or at UW Tower – UWMC HR (by appointment).

Certain documents will require a legal name change in order for the University to change your name on the document – including official documents such as transcripts, diplomas, and financial aid records for alumni.

Preferred name change: For other documents and University systems, including Workday, the UW Directory, UW NetID, and Husky Card, you can use your preferred name without a legal name change.

- Use [Identity.UW](#) to change how your name appears in Workday and the UW Directory. Select the “Set preferred name” button to get started.
- Contact the [UW-IT Service Center](#) if you would like to change your UW NetID. When you call, you will be asked for your Employee ID number (EID) and last 6 digits of your Social Security number (SSN).
- Visit a [Husky Card ID Center location](#) to request a replacement Husky Card. Bring your current card with you to the ID Center. All name change replacement cards are assessed the standard \$25 replacement fee. Note: Please wait at least 24 hours after changing your name in Workday before visiting a Husky Card ID Center to update your name on your Husky Card.

Exhibit B

HEALTH SCIENCES SERVICES

/ [Health Sciences Building Management](#) / All-Gender Restrooms

All-Gender Restrooms

All-gender restrooms are available in the following locations within Magnuson Health Sciences Center (MHSC) and the Foege Building.

All restrooms in the Health Sciences Education Building (HSEB) are all-gender.

- MHSC A312
- MHSC A313
- MHSC B136
- MHSC D048
- MHSC F044
- MHSC G162
- MHSC G164
- MHSC I303
- MHSC I403
- MHSC RR113
- MHSC T200G

- MHSC T266
- MHSC T268
- MHSC T334
- MHSC T447
- MHSC T450
- MHSC T749 (CLOSED FOR RENOVATION)
- MHSC T751 (CLOSED FOR RENOVATION)
- Foege N402
- Foege S035
- Foege S327

Health Sciences Building Management

[Access Badges and Photo IDs](#)

[All-Gender Restrooms](#)

[Building Access Coordinator \(BAC\)](#)

[Building Management Policies](#)

[Building Shutdown and Work Notifications](#)

[Common Areas](#)

[Event Door Unlocks](#)

[Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans](#)

[Freezer Alley](#)

[Keys](#)

[Lactation and Wellness Rooms](#)

[Loading Docks](#)

[Lost and Found](#)

[Posting and Digital Signage Approval](#)

[Security](#)

[Showers](#)

[HS Building Management Team](#)

CONTACT BUILDING MANAGEMENT

Health Sciences Center T283

UW Box 357175

206-685-0143

hsbuild@uw.edu

BM OFFICE HOURS

Hours: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. & 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Days: Monday - Friday

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