



Language and Culture

Preamble:

Australian Institute of Business (AIB) has a diverse population as students, staff and visitors come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring with them valuable experiences and knowledge. It is the responsibility of all members of the AIB community to ensure people are welcomed and included. The language used within AIB is a powerful tool to ensure that people feel welcome and included.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to give staff, students and consultants of the AIB guidance about written and oral communication so that it is inclusive and does not breach the AIB policies on Social Inclusion and Legislative Compliance.

Scope:

Organisation wide

Details:

Inclusive language is about ensuring that differences are not used to deliberately exclude or discriminate against people or groups of people. Differences are important, but putting a negative connotation on those differences is unnecessary, hurtful and may be illegal and/or against AIB policy

Age Stereotyping

Reference to age is often unnecessary. It is inappropriate to view all older people as frail, dependent, no longer productive and inactive or young people as incompetent, immature, or rebellious.. Consider the individual person rather than the age bracket they happen to fall into.

Disability

Avoid labelling people who have a disability in a derogatory manner People with a disability are not their disability. Using terms that depersonalise the individual must be avoided. Use 'a person with a disability' or 'persons with a disability' instead - make the disability secondary to the individual.

If it is necessary to be specific about the disability, then use the following.

Appropriate

People who are blind
A person with epilepsy
A person with schizophrenia
People who have a hearing impairment
Access toilet, Access Car Park,

Inappropriate

The blind
An epileptic
A schizophrenic
The deaf
Disabled toilets or disabled car park

Gender

a) Titles and Modes of Address

Be consistent between men and women when using titles and modes of address. It is especially important in an academic environment to ensure that people's qualifications are accurately reflected in their titles.

Ensure the language you use does not trivialise or patronise either men or women. Both women and men need to be treated with the same dignity and respect

b) Sex-role Stereotyping

Do not use assumptions based on sex-role stereotyping, for example to say that "staff have families to support" assumes that staff are male.

c) Use of Man, He and His

It has been common, both orally and in written work, to refer to both men and women using the male gender. This is not appropriate because it can alienate women and, in some instances, implies an assumption about the gender of the holder of an office. Some examples are given below:

Appropriate

Humans, human beings, humankind, man and woman, women and men
Humanity, human beings, the human race, people
The best person/candidate for the job
Workforce, personnel, staff, human resources
Supervisor
Scientists

Inappropriate

Man
Mankind
The best man for the job
Manpower
Foreman
Men of science

As a verb or adjective

Appropriate

To staff the front desk
You can answer the phones

Inappropriate

To man the front desk
You can man the phones

As a pronoun

Appropriate

Students have the right to appeal their final grades

Lecturers must ensure their course material is accurate

Inappropriate

A student has the right to appeal his final grade

A lecturer must ensure his course description is accurate

d) Sex-specific Occupations

Avoid using titles that depict an occupation as gender exclusive.

Race and Ethnicity

a) Undue Emphasis on Cultural Background

Do not mention the cultural or ethnic background of a person or group unless it is necessary. Unfortunately many news headlines and reports will distinguish a person if they are, for example, from a Vietnamese, Greek or other background, but will not do the same generally if a person is of Anglo-Celtic background.

ii) Stereotyping

Stereotypes must be avoided. Certain traits are sometimes inaccurately associated with all members of a culture or ethnic group. Some examples include 'whinging Poms', all 'black people are fast runners', or 'all Americans are loud'.

iii) Invisibility

Some cultural groups and ethnicities can become invisible, for example the various Asian ethnicities within Australia are often lumped together under the term 'Asian'. This discounts the diversity within the various ethnicities and therefore these ethnicities become invisible.

Derogatory Labelling

Using terms that are derogatory toward anyone is unacceptable. This includes toward people from various cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Any term that defines an individual as 'other' should be avoided.

Sexuality

a) Derogatory Labelling

Ensure the language you use to refer to people's sexuality is accurate and appropriate. Sometimes groups of people use terms for themselves that are otherwise viewed as derogatory and should not be used by people outside of the group; for example, lesbian women may refer to themselves as dykes, but would not appreciate heterosexual women or men using the term.

b) Invisibility

Use language that incorporates a range of relationship possibilities. Assuming that all couples are composed of a husband and a wife renders invisible many people of other sexual identities, as well as people living in defacto relationships. Use 'partner' instead

of 'husband' or 'wife' if you do not know the sexual identity or marital status of the people you are speaking to.

Related Forms:

Nil

Responsibility:

All staff

Related Policies:

Social Inclusiveness

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