Steps to Remove Gender-Specific Pronouns from Policy Documents

May 3, 2022

1. Determine how policy changes are made within the academic unit, and whether there is a process for removing gender-specific pronouns as an editorial change or whether they need to go through the full unit approval process.

2. Locate the original copy of each policy.

3. Search each original policy for the following terms: "he" "she" "his" "her" "him" and "s/he"

   a. Tip – when searching include a space before the word so that only the exact word comes up as a hit. Otherwise, search functions can return the word as part of another word (for example, all instances of the word "this" because it includes the letters "his" or "the" because it includes the letters "he)".

4. Save each original policy as a new version or new document so in order to document the proposed changes.

5. In each original policy and using track changes or some other method of showing proposed additions or deletions, delete the gender-specific pronoun and add the proposed replacement. Options for replacing a gender specific pronoun include:

   a. Repeating the subject

   b. Using "they" or "their"

   c. Restructuring the sentence to avoid repeating the subject or using a pronoun

   d. **Examples:** An employee shall submit his/her travel reimbursement after he/she returns from University-sponsored travel.

      i. Repeating the subject: An employee shall submit ~~his/her~~ the employee's travel reimbursement after ~~he/she~~ the employee returns from University-sponsored travel

      ii. Using "they" or "their": An employee shall submit ~~his/her~~their travel reimbursement after ~~he/she~~they returns from University-sponsored travel

      iii. Restructuring: An employee shall submit ~~his/her~~a travel reimbursement after ~~he/she returns~~returning from University-sponsored travel

6. Have at least one other person review the proposed changes to make sure the proposed changes have not inadvertently changed the substance or caused a grammatical error.

7. Take the changes through the academic unit's approval process.

8. Incorporate the changes into the original policies, so that they next time they undergo revision they will start from the correct base.

9. Communicate the changes to people who use the polices using the unit's notification procedure.

For more information, contact Allyson Hicks, Director, University Regulations.