Applied
Microbiology
International

DIVERSITY &
INCLUSION
GLOSSARY

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF MICROBIOLOGY

PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY

1. Ableism

Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior.[i]

2. Accessibility

Accessibility means that people can do what they need to do in a similar amount of time and effort as someone that does not have a disability. It means that people are empowered, can be independent, and will not be frustrated by something that is poorly designed or implemented. Accessibility can apply to both physical (an environment) and digital accessibility (relating to website, apps and other digital products).[ii]

3. Ally

Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and works in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.[iii]

4. Ancestry

Refers to the lineage, heritage, and familial origins of an individual. It is passed down through generations and encompasses cultural, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds. It can manifest through genetic inheritance, familial traditions, language, customs and societal norms.[iv]

5. Antiracism

Actively identifying and opposing racism to change policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. To be anti–racist, you should educate yourself, be open to new ideas, listen equitably to diverse perspectives, advocate for those in minoritised communities, and understand your privilege.[v]

6. Awareness days

Awareness days, weeks, or months are designated periods set aside to highlight, celebrate, or raise public consciousness about specific issues, communities, events, or causes. They serve to educate, promote inclusion, foster understanding, and encourage action.[vi]

7. Anonymous recruitment

Anonymous recruitment refers to a recruitment practice where personally identifiable information —such as name, gender, age, ethnicity, or educational institution—is removed from job/volunteer applications during the initial stages of the evaluation process. The goal is to reduce unconscious bias and ensure that candidates are evaluated based on their skills, experience, and qualifications alone.[vii]

8. Bullying

The intentional, repetitive hurting of someone or a group of people by another person or group. Bullying involves an imbalance of power and can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen in person or online.[viii]

9. Colonised People

Groups of individuals who experience political, social, economic, and cultural domination by a foreign power. This often results in becoming a minority in their own land due to colonial rule.[ix]

10. Cultural appreciation

Refers to the mindful and respectful interaction with another culture. It strives to understand and celebrate significant elements of other cultures within their historical and social contexts, going beyond elements of a culture. [x]

11. Cultural appropriation

The adoption of certain language, behaviour, clothing, or traditions belonging to a minority culture or social group by a dominant culture or group in a way that is exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical. An imbalance of power between the appropriator and the appropriated is a critical condition of the concept.[xi]

12. Diversity

Diversity encompasses the presence and recognition of differences among people in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, socio-economic status, and other attributes. It is about acknowledging and valuing the unique experiences, perspectives, and contributions that individuals from different backgrounds bring to a community, organisation, or society.[xii]

13. Disability

Disability is an evolving concept resulting from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. It includes physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society.[xiii]

14. Equality

Equality is the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment.[xiv]

15. Equity

Equity recognises that each person has different circumstances, that historically, some groups of people have experienced discrimination and that reaching equal outcomes will not be achieved by treating everyone the same. Equity and reaching equal outcomes require the allocation of resources and opportunities according to circumstance and need.[xv]

16. Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a social construct used to categorise and characterise distinct populations. It is linked with cultural expression and identification. It groups people based on their set of beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviours, and styles of communication.[xvi]

17. Gender

Gender refers to characteristics that are socially constructed and relate to people of different sexes (e.g., male vs female). This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with different sexes. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

Gender interacts with but is different from sex, which refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.[xvii]

18. Gender identity
A person's innate sense of their own gender, such as male, female, nonbinary, transgender, which may or may not correspond to their sex assigned at birth.[xviii]

19. Global majority

Refers to all ethnic groups expect white groups, including white minorities. It includes people from black, Asian, mixed and other ethnic groups often racialised as 'minorities'. These groups make up approximately 80% of the world population. [xix]

20. Harassment

Where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics, including race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct, and can happen face to face, via email or on the phone.[xx]

21. Inclusion

Inclusion refers to the practice of ensuring that all individuals — regardless of their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics — feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. Inclusion involves the active, intentional, and ongoing effort to promote the full participation and sense of belonging of every person in all aspects of society, workplace, or organisation.[xxi]

22. Indigenous Peoples

Those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time of colonisation or conquest. Indigenous peoples were subject to conquest, occupation, and settlement. [xxii]

23. Intersectionality

The ways in which race, class, gender, and other aspects of our identity overlap and interact, informing how people simultaneously experience oppression and privilege in their daily lives. Intersectionality promotes the idea that aspects of our identity do not work in a silo.[xxiii]

24. LGBTQIA+

An acronym used to represent lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, intersex and asexual as well as other marginalised sexes, sexualities and genders. Identities that the '+' speaks to include (but are not limited to) questioning and pansexual. The '+' is intended to ensure that the community, and related D&I work, is inclusive of those with marginalised orientations and identities who may not identify with the specific terms of lesbian, gay, bi or trans.[xxiv]

25. Microaggressions

A conscious or unconscious, verbal or non-verbal interaction that expresses a prejudiced attitude towards an individual or group, for example, based on race, class, religious beliefs, age, able-bodiedness, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, and other such traits. It can be interpreted as non-physical aggression. Though frequently dismissed as minor or harmless, microaggressions can cumulatively cause psychological harm and reinforce systems of exclusion.[xxv]

26. Minority

A non-dominant group distinguished by ethnicity, religion, language, or culture, often requiring recognition and protection to preserve their rights.[xxvi]

27. Minoritised

A social group that are marginalized by active social, political, and/or cultural processes. Minoritised recognises the active marginalisation by dominant groups in contract to minority which passive and does not attribute responsibility to dominant groups.[xxvii]

28. Misgendering

Misgendering refers to interacting with someone in some way which does not respect their gender identity, by using the incorrect name or pronouns. This can invalidate their identity, cause distress, and contribute to a hostile or unwelcoming environment.[xxviii]

29. Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in human brain functioning and cognitive processing. It technically includes neurotypical and neurodiverse individuals because everyone all processes and experiences the world in slightly different ways. The term was first used in 1990s, and it was the first term to propose that 'neurological diversity' was not a deficit or disorder but a difference in how the brain functions.[xxix]

30. Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence refers to individuals whose brains function differently than the social norm. This includes dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum condition. Rather than viewing these differences as deficits or disorders, neurodiversity recognises them as part of normal human diversity, with both strengths and challenges.[xxx]

31. Privilege

Privilege refers to certain social advantages, benefits, or degrees of prestige and respect that an individual has by virtue of belonging to certain social identity groups. These privileged social identities are of groups who have historically occupied positions of dominance over others including whites, males, heterosexuals, and the wealthy, among others.[xxxi]

32. Positive action

Positive action is a range of measures allowed under the UK Equality Act 2010 which can be lawfully taken to encourage and train people from under-represented groups to help them overcome disadvantages in competing with other applicants. Where positive action has been taken to encourage applicants from disadvantaged groups to apply, every applicant must be considered on individual merit and selection for interview and appointment must be based strictly on the agreed selection criteria. [xxxii]

33. Positive discrimination

Positive discrimination refers to policies and actions that favour individuals or groups who have been historically disadvantaged or discriminated against, to promote equality. These measures aim to address systemic inequalities and ensure equal access to opportunities in areas such as employment, education, and political participation.[xxxiii]

34. Prejudice

Preconceived opinions or judgments made without sufficient knowledge, frequently based on stereotypes, leading to bias or discrimination.[xxxiv]

35. Pronouns

Pronouns are words used to refer to people without using their names, typically indicating gender (e.g., he, she, they). Using correct pronouns is an important way to respect and affirm a person's gender identity and expression.[xxxv]

36. Race

The idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups on the basis on inherited physical and behavioural differences.[xxxvi]

37. Racism

The belief or ideology that 'races' have distinctive characteristics which gives some superiority over others. Also refers to discriminatory and abusive behaviour based on such a belief or ideology.[xxxvii]

38. Redaction

To remove or conceal (parts of a document or text) prior to publication or viewing, in the context where unconscious bias could impact decision making. If a document is redacted, words or other information are removed or hidden before it is published.[xxxviii]

39. Safe Spaces

Environment, physical or virtual, that foster trust, open communication, respect and make people feel confident they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism or harassment.[xxxix]

40. Sex

A medically determined binary assigned to individuals at or before birth, usually on the basis of genitalia. Sex can refer to this birth assignment, or to a collection of gendered physical characteristics, such as chromosomes, gonads, and hormones.[xl]

41. Sexuality/ Sexual Orientation

A person's attraction, or lack thereof, to people of a particular gender or genders. Sexuality/ sexual orientation may combine emotional, romantic, sexual, and/or affectionate attraction to other people.[xli]

42. Stereotypes

A fixed, over-generalised belief about a particular group or class of people and what they are like. These are often incorrect and can be offensive.[xlii]

43. Tokenism

Symbolic gestures of diversity that lack inclusivity and equal opportunity to support or help a group of people treated unfairly in society. These actions do not lead to significant or lasting change for the group they are meant to support.[xliii]

44. Unconscious bias

Associations that people unknowingly hold and express automatically without conscious awareness. This can affect how you engage with a person or group due to underlying attitudes and stereotypes, without being aware of these views and opinions. Our biases can be influenced by our background, cultural environment, and personal experiences.[xliv]

45. Underrepresented groups

Underrepresented groups are communities or populations whose presence in a given context—such as an organisation, sector, or institution—is disproportionately low compared to their numbers in the broader society. These groups often face systemic barriers to access, opportunity, and visibility, and may include individuals marginalised due to race, ethnicity, gender, disability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, or other identities.[xlv]

i – Access Living
ii – UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
iii – UN – Chief Executives Board for Coordination: Diversity Equity and Inclusion
iv – Adapted from Oxford Review
v – University of Oxford: Racism Resources October 2021: What is Anti-Racism?; Boston University: What is Anti-Racism?
vi – Inclusive Employers; UN Calendar of Observance Days
vii – Oxford Review
viii – Adapted from the Anti-Bullying Alliance
ix – Adapted from Science Direct
x – Adapted from Oxford Review
xi – Retrieved from Britanica
xii – UN – Chief Executives Board for Coordination: Diversity Equity and Inclusion; UNESCO
xiii – UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
xiv – Cambridge Dictionary
xv – UN Global Compact
xvi – IET: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary
xvii – WHO: Gender and Health
xviii – IET: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary
xix – Immigration Law Practitioners's Association
xx – Adapted from AMI Code of Conduct; UN Secretariat – Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority
xxi – Global Diversity Practice; Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction
xxii – UNESCO; UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
xxiii – UN – Chief Executives Board for Coordination: Diversity Equity and Inclusion
xxiv – IET: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary
xxv – American Psychology Association; Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks; UN Global Compact
xxvi – UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner; UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
xxvii – BMJ Global Health, Categorisation and Minoritisation; Oregon State University: Diversity Action Plan Definitions
xxviii – LGBT Foundation: Understanding Pronouns; UN: Free and Equal
xxix – The Brain Charity; UN: Advancing Neurodiversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
xxx – The Brain Charity; Cleveland Clinic
xxxi – Retrieved from: Rider University
xxxii – Retrieved from University of Cambridge: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
xxxiii – University of Dundee: Positive Action or Positive Discrimination; International Labor Organisation

xxxiv – American Psychological Association; Merriam–Webster
xxxv – Merriam Webster; Stonewall; NPR
xxxvi – Britannica: Race
xxxvii – Institute of Race Relations
xxxviii – Collins Dictionary
xxxix – Adapted from NC State Office of Equal Opportunity; Leader Factor
xl – IET: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary
xli – IET: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary
xlii – Cambridge Dictionary; Simply Psychology
xliii – Cambridge Dictionary; Science Direct
xliv – IET: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary
xlv – Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks; UN Global Compact