

## Inclusive Language: Race and Ethnicity

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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 race and ethnicity it is important to note the difference between the two terms. Race is defined as a socially constructed identity which refers to a group of people of common ancestry, distinguished by physical characteristics such as color of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture or facial features. An individual's ethnic origin refers to the culture individuals identify with and derive a common heritage or ancestry, or a shared historical past. Everyone is ethnic. 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 different races and/or ethnicities.

### Race and Ethnicity

- Avoid generalizations based in race or ethnicity. Do not assume that a person's appearance defines their nationality or cultural background.
- Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, and race, for example, Arab, Caucasian, French-Canadian, Jew, Latin, Asian.
- Remember that "person of colour" and "recent immigrant" are not synonymous.
- Avoid references that draw undue attention to ethnic or racial backgrounds. When references are being used, learn the most appropriate terminology or use the term preferred by the person or group concerned. All individuals have an ethnicity.
- Avoid vocabulary that extends negative racial, cultural or ethnic connotations and avoid language that portrays groups of people as "inferior," "bad," "criminal", or less valued than others.

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<sup>1</sup> University of British Columbia: Inclusive Language: Race and Ethnicity. Retrieved from:  
<http://styleguide.sites.olt.ubc.ca/style-guidelines/inclusive-language-guidelines/race-ethnicity/>

- Using the term "minority" when referring to an ethnic or racial group often implies inferior social position. The Employment Equity Act (1986) refers to members of "visible minorities" as those who are "non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". The term "visible minority" is increasingly becoming unacceptable when referring to individuals who are non-Caucasian, outside of the context of Employment Equity. Use the term 'racialized person/peoples' when referring to individuals who are non-Caucasian.

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:**

1. University of British Columbia: Inclusive Language Guidelines. Retrieved from <http://styleguide.sites.olt.ubc.ca/style-guidelines/inclusive-language-guidelines>
2. University of Victoria: Inclusive Language. Retrieved from <https://www.uvic.ca/communicationsmarketing/publications/style-guide/inclusivity/index.php>
3. Public Health Agency of Canada: Using the Right Terms: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/terms-conditions.html>