



OFFICE OF
CAREER EDUCATION

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

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Recognizing that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and non-binary students and alumni may have some unique considerations in their work-related decisions, our career coaches are committed to helping queer & trans students/alumni with their specific concerns and issues.

As staff and allies, we strive to:

- Honor each unique interpretation of self/gender/sexuality to its fullest
- Help students/alumni with questions they need help with
- Make as few assumptions as possible
- Approach every person with a kind heart and sincere intention
- Be open to learning and growing a little more every day.

Should I out myself in my resume or cover letter?

Outing yourself at any stage of the job search process is a very personal decision — there is no “right” or “wrong” answer, only the answer that is right for you at this time. Consider your own comfort level and interest in sharing your sexuality or gender identity with others. It is important to many people to be out and visible, others prefer to be more private. Is it important to you to be out at work?

Second, research your audience. How likely will the organization you are applying to be accepting of LGBTQ+ -related involvement? If you are concerned they will not be accepting, there are ways to highlight the skills you developed without highlighting the organization you worked with.

Should I out myself in an interview? Can a potential employer ask about my sexuality or gender identity?

- Once again, outing yourself at any stage of the job search process is personal and up to you.
- Employers can and might ask about your sexuality. (It is illegal in some states to make a hiring decision based on your answer; in others states it remains legal to discriminate against people because of their LGBTQ+ identity.)
- It is your choice whether you answer the question directly or not — there are many ways to redirect the conversation or dismiss the question as irrelevant to your employment.
- The best you can do is prepare for the questions you would be most nervous about answering so that you go into the interview feeling confident and prepared to tactfully negotiate questions around your sexuality or gender identity.
- Mock interviews with a career coach are a great way to prepare yourself for an interview whether you may wish to out yourself or not. Contact the Office of Career Education at 304-696-2370.

www.marshall.edu/careereducation

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS (CONT.)

What about outing myself to a networker or at a career fair?

Once again, this is a personal choice - and your choice! Coming out to potential networkers involves many of the same issues you might consider in choosing whether to come out in an interview or on your resume. Researching an organization's policies and climate gives you information about the general attitude towards LGBTQ+ people; however, the individual you are talking to may not hold the same attitude reflected in the policy. Consider:

- How important is it for you to be out at work? This is a key question.
- How safe/comfortable do you feel in the networking location? Are there allies or threats nearby? Are there resources available for LGBTQ+ candidates at the career fair or networking event?
- Does the organization have domestic partner benefits, non-discrimination policies, and/or support groups for LGBTQ+ employees? How did they rank on the [Human Right Campaign website](#)?

How do I include skills gained through work with LGBTQ+ organizations without outing myself in the paperwork?

If you decide you do not want to out yourself on your resume and cover letter, there are still several options for you to convey the skills you have gained from LGBTQ+-related activities:

- You could choose to list the organization(s) by either an acronym or a general name such as “community organization” or “anti-discrimination organization.” However, be prepared to explain during an interview what the acronym stands for or what an “Anti-Discrimination Organization” does.
- Another option is to use a functional resume organized around skill areas rather than the chronological timeline of specific jobs. This allows you to highlight your skills while de-emphasizing where you developed them. [Learn about functional resumes.](#)
- You might also choose to omit any reference to LGBTQ+ organizations.

What about specific issues facing trans & non-binary candidates?

- In your research, look specifically for gender identity/expression language in discrimination policies, gender-neutral bathrooms, and support groups for trans employees.
- Additionally, preparing for all kinds of questions will allow you to clearly articulate yourself and be more confident in your interview. While no amount of preparation can overcome bias, you will increase your chances of a successful job search if you feel confident and self-assured.
- For more information on trans issues in the workplace, visit [transequality.org](#)

How do I search for LGBTQ+ friendly employers?

While it may be difficult to determine how truly supportive any organization is, exploring some key indicators can give you a sense of the espoused values of an institution.

- Non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
- Trainings that include sensitivity to LGBTQ+ issues
- In-house support or employee groups, either formal or informal
- Gender-neutral bathrooms
- Positive statements from people with experience