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Guidance on Gender Inclusive Language

in Theses and Dissertations at ABPU

Version 2.0

Version history

Version	Date	Author	Approved by	Reason for change / notes
1.0	16 April 2024	Marc Ernesti QUM		First version
2.0	19 April 2024	ME		Feedback from RKT Kelsey Albright

Anton Bruckner Private University (ABPU) recognizes equality of gender, among various other dimensions, as an important part of inclusive society. Therefore, it is our ambition to equally respect and address all human beings in our written materials, regardless of gender identity or expression. Specifically, since the academic year 2020/21 we require final theses and dissertations across all Bachelor and Master degree courses to use gender-inclusive language. It is no longer possible to make a blanket statement (known in German as ‘*Gender-Klausel*’) that all gender expressions should be included where only the masculine or feminine is used or implied.

While English nouns may seem gender-ambiguous already, in practice this is not necessarily true: often we encounter, say, ‘the Ph.D. candidate’ in a text only to find out later that the author suggests ‘he’ should be understood to carry all gender expressions.

To mitigate this, a few simple solutions offer themselves:

- Use general, inclusive terms (e.g., human beings) not exclusive (e.g., man).
- Use plural wherever feasible (e.g., PhD students/they rather than the PhD student/(s)he).
- Avoid gendered terminology (e.g., chairman, research fellow, a master of dance) and use inclusive terms instead (e.g., chairperson, research associate, a distinguished dancer).
- Use self-identified pronouns (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs) where available. Note that the non-binary expression attracts a plural: ‘Their name is Cleo. They study dance.’

Students may wish to discuss their choice of gender-inclusive language with their supervisor, who will be able to guide them towards an inclusive and consistent use. In addition, students and supervisors are welcome to seek assistance from the Department of Quality Management QUM.

Further reading

Resource List (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Music Studies, UK)

<https://edims.network/resources/>

Inclusive Language (University of Maastricht, NL)

<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/about-um/diversity-inclusivity/di-education-and-social-safety/inclusive-language>

Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language (American Philosophical Association, USA)

<https://www.apaonline.org/page/nonsexist>

Gender Sensitive and Inclusive Language Guide (University of Basel, CH)

https://www.unibas.ch/dam/jcr:cf56fc5a-9173-4382-9f69-b045af4c31a2/Gender%20Sensitive%20and%20Inclusive%20Language%20Guide_withLogo.pdf