

Goethe-Universität
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QUICK GUIDE
GENDER-INCLUSIVE
LANGUAGE GUIDELINES



Language plays a key role in shaping cultural and social attitudes. Adopting gender-inclusive language is a meaningful way to promote gender equality, avoid gender stereotypes and fight gender bias. Mis-gendering a person is disrespectful and dismissive. When working, teaching and studying at Goethe-University, the best practice is to always use words with intention and care. The following examples can help to convey gender equality and inclusiveness in spoken language and written text.

NOTES ON USING NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

- If a person makes you aware that certain words or phrases are hurtful or perceived as discriminatory, take it seriously and avoid using these expressions.
- If you are told how a person self-identifies and wishes to be addressed, make sure to use their preferred name and pronouns.



GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

Gender-neutral expressions

When using the English language, you may have noticed many nouns ending with -man, even when all genders are meant. Instead, try to use neutral alternatives.

instead of

men or mankind
chairman
freshman student



prefer

people, humanity, human beings or we
chair, chairperson or head
first-year student

Modifications, plurals and passive voice

instead of

Each professor should send one of his assistants to the conference.
Each student must present his ID badge.
The student must submit his assignment by Monday.



prefer

Each professor should send one assistant to the conference.
All students must present their ID badges.
Assignments must be submitted by Monday.



Forms of address

It is always advisable to address someone by their first and surnames instead of “Dear Sir”/“Dear Madam”. When addressing a group, specifying the recipients is an easy alternative to “Dear Ladies and Gentlemen”.

In formal contexts, the following phrases are recommended:

- Dear Professor FIRST and SURNAME
- Dear Students
- Dear Colleagues/Dear Professors

More casual contexts allow for neutral phrases, such as:

- Good Morning, FIRST and SURNAME



Pronouns

There are various pronouns besides “he” or “she”, which differ according to individual preferences. You can signal openness and sensitivity by adding one of the following statements to your e-mail signature:

- ➔ My pronoun is ‘she/her’. By sharing your preferred pronoun, you can help me and others to address you accordingly.
- ➔ NAME [Pronoun she/her]
- ➔ Please don’t hesitate to contact me regarding the gender inclusiveness of our correspondence.



Forms

Two variations meet the current standards of gender inclusiveness:

- A **gender-neutral** design without gendered titles (i.e. ‘male’/‘female’ and ‘Sir’/‘Madam’ are omitted)
- A **gender-inclusive** design with several options (i.e. ‘male’, ‘female’ and a blank field, allowing individuals to write-in their preferred pronoun(s)).

LINKS AND LITERATURE

- Gender-inclusive language website of the Equal Opportunities Office, with Guide „Handlungsempfehlungen für eine diversitätssensible Mediensprache“ (in German): www.uni-frankfurt.de/57630150/Antidiskriminierung
- Information on gender-inclusive language: [www.transinterqueer.org/download/Publikationen/TrIQ-ABC_web\(2\).pdf](http://www.transinterqueer.org/download/Publikationen/TrIQ-ABC_web(2).pdf)
- Examples on how to use the Gender Star in German: www.geschichtgendern.de/gendersternchen-anwenden/

CONTACT AND COUNSELLING

Using these examples in your e-mails, websites and other contexts is a powerful signal of including all students and staff. The Equal Opportunities Office will gladly counsel and provide more information, if any questions should arise:

Equal Opportunities Office: gleichstellungsbuero@uni-frankfurt.de, www.equality.uni-frankfurt.de/

Diversity Team at the Equal Opportunities Office: diversity@uni-frankfurt.de, www.diversity.uni-frankfurt.de/en/

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