

Pronoun use guidelines

The School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies has decided to adopt the following as a general guidance to more inclusive practices with respect to pronoun use.

What are pronouns?

Pronouns are words like ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘she’, ‘he’, ‘they’. Typically, we refer to individuals who identify as women using ‘she’/‘her’ and to those who identify as men using ‘he’/‘him’. Some non-binary or genderqueer individuals use non-binary pronouns. Typical non-binary pronouns are: ‘They’/‘them’/‘theirs’, ‘Ze’/‘hir’/‘hirs’.¹

These pronouns are used in the same way grammatically as ‘she’/‘her’ or ‘he’/‘him’. For example: “I think the point **they** just made about the political significance was interesting”; or “**Ze** went to the library to pick up **hir** book”; or “**Ze** thinks greatly of **hirs**self.”

The above list of pronouns is not exhaustive. For that reason, it is a good idea to ask students and colleagues how they would like to be addressed. Some individuals might prefer to have their name repeated instead of being substituted by a pronoun.

What should I do?

Tutorials, lectures and meetings: If you ask students and attendees to introduce themselves to the class or group in your first meeting, let them know that they can mention their pronouns alongside any other relevant details, e.g. for students, what they study etc.

You can start off by introducing yourself as an example to others of how to present this information. For example, for a tutor that identifies as a woman, you can say “I’m [name] and my pronouns are she/her”. You can also let them know that they can share their pronouns with you by email or by approaching you at the end of the session, if they prefer to do so this way.

You can also use the form included below to distribute among your students where other details are included (e.g. how to refer to your student in different contexts).

Registry at conferences, workshops and other academic events: If you ask attendees and students to wear a name tag, let them know that they can add their pronouns as well. You can set an example by writing your name and pronouns on your name tag. For example, for an organizer that identifies as a woman, you can write “[Preferred name]. She/her.” Or, “Hello, my name is [preferred name]. My pronouns are: She/her”.

¹ Adapted from the guidelines Supporting Transgender Young People. Guidance for Schools in Scotland available at the LGBT Youth Scotland website and from the ‘pronoun’ entry at the Scottish Trans Alliance website.

Mail signature: You can also add your pronouns to your email signature if you use this to interact with colleagues and students. For example, for someone who identifies as a woman, you can write at the bottom below the affiliation “Pronouns: she | her | hers”.

If you plan to introduce speakers and participants, ask them how they would like to be addressed.

Why are we doing this?

We know that transgender students have been misgendered in tutorials. Transgender students can feel nervous bringing this up, as it draws attention to them. Providing space to give their pronouns in tutorials and meetings will normalize the practice and enable transgender students and colleagues to feel comfortable and included.

It might seem that the pronouns of every student and colleague are obvious, and that no one in your group is at risk of being misgendered. However, that is something you cannot know beforehand since people do not always present in ways which make their pronouns obvious. **For this reason, it is important that you incorporate this into your academic practices, regardless of there being no one in the class or group that is transgender or uses different pronouns to what you would expect.**

In this way, we are making more common the idea that people might not use the pronouns you expect. This will lead to greater consideration and inclusion of transgender individuals not just within the department but for members of the department to carry on into the world.

Finally, it is important to remember that consistently misgendering someone is in breach of the law as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Who can I contact for more information/ support?

Saints LGBT+:

General email: saintslgbt@st-andrews.ac.uk

Minorities and Philosophy:

General email: mapuk.sasp@gmail.com

Equality & Diversity officer (School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies):

Derek Ball: db71@st-andrews.ac.uk

Other resources.

Saints LGBT+: <https://www.saintslgbt.com/>

University of St Andrews policies on Trans, Gender Identity, Reassignment, or Non-Binary: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/genderreassignment/>

University of St Andrews Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) page: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/>

School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies EDI page: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/philosophy/school/equality.html>

Beaumont Society (UK transgender support group): <https://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/>

Scottish Trans Alliance (equality Network project to improve gender identity and gender reassignment equality, rights and inclusion in Scotland): <https://www.scottishtrans.org/>

LGBT Youth Scotland: (Scotland's national charity for LGBTI young people): <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/>

Name for official communications: _____

Name you want me to call you in class: _____

How to pronounce it: _____

Pronouns (e.g.: He/him; She/her, They/them, Ze/hir, etc.): _____

May I use these pronouns in front of the class? YES NO

May I use these pronouns with other tutors and academic staff? YES NO

May I use these pronouns to interact with Student Services (e.g. about absences, extensions, etc.)? YES NO

Would you like to follow up with me (in a private conversation) about your pronouns?
YES NO

To help me remember your name, please tell me two things about yourself. This could be interesting facts, hobbies, or just things you want me to know about you. Use the back of the paper if needed.