



**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission

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Kuputaka — Te kanorau me te whakaurunga, me ngā tapanga āniwaniwa he auau te whakamahinga

**P Glossary — Diversity and inclusion, common rainbow terms**

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Get to know, understand and use these common rainbow terms — note this list is not exhaustive.

5th



Landscape of Cuba Street, Wellington, New Zealand

## Ngā tapanga āniwaniwa he rite tonu te whakamahinga **Rainbow commonly used terms**

### **Ace**

Ace is a colloquial abbreviation of asexual and/or aromantic. Often used as an umbrella term to cover the range of identities that fall under the ace spectrum, it is a term to refer to asexual people in a similar manner that 'gay' or 'straight' is used to refer to homosexual or heterosexual people. Ace also includes grey-asexual and demisexual people and recognises that asexuality is a spectrum.

### **Agender**

Someone who feels neutral towards their gender and rejects the influence of gender on their person. Sometimes the term non-gendered is used in a similar fashion.

### **Aromantic**

A person who experiences little to no romantic attraction but may experience sexual attraction towards others.

### **Asexual**

A person who either does not, or does not often, experience sexual attraction but may experience romantic attraction towards others. This can also be used as an umbrella term, like 'ace', that encompasses a range of other ace spectrum identities.



## Bisexual

A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to their own and other genders.

## Cisgender

Pronounced as either 'siz' or 'çiss' — a person whose gender aligns with their sex assigned at birth.

## Gay

A person who is attracted to the same gender. This is more widely used by men than women and can be both a personal and community identity.

## Gender

Gender is an individual's internal sense of being a woman, a man, neither of these, both or somewhere along a spectrum. Gender is not fixed or unable to be changed.

## Gender diverse

A person who does not conform to their society or culture's dominant gender roles.

## Gender expression

A person's presentation of their gender through physical appearance (including dress, hairstyles, accessories, cosmetics), mannerisms, speech, behavioural patterns, names, and personal references. Gender expression may or may not conform to a person's gender identity.

## Gender identity

Gender identity is an individual's sense of being a woman, a man, neither of these, both or somewhere along a spectrum.

## Genderfluid

A non-binary gender that indicates shifting between different genders or presentations.

## Heterosexual

A person who is sexually attracted to people of the other binary gender. Straight is an alternative term.

## Homosexual

A person who is sexually attracted to people of the same gender. Alternative terms used are gay and lesbian.

## Hijra

A word used in the Indian subcontinent to describe intersex people, and transgender people. This community also use the words Kinnar or Kinner to describe themselves.

## la

In te reo Māori, there is no gendered singular pronoun. Regardless of gender or sex, a person's pronoun is 'ia'.

## Intersex

An umbrella term used to describe people born with physical or biological sex characteristics (including sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that are more diverse than stereotypical definitions for male or female bodies. Like all people, intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary and can have any sexual orientation.

## LGBTQIA+

An acronym which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Intersex, Asexual or Ace. The + recognises there are further identities not listed, and while the combination and number of letters varies, the overall LGBTQIA+ acronym is well-recognised.

## Lesbian

A woman who is attracted to other women. This is used as both a personal identity and community identity.

## Non-binary

An umbrella term for gender identities outside the male/female binary.

## Pasifika terms

- Māhū (Tahiti and Hawaii)
- Vaka sa lewa lewa (Fiji)
- Palopa (Papua New Guinea)
- Fa'afafine (American Samoa, Samoa and Tokelau)
- Akava'ine (Cook Islands)
- Fakaleiti or Leiti (Tonga)
- Fakafifine (Niue)

These make up the acronym MVPFAFF — These are some terms used by Pacific peoples to describe cultural and gender identities. These concepts are more, or just as much, about familial, genealogical, social, and cultural selfhood. This is not an exhaustive list of Pacific peoples' terms. These cultural and gender identities do not often have an equivalent in English language/terminology.

## Pansexual

A person who is attracted to people regardless of their gender.

## Queer

Historically used as a derogatory term for something/someone being different. This word has been reclaimed by some people as an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual or cisgender. Note — due to this history, it is best not to initiate the use of this term to refer to others unless this is how they describe themselves.

## Questioning

A person who may be exploring and discovering their own sexual orientation or gender.

## Rainbow

An umbrella term that covers all sexual and gender minorities, and people with variations of sex characteristics and avoids the acronym LGBTQIA+. This can be used to identify communities as well as an individual.

## Sex

The sex characteristics associated with being female or male.

## Sex assigned at birth

The sex a baby is assigned at birth, usually determined by a visual observation of external genitalia. A person's gender may or may not align with their sex assigned at birth.

## Sex characteristics

A person's physical features relating to sex, including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive anatomy, chromosomes, hormones, and secondary physical features emerging from puberty.

## Sexual attraction

Sexual interest in another person. Sexual attraction is having sexual feelings towards someone.

## Sexual behaviour

How a person behaves sexually. It is whether they have sexual partners of a different gender, the same gender, or refrain from sexual behaviour.

## Sexual identity

How a person thinks of their own sexuality and the terms they identify with.

## Sexual orientation

A term that covers three key aspects: sexual attraction, sexual behaviour and sexual identity. These are related – sexual orientation is generally based on sexual attraction; sexual attraction can result in different sexual behaviours and sexual identities.

## SOGIESC

An acronym which stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics.

## Straight

A person who is attracted to people of the other binary gender. Heterosexual is an alternative term.

## Taahine

Taahine is similar to mixed gender, sometimes non-binary, or transgender not-otherwise specified. This speaks to the intersection of Māori and non-cisgender identities.

## Takatāpui

A traditional term reclaimed by Māori to encompass both their culture and spirituality, as well as their diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.

## Tangata ira tane

A te reo Māori term which roughly translates as trans man.

## Trans

Used as an abbreviation of either transgender or transsexual, or as an umbrella term in the same way that transgender is used.

## Transgender

This term describes a wide variety of people whose gender is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender people may be binary or non-binary.



Transgender is an adjective (for example, “I am a transgender person,” not, “I am a transgender

## Trans man

A man who was assigned female at birth. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between trans and man.

## Trans woman

A woman who was assigned male at birth. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between trans and woman.

## Transitioning

The process a transgender person may take to affirm their gender. It may involve social, legal, and/or medical steps.

## Transsexual

This term is generally considered to be outdated and tends not to be used by younger generations. It may refer to a person who has changed (or is in the process of changing) their body to affirm their gender.

## Whakawahine

There is no direct English translation, but roughly translates as trans woman. More literally, it translates as being or becoming, in the manner or spirit of a woman.

Ngā tapanga e whai pānga ana

## Related rainbow terms

### Ally

Someone who is a friend and active supporter of Rainbow communities. This term can be used for non-LGBTQIA+ allies as well as those within Rainbow communities who support each other. For example, a bisexual woman who is an ally to trans, non-binary, and intersex people. Allyship is always a process of learning and recognises that no-one is perfect.

### Discrimination

Means to be treated unfairly or less favourably than others in similar circumstances. Many people face discrimination because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sex characteristics.

# Diversity

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The wide variety of shared and different personal and group characteristics among human beings.

## Dominant culture

The cultural values, beliefs and practices that are assumed to be the norm and are most influential within a given society.

## Inclusion

Providing equal opportunity for participation, so that everyone can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate.

## Intersectionality

A framework to explain how multiple social categories (race, gender, class, sexuality) intersect to create overlapping and combined forms of discrimination and privilege.

## Privilege

A set of benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. Privilege exists in many forms including within Rainbow communities.

## Pronouns

Pronouns are referential markers that we use to refer to ourselves and others. Common pronouns are she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs. Pronouns are self-defined and are not 'preferred'.

Pronoun use in emails [\[link\]](#)

## Safe space

Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.

## Titles

One or more words used before a person's name, in certain contexts, including Mr, Miss, and Mrs. An example of a gender-neutral title is 'Mx,' usually pronounced 'mix'. Mx can be used by a person of any gender, whether they are trans or cis.





## Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are essential parts of the Public Service. We respect and value who we work with and serve, and collect and report on diversity and inclusion data to ensure we meet our commitments.

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