

Gender Pronouns: A Guide for Faculty and Staff at Redlands

What is a pronoun?

- A pronoun is any word that can replace a noun or noun phrase (I, you, them)

What is a gender pronoun?

- Gender pronouns refer specifically to people that are being talked about (he, she, him, his, her)

I've heard the term "preferred-gender pronoun" (PGP). Should I talk about PGP's?

- It is now more appropriate for PGP to stand for Personal Gender Pronoun. This more accurately describes the pronoun with which an individual identifies and wants others to use when talking to or about that individual .

What kind of pronouns can be used?

- *She, her, hers and he, him, his*

These pronouns are most common. They are traditionally referred to as feminine or masculine pronouns, but some prefer to avoid these labels, as it may allow for unwanted stereotypes.

- *They, them, theirs*

This is one of the most common gender-neutral pronouns. It may be used in the singular.

- *Ze/Zie/Xe* (all pronounced like "Zee"), replaces *she/he/they*
- *Hir* (pronounced like "here"), replaces *her/hers/him/his/they/theirs*
- Name preference

Some people prefer not to use pronouns, and would like their names to be used instead.

Hello
My pronouns are:



How should I ask about someone's pronouns?

- You can simply ask "What are your pronouns?" to an individual in a private setting.
 - This may feel uncomfortable at first, but you do not want to say the wrong pronouns based on assumptions, and the students will most likely appreciate your effort.
- On the first day of class, ask all students to complete index cards with contact information, the name they use/like to be called, and their pronouns. You may need to explain/give examples. (e.g. my pronouns are 'she' and 'her'; my pronouns are 'they/them'.)
- If you do class introductions on the first day, invite students to use the name they wish to be called, even if it is different from what is on the roster.
- Students may choose to have a name listed on class rosters in parentheses. If this is the case, this is the name to be used.

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- **If you make a mistake:** That's okay! If you use the wrong pronoun, apologize, correct it, and then move on. Avoid continually talking about how badly you feel for making the mistake, as that makes the person feel as if they need to console you. If you forget someone's pronouns, follow the same protocol: **apologize, correct it, and move on.**
- If other students or faculty are using the wrong pronoun for a person, try to correct it by saying something like "Actually, Alex uses the pronoun *she*."
 - If students or faculty continue to use the wrong pronoun, do not ignore it. It might help to ask the individual who has been misidentified/misgendered if they would like you to take the person aside and remind them of the proper pronoun. Steps like this let the person know you are an ally.
- **Never** refer to a person as "it" or "he-she", unless the individual requests that you do so.

What should I do if I don't know with what gender someone identifies?

- Depending on one's preferred pronouns, you can often determine a person's gender identity. If you are still unsure of one's gender identity, however, you can again be straightforward and ask the person with which gender they identify. On the other hand, you should ask yourself whether it really matters in your context. A safe option is to simply use gender-neutral pronouns for everyone, until you have learned an individual's choice.

Why is it important to respect pronouns?

- You can't always tell someone's pronouns by looking at them.
- Faculty and staff are often in positions of power vis-à-vis students, so by respecting pronouns consistently, you set an example for peers and other students.
- When someone is referred to by the wrong pronoun, it can make the person feel disrespected and alienated.
- Inquiring about pronouns is a simple way to show that you want to cultivate an environment that respects all gender identities.
- The University of Redlands prohibits and will not tolerate unlawful discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression.

To learn more about pronouns, gender and sexuality issues and transgender resources, contact the Pride Center or Center for Gender Justice

Phone: 909-748-8297

Email: campusdiversity@redlands.edu

Website: <http://www.redlands.edu/student-affairs/campus-diversity-and-inclusion/>