

## Guide to making gender-neutral documents and communications

This guide is produced in the context of Trinity's strategic commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and in particular the commitments laid out in our Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy (available at [www.tcd.ie/about/policies](http://www.tcd.ie/about/policies)).

Producing documents that are gender-neutral, or updating existing documents to make them gender-neutral, is a tangible demonstration of our acknowledgement and inclusion of transgender members of our community (students, staff or visitors). Many people do not identify or live as the gender that was assigned to them at birth, and many of those do not identify as either male or female. References to "he", "she" or "he/she" are therefore often not adequate to describe all the people to whom a document applies<sup>1</sup>.

Similarly, a move beyond gendered terms can make a document more reflective of the diversity of families and relationships in Ireland - for example, a woman's spouse is not necessarily male, and a single parent is not necessarily female. Gender-neutral language also allows for open interpretation of social roles – for example, the term "police officer" allows the reader to imagine someone of any gender, unlike the term "policeman".

Finally, it is not necessary to include gender distinctions in most University documents (many languages get by without them), and removing them can make documents more concise and flowing.

The table below contains suggestions that may assist you in making a gender-neutral document or other communication. For the most part gender-neutral wording decisions are very simple and a neutral term can just be slotted into the place of a gendered term. In more complex cases, it can help to rethink the order of the sentence, to Google alternative terms, or to consider whether the phrase / sentence is necessary at all.

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<sup>1</sup> This doesn't mean that all transgender people like to be referred to as "they" – but "they" covers all genders in a document which will be read by a wide variety of people

Gendered word / phrase	Suggested neutral word / phrase
"He", "She" or "He / She"	They
"His", "Her" or "His / Her"	Their
"Him", "Her" or "Him / Her"	Them
"Mr", "Ms" or "Mr / Ms"	You should avoid using any of the gendered titles (i.e. not "Dr" or "Prof.") unless they are necessary. If they <b>are</b> necessary, such as on some forms, it is good practice to offer "Mx" as an option as well as "Mr" and "Ms". "Mx" is a title that can be used by a person of non-binary gender or by anybody who prefers not to disclose their gender
"Father" / "Mother"	Parent (similarly, "Grandparent")
"Husband" / "Wife"	Spouse
"Boyfriend" / "Girlfriend"	Partner
"Son" / "Daughter"	Child
"Man" / "Woman"	Person (or occasionally "human" can be more appropriate, e.g. "humankind")
"Chairman" / "Chairwoman"	Chairperson (or "Chair", which is common in Trinity)
"Dear Sir / Madam"	This could be replaced with "To Whom it May Concern", "Dear Colleague", "Dear Student", etc.

<p>“Ladies and Gentlemen”</p>	<p>“Honoured Guests”, “Esteemed Colleagues”, etc.</p>
<p>Gendered job titles e.g. “Barman” / “Barmaid”</p>	<p>Look up neutral alternatives e.g. “Bartender”</p>
<p>“Male” or “Female” as adjective</p>	<p>Don’t use if not necessary to do so: for example, the adjective in phrases like “male nurse” or “female Professor” is not usually necessary. However, you might use these terms where gender is specifically relevant, for example in a report on the number of female Professors in a department.</p>
<p>“Male” or “Female” on forms</p>	<p>First, consider whether you need to know the gender of each person completing the form, and remove the gender question if not.</p> <p>If you do need to include a gender question, e.g. for statistical purposes, it is advisable to include the further options “Other gender” and “Prefer not to disclose”<sup>2</sup>.</p>
<p>Images</p>	<p>Try to include diversity of gender in the images you use in webpages, posters, etc., and consider how you might overcome stereotyping - show a female scientist or a male homemaker, for example.</p>
<p>Symbols (e.g. on toilet signs)</p>	<p>A range of gender-neutral symbols are available and the Equality Office can advise on this.</p>

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<sup>2</sup> If you report on gender to another body, e.g. the HEA, check their requirements before altering your forms