▶ STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Purdue University Global's Student Guide to Inclusive Language is designed to foster an environment of respect and inclusivity within academic discourse. By promoting mindful language choices, we empower students to navigate key areas such as gender inclusivity, racial and ethnic sensitivity, LGBTQ+ inclusivity, awareness of ability and disability, socioeconomic sensitivity, immigration status, religious diversity, military affiliation, language, and age.

Through practical examples and discussions, students are encouraged to embrace gender-inclusive language, reject stereotypes, affirm diverse identities, respect individuals' chosen pronouns, and acknowledge differences in socioeconomic background, immigration status, religion, military service, language, and age. Our goal is to provide students with the tools and understanding needed to cultivate a culture of inclusivity and respect, ensuring that every member of the Purdue Global academic community feels valued and represented.

▶ PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES

This Inclusive Language Guide is intended for use in academic and professional settings, offering guidance on effective communication while recognizing that language continues to evolve. It is not meant to replace personal language choices in individual contexts or group settings. While not exhaustive, the guide serves as a valuable tool for those learning to navigate and adapt to the ever-changing landscape of diversity.

▶ LANGUAGE AREAS OF FOCUS

‣ Gender-Inclusive Language
Students can ensure their language is inclusive and respectful by avoiding bias. It is important to differentiate between gender and sex using accurate and respectful terminology. Always respect individuals' pronouns, adopting gender-neutral language whenever possible.

Avoid making assumptions about gender roles or identities, and strive to use gender-inclusive language. Respect self-identified pronouns and avoid assuming a gender binary. This approach fosters a more inclusive and respectful environment for everyone.

> Examples:
> - Instead of "he" or "she," use "they" for a generic person, gender-neutral.
> - Use gender-neutral terms like "spouse" instead of "husband" or "wife."
> - Respect individuals' chosen pronouns and names.
> - Gender-Inclusive Resource

‣ Racial & Ethnic Sensitivity
Students can ensure their language is inclusive and respectful in the following ways: avoiding outdated terms, using the appropriate labels like "Black" or "African American," and referring to non-White racial and ethnic groups as "people of color" instead of "minorities." They should also employ parallel comparisons among groups and avoid essentialist language to respect community diversity.

> Examples:
> - Asian, people of color, Black, White, Hispanic, Latino/ Latina/Latinx/Latine, MENA, Native American
> - Racial and Ethnic Sensitivity Resource

‣ **LGBTQ+ Inclusivity**
Students can make their language more inclusive by using broad terms and acronyms like "LGBTQ+," "LGBTQ2+IA," "sexual orientation and gender diversity," and "sexual or gender minorities."

Examples:
- Use inclusive terms like "partner" instead of assuming heterosexual relationships.
- Identities within the LGBTQ+ acronym: Resource

‣ **Ability and Disability Awareness**
Students can promote inclusivity and respect when discussing people with disabilities using Person-First or Identity-First language. When choosing which language to select, students should use the preferred terminology identified by the individual or group. The goal is always to avoid terms that stigmatize disabilities or imply inferiority.

Examples:
- Person-First: person with a disability, person with Down syndrome, person who is visually impaired
- Identity-First: Some Deaf individuals prefer to be called "Deaf" (with a capital D) rather than "people with hearing loss" or "people who are deaf."
- Ability and Disability Resource

‣ **Socioeconomic Sensitivity**
Socioeconomic status (SES) includes income, educational level, job prestige, and how people perceive their social status and class. Students can make their language more inclusive and respectful by using specific terms to describe someone's situation. Focus on what people have, not what they lack.

Examples:
- Avoid using generalizations that have negative connotations; for example, "the homeless" should be "people experiencing homelessness."
- "Low-class people/poor people" should be "people whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold."
- Socioeconomic Status Resource

‣ **Military and Affiliated Language**
Students can make their language more inclusive and respectful by avoiding assumptions and using gender-neutral terminology when referring to our military and military-affiliated personnel. Verify who is serving and what military branch they serve or served.

Examples:
Use all-inclusive terms to address and describe an individual or group. Use terms like the following:
- Service Member
- Military spouse (instead of wife, husband, or dependent)
- Military child (instead of dependent)
- Military or armed forces (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard)
- Military and Affiliated Resource

‣ **Age**
Students can promote inclusivity and respect regarding "age" by avoiding vague definitions like "under 18 years" or "over 65 years." Instead, use preferred terminology. Additionally, using gender-appropriate identifiers can help ensure language is free of bias.

Examples:
- For an individual of any age, appropriate terms are "person," "individual," "older adults," or "adults aged 65 and older."
- Age Resource

‣ **Immigration-Citizen/Non-Citizen**

Students can promote inclusivity and respect regarding immigration status by avoiding dehumanizing terms like "illegal" or "illegal alien" and even terms like "citizen" or "American." This is important because many non-citizens live, work, and study in the U.S.

Examples:
- Non-U.S.-born persons/foreign-born persons
- The person or family is undocumented, not they are an undocumented family.
- [Immigration Status Resource](#)

‣ **Language**

Non-native English speakers may face challenges like fear of ridicule for language mistakes, difficulty with slang and social English, and pronunciation issues. Students can promote inclusivity by embracing linguistic diversity and using language that highlights the valuable asset of multilingual individuals.

Examples:
- They speak English in addition to other languages; they speak Spanish and are learning English, Spanish, Japanese, Russian, etc.; "_____" is their first language.
- [Inclusive Language Resource](#)

‣ **Religion**

Inclusive language should avoid references to a person's religious practice or belief unless relevant to the context. Recognize the diversity within any religion or belief system (e.g., Christianity, Islam or agnosticism, humanism) and avoid making broad generalizations. Do not assume a person's religion, faith, or beliefs and how they practice them. Also, avoid using words, images, or situations that reinforce religious stereotypes.

Examples:
- "You're such a tech guru!" The word guru is an appropriation of Hindu and Buddhist religions; the term refers to a spiritual leader who is highly respected and esteemed. The nonchalant use of the term diminishes its importance and origins.
- "You're an atheist? So what, you don't believe in anything?" This implies that individuals who do not believe in God do not believe in anything. It fails to recognize the individual's personal belief choice and attempts to impose ideologies onto the person about what is right or ideal.
- [Religion Resource](#)

COPYRIGHT ATTRIBUTIONS

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association. (2023). *Inclusive language guide* (2nd ed.). https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines.pdf

Purdue University Global. (2021). *Diversity, equity, and inclusion curriculum guide.* https://drive.google.com/file/d/12Ix8fm0hu2unuG2c6cpQDg5JFihOyGFV/view?ts=66edb333