

Gender neutral language

To ensure that gender-neutral language is used consistently throughout the University, both in official correspondence and internal documentation, please be advised that **all documents, including committee papers and minutes, should now avoid gender-specific language wherever possible.**

This is in line with the [University's Trans and Gender Reassignment Policy](#) (Section 17) which states that *"whenever possible, all official University correspondence should use non-gendered terminology when referring to a group of individuals or an individual of unspecified gender identity. For example, instances of 'he/she' should be superseded by 'they'."*

For the purposes of committee agendas, reports, and minutes, please note that gendered titles should now be removed from individuals' names. Titles that should be removed include: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Sir, Dame, Lady, Lord. Titles that are considered gender-neutral and can be retained in University documentation include: Dr, Professor.

In minutes and reports, secretariats should also be mindful of the use of gender-neutral pronouns, such as 'they', 'them', 'their' or 'themselves', instead of gendered pronouns such as 'he', 'she', 'his', 'hers', 'himself', 'herself'.

The consistent use of masculine words such as 'he' and 'manpower' can, to some readers, give the impression that women are excluded from the group to which the writer is referring. While some may respond that masculine words refer to both men and women, the impression that matters is that of the reader and not the writer. Therefore, we need to remove specifically masculine words from our writing where they are not referring to gender specifics. The table below gives some ideas on how to do this.

Principle	Example	Suggested alternative
Use 'they' instead of 'he' or 'she' (only when the use of plurals would be acceptable)	"Each respondent was asked whether he wished to participate."	"Respondents were asked whether they wished to participate."
Use 'you' to speak direct to the reader	"The student should make sure she checks her references carefully."	"You should make sure you check your references carefully."
Changing the sentence to avoid the need to state a gender	"The child should be given ample time to familiarise himself with the test material."	"Ample time should be allowed for the child to become familiar with the test material."
Changing to gender neutral alternatives	"The manpower needed to complete the task was estimated at 2 employees."	"The workforce needed to complete the task was estimated at 2 employees."

Further information on gendered language can be found on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion website: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/>.