Inclusive Language Guide

RATIONALE

The inclusive language guide is necessary for nurturing the diversity and inclusion at the University of Calgary. Using the inclusive language in all university interactions fosters a community of respect. Inclusive communication avoids use of words or expressions that exclude specific groups of people or are no longer acceptable.

The language associated with gender, disabilities, age, class, size, Indigenous Peoples, racial, ethnic and religious identity can be sensitive and is always changing as societal views change and groups choose to redefine their own identities. Please refer to information below and the glossaries in the Bibliography for more detail. These glossaries have been used in this document to define the terms included here; however, there are many other definitions available in the glossaries themselves.

Remember, not every member of a group will agree on the identifier. The language below is what is in current use and most widely accepted. It is always important to ask the individual what he/she/they prefer as terminology is continually shifting with societal norms, values and laws.

It is also important to note intersectionality, that is, that many identities do not stand alone but are interconnected and co-exist in an individual. To the extent that individuals embody multiple identities that are not valued, those individuals will be at attenuated risk for discrimination and exclusion.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Diversity – Individual and group differences (including but not limited to differences in personality, political orientations, life experiences, learning styles, working styles, race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, country of origin, religious affiliations, and viewpoints.)

Cultural Literacy - Also known as Cultural Humility or Intercultural Competence it is the acquisition of awareness, knowledge and skills required to communicate, work and live effectively in a pluralistic society.

Discrimination - Denial of equitable treatment, civil liberties and opportunity. The subornation of people or groups resulting in unequal treatment and deprivation of political, social and economic rights. Discrimination occurs on grounds covered in the Alberta Human Rights act it is often invisible to those who are not its targets, or who enjoy power and privilege in a society. Discrimination can be individual or systemic and may be absent of intent.

Dominant Group - Not necessarily a majority in terms of numbers, but the group with power, privilege and social status in a society. Attributes of this group are accepted as the 'norm' by which other groups are measured or compared, often to their detriment.

Equal Opportunity Program – An explicit set of policies, guidelines and actions devised to eradicate discriminatory practices and to ensure access to and full participation in education and employment opportunities, housing, health care, and the services, goods and facilities available to the general community.

Equity – Fair treatment of everyone that addresses specific needs, barriers and accommodations to ensure all have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of society and its benefits. Equality, in which individual needs and differences are ignored, is not sufficient.

Inclusion - The process of creating a culture and environment that recognizes, appreciates, and effectively utilizes the talents, skills, and perspectives of every individual. An inclusive environment uses these skills to achieve the organization's objectives and mission; connects individuals to the organization; and encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness.

Intercultural Competence – ability and knowledge of self and those around you; having skills to interpret, analyze, and interact with students, staff, academics and colleagues; valuing various beliefs, values, and behaviours; and successfully interacting with persons of diverse backgrounds.

Institutional Change - A planned approach to developing and implementing inclusive policies, programs and practices adapted to the needs of a diverse and evolving society.

Privilege – unearned power that gives certain groups and individuals economic, social and political advantages; the unequal distribution of and access to resources, benefits and status.

Systemic Discrimination - The institutionalization of discrimination through policies and practices which may appear neutral on the surface but which have an exclusionary impact on particular groups, such that various minority groups are discriminated against, intentionally or unintentionally. This occurs in institutions and organizations where the policies, practices and procedures (e.g. employment systems – job requirements, hiring practices, promotion procedures, etc.) exclude and/or act as barriers to racialized

groups. Systemic discrimination may also result from some government laws and regulations.

Underrepresented/Underserved/Marginalized - Individuals or groups that have historically been or currently are inadequately or insufficiently represented, under resourced, and/or oppressed due to structural and/or societal obstacles and disparities.

ABILITY/DISABILITY

Avoid using language portraying disability as a negative. Refrain from using terms and phrases such as: handicapped, crippled, challenged, victim of…, afflicted with…, or suffers from…

It is advisable to ask people how they prefer to be addressed, because sometimes even using the term disabled might be problematic. The word "disabled" is an adjective, not a noun. It is always advisable to put the person ahead of the impairment as that is just one small part of who they are. Also remember, many people with disabilities are mentally and physically healthy.

Accommodation means making changes to certain rules, standards, policies, workplace cultures and physical environments to ensure that they do not have a negative effect on a person because of the person's mental or physical disability, religion, gender or any other protected ground. (Alberta Human Rights Commission, see http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment/employer_info/accommodation/duty_to_accommodate.asp).

Barrier is a physical or societal structure, design, practice or rule that prevents or impedes individuals from accessing a service or community life.

Disability - Any degree of physical or mental impairment as defined and consistent with the Alberta Human Rights Act, regardless of cause or duration. A natural or acquired characteristic that may prevent someone from fully taking part in educational, social, economic, political, religious or formal activities of a group due to societal barriers. Accommodation may be required to enable full participation.

Duty to Accommodate - The legal duty to accommodate an individual's needs based on a Protected Ground. See http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/bulletins/duty_to_accommodate.asp

Universal Design involves designing products, instructional materials, services and spaces so that the widest possible range of people can use them. Universal Design evolved from Accessible or Barrier Free Design, a process that addresses the needs of people with disabilities. Universal Design goes further by recognizing that there is a wide spectrum of human abilities. Everyone, even the most able-bodied person, passes through childhood, periods of temporary illness, injury and old age. By designing for this human diversity, the focus is on creating an environment (physical, learning and service) that is easier for all people to use.

Preferred	Problematic
Person who is blind or visually impaired	Blind person
Person with diabetes	Diabetic
Person living with a specific condition	Stricken with…, suffers from…, victim of …
Little person, someone of short stature	Dwarf, midget
Cognitively disabled/delayed, person with intellectual disability	Retarded
Person with an emotional disability	Emotionally disturbed
Person in or who uses a wheelchair	Handicapped, wheelchair-bound, confined to wheelchair
Person with psychiatric disability; person with a mental health condition	Mentally-ill, hyper-sensitive, insane, crazy, psycho
Non-disabled	Normal, able-bodied, healthy
Person with a speech impairment	Speech impediment

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES [1]

Aboriginal – The first inhabitants of Canada and includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Aboriginal should not be used as a noun.

Aboriginal people (s) – The term is used to refer to more than one Aboriginal person.This term is moving out of favour and Indigenous is becoming more accepted and widely used.

First Nation(s) – This term came into common usage in the 1970s to replace 'Indian' which some people found offensive. There is no legal definition for this term in Canada.

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[1] There are a number of good glossaries that discuss terminology as it relates to Indigenous people. Due to the nuances of various definitions, some of which are offensive to some people but not others, readers are referred to the glossaries in the Bibliography.

Do not use First Nations as a synonym for Aboriginal or Indigenous Peoples because it does not include Inuit or Métis.

Indian – Indian is a term used to refer to the legal identity of a First Nations person registered under the "Indian Act". It is an outdated term that is considered to be pejorative by most people and should not be used by non-Indigenous persons.

Indigenous – The term is used when referring to variety of Aboriginal peoples. While it must be stated that there is no generic term that captures the diverse identities, cultures and backgrounds of Indigenous peoples around the world, it was Indigenous peoples themselves who choose this word at the United Nations level to best describe the original peoples of a territory.

Despite this term, the (general) preference is to refer specifically to the Indigenous Nation, community or peoples from which the individual belongs – for example, Siksika from Siksika Nation (Blackfoot).

Inuit – are circumpolar people living in the far north of Canada who are not considered "Indians" under Canadian law.

Inuk – The singular form of Inuit.

Inuktitut – The Inuit language.

Métis – French for 'mixed blood". The Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes Metis as one of the thre Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Historically, the term applied to children of French fur traders and Cree women in the Prairies, of English and Scottish traders and Dene women in the north, and Inuit and British in Newfoundland and Labrador. Today the term is used broadly to describe people with mixed Indigenous and Euorpean ancestry who identify themselves as Metis. Alberta is the only province to have defined the term in law. The _Métis Settlements Act_ defines a Métis as "a person of Aboriginal ancestry who identifies with Métis history and culture" in the context of creating a test for legal eligibility for membership in one of Alberta's eight Métis settlements.

Native – The term denotes a person originating from a particular place and not persons of Indigenous ancestry necessarily. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid using this term. Use Aboriginal or Indigenous. The word "native" might hold negative connotations for some and can be perceived as disrespectful.

Non-Status 'Indian' – People who consider themselves to be members of a First Nation but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as such under the

'Indian Act' either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost their status rights. They are not entitled to the same rights and benefits as Status 'Indians'.

Status 'Indian' – People who have their names included on the 'Indian' register, an official list maintained by the federal government. There are criteria that determine who can be registered as a Status 'Indian' and only these are recognized as 'Indians' under the 'Indian Act' and are entitled to rights and benefits under the law.

To show respect, it is advisable to capitalize Aboriginal, Indigenous, First Nation, Inuit, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, Ojibwe, Tsuu T'ina, Blackfoot, Siksika, Kainai, Chipewyan and Cree. Use community, ancestry, territory, or home instead of reserve.

AGE, CLASS, SIZE

Ageism, Classism, and Sizeism are less talked about, but are prevalent forms of discrimination in our society. Below is a list of preferred vs outdated terms arising when age, class and size are discussed.

Ageism - The term "ageism" refers to two concepts: a socially constructed way of thinking about older persons based on negative attitudes and stereotypes about aging and a tendency to structure society based on an assumption that everyone is young, thereby failing to respond appropriately to the real needs of older persons. Age discrimination is often not taken as seriously as other forms of discrimination. However, it can have the same economic, social and psychological impact as any other form of discrimination. (Ontario Human Rights Commission http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ageism-and-age-discrimination-fact-sheet).

Classism - The cultural, institutional and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign value to people according to their socio-economic status, thereby resulting in differential treatment.

Sizeism or **size discrimination** is discrimination based on a person's size. Size discrimination usually refers to extremes in physical size, such as very tall or short; extremely thin or fat. Like other forms of discrimination, sizeism isn't always explicit. It involves the perpetuation of stereotypes and attitudes which support those stereotypes, such as the idea that fat people are lazy, fat people eat too much and don't exercise enough, tall people are good basketball players, or that overweight people often contract diseases which render some jobs dangerous for themselves and others. It is newly emerging as the last bastion of 'acceptable discrimination'.

Preferred	Problematic/Outdated
The preferred terminology is shifting for people as they age. Best to ask.	Older people, elders, seniors, senior citizen
Economically disadvantaged, person living at or below poverty line, people experiencing poverty	Poor person, poverty-stricken person
Person experiencing homelessness	Homeless
Person of size, larger bodied	Overweight person, obese, fat, skinny, beanpole

GENDER

Gender is a social and cultural construct; and it refers to a societal role, not one's assigned sex. Avoid the use of combination forms he/she, as well as the use of pronouns he/him/his. Instead, use plural nouns or pronouns (they, them, or their) or see chart below for newer pronouns being adopted.

Agender – Those whose gender identity does not align with any gender.

Ally – The term for an individual who is not necessarily a member of particular group (e.g., LGBTQ+), but supports that group's human rights and promotes equality and inclusion in various ways.

Androgynous– A person who does not identify or present as solely feminine nor masculine.

Asexual – An adjective describing the individual with no desire or interest in being sexually active.

Biphobia – the fear or hatred of bisexual individuals.

Bigender – a term associated with someone identifying as both man and woman.

Bisexual – An individual attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity.

Cisgender – A term denoting a person whose gender identity aligns with their assigned sex.

Closeted – Someone who is not disclosing their true sexual orientation or gender identity.

Coming Out – The process through which a person acknowledges and accepts their sexual orientation or gender identity and shares this with others.

Cross-dresser – A person wearing clothing stereotypically worn by the other sex, but has no intention to live full-time as the other sex.

Drag King – Female performers who dress as men for entertainment at clubs and events.

Drag Queen – Male performers who dress as women for entertainment at clubs and events.

FTM – A person transitioning from female to male.

Gay – An individual who is emotionally, sexually and/or romantically attracted to members of the same gender.

Gender – One's identity as man, woman or neither man nor woman. Gender is socially and culturally constructed roles, behaviours and attributes considered appropriate for males and females in a given society and is often based on one's assigned sex at birth.

Gender binary – The viewpoint that gender consists of only two gender identities, male/female.

Gender dysphoria – Prolonged state of distress caused by one being uncomfortable identifying with the gender related to their assigned sex at birth. For instance, one can be born male, but is not comfortable identifying as a man.

Gender expression – The way a person exhibits their gender identity through behaviour, clothing, and hairstyle.

Gender fluid - A term depicting a person who does not identify with a single gender.

Gender identity – One's concept of self as woman, man, blend of both, as two-spirit, or neither. One's gender identity may not be the same as one's assigned sex.

Gender non-conforming – A term for individuals whose gender identity does not fit into the societal expectations related to their assigned sex at birth.

Gender queer – Individuals who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female.

Gender transition – The process a person goes through to live as the gender with which they identify, which is different from their assigned sex at birth.

Heterosexism – The perception that heterosexuality is superior to other sexual orientations.

Homophobia – the fear or hatred of people attracted to members of the same sex.

Homosexual – An adjective ascribed to individuals sexually attracted to individuals of the same sex. This term is now seen as out-dated and offensive. Gay man/person/lesbian are preferred.

Intersex – "A term used for people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or chromosome pattern that does not seem to fit typical definitions of male or female." (Transgender Terminology Document)

Lesbian – A woman who is physically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to another woman or female-gendered person.

MTF – A person transitioning from male to female.

Non-binary gender – Any gender that falls outside of the binary system of man/woman.

Outing – Exposing someone's gender identity or sexual orientation without that individual's permission.

Queer – Although historically used as a negative term, queer is more commonly being used by the 'Rainbow Community' as an inclusive term to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and transgender people.

Rainbow Community – The multicolored rainbow flag was adopted in 1978 in San Francisco by the LGBTQ+ communities as a symbol of pride, solidarity, and the diversity of the gay community. The colours symbolize life (red), healing (orange), sunlight (yellow), nature (green), harmony/peace (blue), and spirit (purple violet).

Sex – Classification of a person as male, female or intersex based on their reproductive organs and functions. Biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male.

Sexual Orientation – A term describing a person's attraction to members of other or same sex.

Sex reassignment surgery – Medical procedure altering one's physical appearance to further reflect one's gender identity.

To be out – To be open about your sexual orientation and/or your gender identity.

Transgender - An overarching term for individuals whose gender identity or expression differs from societal expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth. "Trans" is a shorthand for "transgender".

Transgender man – The term for a transgender individual who identifies as a man (or whose gender identity is of a man) and was assigned female at birth.

Transgender woman – The term for a transgender individual who identifies as a woman (or whose gender identity is of a woman) and was assigned male at birth.

Transphobia – The fear or hatred of transgender individuals.

Transsexual – The term for a person whose gender identity is different from the assigned sex at birth, and who may alter his/her/their body through clothing, cosmetics, hormones and in some cases surgery to be more in line with their gender identity.

Two-Spirit – The term used in some First Nations communities to describe person whose individual spirit is a combination of both male and female spirits.

Gender Pronoun Guide

Subjective	Objective	Possessive adjective	Possessive pronoun	Reflexive	Pronunciation
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself	pronounced as it looks
He	Him	His	His	Himself	pronounced as it looks
Ze	Zim	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	Pronounced as it looks
Sie/Zie	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself	pronounced: zee, here, here, heres, hereself
Zie	Zir	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	pronounced: zee, zere, zere, zeres, zereself
Ey	Em	Eir	Eirs	Eirself	pronounced: A, M, ear, ears, earself
Per	Per	Pers	Pers	Perssself	pronounced as it looks
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themself	Pronounced as it looks

Table above is adapted from FORGE. Many of these are not yet widely understood or used.

List of useful terms when discussing gender.

Preferred	Problematic
The average person, people in general	The average man
Ancestors	Forefathers
Assigned sex	Biological sex
Chairperson, chair, moderator, discussion leader	Chairman
Folks, people, all	Guys
Humankind	Mankind
Human Achievements	Man's achievements
Other sex	Opposite sex
Police officer, flight attendant, postal worker, mail carrier/mail officer, fire fighter	Policeman, stewardess, mailman, fireman
Spouse, partner	Wife, husband
Women (over 18 years)	Girls
Workforce, personnel, workers, staff	Manpower
Working hours	Man hours

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are intentional or unintentional verbal or non-verbal behaviours or messages about a person's identity or group membership. Detailed examples of microaggressions can be found in the **Tool: Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send**.

RACE, ETHNICITY, RELIGION, CULTURE and IMMIGRANT STATUS

Avoid stereotyping and generalizations based on race and ethnicity. Capitalize the names of nationalities, peoples, races and tribes, e.g., Indigenous Peoples, Cree, Métis, Inuit, Arab, Caucasian, Jew, Latin, Asian, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Orthodox….

Race is a social construct and often is referred to as 'social race' to reflect this. Black and White are often capitalized when talking about race as they are often used as group designations and proper nouns. Capitalization also helps to underscore the political nature of these words and the tenuousness of their meaning.

The term Black person is acceptable in Canadian and American context. In Canada, African Canadian is rarely used, and in United States, African American is shifting to Black to be a more inclusive term for the Black diaspora.

Terms "visible minority" and the "person of colour" are outdated. Use "racialized person", "member of a racialized group" or "racialized group".

Avoid using the term "minority", because it may imply an inferior social position.

Anti-Oppression - Strategies, theories and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities and injustices that are systemic to our systems and institutions by policies and practices that allow certain groups to dominate over other groups.

Anti-Racism - An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism.

Anti-Racist Education - A perspective that promotes the identification and change required of educational practices, policies, attitudes and behaviours that underlie racism.

Antisemitism - Latent or overt hostility or hatred directed towards, or discrimination against individual Jews or the Jewish people for reasons connected to their religion, ethnicity, and their cultural, historical, intellectual and religious heritage. Antisemitism has also been expressed through individual acts of physical violence, vandalism, the organized destruction of entire communities and genocide. In more recent times, such manifestations could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collective.

Bias - A subjective opinion, preference, prejudice or inclination, often formed without reasonable justification that influences an individual's or group's ability to evaluate a particular situation objectively or accurately; a preference for or against. Reasonable apprehension of bias exists when there is a reasonable belief that an individual or group will pre-judge a matter and therefore cannot assess a matter impartially because of bias.

Ethnic Group - Refers to a group of people having a common heritage or ancestry, or a shared historical past, often with identifiable physical, cultural, linguistic and/or religious characteristics.

Ethnicity - The multiplicity of beliefs, behaviours and traditions held in common by a group of people bound by particular linguistic, historical, geographical, religious and/or racial homogeneity. Ethnic diversity is the variation of such groups and the presence of a number of ethnic groups within one society or nation.

Ethnocentrism - The tendency to view others using one's own group and customs as the standard for judgment, and the tendency to see one's group and customs as the best.

Eurocentrism - Presupposes the supremacy of Europe and Europeans in world culture, and relates history according to a European perception and experience.

Faithism - The cultural, institutional and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign different values to people according to their religion or creed, or their lack of religion or creed, thereby resulting in differential treatment on the basis of faith.

Immigrant - Those who move from their native country to another with the intention of settling for the purpose of forging a better life or for better opportunities. This may be for a variety of personal, political, religious, social or economic reasons. The word is sometimes used incorrectly to refer, implicitly or explicitly, to racialized peoples and to naturalized citizens.

Minority Group - Refers to a group of people within a society that is either small in numbers or that has little or no access to social, economic, political or religious power. Minority rights are protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Human Rights Acts and Codes, and the UN Convention on the rights of minorities.

Race - Refers to a group of people of common ancestry, distinguished from others by physical characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture or facial features. (This definition refers to the common usage of the term race when dealing with human rights matters. It does not reflect the current scientific debate about the validity of phenotypic descriptions of individuals and groups of individuals). The term is also used to designate social categories into which societies divide people according to such characteristics.

Racialization - The process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics, etc. That is, treated outside the norm and receiving unequal treatment based upon phenotypical features.

Racism - Racism is any individual action, or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their colour or ethnicity. This distinction is often used to justify discrimination.

White - A social colour. The term is used to refer to people belonging to the majority group in Canada. It is recognized that there are many different people who are "White" but who face discrimination because of their class, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, language, or geographical origin. Grouping these people as "White" is not to deny the very real forms of discrimination that people of certain ancestry, such as Italian, Portuguese, Jewish, Armenian, Greek, etc., face because of these factors.

List of useful terms

Preferred	Problematic
Asian people, Asian Canadian individuals	Orientals
Bi-racial people, multi-racial individuals	Mixed race people, mulatto
International people	Foreigners
Use specific name of the country, not the continent e.g. Nigerian vs African	Using the name of the continent and not the name of the country
Western Asian, Northern African people	Arabs
White people, European Canadians	Caucasian

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