

Farmingdale State College **Institutional Review Board**

Suggestions for Collecting Demographic Data on Gender and Sexual Identity

In recent years, researchers across disciplines have critiqued the way much survey research measures gender. This is an issue not only of inclusivity, but also of data rigor, as many LGBTQ+ people are misclassified in survey analysis. This document lays out some best practices for measuring gender and sexual identity on surveys. When selecting questions, researchers should consider what kind of data is most necessary for them to collect and what nuance is lost with each strategy. Researchers are encouraged to consider the following suggestions, but are not obligated to do so. Demographic questions included with research protocols will be evaluated by FSC's Institutional Review Board as part of the protocol review process.

Measuring Gender Identity

Option 1: Open-Ended Question

An inclusive method to ask about gender is to leave a blank space where the respondent may fill in their information.

Example Questions:

- What is your gender? [Include a fill-in box and *Prefer not to answer* option]
- What is your gender identity? [Include a fill-in box and *Prefer not to answer* option]
- What best describes your current gender identity? [Include a fill-in box and *Prefer not to answer* option]
- A field labeled- *Gender or Gender Identity* [Include a fill-in box and *Prefer not to answer* option]

Option 2: Two-Part Gender Question

Part 1: Gender Data

Example questions:

- What is your gender?
- What is your gender identity?
- What best describes your current gender identity?
- A field labeled- *Gender or Gender Identity*

Response options (select all that apply):

- Agender
- Gender Nonconforming
- Genderqueer
- Intersex
- Man
- Nonbinary
- Woman
- Describe in your own words (include a fill-in box)
- Prefer not to answer

Part 2: Trans Identity Data

Example questions:

- Do you identify as trans?
- Are you a trans person?

Response options:

- No, I do not identify as trans
- Yes, I do identify as trans
- I am not sure if I am trans
- I do not know what this question is asking
- Prefer not to answer

The term *Trans* may not be familiar to some participants. Consider including the following description:

Trans: Denoting or relating to a person whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex registered for them at birth; transgender.

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Option 3: Gender List

An alternative to an independent *Trans Identity* question is to include Trans identities (Transgender Man, Transgender Woman, etc.) as response options under Gender Data. See below:

Example questions:

- What is your gender?
- What gender do you identify as?
- A field labeled- Gender or Gender Identity

The term *Cisgender* may not be familiar to some participants who are cisgender. Consider including the following description:

Cisgender: Individuals whose current gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Response options (select all that apply):

- Agender
- Cisgender Man
- Cisgender Woman
- Gender Nonconforming
- Genderqueer
- Intersex
- Nonbinary
- Transfeminine
- Transgender Man
- Transgender Woman
- Transmasculine
- Describe in your own words (include a fill-in box)
- Prefer not to answer

Option 4: Gender List (Modified Two-Part Design)

An alternative to using the term *Cisgender* and/or asking an independent trans identity question is to use a gender identity question with a two-part design: one on current gender identity (not specifying *Cisgender*) and one on sex listed at birth (see below). In general, sex is the category an individual is assigned (typically at birth) based on their external sex characteristics (e.g., male, female, or intersex), whereas gender is the identity that best reflects an individual's gender expression. Asking two questions offers a clearer representation of the participant. For example, asking whether someone is a *Transgender Man* or *Transgender Woman* will exclude some transgender people who do not identify as such (e.g. a person who was born male but whose gender identity is a woman may check *Woman* rather than *Transgender Woman* if *Cisgender Woman* is not specified as an option.)

Example questions:

- What sex was originally listed on your birth certificate?
- What sex were you assigned at birth?
- What is your biological sex?
- On your original birth certificate, what sex was assigned?

Response options:

- Male
- Female
- Intersex
- Prefer not the answer

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Additional Options

Depending on the level of nuance that is desired when collecting gender data, a gradational measure of gender identification may be implemented such as using scales to measure femininity and masculinity.

Example questions:

- First Order Gender Scale: In general, how do you see yourself? (Please answer on both scales)
 - Feminine: 0 (Not at all), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Very)
 - Masculine: 0 (Not at all), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Very)
- Third Order Gender Scale: In general, how do most people see you? (Please answer on both scales)
 - Feminine: 0 (Not at all), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Very)
 - Masculine: 0 (Not at all), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Very)

Measuring Sexual Orientation or Identity

Option 1: Open-Ended Question

An inclusive method to ask about sexual Orientation or identity is to leave a blank space where the respondent may fill in their information.

Example Questions:

- What is your sexual identity? [Include a fill-in box and *Prefer not to answer* option]
- What is your sexual orientation or identity? [Include a fill-in box and *Prefer not to answer* option]
- A field labeled- Sexual Orientation [Include a fill-in box and *Prefer not to answer* option]

Option 2: Sexual Orientation/Identity Data

Example questions:

- What is your sexual identity?
- What is your sexual orientation or identity?
- A field labeled- Sexual Orientation

Response options (select all that apply):

- Asexual or Ace Spectrum
- Bi or Bisexual or Bi+
- Pansexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Heterosexual/ Straight
- Queer
- Questioning
- Don't know
- Describe in your own words (include fill-in box)
- Choose not to define
- Prefer not to answer