Get Involved!

• Check out our Web site:
  
  www.queensu.ca/positivespace

• E-mail us for dates when Information Sessions are being held
  (posspace@queensu.ca).
• Attend an Information Session.
• After the session, decide if you want to be a program participant.
• If so, fill out the participant form and get your sticker to post in a work, living, or study space that is under your control.

Join the Committee!

• The Positive Space Committee meets twice each term to maintain and develop the program.
• E-mail us for more information:
  
  posspace@queensu.ca

Our Sponsors

Queen’s Human Rights Office
Room A320, Mackintosh-Corry Hall
Tel: 613.533.6886
E-Mail: hrights@queensu.ca
Web: www.queensu.ca/humanrights

Ontario Public-Interest Research Group (OPIRG)-Kingston
The Grey House, 51 Bader Lane
Tel: 613.533.3189
E-Mail: info@opirgkingston.org
Web: www.opirgkingston.org

Education in Queer Issues Project (EQuiP)
The Grey House, 51 Bader Lane
Tel: 613.533.3154
E-Mail: equip@ams.queensu.ca
Web: sites.google.com/site/equipqueens

...and generous donations from Queen’s students.

Our Logo

The Positive Space logo consists of an inverted rainbow triangle overlaid with the Queen’s “Q.” The 6-colour rainbow is taken from the Rainbow Flag, a common symbol of queer pride and support. The triangle is a reminder of the pink and black triangles used to mark gay men and lesbians in Nazi concentration camps. Our design was modelled on York University’s Positive Space logo. The Positive Space Program was established at Queen’s in 1999.

What is the Positive Space Program?

Positive Feedback

Seeing the [Positive Space] stickers up changed my experience of Queen’s. Suddenly I felt recognized and included… I even got up the courage to ask my prof if I could write a paper on Queer Studies.

—Graduate student

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Positive Space Program?

The Positive Space Program brings visibility and support to queer communities at Queen’s.

Positive Space stickers posted at the entrance to work, living, or study areas encourage the Queen’s community to celebrate the gender and sexual diversity that exists on campus and to work to overcome subtle and overt forms of discrimination and harassment.

This program is a reflection of Queen’s commitment to welcome and include all members of the community and to create a campus that is free from discrimination based on gender variance and sexual identity.

Who should join the Positive Space program?

All members of the Queen’s community who appreciate sexual and gender diversity are encouraged to become involved—staff, faculty, and students.

Participants help to create positive spaces at Queen’s by avoiding making assumptions about anyone’s sexual orientation or gender identity and by signalling that all are welcome.

When asked, participants offer information and support (not counselling).

Participants are familiar with queer issues, local resources, and discrimination policies.

Why is the Positive Space Program needed at Queen’s?

In spite of the positive steps undertaken by many at Queen’s, fear of and hostility towards sexual and gender diversity continue to compromise the well-being of queer students, staff, and faculty.

People are sometimes subjected to insults and harassment, and the histories and perspectives of queer people are rarely reflected in texts and curricula.

This environment causes many people to hide their sexual orientation and gender variance. People who are “out” may feel isolated and invisible.

The Positive Space Program makes it clear that there are people and services with whom lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, and other individuals can feel confident that their differences will be respected and celebrated.

Why have a special program for sexual and gender diversity?

A program for all diverse groups experiencing marginalization would be ideal, but there is a particular need for the Positive Space Program because of the potential invisibility of sexual and gender diversity.

Sexual orientation and gender identity can be hidden. Fear can keep many people closeted. Even today, many faculty, students, and staff live in fear of being “found out” and do not pursue scholarship or associations that may raise suspicions about their identities.

Although the Positive Space Program focuses on sexual and gender diversity, research suggests that queer-positive attitudes are correlated with support for other forms of diversity. It is expected that members of other groups will also find respect and support in queer-positive spaces.

Will a sticker on my door lead others to think I identify in the queer community?

In a word, yes. Some people will assume that participation in the Positive Space Program is indicative of a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Therefore, volunteers and participants—regardless of how they actually identify—must decide if they are willing to be visibly aligned with queer communities and assumed by some to belong to those communities.

Positive Feedback

My English teacher stopped [someone from telling] a homophobic joke once.... Man, I thought I'd get down on my knees and kiss her on the spot. It made me feel like I wasn’t all alone. I even thought about coming out to her, but I didn’t. But it helped just the same.

—Undergraduate student