

## GENDER NEUTRAL COMMUNICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy number	GO 47
Subject	Gender Neutral Communication
Policy	<p>GGV's mission is "To empower girls and young women to grow into confident, self-respecting, responsible community members."</p> <p>Practices which undermine the equal position of women and girls in society are contrary to GGV's mission. The use of gender specific communication is one such practice.</p>
Principles	<p>The use of gendered language reinforces the traditional sexist positioning of women and girls. Its use has negative consequences for girls and women by reinforcing the dominance of male hierarchies. <sup>1</sup></p> <p>The use of gender neutral communication will be used in all GGV written communication and will be encouraged in verbal communication.</p>
Definitions	<p>Gender-neutral language or gender-inclusive language is language that avoids bias toward a particular sex or social gender. In English, this includes use of nouns that are not gender-specific to refer to roles or professions, as well as avoidance of the pronouns he, him and his to refer to people of unknown or indeterminate gender<sup>2</sup>.</p>
Discussion	<p>Generic nouns or titles, such as chairman, man-made, manpower, foreman, salesman and so on are roles which were historically associated to men. The reality of women in these roles are not reflected when these titles are used, even when the intention is to refer to a woman in the role.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Eunson, Baden. *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/gender-neutral-communication-how-to-do-it-38383>. Mar 8, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Fowler, H.W. (2015). Butterfield, Jeremy, ed. *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-966135-0.

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<p>Guidelines for enacting the policy</p>	<p>1. Roles</p> <p>Use gender neutral titles. For example, replace policeman with police officer, air hostess with flight attendant, and do not use the common term “guys” to refer to girls, women, or groups of mixed gender.</p> <p>2. Pronouns</p> <p>Use she, or omit gender-specific pronoun/s altogether.</p> <p>3. Avoid all gender specific words.</p> <p>Replace specific words with gender neutral words, eg, replace man-made with artificial or synthetic, manhole with access hatch. This includes words referring to women, eg chairwoman.</p>
<p>Related policies</p>	<p>GO 46 Diversity and Inclusion Policy</p>

Note: it is often asserted that the origin of the word chairman is from the Latin ‘manus’ for hand. This is incorrect - the man in chairman refers to a male person. The origin is from chair and man and was first used in 1654 (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1933).