



Demographic indicators for gender, sexuality and sex characteristics

Why are inclusive indicators important?

Demographic questions (sometimes referred to as indicators) are the measure(s) included in research to enable the categorisation of population groups. Ensuring that demographic questions are framed to adequately capture gender, sexuality and diversity of sex characteristics is an important act of recognition of LGBTIQ+ people and their lives. Those who do not identify in the heteronormative binary (e.g., man/male, woman/female, heterosexual, or those who have diverse sex characteristics (intersex people)) are often made invisible in research, which means that issues relating to health and social needs of these populations remain unaddressed. When data collection practices are unbiased and inclusive of people with diverse sex characteristics, gender identities, and sexual orientations, they communicate to LGBTIQ+ people that they are welcome, accepted, and respected. When data collection practices are not inclusive, they can marginalise and exclude LGBTIQ+ people and further perpetuate gender biases.

Best practice indicators and answers

1. Sex recorded at birth (i.e. the sex on your original birth certificate)
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Something else (please specify) [open box]
 - d. Prefer not to answer

2. How do you describe your gender?
 - a. Man/male
 - b. Woman/female
 - c. Non-binary
 - d. I use a different term [open box]
 - e. Prefer not to answer

3. Were you born with a variation of sex characteristics (sometimes called 'intersex' or 'Disorders of Sex Development (DSD)')?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
 - d. Prefer not to answer

4. **UNSW is committed to a fair and inclusive workplace free from discrimination, and for this reason it is useful for us to know whether people are heterosexual or non-heterosexual. Would you like to state your sexuality?*
 - a. Yes [open text box]
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to answer

Alternative sexuality question for instances where the above form (#4) is not appropriate:

5. How do you describe your sexuality?
 - a. Heterosexual or straight
 - b. Lesbian
 - c. Gay or homosexual
 - d. Bisexual or pansexual

- e. Queer
- f. I use a different term [open text box]
- g. Prefer not to answer

NOTES:

- The lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this consultation is a serious limitation (and an artefact of funding for national organisations)
- While these indicators are aimed to establish best practice, if you are researching in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations you should consider including brotherboy/sistergirl options
- These recommendations are certain to change over time, but that shouldn't be used as an excuse not to improve the way indicators are collected
- Make sure you adhere to the wording used in the questions, as this was negotiated at length with the key stakeholders and there are strong reasons that back the wording choices