



GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN RESEARCH

Definitions

Gender or Gender Identity describes the internal/psychological sense of self, regardless of biology. Response options to questions categorizing gender would typically include woman, man, transgender, and non-binary.

Sex is the biological category based on chromosomes, hormones, and secondary sex characteristics. Response options to questions categorizing sex would typically include male, female, and intersex.

Sexual Orientation refers to an individual's emotional, physical and sexual attraction to other people. Response Options to questions categorizing sexual orientation would typically include heterosexual, gay/lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Description

When researchers ask questions about sex, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, there must be an understanding of what is being asked and what information is sought. Sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation are specific terms and should not be used interchangeably. Investigators must be specific when asking questions and collecting information with regard to gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation.

When investigators plan to collect information about sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, the following items should be considered:

- Investigators should determine whether questions about sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation are necessary. If the investigator has no plans to use the data, it may not justify asking the question.
- Questions about sex, gender, and sexual orientation should be separate. Investigators do not need to collect data about all three, but investigators should ensure that the questions are designed to obtain the information that is sought.
- Investigators must allow individuals the option to decline responding to questions about sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- Because sexual orientation and gender identity are separate aspects of identity, investigators should not combine them into one question (not asking, for example, "Do you identify as a part of the LGBTQ community?").
- In order to provide additional response options for identifying sex, gender, or sexual orientation, the preferred response option is "Not Listed." The use of the word "Other" can have a negative connotation.
- Rather than simply introducing options following the title, "Gender," it is preferable to ask a question such as, "How do you identify?" or "To which gender identity do you most identify?"

Please contact the IRB Office at (801) 581-3655 or irb@hsc.utah.edu for additional guidance.



Sample Questions

Sex

Sex:

Female

Male

Intersex

Not Listed: _____

Prefer not to reply

Gender/Gender Identity

How do you identify?

Woman

Man

Transgender/Trans woman

Transgender/Trans man

Non-Binary

Not Listed: _____

Prefer not to reply

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation:

Heterosexual/Straight

Gay/Lesbian

Bisexual

Not Listed: _____

Prefer not to reply

Pronouns

When appropriate, investigators should ask subjects which pronouns they use. An example question that can be used in a survey (or reworded into an interview question) follows:

Pronoun Use:

He/Him/His

She/Her/Her

They/Them/Their

Not Listed: _____

Prefer not to reply



References & Links

*American University
Center for Diversity and
Inclusion: Inclusive
Survey and Data
Collection Practices
Concerning Gender, Sex,
and Sexual Orientation
SurveyGizmo.com: How
to Write Gender
Questions for a Survey*

<http://nebula.wsimg.com/4c27929f438a2dee7c064e1c5b2a7b51?AccessKeyId=B6885E9DB42D0C2EAC6F&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

<https://www.surveygizmo.com/resources/blog/how-to-write-survey-gender-questions/>

Please contact the IRB Office at (801) 581-3655 or irb@hsc.utah.edu for additional guidance.