



L-Università
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EQUITY OFFICE

Good Practice in Inclusive Language

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA



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Part

1

Introduction

Part 1

Introduction

1. Introduction

- a. The University of Malta is committed to an active engagement with diversity – in the curriculum, as well as through intellectual, social, and cultural interactions. The University of Malta recognises that institutional excellence can only be achieved by engaging with diversity at every level of the institutional activities.
- b. This commitment extends to the use of language and audio-/visual material. Those who form part of the University of Malta need to avoid using language that is insensitive to cultural differences, or offends any group on the basis of gender, disability/ability, age, body shape, ethnicity and race, religion or belief, gender identity and sexual orientation, etc.

1.1 What is inclusive language?

- a. Inclusive language is respectful of diversity. It helps promote the acceptance and value of individuals deriving from different backgrounds, or with different physical forms. This language needs to be free from words, phrases or tones that demean, insult, trivialise, stereotype and/or infantilise people either because they have a particular attribute, and/or are members of a particular social group.
- b. Inclusive language is about communicating in a way that respects a person's dignity, a manner which empowers people who are perceived as subordinate and/or are considered as minorities by the rest of society.
- c. Language is a tool to be used, and hence the meaning and connotations of words should be used to create a more inclusive and empowering society. In the following sections we will be delineating some inclusive language principles to help you in this endeavour.

1.2 Why is inclusive language important?

- a. Language is very powerful. Research shows that it is the main tool people use to think. It helps form cognitive schematas and these have an impact on behaviour. Language can be used to include, value, and empower people, or the opposite. Language is never neutral. The University of Malta values inclusive language because this will help positively rate, respect and extol diversity. As an institution, we aim at ensuring that people are seen as people, and not as stereotypes, attributes or characteristics.
- b. Language is reflective of community values, knowledge and personal experiences. It should be, therefore, a positive expression of diversity.

1.3 Principles of inclusive language:

- a. Help regard diversity within and between groups in a positive manner.
- b. The focus is on people-centric language, not their association with or identification to a group or culture.
- c. Personal attributes or characteristics are only mentioned when these are relevant in the context in which they are used.
- d. Support a strengths-based approach rather than a deficit one. A strengths-based approach focuses on the resilience of individuals, their abilities, knowledge and capacities, rather than their shortcomings.
- e. When in doubt, ask the individual which linguistic terms they prefer. Don't make assumptions.
- f. Be conscious of the implications of your language. Language can render people invisible or denigrate them.
- g. Embolden people to speak on their own behalf or that of the group they represent.
- h. Questioning people who are trying to promote assumptions, myths and stereotypes if it is safe for you to do so.
- i. Ensure that the language you use and the material you present is inclusive and accessible to a diverse audience and individuals.
- j. Be careful of the context. Certain words used in particular contexts can help you claim an identity, but in another context the same word can be seen as derogatory.

1.4 Use of inclusive language in educational and workplace settings

- a. We are responsible for promoting and appreciating diversity in the workplace. We need to ensure that our communications are not perceived as discriminatory, sexist, racist, homophobic, or offensive. Some specific ways to implement inclusive language in educational and workplace settings:
 - i. Ensure that educational and professional development materials (e.g. images, case studies, examples used during lectures or professional development settings) reflect social diversity
 - ii. When citing other research, use '[sic]' when the cited material uses language which is not inclusive
 - iii. Examples used in lectures or professional development workshops should include more than one area of diversity
 - iv. Ensure that lecture slides, websites, and scheduling of meetings are accessible to a diverse audience.
 - v. Keep up to date with cultural differences to ensure that you are not offensive in any communication you make.
 - vi. Remove stereotypes or inappropriate language in in/formal conversations at work.
 - vii. Use a positive educative approach when somebody uses inappropriate language to tell the person why the language is inappropriate, while at the same time offering a more inclusive term.



Part
2 **Guidelines for
inclusive language**

Part 2

Guidelines for inclusive language

1. Inclusive language and Disability

- a. People with disabilities are often described as victims, as helpless people to be pitied and cared for, therefore as vulnerable. The emphasis is on the disability rather than the person. The word 'disabled' is a description not a group of people. Use 'disabled people' or 'persons with disability' not 'the disabled' as the collective term. People with a disability tend to be referred to collectively as the disabled, the handicapped, the mentally retarded, the blind, the deaf, or paraplegics, spastics, epileptics, the autistic, etc. These terms help depersonalise people and equate them with the disability. Avoid using passive, victim words. Use language that respects disabled people as active individuals with control over their own lives.
- b. Avoid as much as possible medical labels. These say little about people as individuals and tend to reinforce stereotypes of disabled people as 'patients'.
- c. Avoid phrases like 'suffers from'. This suggests discomfort, constant pain and a sense of hopelessness.
- d. Deaf people whose first language is LSM (*Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija* – Maltese Sign Language) consider themselves as part of 'the deaf community' so they may describe themselves as 'Deaf', with a capital D, to emphasise their deaf identity.
- e. Wheelchair users may not see themselves as 'confined to' a wheelchair, therefore not wheelchair bound – it is a mobility aid. We refer to them as wheelchair users.
- f. Most disabled people are comfortable with the words used to describe life on a daily basis.
- g. People who use wheelchairs do 'go for walks' and people with visual impairments may be very pleased – or not – 'to see you'. An impairment may just mean that some things are done in a different way.
- h. Common phrases that associate impairments with negative things should be avoided, such as for example 'deaf to our pleas' or 'blind drunk'.

1.1 Depersonalising or impersonal reference

- a. People with a disability tend to be referred to collectively as the disabled, the handicapped, the mentally retarded, the blind, the deaf, or paraplegics, spastics, epileptics, the autistic, etc. These terms help depersonalise people and equate them with the disability. Avoid using passive, victim words. Use language that respects disabled people as active individuals with control over their own lives.
- b. The following terms are generally preferred as the disability is only one characteristic of the person or persons:
 - person with a disability
 - people with disabilities
 - students / employees with disabilities.



- c. When it is necessary or desirable to be more specific about the type of disability involved, do not focus entirely on the person's disability in the description. Put the person first, and the disability second. The following are some suggestions:

Table 1.1 Terminology

⊗ AVOID	✓ USE
(the) disabled / (the) handicapped	disabled (people)
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of	has [name of condition or impairment]
the physically handicapped	people with physical disabilities
a paraplegic, paraplegics	people with paraplegia
an epileptic, diabetic, depressive, and so on	a person with epilepsy, diabetes, depression or someone who has epilepsy, diabetes, depression
the deaf, deaf and dumb, deaf mute	deaf / deaf / hard of hearing/user of Maltese Sign Language
spastic	disabled people / a person with cerebral palsy
mongoloid	person with Down's syndrome
cripple/invalid	disabled person
people with autism	autistic persons
retarded	person with an intellectual disability
wheelchair bound, cripple, wheelchair-bound	a person using a wheelchair / wheelchair user
mentally handicapped, mentally defective, retarded, subnormal	with a learning disability (singular) with learning disabilities (plural)
able-bodied	non-disabled
mental patient, insane, mad	person with a mental health condition
the blind	people with visual impairments; blind people; blind and partially sighted people
dwarf, midget	someone with restricted growth or short stature
fits, spells, attacks	seizures

- d. When you need to refer to a person's disability, choose the correct terminology for the specific disability. For example:
 - i. people who are blind / have a sight disability / are vision impaired (depending upon the degree of impairment); mobility impaired;
 - ii. people with, or who have, cerebral palsy; Down's Syndrome; a mental illness; an intellectual disability; paraplegia; quadriplegia; epilepsy; a speech impairment; and
 - iii. do not use terms such as 'vertically challenged', 'physically challenged', 'differently abled', and other euphemisms for people with disabilities.

1.2 Stereotyping

- a. People with disabilities are often portrayed as helpless, mindless, suffering, asexual beings. As victims they are portrayed as in need of the charity and sympathy of the non-disabled. This stereotype helps promote the discriminatory treatment of people with disabilities.
- b. People with disabilities should be portrayed in a positive manner. Positive portrayal of people with disabilities includes presenting them as individuals with a variety of qualities.
- c. Do not imply that people with disabilities are to be pitied, feared or ignored, or that they are somehow more heroic, courageous, patient or 'special' than others. Ensure that you do not use the terms 'normal' or 'able-bodied' in contrast.
- d. Avoid using the terms 'victim' or 'sufferer' to refer to a person who has or has had an illness, disease or disability. Such terms dehumanise the person and emphasise powerlessness. For example:

Table 1.2 Examples

victim of AIDS or AIDS sufferer	people who are HIV positive / a person who has AIDS.
polio victim	a person who had polio.

1.3 Confusing disability and impairment

The World Health Organisation defines disability and impairment as:

disability	any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered usual for a human being
impairment	any loss or dysfunction of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function

1.4 When speaking to persons with a disability

- a. use a normal tone of voice, don't patronise or talk down to the person involved
- b. don't be too precious or too politically correct – being super-sensitive to the right and wrong language and depictions will stop you doing anything
- c. never attempt to speak or finish a sentence for the person you are talking
- d. address disabled people in the same way as you talk to everyone else.
- e. speak directly to a disabled person, even if they have an interpreter or companion with them.

1.5 Disability and 'humour'

Discriminatory 'jokes' about people with disabilities are offensive and should be avoided.

1.6 Representation of people with disabilities in case materials and illustrations

Ensure that people with disabilities are represented in case materials and illustrations. Their inclusion should occur in illustrations unrelated to the topic of disability. The focus should not be limited to people with physical disabilities, but should also include those with intellectual and sensory motor disabilities.

2. Inclusive language and gender

- a. Some of the major forms of sexist language are described below. In this section we will look at the way men and women are constructed through discourse. We however underline that language does not differentiate between men and women, but also excludes people who do not fall under any of these categories as we shall underline further on.
- b. **Invisibility:** Women are often rendered invisible in language. This occurs when masculine pronouns like 'he', 'him', and 'his' are used to refer to both men and women. The use of 'man' as a noun, verb or adjective in words such as 'mankind', 'man made' render women invisible.
- c. **Inferiority:** Language is used to suggest that women are inferior to men in certain roles. In a seminar on the 14th of September 2017 entitled 'Is-sessizmu fil-lingwa Maltija' the participants objected to expressions such as 'female pilot' and 'female academic'. They said that when using this terminology they felt that the general public assumed that they were less competent in their role. The focus should not be their gender, but their competence in the area, they insisted. They felt that it was unnecessary to mention the gender of the person in this context. The use of 'feminine' suffixes such as 'ette', 'ess', 'ienne' and 'trix' as in 'poetess' rather than 'poet', have the same effect. They too are unnecessary and demeaning. These may imply that the woman is less entitled than her male counterpart to be acknowledged as the professional that she is.
- d. **Trivialisation:** Language can be used to trivialise women and their activities, actions and occupations. Expressions such as 'just a housewife' are a case in point. Women and their role can also be trivialised by describing them predominantly in terms of their roles of 'wife' or 'mother', or by referring to their physical attributes.

2.1 Strategies for avoiding sexist language

This section will include alternatives to the sexist language described above.

2.1a Use alternatives for 'man'

The word 'man' is often used to refer to either human beings or male human beings.

Try to find alternatives for using 'man' as a generic term:

Table 2.1a Use of alternative for 'man'

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✓ USE
man	humans, human beings, humankind, man and woman, women and men, the individual
mankind	humanity, human beings, the human race, people, human kind
the best man for the job	the best person for the job, the best woman or man for the job, the best candidate for the job
the man in the street	the average person, ordinary people, people in general
man of letters, men of science	scholar, academic, scientists
manpower	workforce, personnel, the staff, human resources, workers
man-made	artificial, constructed, fabricated, handmade, manufactured

2.1b Avoid the use of 'man' as a verb

Table 2.1b Avoid the use of 'man' as a verb

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✓ USE
We need someone to <i>man</i> the desk.	We need someone to staff the desk / attend to the desk.
manning the office	staffing the office
He will man the phones.	He will attend to phone calls, answer the phones, and operate the phones.

2.1c Avoid the generic use of words that contain 'man'

Table 2.1c Avoid the generic use of words that contain 'man'

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✓ USE
sportsmanlike	fair, sporting
workmanlike	skillful, efficient

2.1d Find alternatives to 'he' and 'his'

- a. English does not possess a singular, sex-indefinite pronoun. This means that the pronouns 'he', 'his' and 'him' are frequently used as generic pronouns. This use is ambiguous and excludes women. Restructure the sentence to avoid the pronoun. When you cannot, make the sentence plural, as in the example below. When this is awkward, use the plural pronoun even when referring to a single person.
- b. Please note that the use of s/he is not recommended as it may cause grammatical difficulties.

Table 2.1d Alternatives to 'he' and 'his'

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✓ USE
The staff member may use her discretion.	Staff members may use their discretion.
His right to a workplace free from harassment and discrimination.	Their right to a workplace free from harassment and discrimination.
The defendant may exercise his right to appeal. He should do so before the date advised.	The defendant may exercise their right to appeal. They should do so before the date advised.

2.1e Vary word order

- a. We usually use expressions such as *men and women*, *his and hers*, *him and her*, *he and she*, *Sir or Madam*, etc. Try reversing these expressions: *women and men*, *hers and his*, *her and him*, *she and he*, *Madam or Sir*, etc. This practice helps challenge the established order, and the perception that men are more important than their female counterparts. To avoid mentioning one gender:
- Use 'they' as a singular pronoun
 - Alternate genders and pronouns
 - Use more than one pronoun
 - Try making the nouns and pronouns plural.

2.2 Avoid personifying inanimate objects

The pronoun 'it' should be used to refer to inanimate nouns such as those designating countries, and all sorts of machines or vehicles.

2.3 Use alternatives for sex-specific occupational terms

- a. Women are employed in a whole range of occupations. We have to come up with alternative forms and titles to avoid the impression that these positions are male-exclusive.

Table 2.3a Alternative for sex-specific occupational terms

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✔ USE
chairman	chair, convenor, co-ordinator
policeman	police officer, policeman, policewoman
businessman	business person, business executive, entrepreneur OR businesswomen and men (spoken language only)
layman	layperson, non-professional, non-specialist

- b. Do not use occupational titles containing the 'feminine' suffixes -ess, -ette, -trix, -ienne. These trivialise women or have negative connotations since they convey the idea that women are deviations from a male norm. If it is important to specify the sex of the person, the adjective 'female' or 'male' can be used in conjunction with the non-sexist term.

Table 2.3b Alternative to feminine occupational titles

⊗ INSTEAD OF	☑ USE
actress	actor
executrix	executor
authoress	author, writer
comedienne	comedian
air hostess	flight attendant

- c. Generic terms such as doctor, technician, academic, and administrator apply equally to a woman or a man. Expressions such as 'male secretary', 'female director', 'woman lecturer' should be avoided in contexts where the reference to a person's sex is irrelevant. If sex specification is needed, use the adjectives 'female' and 'male' before the non-sexist noun.

2.4a Use appropriate titles and other modes of address

- a. The way names, titles, salutations and endearments are used creates the impression that women merit less respect or should be taken less seriously than men. Use titles and modes of address consistently, and in a parallel fashion, for women and men:

Duke and Duchess of Sussex	Prince Harry Mountbatten Windsor and Duchess Meghan Markle; Prince Harry and Ms Meghan Markle
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- b. Women tend to keep their surname after marriage or revert to it after divorce. Hyphenated surnames or double names are also used by married people. Ensure that a woman, like a man, is addressed by the name which she prefers.
- c. It is also particularly important in a university environment to ensure that people's qualifications are accurately reflected in their title, and that women's and men's academic titles are used in a parallel fashion. Students and the general public tend to assume that male academics are 'Profs', while they address female ones as Ms or use her first name.

Julie Xerri, Dr Said	Professor Xerri, Dr Said
	Julie Xerri, Christopher Said

2.4b Use of Ms, Mrs, Miss, Mr

The titles 'Miss' and 'Mrs' reveal the marital status of women, whereas the use of 'Mr' merely identifies that person as a man. The use of 'Ms' is recommended when a woman's title of preference is unknown. The title a woman prefers should be respected when known.

2.5 Avoid patronising expressions

- a. Recognise and avoid language that trivialises or denigrates women. All sexes should be treated with the same respect, dignity and seriousness. This means it is important that one uses the words 'man'/'woman', 'girl'/'boy', 'gentleman'/'lady' in a parallel manner. It is demeaning to refer to an adult woman as 'girl' when men would not be described as 'boy' in a similar context.

Table 2.5 *Avoid patronising expression*

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✓ USE
the girls in the office	the secretaries, administrative assistants
ladies	women (except when used in a parallel manner with gentlemen)
My girl will take care of that immediately.	My assistant will take care of that immediately.

- b. Avoid offensive and patronising colloquialisms such as 'birds', 'bimbos', 'ladies', 'darling', 'chick', 'doll', 'love' and 'jocks'.
- c. Avoid using endearments when addressing women who are unknown to you or in situations that do not call for familiarity. Use 'Madam' or 'Sir' when the person addressed is unknown.

2.6 Avoid sex-role stereotyping

Table 2.6 Avoid making sex-role stereotyped assumptions about people.

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✓ USE
Lecturers have wives and children to support.	Lecturers have families to support.
We are looking for an administrator who is his own man.	We are looking for an administrator with a sense of independence and integrity.
housewife	homemakers, parent, caregiver
mothering/fathering	parenting

2.7 Avoid sexist descriptions

- a. When speaking about similar personalities, do not make distinctions between women's and men's behaviour. Use parallel language to describe them. This will help you avoid using stereotyped generalisations about men's and women's characters and patterns of behaviour. Take particular care when describing women and men who do not fit the female or male stereotype.

Table 2.6 Avoid making sex-role stereotyped assumptions about people.

⊗ INSTEAD OF	✓ USE
Strong men and domineering women	Strong men and women, domineering men and women
Assertive men and aggressive women	Assertive women and men, aggressive men and women
Angry men and hysterical women	Angry women and men, hysterical men and women
The student's behaviour was typically female	The student's behaviour was (specify the behaviour).

- b. References to a woman's physical appearance are usually irrelevant. References to a woman's marital or parenting status are generally irrelevant in contexts where her professional role or capacity should be the focus.

2.8 Avoid sexist 'humour'

Sexist 'jokes' are offensive to many people and should be avoided.

2.9 Representation in case materials and illustrations

- a. Take care when selecting examples, case studies and visual material and/or when using illustrations, to include representations of all genders and ensure that they are represented in a variety of roles. **Treat sexist material carefully.**
- b. When quoting sources that use sexist language, use '[sic]' after the sexist word or phrase.

3. Inclusive language regarding sexual diversity and gender identity

- a. The portrayal of LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and intersex) population is slowly becoming more acceptable. There is a tendency though at times to think of and portray gay males as less masculine/more feminine than heterosexual males, and lesbians as more masculine/less feminine than heterosexual females. Less mention is made of bisexual, transgender, intersex or questioning individuals.
- b. Visibility matters. When more LGBTQ people are included in written content or examples used in classes, this means that they are actually seen by society as opposed to being rendered unseen or invisible. When these social categories people are represented, others can understand and grasp who those people are, leading to a shift in the social consciousness. Representations also leads to a sense of affirmation among LGBTQ+. Affirmation can boost positive feelings of self-worth among a social group which feels ostracised.
- c. It is also important to showcase the diversity within this social category. It is important to ensure that the way these groups are referred to, does not risk reinforcing stereotypes about this or any other minority group, especially if only minimal variations of that group are portrayed.

Table 3.1 Gender, sex and sexuality terms used

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	A romantic attraction, sexual attraction, or sexual behaviour toward both males and females, or romantic or sexual attraction to people of any sex or gender identity; this latter aspect is sometimes alternatively termed pansexuality.
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.

Table 3.1 Gender, sex and sexuality terms used (Continued)

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 in 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 marker	The identifier which classifies persons within a particular sex/ gender category i.e. M / F / X
gender nonconforming	A term for individuals whose gender does not fit into the social 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.
heteronormativity	Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation
heterosexism	The perception that heterosexuality is superior to other sexual orientations.
homophobia	The fear, hatred of, or prejudice against lesbian, gay, or bisexual people.
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.

Table 3.1 Gender, sex and sexuality terms used (Continued)

misgendering	Refers to the experience of being labelled by others as a gender other than one that a person identifies with. The essential thing to do after learning someone's pronouns is remembering to use those pronouns when referring to that person. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun when identifying someone, please correct yourself in front of that person and begin using the right pronoun.
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/sex 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 multi-coloured rainbow flag 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 symbolise 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.
sex characteristics	The chromosomal, gonadal and anatomical features of a person, which include primary characteristics such as reproductive organs and genitalia and, or in chromosomal structures and hormones; and secondary characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breasts and, or structure.
sexual orientation	An enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction (or a combination of these) to persons of the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender, or to both sexes or more than one gender.

Table 3.1 Gender, sex and sexuality terms used (Continued)

gender affirmation 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.
trans/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'.
trans/transgender man	The term for a transgender individual who identifies as a man (or whose gender identity is of a man) and was assigned the term female at birth.
trans/transgender woman	The term for a transgender individual who identifies as a woman (or whose gender identity is of a woman) and was assigned the term male at birth.
transphobia	The fear, hatred of, or prejudice against 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.

3.1 Gender/Pronouns used on applications, forms or in research

- a. To ensure that people are referred to by the gender identity they ascribe to, in applications or forms include the term 'pronoun' under 'name'. Other ways to ensure that persons are addressed by the right pronoun is to use nametags and introductions so that students and staff use the correct pronouns with each other from the beginning.
- b. Where sex and/or gender information is collected and recorded in a personal record or research tool, individuals should be given the option to select or indicate a gender beyond the M / F binary.
- c. This can be done either by including the following fields:

Male **Female** **Other (Please specify):** _____

Or, in this closed manner if the question needs to be closed ended:

M (male) **F (female)** **X (other genders)**

- d. Tips for Gender-neutral Language: Use gender-neutral pronouns such as 'they' and 'ze'. Examples include 'she/her/hers,' 'he/him/his,' 'ze/hir/hirs,' and 'they/them/theirs.' When addressing people whose pronouns you don't know, use gender-neutral language such as 'students,' 'staff' rather than 'ladies and gentlemen,' 'madam or sir'. For further examples please refer to <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns>

3.2 Avoid homophobic and transphobic 'humour'

Homophobic and transphobic 'jokes' are offensive to many people and should be avoided.

3.3 Represent gender non-conforming in case materials and illustrations

Take care when selecting examples, case studies and visual material and/or when using illustrations, to include representations of all genders and ensure that they are represented in a variety of roles.

3.4 Treat homophobic and transphobic material carefully

When quoting sources that use this type of language, use '[sic]' after the word or phrase.

4. Inclusive Language and Race and Ethnicity

- a. The Maltese Islands have a number of people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Language plays a major role in denoting how different ethnic and racial groups regard each other, and the hierarchical order that exists within a given social context. Ethnic and racial labels, names and expressions are created and used to portray certain groups as inferior or superior to others.
- b. There are diverse groups in Malta who differ from each other on the basis of origin, descent, language, culture, religion and other characteristics. We need to celebrate this diversity by using non-discriminatory language in relation to race and ethnicity. Some of the major forms of racist language are described below.

4.1 Undue emphasis on racial and ethnic 'differences'

- a. The language often describes the Maltese as the norm against which other groups (minority or 'outgroups') are judged. The idea is that all Maltese have a 'peach' coloured skin. Maltese citizens with other skin tones are seldom mentioned, and when they are, they are usually mentioned as perpetrators of crime or victims of crime. Gozitans are not considered as Maltese, and are often denigrated.
- b. When referring to the ethnic or racial background of a person or group, do not do so unless there is a valid reason for so doing.
- c. We also tend to describe the majority group, its actions and its members in positive terms, negative ones where minority groups are concerned. The same characteristic can be given different connotations depending on the national, ethnic, or racial group it is being attributed to. For example 'reserved English', 'inscrutable Orientals'.
- d. **Stereotyping:** We tend to believe that people from different nationalities have different characteristics. Stereotypes linked to racial, ethnic or national traits include 'passionate Italians', 'hardworking Germans', 'double dealing Gozitans' or the idea that 'black people are natural athletes' or 'come from African' or 'are Muslims'. Positive stereotypes are also discriminatory since they take away a person's individuality. Women from minority groups face stereotypes that are both sexist and racist. Racial and ethnic stereotypes are offensive and should be avoided.

- e. **Invisibility:** The diversity in and among various racial and ethnic minorities is often not acknowledged or taken into consideration. For example, the various African ethnicities present in Malta are often lumped together under the single term 'African', despite their many differences. The same occurs with regards to 'Arab' or 'Muslim'. Arabs derive from different countries. Not all the people who derive from North African countries are Arabs. Not all people who derive from North African countries are Muslim. The term Muslim incorporates within it different religious groups – Sunni, Shia, etc.

4.2 Derogatory labelling and ethnic and racial slurs

- a. The tension between the majority and minority groups often leads to verbal and physical conflict.
- b. With regards to racist and ethnic slurs their main function is to differentiate between 'Us' and
- c. 'Them'. The targeted group is set apart by underlining their eccentricity, exoticism, or undesirability.
- d. These include 'ġbenja' (a term meaning cheeselet used to refer to Gozitans), 'iswed' / black, 'Russa' (meaning Russian but it has an underlying meaning, prostitute), 'ġie bid-dgfijsa' (came by boat), jellyfish (African migrants), 'klandestin' (irregular migrants) which help to delineate people as 'other'. **Inappropriate use of the term 'Maltese'**
- e. The term 'Maltese' should not be used in ways which excludes local and immigrant minorities. 'Maltese' should be used to refer to any Maltese citizen, irrespective of the person's ethnic or racial background or country of birth.
- f. When it is important to specify the descent or ethnicity of a person or a group, or to distinguish between people born in Malta and elsewhere, the following strategies are recommended:
- g. Use a qualifier in conjunction with the noun Maltese. For example 'Syrian-born Maltese', 'Arabic-speaking Maltese', 'Jewish Maltese', 'Australian Maltese', or 'Maltese Australian', etc.
- h. Use phrases which refer to a person or group's background or origin. For example 'Maltese of Irish background', 'Maltese of Libyan descent', etc.

4.3 Use of racist 'humour'

Racist 'jokes' are offensive and should be avoided.

4.4 Representation of racial and ethnic diversity in case materials and illustrations

Visual and textual illustrations of racially and ethnic minorities are important to counteract the idea that Malta is a homogenous nation. This should also counteract the invisibility of ethnic and racial minorities in the Maltese Islands. It is recommended that the racial and ethnic diversity of the Maltese Islands' population be reflected in both visual and textual illustrations, as long as stereotyped language and images are not used.

4.5 Citing racist material

When quoting from sources that use racist language, use '[sic]' after the racist word or phrase. This calls attention to the fact that this form of words is used in the original.

4.6 Fair Representation of Gozitans, people from the South of Malta, different social classes and people from rural areas

The linguistic portrayal of Gozitans, people from the South of Malta, lower classes (*ħamalli*), and those from rural areas has often been negative and stereotypical. These groups are often described as backward, inept, social benefit scroungers, criminal's, '*l-imgħawweġ*' (meaning dialect), and almost never as individuals with personal names. '*Tal-pepe*' (those coming from the upper social echelons, or social wannabes) are also portrayed in negative terms.

4.7 Commonly Used Terms in Relation to Race and Ethnicity

- a. Some of the commonly-heard terms relating to ethnicity and race in the Maltese context are listed in the next table. This list aims to provide general guidance. The words and phrases listed in this section do not have a single, universally-accepted meaning.

Table 4.7a General terms and definitions

TERMS	DEFINITION
ESL	English as a second language. This term indicates that English is someone's second language; it does not indicate the person's competence in English.
ethnic group	A group within a population which is different from the dominant minority group with regard to such characteristics as language, culture and / or religion. This difference frequently results in discriminatory treatment.
immigrant	<p>A person involved in the process of immigration or someone who has recently arrived in Malta.</p> <p>The term 'immigrant' is preferred to the term 'migrant'. If someone has been in Malta for a considerable period of time, it is preferable to avoid using 'immigrant' as a description. 'Immigrant' should not be used exclusively to refer to people of non 'Western' background. In Malta it has negative connotations, avoid. Better use refugee, or use the term which is relevant to the person in question (please see below).</p>
international students	<p>Students who are not permanent residents of Malta, regardless of their ethnic and racial background, who are normally enrolled on a full-fee paying basis.</p> <p>Distinguishing between Maltese, EU nationals and international students, and queries in relation to resident status, citizenship and nationality, should only be made in relevant contexts, e.g. for enrolment purposes.</p>
third country national EU national	<p>Students or staff who do not derive from countries within the European Union.</p> <p>Students or staff who derive from a country within the European Union.</p>
LOTE	Language other than English.
racial minority	A group within a population which differs from the majority group with regards to physical features. This frequently results in discriminatory treatment.

- b. Immigrants in Malta will have differential access to education and other services and benefits, depending on their status. These terms are constantly being updated. Staff should be familiar with:

Table 4.7b Legal definition of different types of immigrants in Malta

specific residence authorisation	'Long-term immigrants who are not eligible for international protection but cannot be returned to their country of origin. It refers to rejected asylum- seekers who have been residing in Malta for a period of 5 years and are actively contributing to Maltese society.' ¹
failed asylum seeker	People not eligible for international protection.
subsidiary protection	'The protection given to a non-EU national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee, but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown to believe that the person concerned, if returned to his or her country of origin or, in the case of a stateless person, to his or her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm and who is unable or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country.' ²
refugee	'Refugees are third country nationals who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, are outside the country of their nationality and are unable or, owing to such fear, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, as a result of such events are unable or, owing to such fear, are unwilling to return to it.' ³ As this definition indicates, the term refugee has a specific meaning, and should not be applied to all immigrants.

¹ https://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet16_sra.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/e-library/glossary/subsidiary-protection_en

³ <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8886&l=1> , page 4.

Table 4.7b *Legal definition of different types of immigrants in Malta* (Continued)

humanitarian protection	'special leave to remain in Malta for those persons who could not have returned safely to their country of origin. This is a local type of protection which is granted in special and extraordinary cases where applicants are found not to be eligible for recognition as refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, but who are nonetheless considered to be in need of protection due to special humanitarian reasons. Humanitarian Protection is divided into two branches; Temporary Humanitarian Protection and Provisional Humanitarian Protection.' ⁴
temporary humanitarian protection	'is granted in cases where the applicant's claim for international protection has been rejected, but due to certain humanitarian reasons the Office grants him/her this form of local protection. Such cases include unaccompanied minors whose claim for international protection has been rejected, terminally ill people, seriously ill persons, and in order to maintain family unity.' ⁵
provisional humanitarian protection	'is given in cases where due to a high influx of asylum seekers, or because of other particular circumstances (e.g. the applicant is not fit for the interview), the case will not be processed within the normal timeframe. Provisional Humanitarian Protection is granted until the application for international protection can be properly assessed and a decision taken.' ⁶
blue card holder	'given to highly qualified Third country nationals seeking to enter and reside in Malta for the purpose of highly qualified employment.' ⁷
single permit holder	'single application procedure for issuing a single permit for third-country nationals to reside for the purpose of work in Malta in order to simplify the procedures for their admission and to facilitate the control of their status; and (b) a common set of rights to third-country workers legally residing in Malta, irrespective of the purposes for which they were initially admitted in Malta, based on equal treatment with Maltese nationals'. ⁸
stateless	'a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law.' ⁹

⁴ <https://integration.gov.mt/en/ReseAndViidencsas/Pages/Humanitarian-Other-Reasons.aspx>

⁵ <https://integration.gov.mt/en/ReseAndViidencsas/Pages/Humanitarian-Other-Reasons.aspx>

⁶ <https://integration.gov.mt/en/ReseAndViidencsas/Pages/Humanitarian-Other-Reasons.aspx>

⁷ <https://integration.gov.mt/en/ResidenceAndVisas/Pages/EU-Blue-Card.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=12287&l=1>

⁹ <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/52865/stateless-person-definition>

Table 4.7b *Legal definition of different types of immigrants in Malta* (Continued)

<p>long-term residence</p>	<p>This is 'granted to Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) residing in Malta who meet the required criteria. The LTR permit entitles the holder and family members to remain in Malta permanently, enjoying a specific set of rights. TCNs who resided legally and continuously in Malta for 5 years immediately prior to the submission of the application. It also covers persons with refugee status and subsidiary protection granted to Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) residing in Malta who meet the required criteria. The LTR permit entitles the holder and family members to remain in Malta permanently, enjoying a specific set of rights. TCNs who resided legally and continuously in Malta for 5 years immediately prior to the submission of the application.</p> <p>It also covers persons with refugee status and subsidiary protection.¹⁰</p>
<p>unaccompanied minor</p>	<p>'A non-EU national or stateless person below the age of eighteen who arrives on the territory of the EU States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him/her whether by law or custom, and for as long as s/he is not effectively taken into the care of such a person, or a minor who has left unaccompanied after s/he has entered the territory of the EU States.'¹¹</p>

4.8 Race, ethnicity and humour

It is unacceptable to make racist jokes or behave in a racially insensitive manner. Maltese society has become more diverse, and racial sensitivity is important to ensure a socially inclusive society. Avoid using racist terms and familiarise yourself with the proper way of responding to racist jokes in the classroom and/or your place of work. Racist jokes and other forms of culturally insensitive speech is not acceptable in work settings or in printed or published material.

4.9 Use racist and culturally insensitive content carefully

Avoid using this type of audio-/visual content when possible. University of Malta students and staff need to recognise and respect racial, ethnic and cultural diversity. University staff and students need to be culturally conscious and incorporate racial diversity in the courses taught, and the audio-/visual material used or created. This site might prove helpful.¹²

¹⁰ http://aditus.org.mt/Publications/factsheet11_lotr.pdf

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/e-library/glossary/unaccompanied-minor_en

¹² <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/RacialAwareness>

5. Age, Social Class, Size and Power-Based Interpersonal Violence

- a. Although we are less likely to talk about ageism, classism, and sizeism, they are still prevalent forms of discrimination. Below is a list of preferred as against outdated terms arising when age, social class and size are discussed.
- b. **Ageism** - The term "ageism" refers to two concepts: a socially constructed way of thinking about older persons based in a negative way. This involves negative attitudes and stereotypes about aging and a tendency to structure society based on an assumption that everyone is young, thereby neglecting to respond appropriately to the real needs of older persons. Age discrimination is not taken as seriously as other forms of discrimination. It however has economic, social and psychological effects like other forms of discrimination.
- c. **Classism** - The cultural, institutional and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign value to people on the basis of their education, income and/or their occupation. In Malta we have the tendency to perceive people as coming from a certain social class background just because they were raised or happen to reside in particular areas. These practices and beliefs lead to differential treatment. It can also affect students deriving from low socioeconomic backgrounds who find it harder to make it to university, and when they do, do not feel that they belong, and hence are more likely to drop out (Cutajar, 2014). This website provides helpful ideas on promoting a class inclusive environment.¹³
- d. **Sizeism** or **size discrimination** is discrimination based on a person's size. Size discrimination refers to extremes in physical size, such as very tall or short; extremely thin or fat. As in the case of other forms of discrimination, sizeism is not always explicit. Sizeist stereotypes and attitudes support the idea that fat people are lazy, fat people eat too much and don't exercise enough, or that tall people are good basketball players, or that overweight people often contract diseases which render some jobs dangerous for themselves and others.

¹³ <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/SocioeconomicDiversityAwareness>

Table 5.1 Problematic/Outdated vs Preferred

⊗ PROBLEMATIC	✔ PREFERRED
older people, elders, seniors, senior citizen	The preferred terminology is shifting for people as they age. Best to ask.
poor person, poverty-stricken person	economically disadvantaged, person living at or below poverty line, people experiencing poverty
homeless	person experiencing homelessness
overweight person, obese, fat, skinny, beanpole	person of size, larger bodied

5.1 Power-based interpersonal violence

- a. Power-based interpersonal violence is a term used to refer to interpersonal violence, sexual assault, harassment, stalking and threats, abusive relationships and bullying, child abuse, and human trafficking. When referring to those who have been affected by power-based interpersonal violence, it is suggested that instead of using the *victim*, the phrase 'person who has experienced power-based interpersonal violence' be used instead. *Survivor* can also be used if the person in question prefers this term; however, this term can also be considered negative since it defines a person solely by an experience.
- b. When individuals share their experience of violence, use the terms *said*, *shared*, and *experience* rather than *admitted*, *confessed*, and *story*. The latter terms convey disbelief and bias.
- c. When individuals have experienced sexual assault (which includes rape and child sexual abuse), refer to the behaviour as *sexual assault* instead of *sex* or any other terms that minimise the behaviour and violence. When we refer to sexual assault as *sex* it is like referring to drowning as swimming.
- d. Use *relationship violence*, *domestic violence*, *dating violence*, *intimate partner violence*, or *abusive relationship* rather than *dispute*, *quarrel*, and *love triangle*. The latter terms minimise the violence.
- e. Use the term *reported* instead of *accused*, *claimed*, and *alleged*. The latter terms convey bias and disbelief.

- f. Use the active voice (e.g., he raped him, he abused her, they reported that she assaulted them) rather than the passive voice (e.g., he was raped, she was abused, they were assaulted). The latter phrases remove the accountability of the individual who committed the behaviour while blaming the person harmed. When writing about a case or legal process, utilise what was reported, such as 'they reported that he assaulted them.'
- g. When referring to a person who has been reported for power-based interpersonal violence, use the term *respondent* during a campus event and *defendant* during a legal process.

5.2 Avoid ageist, sizeist and classist 'humour' or jokes promoting interpersonal violence

These 'jokes' are offensive to many people and should be avoided.

5.3 Represent people of all sizes, ages or social class backgrounds in case materials and illustrations

Take care when selecting examples, case studies and visual material and/or when using illustrations, to include representations of all types, forms, and age and ensure that they are represented in a variety of roles. Be especially careful when using material portraying power based interpersonal violence.

Treat ageist, sizeist, classist and power based interpersonal violence material carefully.

When quoting sources that use this type of language, use '[sic]' after the word or phrase.

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