Recommendations for Inclusive Data Collection

During Pride Month in particular, we're glad to highlight opportunities for our members and allies to focus on LGBT+ inclusion in their work.

Don't forget that we can seize these opportunities all year round, not just in June!

Check out the following recommendations for designing an inclusive survey, kindly provided by Ariadne Cass-Maran, Senior Content Designer with Website and Communications.

Language changes and evolves all the time. Any list you offer people, especially a global community as we have at the University of Edinburgh, will inevitably age over time, or leave someone out. It helps to consider inclusive data-gathering as an evolving thing.

There's a lot of talk at the moment about blanket terms being used in inclusive language guides to try to cover everyone. However, we should be careful not to use a neutral term that might imply different things to different people. We should also be aware that there are circumstances when people prefer to see their identity represented.

So if you're designing a form or survey, here are some recommendations:

- Be clear on what quantitative and qualitative data you want to gather.
- When providing a list, include the identities you want to know about, and include 'prefer not to say' as an

option.
- In addition to your list for participants to select an identity, provide a free text box to give the option for people to provide their identity if they don't see it in the list provided. The reason for this is that there are always unknowns and unknown unknowns. By providing a list, you give people the opportunity to see themselves represented, but you also risk leaving an identity out. Provide the opportunity for people to tell you about themselves.
- If you want to ask people about their gender, including cis and trans genders, to understand self-identification and the intricacies of societal definitions, a free text box will allow participants to provide more nuanced information about an identity they selected.

Ariadne's work has informed an inclusive language guide for the University community. Explore the Inclusive Language Guide

Check out Advance HE's guidance on collection of diversity monitoring data. Advance HE guidance on data gathering