

Humber College is committed to ensuring that principles of equity and diversity are instilled as values throughout Humber’s culture. Increasing, the use of inclusive language in all communications throughout the College can enhance inclusion in Humber’s learning, working and living environments. “Inclusive language strives to promote all people – regardless of difference – as full and valued members of society by selecting vocabulary that avoids exclusion, the use of false stereotypes, and the use of descriptors that portray groups of certain people as dependent, powerless, or less valued than others”<sup>1</sup>.

When referring to gender identity it is important to be aware of and use ‘all-gender’ terms and phrasings. Sex refers to a person’s biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex, whereas gender identity, refers to a sense of oneself as male, female, or transgender<sup>2</sup>. Transgender people refer to individuals whose life experience includes existing in more than one gender. This may include people who identify as transsexual, and people who describe themselves as being on a “gender spectrum” or as living outside the categories of ‘man’ or ‘woman’. ‘All-gender’ terms and phrasing can be applied to all genders. Below is a list of recommended guidelines and tips on how to enhance communication by incorporating inclusive language in discussions or written content when referring to sex and/or gender identity.

### Sex and Gender Identity

Provided below are tips on how to use all-gender terms and phrasing.

Instead of	Use
His/Her	Their
He/She	They, Them
Invite your boyfriend or husband	Invite your partner or spouse
Mankind	Humankind
Manning the office	Staffing the office
Forefathers	Ancestors

Avoid terms that show gender biases in the profession, for example:

Instead of	Use
Cleaning lady, Policeman, Chairman	Cleaner, Police officer, Chair
Male nurse, Woman lawyer, Female doctor	Nurse, Lawyer, Doctor

- Gender is not binary, but a continuum. \*Trans, Transgender and \*Transsexual refer to gender identity, not to sexual orientation. Always use the pronoun of a person's choosing.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/styleguide/content/inclusive\\_lang.html](http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/styleguide/content/inclusive_lang.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/sexuality-definitions.pdf>

- The word 'Transgender' is an umbrella term used to refer to people who do not identify with traditional concepts of gender and who may feel as though their biological sex (male, female, intersex) and their socially expected gender (man, woman) are different. 'Transgender' is commonly used to embrace both transgender and transsexual people and is often abbreviated to "Trans" or combined with other gender terms, e.g., "transman," "transwoman."
- The word 'intersex' refers to a person who, on a physical level, has a combination of typically male and female body parts

\*Trans: An umbrella term used to describe individuals who, to varying degrees, do not conform to what society usually defines as a man or a woman.

\*Transsexual: People who were identified at birth as one sex, but who identify themselves differently. They may seek or undergo one or more medical treatments to align their bodies with their internally felt identity, such as hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery or other procedures.

For more information on human rights, equity and diversity related terms please visit the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Diversity website at <http://hrs.humber.ca/diversity>.

**Sources:** The information in this document was compiled by the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Diversity | HR Services with information adapted from:  
[Inclusive Language Guidelines](#), University of British Columbia  
[Inclusive Language](#), University of Victoria  
[Using the Rights Terms](#), Public Health Agency of Canada  
[Understanding Gender Identity Fact Sheet](#), Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Diversity, Humber College