Frequently Asked Questions about the Gender Inclusive Living Experience (GILE)

We have a variety of gender inclusive housing options throughout our system. One of these options is the Gender Inclusive Living Experience (GILE), housed in East Quad.

Residents must apply for the Gender Inclusive Living Experience. The application is due no later than 12 pm (noon) on Friday, January 16, 2015.

Q: Why is it important to offer Gender Inclusive Housing options?

A: University Housing is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, comfortable and supportive living experience for all students living in the University of Michigan’s residential facilities. We offer gender inclusive housing to students who, because of gender identity* and/or gender expression*, prefer this option.

The majority of the university's residential system limits living arrangements to same-gender roommate pairings, which are not comfortable for some students. Gender inclusive housing options allow students who identify as transgender* and gender non-conforming* the ability to choose a roommate of any gender. The addition of the Gender Inclusive Living Experience acknowledges the diverse needs of the student body and underscores the importance of community. Gender inclusive housing options help further develop a residential climate that is positive, respectful, and inclusive for all residents. Gender inclusive housing is voluntary.

Q: Who can live in the Gender Inclusive Living Experience?

A: This housing option is open to all students. It provides options for students who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. The purpose of the Gender Inclusive Living Experience is to provide a safe space for transgender* and gender non-conforming* students. Allies are also encouraged to apply to reside in this community. Anyone who has a respect and understanding of gender identity and gender expression can live in the Gender Inclusive Living Experience.

Q: How are roommates chosen?

A: Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to self-select their roommate. If you are unable to identify a roommate and would like to live in the Gender Inclusive Living Experience, University Housing will pair you with a roommate during the assignment process.

Q: How many spaces are available?

A: The Gender Inclusive Living Experience will house twelve students in six double rooms for the 2015–16 academic year. There is the potential for more spaces depending on the number of applicants.
Q: How will the bathrooms work?

A: The Gender Inclusive Living Experience will have a gender inclusive bathroom. This means that the bathroom will not be restricted to a specific gender. This is an important aspect of the community as bathrooms can often be threatening places for individuals who identify as gender non-conforming (either through identity or presentation). The Gender Inclusive Living Experience will also be close to gender specific bathrooms. GILE community members who feel comfortable using gender specific bathrooms are asked to utilize them. Bathrooms that meet the needs of all members of the community will be available.

Q: I do not want to live in GILE, can I still live in Gender Inclusive Housing?

A: Yes, in addition to the Gender Inclusive Living Experience in East Quad we offer other gender inclusive housing options within our system.

Q: What if I still have questions?

A: If you have any questions or to discuss your interest or preferences, please contact Patty Griffin, Director of Residence Education at pgriffin@umich.edu 734-764-8515 or Will Sherry, Associate Director of The Spectrum Center at asherry@umich.edu or 734-763-4186.

Definitions

*Transgender* is a term used for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth, including but not limited to transsexuals, cross-dressers, androgynous people, genderqueers and gender non-conforming people.

*For the purpose of Gender Inclusive Housing, gender non-conforming* is a term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

*Gender identity* is an individual’s internal sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither, two-spirit, multi-gender, bi-gender, or another configuration of gender since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

*Gender expression* is the external manifestation of one's gender identity, usually expressed through "masculine", "feminine" or gender variant behavior, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics.

*Cisgender* is a term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth. For example, if a doctor said “it’s a boy!” when you were born, and you identify as a man, then you could be described as cisgender. In other words, ‘cisgender’ is used to describe people who are not transgender.