Inclusive Language

Fostering a culture of inclusion through the power of language

It is important to use inclusive language and make intentional choices in the way we communicate with others, especially during the recruitment and hiring process. By using inclusive language, we do not exclude or diminish other people, ideas, or groups. The University of Central Florida is committed to being an inclusive community. In our commitment to using inclusive language, we acknowledge the power of words, respect differences in our lives and experiences, and honor the full dignity and personhood of everyone we encounter.

Why?

Simply put, sometimes word choices can send the wrong message. In making the intentional effort to use language that actively welcomes all candidates, we show the spirit of the UCF Knights. Using inclusive language in the recruitment and hiring process is another way to advance the mission, vision, and values of University of Central Florida.

Action Items:

- Pick one thing to change first
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Get an accountability partner
- Use language like "us" and "we"
- Keep learning

Making Better Choices:

People Centered Language

It is essential to recognize specificity without being exclusive. We never want to use language that will disempower anyone.

Identify Personal Biases

Self reflection helps us to recognize what leads us to use certain words that may have different meanings in different contexts.

Context Matters

We want to identify our personal biases and habits. Be mindful of traditional phrases and sayings that could be implicitly exclusive.

Be Willing to Learn

Language is dynamic and constantly changes and evolves. Be agile and open to change to shifts in understanding.

Inclusive Language in Recruiting:

Job advertisements often can be a candidate's first impression of the University of Central Florida and of the hiring department. Spending time thoughtfully crafting job advertisements pays off! Studies show that advertisements that use inclusive language consistently see more applicants and are filled faster than those that do not.

Inclusive Language

Dos and Don'ts

Instead of using:

❌ Gendered language:
you guys; ladies and gentlemen; chairman; manpower

❌ Ableist language:
crazy; normal; hands-on; handicapped; lame

❌ Name oppression:
minority

❌ Socioeconomic language:
inner city; disadvantaged; homeless; food stamps

Try using:

✅ Inclusive alternative:
you all; everyone; friends; chairperson; workforce

✅ Inclusive alternative:
wild; typical; interactive; person with a disability; uncool

✅ Inclusive alternative:
minoritized; underrepresented

✅ Inclusive alternative:
under resourced; low-opportunity; experiencing homelessness; worker welfare

Creating Inclusive Job Ads:

Make Job Advertisements as Inclusive as Possible

Rule 1:

Eliminate biases - In crafting job descriptions, make a conscious effort to avoid biases based on gender, age, education, and more. Steer clear of phrases that may be imply a preference in candidate. Including words like "sincere" could be construed as preferring a woman for the role, whereas "fast-moving" could be construed as seeking a young candidate.

Rule 2:

Remember literacy and accessibility inclusion - Create job advertisements to include applicants at different literacy levels. Also be mindful that applicants may be using assistive technology to read through and apply to the position. Keep sentences and paragraphs short, utilize white space, and avoid using underlining or italicizing fonts (use bold instead).

Rule 3:

Avoid jargon and buzzwords - To attract a large, diverse, and qualified applicant pool, avoid confusing and alienating corporate jargon when writing job advertisements. Using clear and concise language will attract applicants with a more clear understanding of job expectations that may have opted out of applying to a job with jargon-heavy qualifications.