

Teaching with gender in mind

Tools for gender-conscious teaching & inclusive learning environments

In an era where inclusivity and diversity are increasingly recognised as fundamental pillars of education, it is important to ensure that teaching practices are gender-sensitive and inclusive.

The gender equality movement is a grassroots movement. Many times, initiatives are driven by individuals. But even with a strong commitment to the task, you need the proper tools to act on it. This brief summarises what you as an individual teacher can do to increase gender equality in your important task of shaping future generations. And how you can work to formalise teaching through a gender lens in your organisation.

This checklist provides a comprehensive framework with recommendations on how to foster an environment where all students feel respected, represented, and empowered. From defining gender-sensitive competencies to conducting course evaluations inclusive of both teachers' and students' inputs, each recommendation serves as a crucial step towards creating a more inclusive educational experience.

The recommendations in this brief covers the following phases of teaching and learning with gender in mind:

- **Before** – making sure your course includes a gender perspective
- **During** – teaching with a gender lens
- **After** – evaluating student & teacher perspectives
- **Advocating for formalisation** – to ensure sustainability



This brief is for teachers, programme boards, directors of PhD studies and schools, and student recruitment officers. By following our recommendations, you can contribute to the promotion of gender-conscious teaching for a long-term effect.

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Before – make sure your course includes a gender perspective

- **Critically evaluate course materials** to ensure they encompass diverse gender perspectives and experiences, to foster an inclusive learning environment.
- **Expand your toolkit** with alternative analytical frameworks that go beyond traditional male-centric viewpoints, enabling you to offer more inclusive and nuanced perspectives within your field.
- **Invest in training** to refine your communication strategies, considering and respecting gender differences to promote inclusive dialogue and understanding among both peers and students.
- **Incorporate instructional methods that deepen awareness** of how gender influences learning processes and problem-solving approaches, creating a supportive learning environment that caters to the needs of all students.
- **Address biases in your course content** by engaging in critical reflection to identify and address biases within your academic discipline, fostering awareness of how gender biases may manifest in research, teaching materials, and societal norms.
- **Identify gender inequalities** within your subject(s), by developing your ability to recognise and confront gender inequalities inherent in your field, demonstrating a commitment to promoting gender equity and social justice within your academic pursuits.
- **Seek training in how to use statistical methods** that account for diverse gender experiences, ensuring your research and analysis accurately reflect the complexities of gender dynamics in various contexts.

During – teach with a gender lens

- **Continue to stay up to date with how gender is studied** in your field and recent findings. For instance, if teaching history, acknowledge the roles of both women and men in historical events.
- **Highlight gender disparities** and discuss the impact of the phenomenon or issue being studied on both women and men. For instance, in a sociology class studying poverty, examine how it affects women and men differently. Be mindful of the fact that gender is not always binary.
- **Encourage students to explore diverse perspectives** and methodologies. For example, in a literature course, include works by authors from different cultural backgrounds and genders.
- **Acknowledge the contributions of individuals of all genders** in your field. For instance, in a physics class, highlight the achievements of women scientists throughout history.
- **Encourage diversity** in your classroom by considering culture, age, and gender when forming student groups. This ensures a rich and inclusive learning environment.
- **Differentiate between gender and sex correctly.** Gender refers to socio-cultural factors, while sex is biological. Ensure your language reflects this difference.
- **A picture says a thousand words.** Make sure the images you use depict diversity and do not reinforce gender stereotypes, especially in professions or role. For example, show both men and women in leadership positions in business presentations.
- **Mind your language** and use inclusive terms and choose empowering terminology.

Guidelines on how to use inclusive language

- **Avoid using gendered terms as universal.** For example, instead of saying "mankind," use "humanity" or "humankind."
- **Use language that respects individuals' identities and experiences.** For example, instead of saying "suffering from Down Syndrome," say "living with Down Syndrome."
- **Be mindful of language hierarchies** and avoid favouring one gender or identity over another. For example, use "they" as a singular pronoun to be inclusive of all genders.
- **Refrain from using stereotypes** or reinforcing gender norms. For instance, instead of saying "boys don't cry," promote emotional expression for all genders.
- **Use gender-neutral language** when referring to individuals of unknown gender. For example, instead of saying "he" as a default pronoun, use "they."
- **Refrain from using language that infantilises** or diminishes individuals. For instance, instead of calling adult women "girls," use "women."

After – evaluate student & teacher perspectives

Include a standard section (1-2 questions) in your course evaluation to confirm gender sensitivity of the course. For example:

- How well does the course content acknowledge gender considerations? (Rate from 1 to 5)
- Does the instructor effectively address gender-related issues? (Rate from 1 to 5)
- Are different opinions welcomed and discussed? (Rate from 1 to 5)
- Does the instructor present various gender perspectives? (Rate from 1 to 5)
- Is gender-neutral language used and encouraged in the course? (Rate from 1 to 5)

This approach ensures a straightforward assessment of gender sensitivity within courses, creating an inclusive learning environment.

Advocate for formalisation

Establishing official policies, procedures and structures within research organisations that promote or ensure systematic integration of gender, diversity and inclusion in learning environments is central to ensure that gender equality measures are prioritised, sustained, and effectively implemented. This helps relieve the pressure from committed individuals and instead shift responsibility for promoting social justice, equity and academic excellence to the university administration and management. Two ways of ensuring sustainability is updating syllabi and offering training.

Update syllabi to include gender-sensitive competences

An understanding of gender inequalities equips students and researchers to address these issues in their academic and professional pursuits. Integrating these guidelines into syllabi supports institutional goals of promoting social justice and equity, fostering inclusive learning environments for all. By incorporating these principles, educational programs can empower future generations to tackle gender disparities and drive positive societal change.

Gender-sensitive skills development for students should help them develop the skills needed to:

- Analyse from a gender perspective.
- Critically read standard texts and information.
- Utilise a non-androcentric analytical framework.
- Identify biases and understanding their ideological role.
- Recognise and addressing inequalities between genders and among women.
- Identify gender inequalities within their field, especially concerning the sexual division of labour.
- Work with non-androcentric statistics.
- Analyse policies from a gender perspective.

Provide teachers with proper diversity & inclusion training

Teachers should be offered to participate in any training on gender equality performed by their organisation. This training should be tailored to the specific role of the teacher and their field. Training needs to be designed to be inclusive, considering factors like venue, timing, and program content to accommodate diverse participants.

The training should cover biases and emphasise the importance of recognising and overcoming them. It should also cover conflict and diversity management within educational settings. Utilising effective teaching methods, the goal is to deepen understanding of how gender constructs impact individuals and scientific development.

Real-life examples and experiences of students can be used to ensure equal representation of gender perspectives throughout the teaching. This approach aims to promote equality and inclusivity in educational environments.



MINDtheGEPs
gender equality in research

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Reference

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