All About Pronouns

What are pronouns?

Pronouns are the words used to refer to someone when you’re not using a name. Examples of pronouns include:
- He, him, his: indicates that subject is male.
  - Andrew told me that his favorite class was history.
- She, her, hers: indicates that subject is female.
  - Monica called me to say that she is going to be late.
- They, them, theirs: functions as both a singular, gender-neutral pronoun and a plural pronoun.
  - Taylor doesn’t want to go to the movie because they dislike Nicholas Cage’s acting.
- Xe, hir, hirs: functions as a gender-neutral pronoun. Pronounced zee, here and heres.
  - Sam is changing hir major to chemistry.
  - Jesse is going to be my roommate in the Gender Equity Hall. Co is bringing a mini-fridge.
- Per, per, pers: functions as a gender-neutral pronoun. Pronounced as it looks.
  - Kyle is going to per best friend’s wedding.
- Someone may also just wanted to be referred to only by their name.
  - Jacob went to back to Jacob’s house after the party.

We hope that you will share your pronouns with the students, families and visitors that you interact with. It’s an easy way to be inclusive, and might become an opportunity to educate, which is obviously UO’s main goal. (AND it’s free!)

Why is this important?

The University of Oregon is committed to creating spaces that actively include and engage everyone. Like names, our pronouns are an important part of how we identify that deserves to be respected. We also recognize that assuming someone’s gender can be hurtful, especially to members of our community who are transgender, genderqueer or non-binary. Part of the way transphobia works is that it forces us to make assumptions about people’s gender based on our perceptions of how they look, and transphobia forces us to assume that there are only two genders. Sharing our pronouns is just one of the ways we try to make people of all genders feel included and welcomed on our campus.

Putting this into practice can be difficult at first—we basically have to re-train our brains in order to get it right, and we all make mistakes. The best thing you can do is practice: try using gender-neutral language and pronouns with coworkers, friends and family! If you do make a mistake, apologize and move on.

Where can I refer someone for more information about pronouns?

Feel free to direct anyone to the LGBT Education and Support Services Program, located in 164 Oregon Hall, via email out@uoregon.edu, or online at lgbt.uoregon.edu.
Talking About Pronouns

Having difficulty talking about pronouns or explaining why sharing pronouns is important to you? Here are some quick, one-sentence responses to share why you care!

- I share mine because I don’t want anyone to feel unsafe or unwelcome and I think this helps.
- I think that sharing my pronouns helps everyone feel included and respected.
- If we just asked trans people to share them, it would be weird.
- Sharing my pronouns helps make my workspace more welcoming to Ducks of all genders.
- I want to make sure that everyone gets my name and pronouns right every time.
- I want to make sure I get everyone else’s name and pronouns right, too!
- Hooray! I’ve been waiting all day for someone to ask! I share my pronouns because I think it will change the world.
- I think it’s more respectful not to assume someone’s gender based on how I think they look. I’m sharing mine so that you won’t have to assume either!
- I share mine because I am an active ally.
- I share mine because I am so proud, lucky, and happy to be trans, and having the chance to share my pronouns at work is phenomenal!
- I really appreciate that you asked! I think this helps to create a more positive environment for all the Ducks that live, work, visit and learn here at the University of Oregon.
- Oh, I share my pronouns so that people have the chance to remember that assumptions about gender hurt us all.
- Because I always want to fight prejudice against transgender, genderqueer, and non-binary people whenever and wherever I can.
- I believe in radical acceptance and unconditional love.
- Thanks for asking! I share my pronouns because UO is one of the top 10 trans-friendly universities in the nation! Isn’t that fantastic? Our school is the best!