

Non-binary Inclusion



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Non-binary is a term used to describe people who feel their gender cannot be defined within the confines of the gender binary of man and woman.

Instead, they understand their gender in a way that goes beyond this binary. Non-binary people can feel that their gender identity and gender experience is in between a man and woman, is being both a man and a woman or that it is fluid, can change and fluctuate or is completely outside of the man/woman binary.

How else might non-binary people identify?

As non-binary is a broad term which includes anyone who doesn't fit the binary narrative of identifying as a man or a woman, non-binary communities are incredibly diverse, and no two experiences are the same. The range of identities and labels/language used within non-binary communities means that non-binary has become an inclusive umbrella term. Some examples of terms commonly used by non-binary people and are captured under the non-binary umbrella term include genderqueer, agender, gender-fluid, bigender and third gender. This is not an exhaustive list but shows the richness of language and the many ways that people can describe their gender.

What pronouns and titles might non-binary people use?

Pronouns are short words used to describe someone instead of using their name, for example she/her or he/him. Non-binary people may choose one of these pronouns, but they may prefer a gender-neutral pronoun such as they/them. If you are unsure about someone's pronoun, ask them. You may want to share your pronouns as well.

How to be an ally to non-binary people

- **Introduce yourself with your name and pronoun.** Stating your pronouns is important as it reminds people that pronouns and associated gender should not be presumed. Not everyone uses gendered pronouns such as 'he/him' or 'she/her' and it's important to be respectful and inclusive of people who use different pronouns. For example, the most common gender-neutral pronoun is the singular 'they' (they/them/theirs). Using people's correct pronouns shows that you respect them and who they are.
- **Put your pronouns in your email signature.** This is more inclusive and allows for you to use correct pronouns and for other staff and students to use your correct pronoun.
- Instead of addressing groups of people with binary and gendered language such as 'ladies and gentlemen', **try more inclusive alternatives such as 'folks' or 'everyone'**.
- When writing communications, reports or policies **use words that define the relationship instead of the relationship and gender.** For example, use 'parents,' 'caregiver,' 'guardian,' 'partner,' 'children' or 'siblings' instead of mother, father, boyfriend, girlfriend, brother, sister, son and daughter as this language is gendered and can exclude non-binary people.
- Not everyone is comfortable with gendered titles such as 'Ms' or 'Mr', therefore it is important to **provide alternative gender-neutral titles such as 'Mx'** (pronounced mix or mux) when requesting data on titles.
- **Use the singular 'their' instead of 'his/her' in letters and other forms of writing,** i.e. 'when a colleague finishes their work' as opposed to 'when a colleague finishes his/her work'. It is important not to assume gender identity and pronouns, so until someone tells you their pronouns use gender neutral pronouns.
- **Make sure that your policies, documents and reports use inclusive language,** i.e. using 'they' instead of 'he/she' and avoiding sentences that imply two genders. Where specifically talking about gender identity, make sure it is inclusive of non-binary gender identities and not just trans men and trans women.

Some of these practices may take time to get used to, and sometimes you may make mistakes but each small change we make can have a big impact. If you do make a mistake apologise, correct/change what you have said, learn from the mistake, and move on. We can as individuals and as a University support our non-binary staff, colleagues and students and help foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable and safe to be themselves.

Internal Support

[Advice and Counselling](#) - Advice and Counselling provide a range of specialist, professional and confidential services to support **students** with financial, welfare, legal, emotional and psychological issues.

[Togetherall](#) - Queen Mary University of London offers all its **staff and students** access to an online support service called 'Togetherall'. Togetherall offers unlimited, 24/7 accessible online support – you can connect with peers, chat online to clinicians, use self-help resources, join groups or take self-assessments. To [join Togetherall follow this link](#) and sign up using your Queen Mary University of London with your university e-mail address.

[Employee Assistance Programme](#) - The employee assistance programme is a free, confidential service that provides a wide range of support for **staff** around help balancing work, family and personal life. Available anytime, any day, by phone, email or online, the service provides information, resources, referrals and counseling on any issue that matters to you.

[Report + Support platform](#) - We want Queen Mary to be the most inclusive university of its kind. If you or someone else have experienced harassment, hate incidents, bullying or gender-based violence, you can report it via our secure Report + Support platform. Report + Support provides information about specialist external services and offers the option to make a report to the University to discuss options for support and possible action.

Further Resources

[Mermaids](#) - Mermaids supports transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse children and young people until their 20th birthday, as well as their families and professionals involved in their care.

[Trans Unite](#) - Trans Unite allows members of the trans and non-binary communities to find a support group local to them (or even online).

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