

Inclusive Washrooms at Western



Western is committed to diversity and inclusion.

As part of that commitment, posters have been placed on some washroom entrances and state, “Western respects everyone’s right to choose a washroom appropriate for them. Trust the person using this space belongs here”.

These posters support Western’s commitment to a diverse and inclusive campus. They also align with human rights law and respond to concerns about gender policing that some campus members have experienced when using washroom facilities.

Gender policing is where someone imposes or enforces normative gender expressions – i.e., the narrow definitions of what a man or a woman should do or look like - on an individual who they perceive as not adequately performing, through appearance or behaviour, the sex that was assigned to them at birth. [Read more about gender policing on Wikipedia.](#)

Gender policing a washroom is inappropriate and is contrary to Western's policy on non-discrimination and harassment.

It is up to the individual to decide what washroom they wish to use based on their lived identity.

It is not up to anyone else to decide who can use, or who should use, any particular washroom facility.

What is Washroom Inclusivity?

Washroom inclusivity is a shift in how we think about the use of the washroom space. It is thinking about the washroom in terms of the service it provides, as opposed to the identity of the person using it.

Western has long considered washroom inclusivity in addressing accessibility for persons with disabilities within washroom spaces. Single-user washrooms have also been made inclusive and available to all, regardless of gender identity and gender expression (see discussion on single-user washrooms). Family needs have also been considered and change tables have been installed in washrooms around campus. Washroom inclusivity is on-going work. We are now shifting to further consider washroom inclusivity of multi-user spaces from the perspective of gender.

Gender Identity and Washrooms

Everyone has the right to use the washroom without fear of violence or humiliation. Public institutions like Western University have a responsibility to respect an individual's right to choose a washroom that is appropriate for them. In fact, this is the law.

TransPULSE, a 2010 Ontario-based research study on trans health, found the following:

- 20% of trans people "had been physically or sexually assaulted for being trans, and another 34% had been verbally threatened or harassed but not assaulted.
- Approximately, two-thirds of trans people in Ontario had avoided public spaces or situations because they feared harassment, being perceived as trans, or being "outed" as trans. Among those who had begun to live in their felt gender full or part-time, this proportion was higher (83%).
- The majority (57%) of trans Ontarians had avoided public washrooms due to these safety fears. (Bauer and Scheim, 2015).

In 2012, Ontario's Human Rights Code was amended to add the protected grounds of gender identity and gender expression. This confirms that all people have the right to access the washrooms, change rooms or other gendered spaces that align with their gender identity. Despite this legal right, trans people continue to experience gender policing, inappropriate questions or comments, harassment, physical or sexual assault, and negative encounters with security personnel when using gender-segregated washrooms. Avoiding washrooms can have negative health consequences, and can force trans people to avoid other public spaces because the washrooms are unsafe (e.g. schools) (Schein, Bauer and Pyne, 2014).

Single-user washrooms – the “All-Gender Washroom” project (began in 2012)



The most “user-friendly” type of washrooms is a single user, gender neutral, accessible, washroom which also includes a change table. This type of washroom can be used by everyone and maximizes privacy (Rainbow Health Coalition, 2015).

A single-user washroom is not unlike the room, in many private homes, that is outfitted with washroom facilities (i.e., a toilet, a sink, etc.) and used by all occupants of the home, without regard to the gender identity or gender expression of the individual using it. Therefore, a single-user washroom marked as a “men’s washroom” or “women’s washroom” is an unnecessary barrier to washroom access.

Single-user washrooms are available at Western. In 2013, a project began to replace all gender-specific signage on single-user washrooms with purple signs that simply read, “Washroom”. Where the washrooms are accessible, the accessibility symbol is displayed. Where the washrooms have a change table inside, this is also marked on the door.

We continue to monitor and replace single-user signage as necessary. We also recognize that single-user washrooms aren’t always conveniently located. It also bears emphasizing that single-user washrooms are an option. They are not intended to be *for*

any particular group and thus, people should not be directed to use them for the comfort of those who use multi-gender washrooms (this is washroom/gender policing). Rather, single user washrooms are available *to anyone* and can be used by *anyone* who is wants a private washroom facility.

A list of all single-user washrooms is available at this end of this document.

Multi-User Washrooms

Multi-user washrooms feature more than one stall and thus, they can be used by multiple people at a time. Where these washrooms are also accessible and/or have changing tables, they are marked accordingly. Signage marking these washrooms varies across campus.

With the exception of one washroom on campus, all multi-user washrooms are gender-segregated based on the gender binary – i.e., a “men’s washroom” or a “women’s washroom”. The sole multi-user all-gender washroom is located in the FIMS/Nursing building; however, it is not accessible.

Segregating washrooms by gender can affect many people who may not feel comfortable or welcome in washroom marked for men-only or women-only. For example:

- Those who do not identify as man/male or woman/female, trans people or gender non-conforming people
- Individuals with caregivers or attendants of a different gender identity.
- Parents caring for children of the opposite sex may need to choose between bringing the child into a washroom not designated for the child’s gender or entering a washroom not designated for their own gender.
- Men caring for babies often find that only the women’s washroom has a change table.

While Western does not yet have multi-user, fully accessible washrooms that are not marked in terms of gender, conversations in this regard are underway. The current poster campaign asks the community to **trust that the person using the space belongs there**. In other words, do not gender-police a washroom space by telling a person that they are in the wrong space and/or directing them to a different space.

We recognize that this is a shift in how many think about public washroom spaces. Anyone uncomfortable using a multi-user space for any reason is reminded that other washrooms, including single-user washrooms, are available.

Single-User Washrooms

List of Room Numbers, by Building:

Alumni Hall

- AH 103
- AH 109

Biotron

- BIOTRON 03
- BIOTRON 04

Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel

- BLWT 22
- BLWT 156

Collip Building

- CB 109

Chemistry Building

- ChB 006

Dr. Don Rix Clinical Skills Learning Building

- CSB 1733

Dental Sciences Building

- DSB 0160C
- DSB 0160D

Elborn College

- EC 1514
- EC 1515
- EC 2238
- EC 2239

Health Sciences Addition

- HSA 11

Arthur & Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building

- HSB 200P (inside Dean's office)
- HSB 422

Kresge Building

- KB 10

Natural Science Centre

- NSC 20A
- NSC 20B
- NSC 175 (inside Taylor Library).
- NSC 221

North Campus Building

- NCB 452
- NCB 453

Siebens Drake Research Institute

- SDRI 136
- SDRI 137

Social Science Centre

- SSC 3318
- SSC 4318
- SSC 5318
- SSC 6318
- SSC 7318
- SSC 8351

Somerville House

- SH 1302
- SH 3323
- SH 3325

Stevenson Hall

- STvH 1126
- STvH 1151
- STvH 2128
- STvH 4128

Support Services Building

- SSB 1312

Talbot College

- TC 135

University Community Centre

- UCC 11F (inside Student Health Services)
- UCC 12G (inside Student Health Services)
- UCC 14K (inside Student Health Services)
- UCC 14L (inside Student Health Services)
- UCC 15A (inside Student Health Services; accessible to staff only)
- UCC 25 (inside Student Health Services)
- UCC 26 (inside Student Health Services)
- UCC 148

John Labatt Visual Arts Centre

- VAC 303

Weldon Library

- WL 119A (locked – obtain key at service desk)
- WL 245B (locked – obtain key at service desk)

Western Student Recreation Centre

- Students can ask for a staff member at the equipment desk to open the family change room.

Western Student Services Building

- WSS 0147
- WSS 1119
- WSS 2119
- WSS 3119
- WSS 4119

Gender-neutral washrooms can also be found on the [floor plans inventory from Facilities Management](#)

Note: the list and floor plans are still being updated so be sure to check back as we identify more washrooms. If you find a single-user washroom (gender-neutral or not) that is not listed, please [email us](#).

Community Resources

[Equity & Human Rights Services](#)

[Western Queer Caucus: email](#)

[University Students' Council Peer Support Centre](#)

[Society of Graduate Students \(Pride Commissioner\): email](#)

[The Pride Library at Western University](#)

[The Wellness Centre](#)

[Alphabet Community Centre – Trans Youth London](#)

[Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line: 1-800-268-9688](#)

[PFLAG](#)

Further Learning Resources

[The Trans PULSE Project](#)

[The 519:](#)

- [Creating Authentic Spaces: A Gender Identity and Gender Expression Toolkit](#)
- [Media Reference Guide:](#)

[Rainbow Health Ontario](#)

[Egale Canada](#)

[The Canadian Centre for Gender + Sexual Diversity](#)

Please contact us if you have further resources to share