

# USA Fencing Transgender And Non-Binary Policy

*UPDATED July 18, 2025 — Effective Aug. 1, 2025*

USAFencing supports fencing for all. In July 2025, the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), through its [updated Athlete Safety Policy](#) <sup>↗</sup>, directed every National Governing Body to align athlete-eligibility policies with a federal executive order. The following Transgender & Non-Binary Participation Policy, effective Aug. 1, 2025, meets that requirement while upholding our commitment to a respectful, inclusive, and competitive environment.

## Transgender & Non-Binary Athlete Eligibility Policy, Effective Aug. 1, 2025

### I. The Scope

The proposed policy options are designed to provide clarity for the participation of transgender and non-binary individuals participating in USA Fencing sanctioned competitions. The proposed policy will not apply to:

- Unsanctioned fencing events or activity
- Any area or activity that is not considered a competition.

### II. Membership Profiles

All USA Fencing members are permitted to willingly change their gender identity to that of which they identify in the “Personal Information” section of their membership profile, as well as their pronouns that they wish to be addressed by. This does not define eligibility to participate in events and therefore does not impact competition sex.

### III. Policy for Domestic Competition





#### Event Categories

USA Fencing sanctioned events that are not gender-mixed will offer two categories – Women's and Men's event categories. The following guidelines should be applied to each category.

- **Women's category:** Athletes who are of the female sex at birth and have not started female-to-male hormone treatment will be eligible to compete in the women's category, provided all other entry criteria have been met.
- **Men's category:** Open to all athletes not eligible for the Women's Category, including transgender women, transgender men, non-binary and intersex athletes, and cisgender male athletes, provided that all other entry criteria have been met.
- Mixed events can still be sanctioned by USA Fencing.

### IV. International Competition

Any athlete who qualifies for competitions hosted by the International Fencing Federation (FIE) World Championship or World Abilitysport are to adhere to the compliance requirements set forth by said organization's eligibility policies. Failure to adhere to that organization's transgender and non-binary policy guidelines may impact the athlete's participation in international competition and result in disciplinary action.

For the updated international transgender policies, please refer to the  [International Olympic Committee](#)  , [FIE](#)  and [World Abilitysport](#)  .


### V. Anti-Doping Requirements Remain Applicable

In accordance with the FIE and World Abilitysport, it is the responsibility of the athlete to monitor testosterone levels and submit appropriate documentation to satisfy anti-doping policies.

If hormonal medications utilized for gender transition are listed on the World Anti-Doping Agency's Prohibited List, USADA can, at their exclusive discretion, grant a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). The TUE application process is thorough and designed to balance the need to provide athletes access to critical medication while protecting the rights of athletes to compete on a level playing field.

Further information regarding the TUE application process can be found [here](#)  .

### VI. Reporting Grievances

Abuse, harassment, and/or harmful acts towards the transgender and nonbinary community will not be tolerated. Any instances or grievances should be immediately reported to USA Fencing Compliance and Safe Sport. Complete the online [reporting form here](#)  .

It is important to note that there may be existent laws per state, and an evolving federal legal landscape that have implications on the adherence to the proposed policy. In such cases, it is the responsibility of that event host(s) or individual(s) to make USA Fencing aware.

Policy development governing transgender and non-binary participation in sport is a fluid and ongoing phenomenon. As new research on physiological effects of gender transition on athletic performance emerge,

policies are subject to reevaluation and change to ensure they reflect the most current evidence-based information.

## Vocabulary

- **Gender:** Broadly, gender is a set of socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate (see Social Construction Theory).
- **Sex:** Refers to the allocation of male or female assessed at the birth of an individual.
- **Gender Binary:** A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male or female. Gender identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.
- **Gender Identity:** One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender Expression:** External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
- **Cisgender:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **Mixed-category:** Indication that the category is open to all gender identity(ies).
- **Non-binary:** An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.
- **Transgender:** An adjective to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People who are transgender may also use other terms, in addition to transgender, to describe their gender more specifically. Use the term(s) the person uses to describe themselves. It is important to note that being transgender is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures. A person can call themselves transgender the moment they realize that their gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Related Research Studies

Tidmas V, Halsted C, Cohen M, Bottoms L. The Participation of Trans Women in Competitive Fencing and Implications on Fairness: A Physiological Perspective Narrative Review. Sports. 2023;

11(7):133. <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports11070133> 

FBASES, R. B., & Hicks, K. (2021). The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences Expert Statements. Journal of Sports Sciences, 39(S2), 1–66.

D2.S2.1(2) The BASES Expert Statement on Eligibility for Sex Categories in Sport: Trans Athletes produced on behalf of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences by Dr. Georgina Stebbings, Dr. Adam Herbert, Dr. Shane Heffernan, Prof. Roger Pielke Jr., Prof. Ross Tucker and Dr. Alun Williams.



## Reporting Concerns & Getting Help

If you ever feel unsafe, harassed, or excluded because of your gender identity, please tell us so we can help.

- **Online:** [File a Report](#)
- **Phone:** 719-259-2544

All reports are taken seriously, investigated promptly, and kept confidential to the fullest extent possible. Your voice helps us keep fencing safe and welcoming for everyone.

### Mental-Wellness Resources

Free, confidential mental-wellness support is available through our partner EndureAthletic Mental Fitness. Access 24/7 chat, phone, or video sessions by emailing [information@usafencing.org](mailto:information@usafencing.org).

## Frequently Asked Questions

*FAQs posted July 18, 2025*

### Why is USAFencing updating this policy now?

The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) [directed every National Governing Body](#) to align athlete safety policies with a federal executive order. Our update brings fencing into compliance while preserving our commitment to inclusion and fairness.

### When does the updated policy take effect?

Aug. 1, 2025. Competitions that begin on or after this date will follow the new policy.

### Which USAFencing competitions are covered?

All sanctioned domestic events — national, regional, and local — must follow this policy.

### What event categories are available under the new policy?

- **Women's category:** Athletes of the female sex who meet all entry criteria.
- **Men's category:** Open to all athletes not eligible for the Women's category, including transgender women, transgender men, non-binary, intersex, and cisgender male athletes.
- **Mixed events** remain an option for hosts.

### How does the policy affect international competition?

Athletes who earn spots at FIE or WorldAbilitysport events must also satisfy those organizations' eligibility rules, which may differ from USAFencing's domestic policy.

### What about anti-doping requirements?

All athletes must continue to follow World Anti-Doping Agency rules. If transition-related medications appear on the Prohibited List, a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) from USADA may be required.

### How do I report discrimination, harassment, or abuse?

Submit a report at <https://www.usafencing.org/fencesafe-report> . Every report is taken seriously and investigated promptly.

### What mental-wellness resources are available?

Free, confidential support is offered through EndureAthletic Mental Fitness. Contact [information@usafencing.org](mailto:information@usafencing.org) to take advantage of this resource.



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