

## CHECKLIST – FOR GENDER EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

It is harder to become what you can't see! We know that it is important to be able to recognise yourself in various media to feel included in society. It is important that not only certain voices, perspectives and bodies get to take up space and be represented. As a public authority, we have a responsibility for including and representing broadly, in a gender equal and socially equal way, in our communication.

Lund University's strategic plan states that the University's activities are to contribute to understanding, explaining and improving our world. As communications officers, we can, through our choice of language and images in communication, work actively to counteract preconceptions and exclusion of certain groups. In the long run, this can mean more people having a chance to be heard and seen in a gender equal and socially equal way, with reference to the seven grounds on which discrimination occurs. This, in turn, will hopefully lead to more people being able to access information more easily, identifying with it and having their needs and wishes better met.

Why is this checklist needed? It is intended as a reminder of the importance of working with a gender equal and inclusive perspective in communication work while providing tips as to how this can be done.

### ON WORKING NORM-CRITICALLY

Norm criticism is not to be understood as criticism of the norm, but of the fact that it is almost only the norm that gets visibility. Norm criticism means striving to show more ways of living and being. The aim is not to create a new norm but to broaden existing norms. One of the ways to achieve this is by analysing our work in a norm-critical perspective.

One way to start working norm-critically is to analyse that which appears to be neutral a first glance but is in fact exclusionary, and then to choose to communicate in a different way. To facilitate this work, ask the following questions: Who is the example in the text and image? What job and leisure interests does this person have? Whose reality and whose experience are we using as a vantage point? Is the diversity that exists in society reflected here? Can we write or show other examples ourselves, or do we need help in bringing new perspectives? These questions aim to show that there is no neutral choice behind what we show or write: we always choose who gets to be represented and who is not chosen. The norm-critical work thus covers the choice of both images and text.

PUT THE CHECKLIST ON THE WALL AND LET IT BE A HELP IN EVERYDAY LIFE!

### MORE INFORMATION

At [www.ht.lu.se/en/???](http://www.ht.lu.se/en/???) it is possible to order printed copies of the checklist and here you will also find good-to-have links where you can read more about equal and inclusive communication.

### QUESTIONS?

Contact information for the communicators at the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology can be found at:

[www.ht.lu.se/en/contacts/press-and-media](http://www.ht.lu.se/en/contacts/press-and-media)

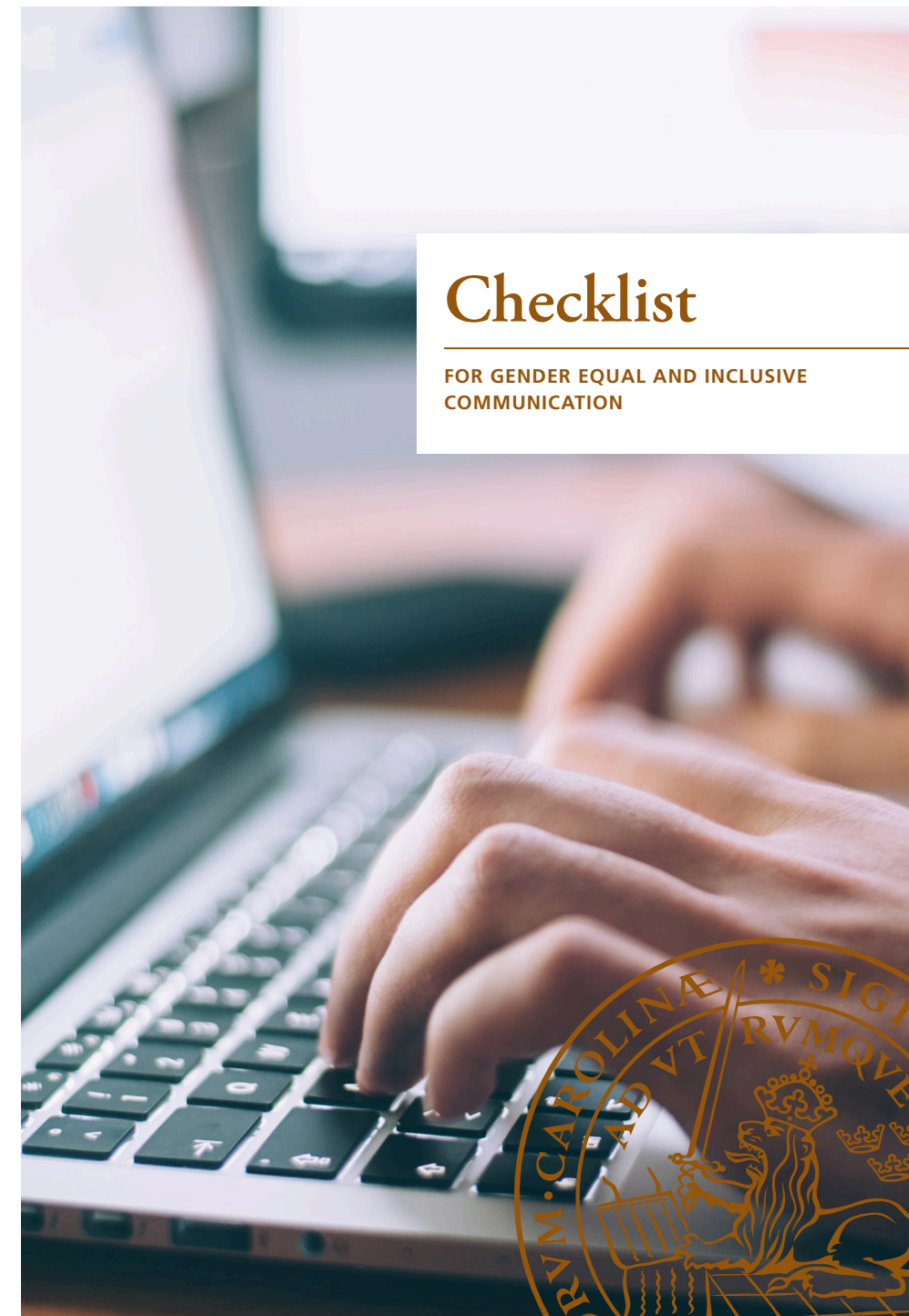


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# Checklist

FOR GENDER EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE  
COMMUNICATION



# Checklist – for gender equal and inclusive communication

## TEXT

- **Always be careful to spell out what is meant, i.e. actively highlight the norm!** If we leave something unwritten, it is often assumed to be what is obvious and “natural”. Only do this when it is relevant and crucial to the content:
  - Write heterosexual couples if that is what is meant, not just couples.
  - Write men’s and women’s football, male genius – female genius, male nurse – female nurse or other distinctions based on gender.
- **Sometimes do the opposite and refrain from descriptions of deviation from the norm, where it is not relevant to the context.** For example, you can write “pastors” instead of “female pastors”, even if there are only females in the image, and thereby contribute to broadening views of who can represent the professional category.
- **Pay attention to whether you are creating an ‘us’ and ‘them’.** Writing ‘they’ in reference to groups creates and reinforces prevailing ideas of us and them which can lead to exclusion for certain groups. Try as far as possible to pay attention to who is included and excluded in the text and what perception this gives rise to in the reader.
- **Adapt the level of language** to the target group to make the text as easy to read and as inclusive as possible.
- **Avoid using the passive voice.**
- **Avoid writing long sentences with several subclauses.**
- **Avoid using specialised technical terms,** unless the text is only intended for researchers in the field. When you must use technical terms, explain them in the text.
- If you refer to information, books, films, etc. that not everyone may be familiar with, briefly describe the reference so that everyone who does not have prior knowledge can understand.
- **Look at how people of different genders are presented and represented.**
  - Are both “she” and “he” used in examples and argumentation? Does the text use he or she, they, one or people?
  - Do examples include different genders, concepts such as non-binary and other concepts that many people can relate to?
  - Avoid traps such as describing gender according to stereotypes.
- **Count the number of entries** on your website, brochure or Facebook page on the basis of the various grounds on which discrimination occurs. Are non-normative examples, texts and stories linked to e.g. sexual orientation, ethnicity, age and disability used? If not, see whether you can swap some examples for others.
- **Do not use words that reinforce the prevailing norms and exclude certain groups:**
  - Example: write ‘regardless of gender’ or ‘all genders’ instead of ‘both genders’ or ‘opposite gender’, as these words assume that there are only two possible genders. ‘Other’ is also a word that reinforces norms and excludes if it is used before groups that deviate from the norm.
- **Use language that describes people with disabilities as people,** and not only as their disability. Use “a person with e.g. disability” instead of e.g. “a disabled person” or “a handicapped person”.

## IMAGE

- It is not only the subject depicted that can determine how an image is interpreted; several factors can come into play: image composition, cropping, focus point, size combined with headings or text.
- For more gender equal and inclusive image communication, start with:
    - **Calculating with reference to the grounds on which discrimination occurs:** how many people of different genders are visible in the images? What about age, gender expression, skin colour and disability?
    - Examining the situations in which the people above are presented: do their surroundings reinforce prejudices linked to the grounds on which discrimination occurs?
  - **Test a gender swap** – what happens if we swap the models’ genders in an image? If nothing happens, you probably have a gender-neutral image.
    - How is the body language?
    - Is any gender depicted as passive or active?
    - How has the image been taken? Has the person been photographed from above (can be perceived as subordinate) or from below (can radiate power)?
  - Try, as gender-aware photographer Thomas Gunnarsson says, **“to include without highlighting”** – i.e. without making a big thing out of it. Allow people who contradict the norms to represent everyone and not only the group that society perceives them to be part of.
  - **What do the images tell us?**
    - Where are people looking? What does their gaze signal?
    - How is the power balance perceived?

- **Ask another communications officer to go through your text and images.**
- **How do they perceive the texts and images separately and together?**

### THE SEVEN GROUNDS ON WHICH DISCRIMINATION OCCURS:

- gender
- transgender identity or expression
- ethnicity
- sexual orientation
- religion or other belief
- disability
- age