



LGBTIQ Inclusive Data Collection Guide

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BEST PRACTICE SEX, GENDER AND SEXUALITY DATA COLLECTION

At Edith Cowan University, we are committed to diversity and inclusion. We strive to be a place of belonging for all staff and students including those who are LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and/or Questioning) or diverse in their sex, gender and/or sexuality.

As our collective understanding of sex, gender and sexuality continues to evolve, it is important that language usage and data collection methods also reflect and acknowledge the diversity that exists in our community

Our inclusive approach to data collection communicates to LGBTIQ students, staff and community members that ECU actively considers them and they are welcome, respected and valued here. Inclusive data collection also allows us to better capture hidden populations and to understand and respond to our diverse ECU community

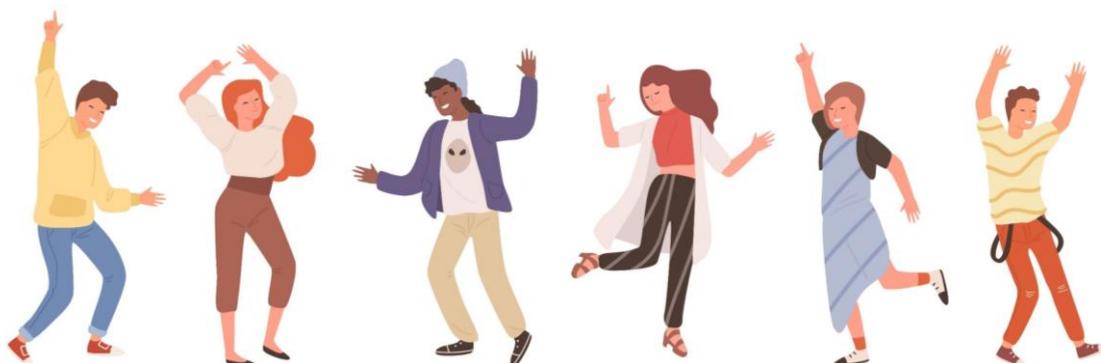
A guide for surveys, events and forms

This Inclusive Data Collection Guideline provides guidance for ECU staff when developing internal and informal data collection methods such as surveys, event registrations and forms. It does not aim to be directive, rather, it provides a broad range of best practice data collection methods for sex, gender and sexuality to be used and adapted as appropriate

Is that question necessary?

Not all questions always need to be asked, and sometimes it can be inappropriate or unnecessary to do so. Some useful questions to ask yourself before you start collecting personal information are:

1. Is a person's sex/gender/sexuality relevant to this topic?
2. What will the data collected be used for? Are we asking questions based on habit rather than need?
3. How will I guarantee this data is kept confidential and safe? How do I reassure respondents of this?
4. Will this data collection act as a signal or help to visibly include LGBTIQ populations?
5. How do we create an environment where LGBTIQ people feel comfortable to share their identity/experience with ECU?



Being inclusive in collecting data

It is important that data collection around sex, gender and/or sexuality is appropriate and well considered. You will find some useful suggestions for how to collect this data in an inclusive and respectful manner throughout this Inclusive Data Collection Guideline.

Please follow these steps:

Step 1: Review existing data collection practices

Step 2: Reflect on what data information really needs to be collected and why

Step 3: Consider how you can collect this information in an inclusive and respectful way – consult where necessary

Step 4: Ensure appropriate privacy mechanisms are put in place

Step 5: Contribute to building an inclusive culture where people feel safe to disclose their identity/experiences at ECU

Step 6: Continue to review and adapt as our understanding of sex, gender and sexuality evolve

If you require any further information or you would like advice regarding your data collection methods, please contact the Equity Projects Team at equity@ecu.edu.au or on 08 6304 6170.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Sex and gender (and sometimes sexuality) are terms that are often used interchangeably, particularly in data collection. However, in reality these can be very different aspects of a person, their identity and experience. Understanding the difference between these terms will help you to recognise how to best ask and capture this information and where and when it is or isn't appropriate to do so.

Sex

Sex refers to a person's body – made up of a person's hormones, chromosomes, genitals and internal reproductive system. Sex is recorded on a person's birth certificate as either M (for Male) or F (for Female) in most jurisdictions and is often what is 'legally' recorded. Sex or sex assigned at birth is often collected for legal or medical reasons but doesn't provide the relevant information needed to enable us to engage with a person respectfully or socially.

Gender

Gender is the social part of a person – who they are, how they feel about themselves and often how they express themselves to the world. For many, gender is also about how individuals want

to be acknowledged and respected by the people around them. How we express our gender varies from person to person and not everyone's sex and gender align. Gender data is often collected so we have a better idea about how to respectfully acknowledge a person based on their identity.

Sexuality

Sexuality refers to how we feel about other people – our emotional, sexual and romantic feelings and who (if anyone) these are generally directed towards. Sexuality encompasses a person's feelings, experiences and identity. Sexuality can include physical and emotional attraction and can be felt towards multiple genders or none. Sexuality data is often collected when asking about sexual behaviour or relationships.

LGBTIQ

LGBTIQ refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer/Questioning. There are different variations of this acronym (LGBTIQ+, LGBTIQA+) but generally they are intended to encompass anyone who is diverse in their sex, gender and/or sexuality.





A NOTE ON THE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

It is common to commence research with surveys associated with demographic data in an effort to evaluate independent or confounding variables, such as sex or gender, on the proposed research questions. The National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research states:

1.10 “Respect for human beings is a recognition of their intrinsic value. In human research, this recognition includes abiding by the values of research merit and integrity, justice and beneficence. Respect also requires having due regard for the welfare, beliefs, perceptions, customs and cultural heritage, both individual and collective, of those involved in research.”

Appropriately worded questions to accurately respect the diversity of people when capturing this information is critical from a scientific and ethical perspective. The justification of including sex, gender and sexuality demographic data can be considered through the following set of questions:

- 1. Is there potential for the research questions being evaluated to be confounded by sex, gender or sexuality of the participants or is there a similar justification for this data to be collected from participants?**
- 2. Is the research question potentially influenced by sex, gender or both?**
- 3. Is the research question influenced by or related to the sexual identity of the participants?**

Based on the answers to the above questions, researchers should then choose a series of questions that allow for the most accurate collection of data associated with sex, gender or sexuality that are reflective of inclusive current best practice within the context of required data collection.

SEX

The most important thing to consider when collecting data on sex is, do we *need* to know about a person's body? The answer is most commonly 'no'. If the answer is 'yes', the next question is, how do we collect this information in a way that acknowledges bodily diversity and people with intersex variations?

Intersex

Intersex is a term used to capture a diverse population of people who share a common experience of having natural variations in sex characteristics (such as genitals, internal reproductive system, hormones and chromosomes). There are a broad range of intersex variations, and people with intersex variations have the same range of sexuality and gender identities as anyone else.

Irrespective of intersex status, most countries assign either M (for male) or F (for female) on birth certificates when a child is born. Retrospectively, you can change your 'gender marker' to reflect 'X' or 'non-specific', and in some Australian states/territories, parents can opt to not include sex on the birth certificate at all. It is likely that we will be seeing X being used more broadly in the future.

Asking any of these questions will allow you to capture a person's legal sex. Many people with intersex variations have a legal M or F sex and identify their gender as either male or female in line with their sex. Therefore, if you wish to capture participants who have an intersex variation, you will need to ask the below additional question. Asking both questions allows you to collect both 'legal' sex and intersex variations.

| Objective 1 To collect a participant's 'legal' sex which is recorded on their birth certificate | Objective 2 To determine those participants who have an intersex variation |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Questions:</p> <p>What was your sex assigned at birth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• M – Male• F – Female• X – Non-specified• Prefer not to say <p>OR</p> <p>What is the letter on your birth certificate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• M• F• X• Prefer not to say (if possible) <p>OR</p> <p>What is the legally recorded sex on your birth certificate/records?</p> | <p>Questions</p> <p>What is the letter on your birth certificate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• M• F• X <p>AND</p> <p>Intersex is a term for people born with atypical physical sex characteristics. There are many different intersex traits or variations. Do you have an intersex variation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes• No• I don't know <p>I would prefer not to say</p> |

For more information about intersex experiences and inclusive intersex data collection, you can go to Intersex Human Rights Australia's website at www.ihra.org.au

GENDER

A person's sex does not necessarily denote their gender and vice versa. Trans or Transgender is an umbrella term often used to encompass anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender do not align. This may include people whose gender is not exclusively male or female for which umbrella terms such as gender diverse or non-binary may also be used.

To understand who a person is and how to relate to them, we need to ask about gender not sex. When gender is collected inclusively, it can provide hints about how to respectfully engage with a person and how to affirm their gender. Inclusive gender data collection does not assume a binary (only male/man or female/woman) and recognises people can have a gender other than male and female.

| Objective 1 To record a person's gender identity regardless of whether it aligns with their 'sex' or body. | Objective 2: To determine those participants who have a trans or gender diverse history, experience or identity. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you describe your gender (ie man, woman, non-binary)?* <p>If select boxes are required, options like this may be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What term do you use to describe your gender? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Man Woman Gender diverse Another term (please specify ...) Prefer not to say <p>If limited boxes are allowed, options like this may be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is your gender?** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M – Male F – Female X – Prefer not to say | <p>Questions:</p> <p>What is your gender?***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Man Woman Gender diverse Another term (please specify ...) Prefer not to say <p>AND</p> <p>What was your sex assigned at birth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M F X <p>OR</p> <p>Do you have a transgender or gender diverse history, experience or identity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No <p>Prefer not to say</p> |

*This method is gold standard, best practice as it allows respondents to self-describe their own identity, however it can make data collection more difficult as you may need to go through and 'categorise' responses later into required groups.

** Most trans and gender diverse people have a binary gender and will simply state man or woman here when asked about their gender. This question indicates inclusion and allows respondents to accurately record their gender, but it won't give any information about how many trans or gender diverse respondents there are (however, it will allow you to collect the number of participants who have a gender outside the binary). If you need to know if respondents are specifically trans or gender diverse, you would need ask the below questions.

***You would then need to cross check these to determine incongruence between a person's sex and gender. This type of questioning will provide greater information about the relationship between a person's sex (i.e. how many participants were assigned female at birth but are men, versus how many were assigned male at birth but are women)

SEXUALITY

Sexuality terms are used to describe a person's emotional, sexual and/or romantic feelings. The most common terms people use to describe their sexuality are heterosexual/straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and asexual. However, there are many other terms, identities, and ways to describe sexuality.

Inclusive sexuality data collection acknowledges the broad range of options and is open to people self-describing their sexuality. Inclusive sexuality data collection also acknowledges that not everyone has sexual or romantic attractions, that sexuality can be fluid over time, and people can be attracted to more than one gender.

| Object 1 To determine the term which participants use to describe their sexuality | Objective 2 To determine the number of participants who have a same sex/gender attraction or are not heterosexual. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you describe your sexuality/sexual orientation (i.e. heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, asexual)?[^] <p>If select boxes are required, options like this may be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you describe your sexuality/sexual orientation? (select all that apply) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesbian Gay Bisexual Queer Asexual Heterosexual Another term (please specify) Prefer not to say | <p>Question</p> <p>Do you experience any same sex or same gender attraction, regardless of what term you use to identify your sexual identity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No Unsure <p>Prefer not to say</p> |

[^] This method is gold standard best practice as it allows respondents to self-describe their own identity, however it can make data collection more difficult as you may need to go through and 'categorise' responses later into required groups.



OTHER INFORMATION YOU MAY CHOOSE TO COLLECT



Name/s

A person's 'legal' name may not be the name they use or the name that reflects their identity for a number of different reasons. If a 'legal' name must be collected, you should also collect the name that person would want used for them. Try to avoid the term 'preferred' name as it implies one is more valid than the other.

Titles

An inclusive title option for gender diverse and non-binary people is 'Mx' (pronounced M-X or Mix). Inclusive title collection offers 'Mx' as an option as well as having the option to not choose a title at all.

Pronouns

Pronouns are important to collect and ask about whenever you will be writing case notes or need to know how to respectfully speak about someone

| Name | Titles | Pronouns |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Questions:</p> <p>What is your name as it appears on your birth certificate or passport?</p> <p>AND</p> <p>What name/s would you like us to use for you?</p> | <p>Question:</p> <p>What title would you like used for you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mx • Mr • Mrs • Miss • Ms • Dr <p>Another title (please specify)</p> | <p>Question</p> <p>Pronouns are the little words we use to describe people with when we aren't using their name (e.g. Sam went to the shops, and she purchased a coffee – 'she' is an example of a common pronoun). What pronouns do you use? (select all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He/Him/His • She/Her/Hers • They/Them/Theirs <p>Another pronoun/s (please specify)</p> |