



STUDENT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Words Matter

A guide to inclusive
language and presentation
for staff and students

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Words matter. They reflect the values and knowledge of people using them and can reinforce both negative and positive perceptions about others.

Language is not neutral. Inclusive language acknowledges the unique values, skills, viewpoints, experiences, culture, abilities and experiences of individuals or groups. Derogatory or discriminatory language undervalues individuals or groups, denigrates, humiliates and perpetuates stereotypes and inequality in society.

At its worst discriminatory language incites hatred or vilification—especially with regard to race, religion, gender or sexuality. Discriminatory language and visual representations ignore, exclude, marginalise or under-represent people, rendering them invisible.

Griffith has no place for discriminatory language or visual representations that perpetuate inequality. Your use of inclusive language—how you speak, write and visually represent others—is an important part of Griffith's commitment to its mission and values as an educational institution, as an employer, and as part of a progressive and inclusive society.





WHY HAVE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Griffith's [Equity and Diversity Plan](#) states 'that all people have inherent dignity and the right to be treated equitably. Equity, diversity and social inclusion will be expressed in teaching, research, service and community engagement at all levels.' This includes ensuring the use of non-discriminatory and inclusive language and practices through a range of activities that promote equity and diversity.

Griffith's policies reflect the relevant Queensland and Commonwealth [legislation](#) such as the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* and the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*. Allowing discriminatory language may render Griffith vicariously liable for discrimination under this legislation. For example, if students are unable to attend classes because they feel excluded or harassed by the language used by staff or other students, they could reasonably make a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

INCLUSIVE CULTURE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

It is essential for Griffith to develop the expertise of our staff in academic and non-academic spheres. Staff who use inclusive language demonstrate leadership and an understanding of the position that universities have within society. Inclusive language allows a more accurate view of the real world by reflecting social diversity as opposed to perpetuating stereotypes.

Our students rely on Griffith for intellectual and professional development and for a sense of community. Griffith's [graduate attributes](#) aim to imbue graduates with the skills to work in a wide range of careers—both within Australia and globally. These attributes include being effective communicators and collaborators; being culturally capable when working with First Australians; and being effective in culturally diverse and international environments.

It is only through the development of appropriate communication tools, such as inclusive language, that our students will attain such attributes.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION STYLE, TEACHING AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Inclusive language aims to include everyone in the conversation. It means giving all participants appropriate attention and facilitating meaningful participation for all through the use of body language and eye contact and encouraging questions and answers from the whole group. It also means using content that includes everyone, as well as vocabulary and body language that are non-offensive to any individual in the group.

Materials, quotes and examples used in class, in online teaching and on websites need to be relevant to all participants. It is important to fairly represent and reflect in texts and materials the experiences of under-represented groups. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; people with a disability; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer (LGBTIQ); women; and older people.

Promotional material, such as posters, videos and brochures, or teaching material, such as slides, overheads or other illustrations, should also feature the diversity and cultural richness of Australian society and the Griffith community. Look for alternatives to literature or materials that are demeaning or non-inclusive. If you must refer to such a source then make explicit reference to the problem with the material, otherwise use '[sic]' after the offending word or phrase to indicate that you are aware that the material is problematic.

Academic staff should actively encourage their students to use inclusive language and presentation in all their written work, oral presentations and discussions in lectures and tutorials. They should model appropriate language, lead discussions in an inclusive way, and be prepared to challenge and discuss, in a constructive manner, statements that may be racist, sexist or personally demeaning.



PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This Guide provides all members of the Griffith community the opportunity to develop their use of inclusive language and presentation. The examples given as inappropriate or offered as alternatives are those generally agreed upon among the groups of people most affected. This Guide and the examples outlined here are by no means exhaustive; references at the end of the booklet provide a more detailed exploration of the issues raised here. Language is always evolving and requires constant consideration in exemplifying best practice.

This Guide does not intend to prohibit the usage of otherwise offensive language or representations in special contexts, for example, when discussing or viewing language, literature, or visual representations in an historical context. Having said that, you should take care to ensure that the usage is a 'requirement', that the materials or language are appropriately contextualised, and that the audience is forewarned and advised that it should not be used outside that context.

USING GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

It has been commonly accepted for many years that the use of 'man' as a generic term excludes women and non-binary individuals. Words like 'mankind' and 'chairman' make people think 'male' rather than 'female' and render other genders invisible. The use of 'man' or 'men' and 'woman' or 'women' is an expression of binary language and doesn't allow for people who don't identify as male or female.

Look for words that are non-binary and gender neutral (Flinders University, 2017; QUT, 2010).

INNAPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
man, mankind, spokesman, chairman, workmanship, man the desk/phones, manpower	humans, humankind, spokesperson, chairperson, quality of work/skill, attend the desk/phones, workforce
The supervisor must give his approval.	Supervisors must give their approval.
girls in the office, woman doctor, male nurse, cleaning lady, female professor, authoress, actress, manageress	office staff, doctor, cleaner, professor, author, actor, manager
Good morning ladies and gentlemen	Good morning colleagues/everyone
The guys in the office will help.	The staff in the office will help.

Look for non-binary pronouns (BBC, 2017) so that misgendering doesn't occur.

	SUBJECT	OBJECT	PRONOUN
Binary	She He	Her Him	Hers His
Non-binary	They	Them	Their



INDIVIDUALS, NOT STEREOTYPES

In an increasingly diverse workforce, where traditionally gendered roles are less and less common, gendered language has no place. Although there are still issues such as under-representation in certain occupational areas and in gender wage gaps, it is important not to stereotype or present unbalanced representations in materials or visual representation. In addition, recognition of non-binary individuals is important.

Gender is irrelevant in most cases now that there is greater gender diversity across a range of fields and disciplines and in a range of occupations at all levels within an organisation. Families are diverse and carer or parental responsibilities vary—including kinship and child care and/or elder care responsibilities. Ensure that examples, illustrations or case materials depict people in a variety of roles.

Find neutral, generic terms for occupations and job titles that recognise occupational diversity. It is appropriate to refer to a person's gender when it is a significant factor, e.g. 'first female prime minister' or 'first male nursing educator'. Where gender is irrelevant do not refer to it. Below are some examples (QUT, 2010).

INAPPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
JK Rowling is a well-known authoress of fantasy fiction.	JK Rowling is a well-known author of fantasy fiction.
Paternity leave is covered under the EBA.	Parental leave is covered under the EBA.
Woman doctor charged with over-servicing.	Doctor charged with over-servicing.
Fireman accused of arson.	Firefighter accused of arson.

Stereotypes ignore the complexity of people's lives. Women are often described as 'wife of' or 'mother of', irrespective of their other roles, qualifications, expertise or achievements. And again, reference to men or women, or mothers and fathers ignores people who don't identify as male or female. The stereotyping of other factors such as age, race or ethnicity, can prejudice the merit process.

INAPPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
A mother of four has been appointed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor.	Professor Marjorie Day has been appointed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
Blind person elected to role of Chairperson on Disability Committee.	The Disability Advisory Committee has chosen expert disability advocate as Chairperson.
Black academic leads health project.	A leading academic, Professor Smith, with expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues will lead the project.

TITLES OF ADDRESS

Titles of address are now considered redundant when not linked to professional positions such as Professor, Doctor, Sister or Senator. Titles such as ‘Mr’ and ‘Ms’ are no longer necessarily linked to marital status like ‘Mrs’ and ‘Miss’ and in professional arenas marital status is irrelevant. ‘Ms’ is widely used for women regardless of marital status but, rather than misgendering a person, it is better to be consistent and not use gendered titles. Where possible confirm with the individual their preferred title of address.

Using ‘partner’ or ‘spouse’ rather than ‘husband/wife’ or ‘girlfriend/ boyfriend’ to describe relationships will include those in de facto or same-sex relationships. If titles are used check with those concerned how they wish to be addressed and ensure that titles and modes of address are parallel for women and men.

INAPPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
John Smith and his wife	‘John and Lily Smith’ or ‘John Smith and Lily Smith’
Mr Connor and Jennifer	Jennifer Parker and Michael Connor
Judy Spence and Dr Nguyen	Associate Professor Spence and Dr Nguyen
Dear Sir/Madam	Dear Colleague
Mrs May and Malcolm Turnbull	‘Theresa May and Malcolm Turnbull’ or ‘Prime Minister May and Prime Minister Turnbull’

SEXIST LANGUAGE – IT’S NOT A JOKE

Sexist language, such as calling people in the workplace ‘love’, ‘honey’, ‘dear’ or similar, is not acceptable. Women are likely to perceive so-called ‘compliments’ as put-downs. Examples include: ‘you think like a man’; ‘you’re pretty smart for a woman’; ‘you’re just like one of the guys’; or ‘you definitely wear the pants’. Similarly, praising a particular action because it is atypical of traditional gender stereotypes is insulting. For example, ‘He’s so amazing, he makes the kids’ lunches each morning’.

Expressions such as ‘the weaker sex’ or ‘the fair sex’ have no place in modern society. Other comments often used as a sarcastic jest to insult men, such as ‘he behaved like an old woman’ or ‘you blokes throw like girls’ are belittling and insulting to women and can constitute bullying or gender-based discrimination if used as part of ongoing harassment.

The University will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex. Grievance procedures exist to deal with such complaints (see section on [Complaints](#)) and perpetrators may also be subject to breaches of legislative or criminal codes for such acts.



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PEOPLES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia have diverse and distinctive cultures which span more than 65,000 years. The diversity of languages (including adaptations of English), communication and social customs and protocols may not be readily understood by people who do not belong to these cultures. However, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples share spiritual and religious ties to both land and sea, strong family networks and support systems.

Inclusive language recognises and values the diversity among the many cultural groups belonging to Australia. It is important to recognise the contributions that both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and community groups have made and continue to make to contemporary Australian society.

RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT

Increasingly, we are embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in curriculum as well as in specific content and activities focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practice across disciplines and activities to support education and employment. This requires a greater level of cultural competency amongst non-Indigenous people around cultural protocols, embedding Indigenous perspectives and committing to the principles of Reconciliation.

Griffith's [**Statement of Reconciliation**](#) is a public declaration of the University's commitment to promoting an environment that values the traditions, protocols and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

WELCOME TO COUNTRY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In embracing Reconciliation between Australia's First Peoples and other Australians, the University recommends the use of the Welcome to Country or the Acknowledgement of Country at University events, ceremonies, meetings, functions and the first lecture of each Trimester.

Griffith's Acknowledgement of Country is as follows:

Griffith University acknowledges the people who are the traditional custodians of the land, pays respect to the Elders, past and present, and extends that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For more information about respect and Reconciliation of First Peoples visit:

- ▶ [Griffith University First Peoples](#)
- ▶ [Griffith Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy](#)
- ▶ [Griffith Reconciliation Action Plan](#)




ACCURATE PRESENTATIONS OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Inclusive Australian history acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life has always been rich in tradition with complex social and governing structures developed from a religious base that stems from creation. It is crucial to recognise this complexity within course content, learning materials and learning activities. When depicting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in visual materials, issue the warning below:

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are warned that the following material may contain images and voices of deceased persons.

Accurate representation of history is also important. Talking about ‘when Captain Cook discovered Australia’ is not only insulting to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is also incorrect¹. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were here at least 60,000 years

¹ There is evidence of sophisticated trade activity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with Indonesia and earlier contact with Europeans 600 years before Cook (Reconciliation Australia, 2017).



before the coming of the Europeans (Reconciliation Australia, 2017). As a learning institution avoid texts or materials that perpetuate historical inaccuracies, or that use euphemisms to describe the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For example, the phrase ‘when Aboriginal children were taken in by the church’, hides the fact that force was used in removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their parents and traditional lands (AHRC, 1997).

Griffith has guidelines to assist staff with definitions of and embedding of [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in curriculum](#). Where appropriate look for, and use, materials that present an accurate history. Some useful sources to assist include:

- ▶ [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies](#)
- ▶ [Reconciliation Australia](#)
- ▶ [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- ▶ [Share Our Pride](#)
- ▶ [National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network](#)
- ▶ [Australian Indigenous Studies Learning and Teaching Network](#)

When undertaking research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities or issues, ensure you follow appropriate research protocols and consult Griffith’s [Office of Research](#) for advice.

ACCEPTABLE NAMES

Popular and acceptable usage of names changes over time. If possible, take the time to find out what the people themselves prefer to be named. This may depend upon the family structure and land area associated with each particular person. Griffith has [Guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Terminology](#) to assist staff and students but some key information is outlined below.

The terms ‘First Australians’ or ‘First Peoples’ are collective names for the original people of Australia and their descendants. You can use them to emphasise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples lived on this continent prior to European invasion and colonisation.

It is preferable to use the term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’—rather than ‘Indigenous’—as an adjective, as the former term more accurately reflects cultural heritage.

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples prefer the terms 'Aboriginal' or 'Torres Strait Islander' person or peoples. Use these terms and avoid the term 'Indigenous Australian', which is not as specific. Capitalise the first letter of the terms 'Aboriginal', 'Torres Strait Islander', 'Indigenous' and 'Elder'. The word 'Indigenous' is acceptable, however, where it forms part of an acronym within a University element, for example, Indigenous Research Unit (IRU) or Indigenous Education Statement (IES).

The term/s 'Aborigine/s' can have negative connotations. Remember the term 'Aboriginal' does not include Torres Strait Islander people, and reference should be made to both. Never use acronyms such as 'ATSI' to abbreviate 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' as it is offensive to reduce the diverse members of ancient cultures and to lump them together under one cultural identity.

IDENTITY IS IMPORTANT

The [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\)](#) map of Indigenous Australia provides a detailed representation of language, tribal or nation groups. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contextualise themselves by ancestral tribal and clan groups, and it is important to acknowledge each individual's preference.

Acceptable names may be 'Koori' if that person was connected to New South Wales, 'Murri' for Queensland, and 'Noongar' for Western Australia, or other specific groupings such as 'Yolngu' for Arnhem land or 'Anangu' for Central Australia.

The term 'Aboriginal people' is quite widely used and a person may say 'I am an Aboriginal person', though within Aboriginal systems that person could also say 'I am a Murri' or 'I am a Koori', which is actually far more descriptive and gives more information than purely 'Aboriginal'. Torres Strait Islanders have a linguistic and cultural identity that is very different to that of Aboriginal peoples. Refer to these groups as 'Torres Strait Islanders' or use the names of relevant groups.



An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Elder is someone who has gained recognition as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose knowledge and beliefs. Age alone doesn't necessarily mean that one is recognised as an Elder. Aboriginal people traditionally refer to an Elder as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle' as a sign of respect. It is not only about kinship connections but the position of the Elder in the community. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people should be respectful of Elders and, in particular, non-Indigenous people should ensure that they refer to Elders appropriately.

It is important to be respectful and not to be over familiar in addressing or referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is also important to understand that some groups do not allow the use of the name of a family member after their death. Check on the correct protocol when this situation occurs. For a period of time, known as a 'bereavement term', families may use a substitute name such as 'Kumantjayi', 'Kwementyaye' or 'Kunmanara' instead of a deceased person's first name. Families may also deem an alternative name for a particular period or permanently. For example, the family of the late 'Dr Charles Perkins' renamed him 'Kumantjayi Perkins' after his death. They have, however, permitted the use of his name ('Dr Charles Perkins') to those who knew him, and in historical or professional contexts. After his recent death, the family of a famous Yolngu singer advised the media that the singer should be subsequently referred to as Dr G Yunupingu in media reports and his image not shown.

RACIAL IDENTITY

The term 'black' has both positive and negative connotations. While it signifies solidarity, unity and political activism against racism to various groups around the world, it has been used also to devalue and victimise people on the basis of their skin colour. The terms 'Black' and 'Blackfella' should only be used by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Terms such as 'full-bloods', 'half-castes' and 'part Aborigines' were used officially in the past for the purpose of discriminatory treatment and are regarded by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and others, as inaccurate and insulting.

Some cultural practices have been misrepresented. For example, the English word 'walkabout' has been used pejoratively to describe traditional rites of passage thus demeaning the spiritual significance of these practices. Similarly, the cultural beliefs of the Aboriginal people and people of the Torres Strait Islands have been misrepresented and devalued; expressions such as 'superstition' or 'black magic' should not be used when referring to traditional beliefs.

The University will not tolerate racially-based discrimination or harassment. Grievance procedures exist to deal with such complaints ([see page 24](#)) and perpetrators may also be subject to legislative or criminal codes for such acts.

AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS

Australian South Sea Islanders are not Indigenous Australians but, similarly, have strong family and cultural ties including great respect for their Elders. They share with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples a history of disadvantage and discrimination since colonisation, and have been recognised as a distinct cultural group in Australia since 2000.

Australian South Sea Islanders were first brought to Queensland between 1863 and 1904 from eighty Pacific Islands to work in the fledgling sugar industry. They were, for nearly 50 years, the industry's principal labour source, and were often lured into coming or kidnapped through 'blackbirding'.

Many Australian South Sea Islanders have strong connections with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through marital relationships. Some can claim heritage through all these cultural connections. However, it is important to remember that Australian South Sea Islanders, Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders are all distinct cultural groups.

Never make assumptions about identity, but be guided by the manner in which people identify themselves. This demonstrates respect for all the communities and their individual cultures.

Some useful background about Australian South Sea Islanders includes:

- ▶ [Australian South Sea Islander, Department of Communities](#)
- ▶ [Australian South Sea Islander history, State Library of Queensland](#)



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE FOR GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Griffith staff and students are diverse in both gender and sexual identity. We have already mentioned the need for non-binary language as a way of recognising that not all people identify as male or female. In addition, people's sexual orientation is diverse and language and visual representation that is open to this diversity is also necessary.

Homophobia continues to be a problem in today's society and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ) still face considerable discrimination and marginalisation. Homophobia is the irrational fear of LGBTIQ people or any behaviour, belief or attitude in oneself or others which doesn't conform to rigid sex-role stereotypes. Some people who are homophobic simply avoid LGBTIQ people, places, events and topics of conversation. Extreme homophobia can manifest as vilification or violence.

It can be difficult for staff members or students to be open about their sexual orientation because of homophobia even though legislation makes discrimination illegal. This fear may affect the quality of their work and study experiences and their inclusion in university life.

TERMINOLOGY FOR GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

It is important to ensure that the correct terminology is used when referring to particular gender or sexual identities. The following provides a brief guide to those terms (National LGBTI Health Alliance, 2017) which are most likely to be used in the university and community contexts. Further resources for exploration are listed at the end of this guide.

TERM	DEFINITION
Gender	A psychosocial construct used to classify a person as male, female, both or neither
Gender identity	Usually conforms to societal gender norms and usually congruent with a person's gender expression and sex
Sex	The anatomy and biology that determines whether one is female/male
Sexual identity	How a person sees themselves physically, e.g. as male, female, non-binary etc
Sexuality	Which sex is emotional, physically or sexually attractive: opposite (heterosexual), same-sex, or both (bi-sexual)
Bisexual woman/man	Refers to a person's attraction to both men and women or other genders
Transgender, transman, transwoman, transperson	Transgender people are people whose gender identities are different to the gender they were assigned at birth
Intersex	Intersex is an umbrella term that describes people who have natural variations that differ from conventional ideas about 'female' or 'male' bodies. These natural variations may include genital, chromosomal and a range of other physical characteristics
Queer	The word queer is still a contentious word, originating as a derogatory label for gender and sexuality diverse people. It was reclaimed by the LGBTI community as part of activism within the community and is often used within the community as an umbrella term for gender diverse people
Gender fluidity/ gender diversity	Gender diversity includes people who identify as transgender, gender-fluid, intersex, gender questioning and genderqueer people. Gender diverse people do not owe an explanation for who they are, how they feel or how they look
Cisgender	This is a term used to describe people who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, for example, a person born with male genitals who identifies as a man is cisgender.
Agender/ non-binary	Identify as no gender
Bigender	Identify as both woman and man

NAMES MATTER

Derogatory terminology used to insult gender diverse people, or to refer to something in a derogatory way, for example ‘that’s so gay’, perpetuates the view that homosexuality is unacceptable. The words ‘gay’ for men and ‘lesbian’ for women are generally accepted within the LGBTIQ community. ‘Queer’ and ‘queer community’ are accepted by some people within these groups but should not be used by people outside the community without first consulting the relevant group/s. Below are some current examples of appropriate and inappropriate terminology (GLAAD , 2017).

INAPPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
homosexual, homo	LGBTIQ
dyke, leso	lesbian
faggot, poofter, homo, lemon	gay, gay man, gay person/people
tranny, transvestite, cross-dresser	transgender, trans, transman, transwoman
hermaphrodite	intersex
husband, wife	partner
homosexual couple, homosexual relationship	Relationship, couple
sexual preference, lifestyle	orientation, sexual orientation

Additional useful links discussing terminology in detail include:

- ▶ [ABC Sexuality and Gender Glossary](#)
- ▶ [Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation \(GLAAD\)](#)
- ▶ [LGBTIQ Health](#)
- ▶ [Victorian Government Inclusive Language guide](#)
- ▶ [Queer without Fear](#)
- ▶ [Transstudent](#)

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Inclusive language is an important part of creating a safe and inclusive environment for people who identify as LGBTIQ at Griffith. This includes using language that embraces the reality of gender diverse people, same-sex couples, family groups and the complex lives of young people who are still exploring their gender and sexual identities.

Affirmation of sexual and gender diversity also requires challenging heteronormative assumptions when these are expressed by others, particularly when expressed in a threatening or offensive manner. Challenging homophobic jokes and derogatory comments in a constructive way demonstrates support and greatly assists in creating a positive and inclusive work and learning environment. Refer to the section on [Active Bystander interventions](#) for more information.

The University will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender or sexual identity. Grievance procedures exist to deal with such complaints ([see page 24](#)) and perpetrators may also be subject to legislative or criminal codes for such acts.

Some useful links to explore for creating a safe campus include:

- ▶ [Griffith's Safe Campuses](#)
- ▶ [Queer without Fear](#)





USING CULTURALLY-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

VALUING DIVERSITY

Australia has many hundreds of different language groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups. Use of culturally-inclusive language means all ethnic and cultural groups are represented as equally valid. To avoid discriminatory language, it is important not to emphasise irrelevant racial or ethnic features e.g. 'two Asian students were accused of fraud'.

In general, avoid referring to the ethnic and racial background of a person or group unless there is a transparently valid or legal reason for doing so. For example, 'this week will discuss civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King Jr. who is remembered as one of the most influential and inspirational African-American leaders in history'.

APPROPRIATE DEFINITIONS

It is important to describe difference in appropriate and positive ways extending respect and dignity to the way individuals wish to be described, identified, addressed or portrayed.

There are some common terms used in higher education and more broadly that are more inclusive than others. The term 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) is a useful inclusive description for communities with diverse language, ethnic background, nationality, dress, traditions, food, societal structures, art and religion. CALD is the preferred term for many government and community agencies as a contemporary description for ethnic communities (Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, 2017).

An existing definition used by Government also includes non English-speaking background (nEsb). This term is defined as ‘people who have in Australia in the last 10 years’ and is used for statistical and reporting purposes (ABS, 2001). It is a sub-group of CALD and, while previously used to classify disadvantage, fails to adequately capture this and can leave out other CALD groups.

Because there is such diversity of migration experiences—over many generations but also very recently—a range of additional definitions evolve over time. Terms that have emerged include ‘recently arrived’ (usually within the last 5 years), and ‘new and emerging communities’ (only small numbers of the group/s are present in the community and may lack sufficient infrastructure and resources relative to other ethnic communities).

More formal definitions, such as ‘refugee’, asylum-seeker’, ‘permanent humanitarian visa holder’, tend to arise from immigration visa categories². Again, context and purpose are important. A term may be necessary to determine eligibility criteria, the scope of a program or research activity, or to specify a target audience. It is important to consider whether the terms exclude or label negatively and to qualify the experiences of a group.

ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

Avoid inappropriate generalisations about ethnicity and religion. The term ‘Asians’ is sometimes used inappropriately to refer to people from diverse countries with different cultures such as China, Japan, Vietnam, India, Taiwan and Malaysia. Grouping all these cultures under one title is ambiguous and fails to recognise vast ethnic, cultural and religious differences.

Not everyone in an ethnic group necessarily has the same religion. For example, not all Lebanese or Turkish people are Muslims and not all Muslims are Arabic or Turkish. Similarly, religions such as Judaism, Christianity and the Islamic faith are practised throughout the world, not just in particular countries. In addition, within these religions there can be a number of denominations with differing beliefs and practices. For example, Christian denominations include Anglicans, Catholics and Lutherans, and Judaism has denominations such as Orthodox and Hasidic.

‘Australians’ include people born in Australia or with Australian citizenship, regardless of their cultural heritage. If you need to specify a person’s ethnicity ask them how they choose to be identified.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND SURVEYS

Using ‘given name’ or ‘personal name’ on forms is more relevant than ‘first name’ which does not suit the cultural and ethnic groups in Australia who use their family name first. Similarly, the term ‘Christian name’ is inappropriate for the sizeable proportion of the population that is not Christian.

² www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/Visa-listing

INDIVIDUALS, NOT STEREOTYPES

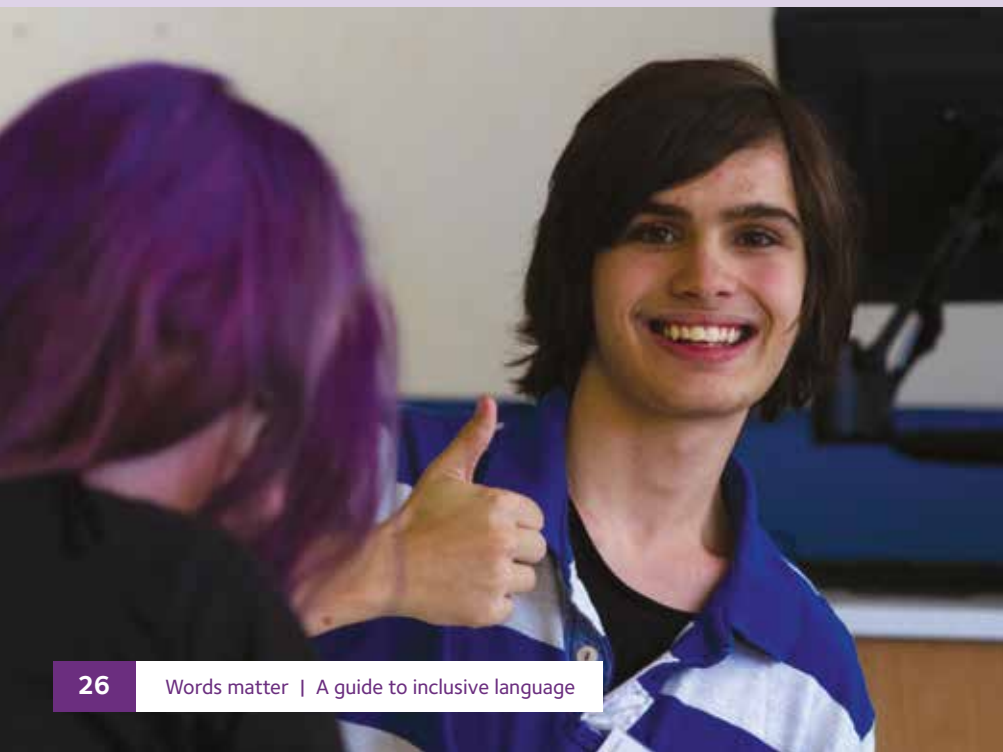
When describing people, take time to think of more relevant features such as occupation, abilities or achievements, rather than physical features or negative stereotypes developed about particular racial or ethnic groups. Stereotyping is misleading and ignores the personal worth of individuals. For example, 'all Vietnamese accents are difficult to understand' or 'all Anglo-Australians are 'boozers'—neither of which are the case.

Talking about different cultural practices out of context can result in ridicule and stereotyping. For example, polygamous marriages, while illegal in Australia, are acceptable in some cultures and countries. Engaging in dialogues about the context in which such practices occur will offer different perspectives and a broader understanding of the world.

The University will not tolerate racially-based discrimination or harassment. Grievance procedures exist to deal with such complaints ([see page 24](#)) and perpetrators may also be subject to legislative or criminal codes for such acts.

Some useful links to explore for creating a safe campus include:

- ▶ [Griffith Safe Campuses](#)
- ▶ [Racism. It stops with me.](#)



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

THE INDIVIDUAL, NOT THE DISABILITY

People with a disability are individuals who don't want to be pitied, feared or ignored, or to be seen as somehow more heroic, courageous, patient, or 'special' than others. Avoid using the term 'normal' when comparing people with disabilities to people without disabilities.

Remember, people with a disability are 'disabled' to the degree that the physical or social environment does not accommodate their disability or health condition. Terms like 'deformed', 'handicapped', 'able-bodied', 'physically challenged', 'crippled', 'differently-abled' and 'sufferer' are not acceptable.

APPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

If possible, find out how the individual refers to their disability—assuming reference to their disability is relevant. For example, some people may refer to themselves as 'blind' while others prefer vision-impaired. This may also be the case for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Those who use Auslan sign language typically prefer to be known as 'Deaf', or as 'the Deaf' when referring to the community. Other preferred terms are people 'with' or 'who have' a particular disability or health condition.

Avoid terms that define the disability as a limitation, such as 'confined to a wheelchair'. A wheelchair liberates; it doesn't confine. Words like 'victim' or 'sufferer' can be dehumanising and emphasise powerlessness for people who have or have had a disability or health condition.

Some useful preferred terms (Dept of Communities, 2012) are outlined below in further references at the end of the Guide.

INAPPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
the disabled	people with a disability
visually impaired	people with low-vision
the mentally handicapped	people with an intellectual disability
epileptics	people with epilepsy
the mentally ill	people with a mental illness/condition person with a psychiatric condition person with bi-polar, depression
confined to a wheelchair	wheelchair user, uses a wheelchair
victim of AIDS or AIDS sufferer	person with AIDS/person who is HIV positive
polio victim	person who has/had polio
disabled toilet	accessible toilet
handicapped parking	parking for people with disabilities accessible parking
learning impaired	person with a learning disability

INCLUSION

It is important to ensure that people with a disability are included in illustrations and materials in a non-discriminatory way. The lives of people with a disability are not defined by their disability and they should not be excluded from representations or content which is unrelated to the topic of disability.

Remember that disabilities can be both visible and invisible, so try to balance this in visual representations. However, also take care that this representation is not tokenistic or gratuitous nor the presence of the person with the disability treated as curious or ‘freakish’.

Additional resources to assist in creating inclusive environments for people with disabilities can be explored at:

- ▶ [Griffith University Accessibility and Inclusion website](#)
- ▶ [Australian Network on Disability](#)
- ▶ [Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training \(ADCET\)](#)
- ▶ [Project Open Doors](#)

USING LANGUAGE INCLUSIVE OF ALL AGES

Inclusive language counters many of the myths about youth and ageing. Language and representations should reflect the fact that both young and older people are independent and contributing to the social and economic well-being of the Griffith community.

Be aware that students are of all ages and do not refer to them as 'kids' or as 'young people'. Terms like 'pensioners', 'the elderly' and 'geriatric' perpetuate negative stereotypes. Although 'pensioner' may still be used as a technical term, it doesn't necessarily refer to older persons. The term 'older people' is considered the most acceptable term; 'seniors', 'older adults' and 'mature aged' are also commonly accepted terms.

Only use a person's age where it is a requirement or relevant, such as 'celebrating her 100th birthday', and ensure that both younger and older people are shown in current environments and with current views. Don't stereotype and demonise people regardless of their age group; not all older people are 'slow' or 'cranky', just as not all young people are 'arrogant' or 'lazy'. Discussing 'baby boomers', 'generation X or Y' or 'millennials' with negative connotations denies the inherent differences and uniqueness of individuals.

While sociologists coined terms like 'baby boomers' and 'millennials' to explain commonalities between generations who share socio-cultural histories, these terms fail to account for other influences such as culture, ethnicity, class, race and gender (Reeves & Oh, 2007).



ACTIVE BYSTANDER INTERVENTIONS

The bystander effect is a psychological phenomenon in which individuals exhibit reluctance to offer help to a victim when other people are present (Colman, 2015). The greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that any one of them will help. This reaction is borne out of a diffusion of responsibility and 'group think'. It is not that people don't feel genuine concern for a victim, but that they are not sure how to react or what to do, or they assume someone else will take action. The phenomenon was borne from a brutal attack on a woman in New York in the 1960s. The bystander effect can occur in a variety of situations including harassment, bullying or discrimination.

Active bystanders can be positively influential in situations where someone is being harassed, bullied or discriminated against. In conversations or situations where inappropriate language is being used, or in discussions which include discriminatory or derogatory language, there are a few simple and effective options (AHRC b & c, 2017) to shut down the conversation.

- ▶ name or acknowledge an offence
- ▶ interrupt the behaviour
- ▶ publicly support the aggrieved person
- ▶ use body language to show disapproval
- ▶ encourage dialogue
- ▶ diffuse or calm strong emotions

Some statements to diffuse difficult conversations include:

"I think some of your opinions on this matter are misinformed."

"I am not sure you are considering all the issues."

"That's not an appropriate conversation to have in the office."

"I disagree with you and I would rather not discuss this further."

"I'm uncomfortable with what you are saying."

"What you just said is rude and offensive."

Where someone is being physically harassed or assaulted there are some safe interventions to manage the situation. Don't get into situations that may cause personal harm to yourself or others.

- ▶ Call the police – don't assume someone else has
- ▶ Tell the perpetrators that you have called the police – this is likely to distract them and get them to move along
- ▶ Stay on the line with the police
- ▶ Comfort the victim, be a witness

For additional resources explore the following links:

- ▶ [AHRC Bystander fact sheet](#)
- ▶ [AHRC Cyberbullying and bystanders](#)
- ▶ [Griffith Safe Campuses](#)
- ▶ [Our Watch](#)
- ▶ [What you say matters \(Racism. It stops with me.\)](#)



PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

Anyone who wishes to make a complaint about demeaning or discriminatory language/presentation can access information and support from a variety of sources.

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS

Griffith takes all complaints and grievances seriously and recognises that information received via complaints helps to identify ways to improve our services and systems. Relevant policies and procedures depending on the type of complaint can be found at www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/complaints-grievances

For support and further information you can contact:

- ▶ [Ally Network and LGBTIQ Inclusion](#)
- ▶ [Griffith Harassment & Discrimination Contact Officer](#)
- ▶ [Griffith Safe Campuses](#)
- ▶ [Respect. Now. Always.](#)

EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

The Australian Human Rights Commission can investigate and resolve complaints where people have been treated unfairly, harassed or abused because of sex, disability, race or age. The complaints process is free and confidential. You can also contact us to discuss an issue and talk through your options.

For more information visit

www.humanrights.gov.au/complaints-information

Anti-Discrimination Commission (ADCQ)

The Anti-Discrimination Commission can help to resolve complaints under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 about discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation, and vilification.

For more information visit

www.adcq.qld.gov.au/complaints

CONTACT US

We welcome feedback on this document to continuously improve this guide.

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STUDENT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Words Matter

A guide to inclusive
language and presentation
for staff and students

For more information, visit
griffith.edu.au/student-services/diversity-and-inclusion