

## **Lexicon – Equalities Definitions**

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### **Introduction**

This Lexicon is intended as a guide for staff and students of AUB on the most commonly used definitions within the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) space.

Definitions that have a legal basis, such as those found within the Equality Act 2010, have been defined under their legal parameters. AUB is aware that some of these legal definitions are controversial, however, it is important that the institution complies with these legal definitions when considering any potential discrimination. Therefore, if a word is legally defined, AUB will continue to use its legal definition.

However, the University is also committed to providing an inclusive and respectful environment for everyone, irrespective of whether they have a protected characteristic. The University benefits from the diverse experiences of its staff and students and promotes inclusivity for all.

AUB is particularly respectful of an individual's preferred gender pronoun/s, and as such, expects the entire AUB community to be aware and respectful of the same.

AUB have sought to include all the relevant definitions within this Lexicon but are aware that in this rapidly changing space, there may need to be regular amendments or additions to its contents. This is a continuous learning experience, and we are always open to new suggestions and inclusions. Therefore, the Lexicon will be formally reviewed and amended as necessary every 12 months or whenever a legal definition is updated by an amendment to the statute under which it is found.

Please contact [equalities@aub.ac.uk](mailto:equalities@aub.ac.uk) with any comments or suggested amendments to be considered at our next review meeting which will be held in January 2023.

If anyone has been adversely affected by the definitions used within this Lexicon, support is available from the following resources:

**Staff** – please speak to your HR Partner.

**Students** – please refer to your Course Leader or Student Services and you will be signposted to any appropriate support available - [studentadvice@aub.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@aub.ac.uk)

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### **A**

#### **Ableism**

Discrimination in favour of able-bodied people.

#### **Affinity Bias**

The tendency to connect with people who look and seem like ourselves.

#### **Affirmative Action**

The practice or policy of favouring individuals from groups known to have been discriminated against.

#### **Ageism**

Age discrimination, also called ageism, is when someone is treated unfavourably because of their actual or perceived age.

### **Agender**

Agender people do not consider themselves to have a gender.

### **All Workers**

This includes Established Staff, Visiting Tutors and Casual Staff.

### **Ally**

Ally is a term used for people who support a social group other than their own. They acknowledge disadvantage and oppression, educate themselves, and take action on behalf of others.

### **Antisemitism**

AUB has adopted the working definition of Antisemitism:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

### **Anti-Black**

The specific exclusion and prejudice against people of (or perceived to be of) African descent.

### **Anti-Racist**

Actively challenging racist behaviour, explaining you find racist behaviour unacceptable and explaining why you hold those views.

## **B**

### **BAME /BME**

An acronym that stands for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic or Black and Minority Ethnic. It is important to recognise that these acronyms cover a diverse range of minority ethnic groups, and it is important to avoid implying all ethnic minorities are part of a single homogenous group.

### **Belonging**

An individual sense of acceptance, feeling part of something and mattering to others. There is current debate over the use of the term 'belonging' in place of EDI.

### **Bi-gender**

Bi-gender people experience two gender identities, either simultaneously or varying between the two. These two gender identities could be male or female but could also include non-binary identities.

### **Bigotry**

An obstinate or unreasonable attachment to a belief or opinion. In particular, prejudice against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular group.

### **Binary**

The classification of gender into two distinct and opposite forms – masculine and feminine. Most cultures and social systems use a binary gender classification but increasing numbers of people identify as non-binary. See below for 'non-binary' definition.

### **Black Lives Matter / BLM**

BLM stands for Black Lives Matter and is a movement that aims to address systemic racism and violence against Black people and other groups with ties to Black culture.

### **Bullying**

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined, or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

## **C**

### **Casual Staff**

AUB staff with a mutually agreed position of no guaranteed working hours, fixed term.

### **Cisgender**

Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth, for example a female who identifies as a woman.

### **Cognitive Diversity**

Cognitive diversity accounts for differences in perspective and the way we process information.

### **Colourblind**

The idea people can choose not to see colour or race, and therefore should, in theory, treat people in the same way. The outcome, however, is that the issues of racial disparities, discrimination, and racialised privilege that exist in our society are not seen, are largely ignored and are therefore allowed to persist.

### **Confirmation Bias**

Seeking out or only noticing information that reinforces existing beliefs.

### **Crossdresser**

Crossdresser is a term to describe people who dress in clothes associated with their opposite sex, as defined by socially accepted norms, but who identify with the gender that matches their sex assigned at birth.

## **D**

### **Disabled (social model)**

The social model of disability says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things.

### **Disabled (medical model)**

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences. The medical model looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs.

## **Disability**

The Equality Act 2010 states that someone is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

## **Discrimination (Direct)**

Direct discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably than another person in the same or similar situation based on one, or more, of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. An example would be not hiring someone because they are black.

## **Discrimination (Indirect)**

Indirect discrimination is where a rule or practice is applied to all but has the effect of disadvantaging a particular group of people compared to others outside of the group, unless the rule or practice is required to meet a legitimate business aim and the means of achieving the aim are appropriate and necessary. An example of this may be the requirement of a minimum height requirement for a job where height is not relevant to carry out the role. Such a requirement would likely discriminate disproportionately against women (and some minority ethnic groups) as they are generally shorter than men.

## **Discrimination by Association (Associative Discrimination)**

Discrimination by association (a form of direct discrimination) is the act of discriminating against an individual because of an association with another person who has a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, this does not include the protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnerships, and pregnancy and maternity. An example would be treating a student less favourably because they have been seen out with another student who is gay.

## **Discrimination by Perception (Perceptive Discrimination)**

Discrimination by perception (a form of direct discrimination) is the act of discriminating against an individual based on the perception that the individual has a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, this does not include the protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnerships, and pregnancy and maternity. An example would be refusing to hire someone because they have an Arabic name and are wrongly perceived to be Muslim.

## **Discrimination by failing to make Reasonable Adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments remove or minimise disability related disadvantages experienced by disabled people. What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances of each individual case and failing to make reasonable adjustments may be discrimination.

## **Diversity**

Diversity means that everyone is unique; understanding diversity means we recognise our individual differences.

## **E**

### **EDI**

This acronym stands for equality, diversity and inclusion. EDI tends to focus on changing an institution's culture with the aim of attracting and promoting talent from different backgrounds.

### **Established Staff**

AUB employees on either part-time or full-time contracts, either fixed term or permanent.

### **Ethnicity**

The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

## **Equality**

When everyone starts out on equal footing with equal opportunities to make the most of their lives and talents.

## **Equity**

Aims for a fair outcome for people or groups by addressing barriers that are specific to their characteristics, it thereby levels the playing field. If an institution treats everyone the same without realising that certain people need specific support or services, there will be inequality. Equity is the pathway to true equality.

## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework to protect the rights of individuals with protected characteristics and to advance equality of opportunity.

## **E**

### **Feminism**

The belief in and advocacy for equality between the sexes. Although there are many strands of feminism, most aim for equality in the social, political and economic realms.

## **G**

### **Gay**

Gay refers to people who have romantic and/or sexual orientation towards the same sex and is a generic term used interchangeably by the LGBTQ+ community to express their sexual preferences.

### **Gender**

Gender is culturally determined. It is often culturally assumed from the sex assigned at birth and expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity.

### **Gender Bias**

Prejudiced gender-based actions or thoughts leading to or unfair treatment, such as discrimination in the workplace. Gender bias can be conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit.

### **Gender Discrimination**

A distinction, exclusion or restriction made based on a person's sex and/or gender identity rather than their skill or merit.

### **Gender Equality**

A situation that would see people being able to make choices and develop personal abilities regardless of the limitations set by gender norms. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration.

### **Gender Expression**

Gender expression is how a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender, for example, feminine or masculine clothing, hair, name, mannerisms etc. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.

**Gender Fluid**

Gender fluid is not having a fixed sense of gender identity or expression.

**Gender Gap**

The disparity between women and men's position in society based on gendered norms and expectations. The gender gap refers to an unequal distribution of opportunities, resources or outcomes.

**Gender Identity**

An individual's personal sense of having a particular gender which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Norms**

These are the collective expectations and beliefs about how people should behave and interact based on sex or gender identity.

**Gender Pay Gap**

The gender pay gap is the difference between average earnings for men and women. The gap is caused by occupational segregation (with more men in higher paid industries and women in lower paid industries) and vertical segregation (with fewer women in senior roles with better paying positions). It is also often attributed to women working more part-time jobs and fewer hours. In the UK, all private and voluntary sector employers with 250 or more employees must publish data on their gender pay gap.

**Gender Privilege**

Gender privilege usually refers to heteronormative male privilege, meaning a set of advantages granted to men based on their gender.

**Gender Reassignment**

Gender reassignment is a way of describing a person's transition towards the gender with which they identify. Gender reassignment can include undergoing some sort of medical intervention, changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010.

**Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)**

This enables transgender people to be legally recognised in their affirmed gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. Not all transgender people will apply for a GRC and you currently have to be over 18 to apply. You do not need a GRC to change your gender markers at work or to legally change your gender on other documents such as your passport.

**H****Harassment**

Under the Equality Act 2010, harassment is where an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment. This can be a serious single act or a campaign of harassment of smaller acts.

**Heteronormative**

Heteronormativity is the belief that heterosexuality is the default, preferred, or normal mode of sexual orientation. It assumes there are only two distinct, opposite genders and that sexual and marital relations are most fitting between people of opposite sex.

## **Homophobia**

Homophobia is the irrational hatred, intolerance, and fear of LGBTQIA+ people. These negative feelings fuel the myths, stereotypes, and discrimination that can affect LGBTQIA+ people:

## **I**

### **Implicit bias**

Implicit bias refers to the same area as unconscious bias but questions the level to which these biases are unconscious especially as we are being made increasingly aware of them. Once we know that biases are not always explicit, we are responsible for them. We all need to recognise and acknowledge our biases and find ways to mitigate their impact on our behaviour and decisions.

### **Inclusion**

Inclusion is a basic right, and its objective should be to embrace everyone regardless of individual differences.

### **Inclusive leader**

A leader or boss who is aware of their own biases and preferences. One who actively seeks out and considers different views and perspectives to inform better decision making.

### **Intersectionality**

Having multiple intersecting identities that can affect the level of privilege or disadvantage a person experiences. These might include gender, race, and sexual orientation. Rather than defining men and women as homogenous groups, an intersectional approach recognises the differences within and among groups of men, women and gender non-conforming individuals and assesses how they are oppressed by power systems.

### **Intersex**

A term used to describe a person who may have the sex characteristics of both sexes or whose sex characteristics do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female.

## **L**

### **Lesbian**

Refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

### **LGBTQ+/LGBTQI/ LGBTQIA+**

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (or queer), intersex, asexual (or allied) and other gender variants.

## **M**

### **Microaffirmations**

Subtle acknowledgments of a person's importance and accomplishments that create a feeling of being valued and included.

### **Microaggressions**

Microaggressions may seem to be harmless but are minor everyday slights and exclusions, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes towards members of a marginalised group such as a racist or ethnic minority.

### **Misandry**

A dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against men.

### **Misogyny**

A dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.

## **N**

### **Neurodiverse**

Neurodiversity describes the range of neurological differences that might include learning and developmental difficulties such as ADHD, autism or dyslexia.

### **Non-Binary**

Non-binary people do not identify as either male or female and ask that other people use they/them or ze/zir pronouns, whilst some reject a binary identity entirely. It is important to be aware of the use of alternative pronouns and respect an individual's preferred pronoun/s.

## **O**

### **Oppression**

A person may be oppressed because of unjust treatment or control. This can occur at an individual or systematic level.

## **P**

### **Person of Colour (POC)**

The term Person of Colour is primarily used to describe any person who is not considered white.

### **Prejudice**

Refers to the conscious or unconscious attitudes and feelings one has towards an individual or group of individuals based on certain traits.

### **Privilege**

This refers to a set of benefits given to people owing to their membership in a specific social group. This might include race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and religion. Privilege is also often related to wealth and class.

### **Pronouns**

Words we use to refer to people's gender identity and/or expression in conversation such as 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer to be referred to in gender-neutral language using pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir. Gender neutral pronouns can help generate a feeling of inclusivity.



## **Protected Act**

A 'Protected Act' is:

- Making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act).
- Helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information.
- Making an allegation that you or someone else has breached the Act.
- Doing anything else in connection with the Equality Act.

## **Protected Characteristics**

The Equality Act 2010 has enshrined protection for the following nine characteristics in law: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack thereof), sex, sexual orientation. It is now illegal for any institution or workplace environment to discriminate against people on the basis of any of these characteristics.

## **Q**

### **Queer**

Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have embraced it.

## **R**

### **Racism**

Prejudice or discrimination against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

### **REACH**

Acronym for race, ethnicity and cultural heritage.

## **S**

### **Sex**

Sex is the biological category of female or male assigned at birth based on physical characteristics such as chromosomes and genitalia.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Sexual orientation is interpersonal and refers to people we are emotionally and/or physically attracted to.

### **Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are ways in which members of a group are considered similar to each other and different to members of other groups.

## **I**

### **Tokenism**

The practice of including one or a few members of an underrepresented group in a team or company, without their having authority or power equal to that of other group members. This places a burden on an individual to represent all others 'like them'.

The following section includes definitions related to trans identity. It's worth noting that some of the terminology used within this section comes from the medical and legal communities and are considered outdated by the trans community. For example, the terms "MTF" and "FTM" might be used by healthcare professionals but many trans and non-binary individuals use the phrase "assigned at birth" when talking about transitioning. Additionally, some individuals may use words to describe themselves that aren't listed here. If in doubt, always be respectful of the language people use to self-identify and educate yourself using respected resources such as Gendered Intelligence.

### **Trans**

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

### **Transgender man**

A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

### **Transgender woman**

A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

### **Transitioning**

The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.

Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

### **Transphobia**

The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.

### **Transsexual**

This was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.

## U

### **Unconscious Bias**

Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. (See also Implicit bias)

## V

### **Victimisation**

Treating someone badly because they have done a 'Protected Act' (or because you believe that a person has done or is going to do a Protected Act). For example, a tutor shouts at a student because they believe the student intends to support another student's sexual harassment claim.

### **Visiting Tutors**

AUB employees with mutually agreed irregular working hours, either fixed term or permanent.

## W

### **White Fragility**

Describes the state in which white people are unable to cope with or process the information they receive about racism, whether that be lived experiences or racial disparity data.

### **White Privilege / White Advantage**

The benefit in some societies or situations that a white person can have over a non-white person of similar social or economic circumstances.

## X

### **Xenophobia**

The dislike of, or prejudice against, people from other countries leading to bias and discriminatory behaviour.

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## **Sources**

ACAS found at <https://www.acas.org.uk/>

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 'Gender Equality Lexicon' found at <https://www.gatesgenderequalitytoolbox.org/definitions-concepts/gender-equality-lexicon/>

Equality Act 2010 found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Equality and Human Rights Commission found at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/secondary-education-resources/useful-information/glossary-terms>

Gendered Intelligence found at <https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

Oxford Languages Dictionary found at <https://languages.oup.com/dictionaries/>

Scope Equality for Disabled People found at <https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/social-model-of-disability/>

Stonewall found at <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>