

The following sections are excerpts from U of T Engineering's <u>*Editorial Style Guide</u></u>*, which is available to staff and faculty to download from the Hub in its entirety</u>

Based on CP style, the *Editorial Style Guide* provides direction on how to stay consistent with U of T Engineering writing standards. The sections below on *Inclusive Language* and *Unconscious Bias, Colloquialisms and Embedded Metaphors* offer guidance on the use and impact of language in creating inclusive, intentional writing.

Inclusive Language

<u>U of T Engineering is committed to fostering an environment in which each member of our community can excel,</u> <u>contribute and benefit from different perspectives</u>. This commitment extends to how we communicate to our internal and external audiences.

Becoming conscious of how language impacts others can help prevent feelings of exclusion, discomfort or devaluation in our audiences. The goal in communications is not merely to be politically correct, but professional and respectful of difference. In using inclusive language, it is helpful to keep these principles in mind:

- Your words matter. Intentional or not, certain terms and expressions cause people or groups to feel excluded and can convey or embed stereotypes, expectations or limitations.
- Over time, language changes to reflect the values of society. What was once acceptable may no longer be acceptable. Take time to educate yourself about what words, phrases or perspectives may offend your audiences.
- Be self-aware and think about your intention. Find a more inclusive way to say what you intend to convey.
- **Be cautious about making sweeping statements about any social group.** This includes making personal assumptions based on gender, culture, ancestry, age, religion and more.

Age

Use only when relevant and accurate.

Prefer exact age to general, ill-defined terminology; avoid senior/elderly; middle age; youth; young the 14-year-old (not 'the youth' or 'the teen')

the 66-year-old (not 'the senior')

early-career researcher (not 'the young researcher')

An exception to the descriptor 'elderly' is in the case of Indigenous Peoples where the term Elder is an honoured title for someone who holds both age and wisdom (and should be capitalized).

Nationalities, Peoples, Race, Religions and Cultures

Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, religions, peoples and culture. Include this level of detail when it is relevant.

Black Inuit Indigenous Jewish Muslim Sikh Black (capitalized) is acceptable in reference to people of African descent. In Canada, Black-Canadian is commonly used. When in doubt, ask the person you are interviewing or writing about what they prefer; African-Canadian, Caribbean-Canadian or something specific may be more appropriate. Below is an excerpt from a U of T Engineering news story that illustrates use:

Blueprint builds on other U of T Engineering outreach programs, such as ENGage, aimed at Black students in Grades 3 to 8.

'Racialized person' or 'member of a racialized group' or 'racialized group' are preferred to terms that include 'minority' (e.g., visible minority or minority group – which may imply inferior social position) or 'person of colour'. In the engineering context, we often talk about underrepresented groups or communities. Below are two excerpts from U of T Engineering news stories that illustrate appropriate use:

Announced today, the Indigenous and Black Engineering and Technology (IBET) Momentum Fellowships aim to address the urgent need to provide pathways that encourage and support the pursuit of graduate studies by underrepresented groups.

An Al-curated HR system that's designed to filter resumes might leave out excellent candidates from marginalized or underrepresented communities. A facial-recognition program that systematically misrecognizes a segment of the racialized population can have dire and unjust consequences if presented as evidence in court.

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression

Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression have different meanings, and are specific to the individual. It's also important to note that 2SLGBTQQ+ is an acronym that represents many — but not all — groups. The acronym refers to two spirit people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and questioning, and the "+" recognizes that there are many more identities.

Pronouns in English originally developed around binary gender norms, which may not match a person's gender identity or expression. It is more inclusive to use gender-neutral language in writing and when speaking.

Invite your partner (not 'Invite your husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend') Students should read their syllabus (not 'Each student should read his/her syllabus')

Don't stereotype or use unnecessarily gendered terms, jobs or positions.

nurse (not male nurse) police officer (not policeman)

Avoid unnecessary 'man' words.

workforce (not manpower) people (not mankind) constructed (not man-made) first year (not freshman) spokesperson (not spokesman) chair (not chairman) staffing the display (not manning the display); Note: 'manned' is a space industry term, but use sparingly; instead, try human, piloted, unpiloted, robotic. e.g., The piloted craft orbited six times.

Ask the person you are writing about what their preferred pronouns are. Consider limiting use of he or she if you have not clarified with the person what their preferred pronouns are. When in doubt, simply refer to them by their name.

When writing about graduates of U of T, we often refer to them as alumni. Be cautious about using alumna or alumnus when referring to a person if you do not know or cannot confirm how they identify. When in doubt, it is more inclusive to refer to the person as a gender-neutral 'graduate.'

"This innovation has enormous potential for the future of sustainable energy," says Kim Lee, a 1990 graduate of the civil engineering program at U of T Engineering.

Disability

Ask the person their preference. Be clear, accurate and sensitive. General practice is to put the person first, unless the person indicates otherwise when asked.

Person with epilepsy (not an epileptic) People with disabilities (not the disabled, the blind, the handicapped).

In instances of deaf or blind individuals, more direct language may be preferred. Ask the person their preference. Be clear, accurate and sensitive.

People can be deaf, slightly deaf or hard of hearing (not hearing impaired) People may be blind, have poor eyesight or low vision

Deaf should be capitalized when describing the Deaf community.

Be cautious about portraying a person as courageous or special because they have a disability. Avoid words like *victim, suffers from..., disabled* or sentiments that suggest they overcame their disability or are exceptional despite their disability.

Unconscious Bias, Colloquialisms & Embedded Metaphors

Several phrases used in popular culture and everyday conversations in the North American context are so common that we often don't think about where they came from, or what they actually mean. While such language may not be intended to cause harm, its use may reinforce stereotypes and/or have historically painful origins. For example, if someone *sells you down the river*, it is meant to convey that you've been betrayed or cheated. In actuality, this phrase has its roots in slavery.

Given the diversity of the U of T Engineering community, with members from all around the world, we need to be particularly mindful of phrases and colloquialisms that may be meaningless to someone without cultural context. For instance, the idiom *killing two birds with one stone* is meant to articulate accomplishing multiple things with streamlined effort. To someone unfamiliar with the phrase, they may be shocked at the prospect of killing any birds, let alone two.

Words like *lame, crazy, bipolar* and *depressed* are too often used casually in conversation to describe situations or feelings that are meant to convey anything from amazement to boredom. Ableist language should be avoided in all forms of communication. Mental health disorders and physical disabilities are not adjectives and should not be generalized to everyday language. Instead, think about what you mean to convey, and say what you mean. In an editorial context, this may result in editing a person's direct quote to be more inclusive before publishing a story.

Instead of	Use
lame	awful, embarrassing, boring
crazy	intense, amazing, fascinating, ridiculous, outrageous, frantic
OCD	meticulous, detail oriented
bipolar	erratic, back and forth, inconsistent, vacillating
depressed	disappointed, upset, sad
blind	ignorant, biased
blindsided	surprised, caught off guard
binging	indulging
hysterical	intense, impassioned

Cultural or sacred objects, ceremonies, concepts, groups, titles and terms — like pow wows, spirit animals and totem poles — should only be used when talking about those specific sacred traditions, and not generalized or appropriated for everyday language. Many phrases to avoid are both culturally insensitive and gendered, such as *the low man on the totem pole*.

Instead of pow wow spirit animal totem pole guru mantra ninja gyp Gypsy (Romani people) Sherpa (an ethnic group) Use gathering, meeting inspiration ranking, placement expert, authority motto, saying, philosophy ace, whiz, expert shortchanged wanderer, nomad, roamer guide, coach

While not offensive in themselves, many words or phrases carry heavy negative connotation. Avoid terms and colloquialisms that use *black* to portray negativity or *white* to portray positivity. These terms have no link to skin colour, but may reinforce harmful stereotypes.

Use
less reputable, disgrace, unusual, atypical
excluded, banned, blocked
approved, favoured, safe
less appealing
unofficial, ungoverned
threatened, intimidated
courageous, noble
detailed, methodical, meticulous
primary bedroom