

A Quick Guide to Inclusive Language & Accessible Content in Griffith policy documents

The purpose of this document is to provide a quick Guide to staff drafting Griffith Policy and Procedures. Griffith is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and requires that this be reflected in our policy documents.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

When making reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within policy documents, the following examples are considered acceptable

- ✓ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person/student/staff member
- ✓ Indigenous Australian person/student/staff member
- ✓ Australian First Nations people/students/staff
- ✓ Torres Strait Islander people/students/staff.

Do not use

- ✗ the abbreviations ATSI and A&TSI
- ✗ Aboriginal or Aboriginals as a noun
- ✗ Lower case when using the words “Aboriginal”, “Torres Strait Islander” and “Indigenous Australian”.

Gender and Sex Diversity & Inclusion

Griffith recognises the diversity of gender and sex is beyond the binary of female and male. To ensure inclusive language we therefore use "they" instead of he/she.

For example,

- ✗ Instead of: An appointee is required to disclose whether he/she ...
- ✓ Use: An appointee is required to disclose whether they ...

There will be opportunities to include gender-neutral language, for example, ‘people/staff/managers/students’ rather than ‘women and men’. Of course, there may be instances where it is appropriate to specify gender, for example, ‘women in leadership program’.

For consistency, the Griffith Pride Committee has recommended the use of the acronym LGBTIQ+ (meaning lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex and + to connote identities not listed) to encompass a range of diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics.

Person Centred Language

At Griffith we use person centred language, that is, putting the person first. For example,

- ✗ Instead: of disabled person/student/staff member
- ✓ use: person with a disability, student with a disability, staff member with a disability.

Accessible Content

Meaningful links

Ambiguous links can be frustrating for people who are blind or have low vision and rely on screen reader software to access content.

- ✗ Generally speaking, web links called 'click here', 'read more', 'further information' are unhelpful for people with screen readers.
- ✓ Instead, use words that describe the link, for example [Staff equity, diversity and inclusion website](#)

Providing image descriptions/alternative text

There may be instances where there are images, for example, flow charts or infographics in policy documents. It is important that images have accompanying alternative text (descriptive text which conveys the meaning and context of a visual item) so that descriptions may be read aloud by screen reader software. Without alternative text, some users will miss important information.

For more information on how to write and embed alternative text, go to the [Everything you need to know to write effective alternative text website](#) and/or use the Accessibility Checker in Word (in the Review tab).

The image below has the following alternative text. "Griffith University Pride Logo. Text states: Griffith University Queensland, Australia with a rainbow underline." This was done by right clicking the image and choosing "Edit Alt Text".



Forms

Sometimes forms are linked to Griffith policies and procedures. As a general principle, and aligned with [privacy](#), it is important that we only collect information that is needed and avoid collecting irrelevant and potentially discriminatory information.

Inclusive categories

Where we do legitimately collect information, it is important that we use inclusive categories or free text fields. **Gender categories** should go beyond the binary of woman and man and include the opportunity for a person to indicate non-binary, or self-described (please specify). **Name categories** should recognise a diversity of naming norms, for example, different cultures have different concepts of what a "first" and "last" name is, and some people will not have two-part names. Asking for the person's full name in one field in addition to a preferred name in another field, may be considered better practice.

Consultation

It is vital that where policy documents are about or impact particular groups, that these groups are involved in the development and consultation – "nothing about us without us".

If you'd like to discuss inclusive language and accessible content, please be in contact with Marnie King, HR Lead: equity, diversity and inclusion (marnie.king@griffith.edu.au).