

LUSU Pronoun Policy

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1. **Introduction**

The Union notes:

- 1.1. Trans+ and non-binary students are at a higher risk of experiencing microaggressions through misgendering, assumption of pronouns based on appearance and misuse of names
- 1.2. Assuming someone's pronouns can cause a significant amount of stress, discomfort and/or anxiety, thus deterring them from taking part in Union activities
- 1.3. Students who are members of minority groups and/or have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are more susceptible to bullying, harassment and discrimination

The Union believes:

- 1.4. All students should be given equal opportunities and be given the chance to take part in any Union activity
- 1.5. The normalisation of introducing oneself using pronouns is a necessary step for Trans+ allies to demonstrate their allyship
- 1.6. It is important to respect and use individuals' pronouns, regardless of what may be on legal records or databases
- 1.7. All members should feel comfortable expressing their pronouns

The Union will:

- 1.8. Actively work to normalise clarifying pronoun use by including pronouns in introductions and meetings
- 1.9. Work to encourage all members to familiarise themselves with the concept of gender pronouns and their significance in society

2. **Purpose**

- 2.1. To foster an inclusive and respectful environment for all members associated with the Students' Union
- 2.2. To recognise the importance to gender identity and expression and ensure that individuals are addressed and referred to in a manner that aligns with their pronouns
- 2.3. This policy applies to all interactions, including verbal and written communication, meetings, presentations, and official documentation

3. Definitions

3.1. Pronouns

3.1.1. A word that is used in the place of a noun that is most often used when referring to someone without using their name

3.1.2. Examples of pronouns include, but are not limited to: 'he', 'she', 'they'

3.2. Microaggressions

3.2.1. A term used for commonplace daily verbal, behavioural or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward stigmatised or culturally marginalised groups

3.3. Trans+

3.3.1. A term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth

3.3.2. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

4. General Principles

4.1. Respect:

4.1.1. When addressing or referring to someone, always use the pronouns they have specified

4.1.2. If you are unsure about someone's pronouns, politely ask or use gender-neutral pronouns such as they/them until you receive clarification

4.2. Self-identification:

4.2.1. While pronoun usage is not mandatory, we recognize its significance in affirming individual identities

4.2.2. We provide opportunities for individuals to self-identify their pronouns, such as through employee profiles, introductions, or any other appropriate means

4.3. Avoid making assumptions:

4.3.1. Do not assume someone's gender identity or pronouns based on their appearance, name, or any other characteristic

4.3.2. It is essential to understand that gender identity is deeply personal, and individuals should have the autonomy to define and communicate their own pronouns

4.4. Inclusive language and communication:

4.4.1. Ensure that all communication channels, including emails, messaging platforms, and official documents, reflect inclusive language practices

4.4.2. Avoid using gender-specific terms when unnecessary and opt for gender-neutral alternatives whenever possible. For instance, use "they" instead of "he" or "she," or "spouse" instead of "husband" or "wife"

4.5. Correcting and apologising:

4.5.1. If you make a mistake in using someone's pronouns, apologize without hesitation and make an effort to correct yourself moving forward

- 4.5.2. Mistakes can happen, but it is crucial to show accountability, respect, and willingness to learn from them
- 4.6. Trans+ and non-binary inclusion:
 - 4.6.1. Recognize that transgender and non-binary individuals may use pronouns that differ from what is typically associated with their assigned sex at birth
 - 4.6.2. Support their right to be addressed using their pronouns, and avoid any form of discrimination, harassment, or misgendering
- 4.7. Education and awareness:
 - 4.7.1. Promote education and awareness about pronouns, gender identity, and inclusion
 - 4.7.2. Encourage open conversations, training sessions, or resources that help raise awareness, dispel myths, and promote understanding among employees
- 4.8. Non-tolerance or harassment:
 - 4.8.1. Any form of harassment, discrimination, or intentional misgendering based on an individual's pronouns is strictly prohibited
 - 4.8.2. We have a zero-tolerance policy for such behaviour and will take appropriate disciplinary actions against anyone found violating this policy

5. Pronouns Policy

5.1. Inclusive language

- 5.1.1. Gender-inclusive language recognises and includes all genders, acknowledging that gender exists on a spectrum
- 5.1.2. When addressing a new group of people, gendered language should be avoided to ensure all people are included
- 5.1.3. When referring to someone unknown, 'they' should be used in conversation rather than assuming their pronouns based off of their name
- 5.1.4. Names and pronouns should be clearly stated in peer-to-peer introductions or at the beginning of meetings, presentations and trainings
- 5.1.5. Where possible, gendered groups will use the '+' symbol to include those who identify outside of the gender binary

5.2. Training

- 5.2.1. Gender inclusivity must be part of training sessions for student leaders and new Union staff members
- 5.2.2. Training will be comprehensive and updated based on the changes made in society
- 5.2.3. All resources will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are updated and provide accurate
- 5.2.4. Inclusivity, diversity and equality should be promoted during training programmes in order to raise awareness about various forms of discrimination, biases, and systemic barriers that can exist within our community and society
- 5.2.5. Training sessions cover topics such as pronoun usage, respectful language, understanding gender identity, and creating inclusive spaces for all genders

- 5.2.6. Members should be empowered to become effective allies and advocates for marginalised groups
 - 5.2.6.1. Allyship training should focus on understanding privilege, learning about different forms of discrimination, and developing strategies for active allyship
- 5.2.7. There should be a commitment to ongoing learning and improvement. The effectiveness of training initiatives will be regularly assessed and necessary adjustments will be made based on feedback and emerging best practices

5.3. Online presence

- 5.3.1. We promote the use of inclusive language online, as outlined in the Inclusive Language guidelines.
- 5.3.2. Members are encouraged to be mindful of their language, avoiding stereotypes, assumptions, or derogatory remarks that may exclude or offend individuals based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, or any other characteristic
- 5.3.3. We aim to provide engaging and informative content that reflects the diverse interests, concerns, and experiences of our community
- 5.3.4. We encourage members to contribute ideas, suggestions, and feedback to help shape our online presence and ensure that it remains relevant and valuable to all

5.4. Accidental use of inaccurate pronouns

- 5.4.1. Mistakes in using pronouns may occur unintentionally, and it is important to address and correct them respectfully
- 5.4.2. If someone is corrected about pronoun usage, they are expected to apologise, make the necessary adjustment, and avoid repeating the mistake in the future
- 5.4.3. Deliberate misgendering or refusal to use someone's correct pronouns will not be tolerated within the Students' Union