# Scottish universities face backlash and policy reviews after Supreme Court transgender ruling



The recent Supreme Court ruling concerning transgender rights has sent shockwaves through Scottish universities, forcing a reevaluation of policies that affect facility access. Glasgow University, for example, revealed that it had 22,775 female students compared to 14,915 male students in the 2023/24 academic year and is now in consultations about how the ruling impacts its inclusivity practices. A spokesperson stated the institution’s aim to cultivate an inclusive community, but the commitment appears increasingly disconnected from the realities expressed by women concerned about safety and fairness. Their policy allowing individuals to use facilities aligning with their acquired gender, formalised in May 2024, is now under scrutiny.

Similarly, the University of Edinburgh has reiterated its guidance that permits all students to use facilities that correspond with their gender identity, contingent upon appropriate resources being available. With 25,290 female and 15,105 male students, the university's policy ostensibly seeks to champion inclusion. However, following the controversial ruling in April regarding mixed-gender facilities, university leaders are facing significant backlash. Fiona McAnena from the charity Sex Matters has strongly challenged such policies, emphasizing the rationale for separating facilities based on biological sex.

In this climate, the University of Edinburgh claims it will review its policies with "compassion" and "legal rigor." However, consulting with the community to ensure a welcoming environment may overlook the legitimate concerns of those advocating for the rights and safety of women. This sentiment mirrors broader apprehensions echoed across various institutions, suggesting that the ruling has ignited a significant debate surrounding transgender rights and women's rights within the public sector.

The University of Stirling’s Students' Union has expressed disappointment following the ruling, yet they pledge unwavering support for transgender rights. Like many other institutions, they await guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which may prioritize the agenda of inclusivity over the safety and comfort of female students. Meanwhile, Robert Gordon University is also revising its policies in light of the Supreme Court’s decision, promising to uphold protections against discrimination, albeit under uncertain legal interpretations that may allow for compromises on women's rights.

Conversely, some entities, such as Barclays, are taking a firmer stance, outright banning trans women from female toilets. This divergence among organisations highlights the contentious atmosphere surrounding gender identity policies in today’s socio-political landscape. Advocacy groups aligned with this agenda portray these developments as backward steps, disregarding the settled rights of women and echoing a growing frustration among many citizens. Such actions underscore the prevailing tensions and complexities surrounding gender identity discussions in Scotland, which show little sign of resolution.

As universities move forward, the need to reassess their policies is crucial—not just to comply with legal requirements but to uphold their promised commitment to safety and fairness for all students. This ongoing discourse will profoundly influence the future of gender rights within the educational framework, marking a pivotal point in how institutions reconcile evolving societal values with the rights of women.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25196987.trans-rights-row-scottish-universities-review-policies/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/corporate-information/trans-inclusion-policy> - The University of Dundee's Trans Inclusion Policy, updated on 11 February 2021, demonstrates the institution's commitment to equality for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. The policy outlines support for those presenting in a gender different from that registered at birth and those identifying as gender non-conforming. It provides guidance for staff and students undergoing gender reassignment and emphasizes the university's dedication to creating an inclusive environment where unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on gender identity are not tolerated.
3. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-news/revised-trans-policy-staff-and-new-reasonable-adjustments-policy> - The University of Edinburgh has updated its Trans Policy (Staff) and introduced a new Reasonable Adjustments Policy to foster a positive, open, and inclusive working environment. The revised Trans Policy (Staff) replaces the previous Trans Equality Policy that applied to both students and staff, now with separate policies for staff and students. These policies aim to support and encourage discussions between colleagues and their managers, reflecting a modern understanding of workforce demographics and health needs, contributing to the well-being of all colleagues.
4. <https://brignews.com/2025/05/06/concerns-grow-at-university-amid-supreme-court-ruling-and-union-response-2/> - Following the Supreme Court ruling on 16 April 2025, the University of Stirling's Students' Union expressed concerns over the ruling's impact on transgender rights. The union described the ruling as 'disappointing' and called for guidance on its implementation. They reassured students of continued protection against harassment and discrimination for transgender individuals. The university's spokesperson stated that they are awaiting guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to inform their policies and procedures, reflecting a cautious approach to the legal change.
5. <https://www.christian.org.uk/news/edinburgh-uni-imposes-reckless-trans-policy-on-single-sex-spaces/> - The University of Edinburgh's new Trans Policy (Students) allows individuals who self-identify as female to use women's toilets and facilities. The policy has been criticised by women's rights campaigners as illegal and dangerous. It has been revealed that the Staff Pride Network was the only staff body involved in the review of the policy. The policy claims that pronouns are integral to self-identification, listing options such as 'he/him', 'she/her', 'they/them', and 'he/she/they/ze'.
6. <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/newsandblogs/article/UKSupremeCourtruling> - The Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) has expressed support for transgender students following the UK Supreme Court ruling on 16 April 2025. EUSA committed to providing appropriate facilities for all members and assured students and staff, particularly the trans community, of their support during this uncertain time. They called on the university to publish clarification regarding its own policies in light of the new guidance and encouraged students to reach out if they have concerns.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/01/10/scottish-universities-drop-stonewall-equality-league-tables/> - Leading Scottish universities, including the University of Edinburgh, have dropped out of the controversial equality league tables compiled by LGBT lobby group Stonewall. This decision follows claims that participation can inhibit academic freedom and open debate about transgender issues. The University of Edinburgh declined to submit an application for this year's rankings, despite previously highlighting its participation as a sign of commitment to diversity and inclusion.