

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Teaching Physics

January 2021 Bulletin: Pronouns

A personal pronoun is used to refer to someone without saying their name

Examples: they/them/theirs
she/her/hers
ze/hir/hirs
he/they → (either is fine)

You cannot assume someone's pronouns from their appearance - it is always appropriate to ask: "What pronouns do you use?"

How can you use pronouns respectfully?

- **Identify your own pronouns** in Sakai, in Zoom, during introductions, and in email signatures
- **Create opportunities for participants to identify their own pronouns** by requesting them in nametags, class questionnaires, introductions
- **Use they/them/theirs pronouns when referencing an arbitrary subject** in syllabi, lecture slides, assigned problems, and tests
- **Abide by the pronouns someone tells you to use** and acknowledge your mistakes calmly and openly

Why is respectful pronoun use important in your learning environment?

- Show and promote respect for the personal identities of class participants
- Welcome all students in your class, regardless of their gender identity
- Avoid excluding students by making gendered group references like "you guys" or describing a generic scientist as "he"

According to Mattheis et al., 2019, "heteronormative assumptions frequently silence conversations about gender and sexuality in STEM" settings

There are many ways to learn more

- Learn how to [include your own pronouns in Sakai](#)
- Learn how to [put your pronouns in Zoom](#)
- Explore more and ask questions at [upcoming Physics & Astronomy student-led workshop](#) **January 14th or January 15th**

Links and archive: go.unc.edu/uncpa-dei-bulletin