**Instructions**

1. Review each option set (highlighted in green) and remove those sections that aren't applicable in this situation.
2. Remove the headings for each remaining option set, highlighted in green.
3. For all sections highlighted in yellow, replace the template text with content relevant to the situation. The more personalised you make this letter, the more likely the organisations will be to act on it.
4. Copy and paste the subject line and content into a new email.
5. Insert the email address of the organisation you want to send to, and hit send!
6. Celebrate making a different for gender-diverse people and people with variations of sex characteristics.

**Subject line:** Request for changes to your forms

Dear [name]

I am writing to request that you consider updating your [description] form to make it more inclusive and give you some information that could help you do this.

As context, [how you came across the form, whether the lack of inclusion meant you couldn't fill it out or had to put in incorrect details to continue, etc.].

**Option set one: for organisations that have a reason to include sex as a mandatory field, such as medical professionals, but have asked for gender. Delete this section if not applicable.**

I understand you may need to collect information about a person's sex characteristics due to the nature of your services and that sex characteristics are often, but not always, related to a person's sex.

However, your form labelled this section as 'gender'. Although the words ‘sex’ and 'gender' are often used interchangeably, they are quite different.

A person's sex is typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy (but can change over the course of their lifetime). In contrast, gender encompasses a person's identities, expressions and societal roles.

The words 'male', 'female' and 'intersex' are typically used to categorise a person's sex. Terms for a person's gender include 'man', 'non-binary person' and 'woman', among others.

I know this might be different to how the words are commonly used, but awareness of the different meanings is becoming more widespread as we gain a greater understanding of the difference between sex and gender.

**Option set two: for organisations that do not have a reason to include sex or gender as a mandatory field. Delete this section if not applicable.**

**2a) If they ask for a person's sex**

Your form has a mandatory field asking for a person's sex, which does not seem relevant to your services.

You might actually be wanting to collect information about a person's gender instead of their sex. Although these words are often used interchangeably, they are quite different. A person's sex is typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy (but can change over the course of their lifetime). In contrast, gender encompasses a person's identities, expressions and societal roles.

However, asking for these details is often done out of habit rather than necessity, and I encourage you to consider whether you need them. Although you might want this information for marketing or demographic analysis, is it necessary for you to run your organisation?

If you don't need the information, you could eliminate the questions to shorten your forms and reduce data storage, or at least make them optional rather than mandatory.

If you decide you need this information, please consider explaining on your forms why you need it, to lessen the likelihood of any negative experiences for people who have been marginalised on the basis of their gender or variations in sex characteristics. You could also consider how often to ask. For example, you might only need to collect this information once rather than on every interaction.

**2b) If they ask for a person's gender**

Your form has a mandatory field asking for a person's gender, which does not seem relevant for your services.

However, asking for these details is often done out of habit rather than necessity, and I encourage you to consider whether you need them. Although you might want this information for marketing or demographic analysis, is it necessary for you to run your organisation?

If you don't need the information, you could eliminate the questions to shorten your forms and reduce data storage, or at least make them optional rather than mandatory.

If you decide you do need this information, consider explaining your reasons on your forms. This could reduce the likelihood of any negative experiences for people who have been marginalised because of their gender or sex characteristics. You could also consider whether you only need to collect this information once rather than on every interaction, and include content on your form about how you will protect this information.

**Option set three: where incorrect or incomplete options are provided**

**3.a) Where the field is related to sex**

When asking about a person's sex, please ensure you are using the correct terminology. The words 'male', 'female' and 'intersex' relate to a person's sex, which is typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy but can change over the course of their lifetime. Gender encompasses a person's identities, expressions and societal roles, and is usually denoted with the terms' man', 'non-binary person' and 'woman', among others.

I know this might be different to how the words are commonly used, but awareness of the different meanings is becoming more widespread as we gain a greater understanding of the difference between sex and gender.

Please consider changing the 'sex' field on your form to make it more inclusive for people with variations of sex characteristics. Here is an option to structure your question, which aligns with broader Australian standards.

* What was [your/Person's name/their] sex recorded at birth?
  + Male
  + Female
  + Another term (please specify)

**3.b) Where the field is related to gender**

When asking about a person's gender, please ensure you are using the correct terminology. The words 'male', 'female' and 'intersex' relate to a person's sex, which is typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy but can change over the course of their lifetime. Gender encompasses a person's identities, expressions and societal roles, and is usually denoted with the terms' man', 'non-binary person' and 'woman', among others. 'Non-binary person' is an umbrella term for a range of other terms people may use for their gender, including but not limited to genderfluid, agender and genderqueer.

I know this might be different to how the words are commonly used, but awareness of the different meanings is becoming more widespread as we gain a greater understanding of the difference between sex and gender.

Please consider changing the 'gender' field on your form to make it more inclusive for gender-diverse people. Here is an option to structure your question, which aligns with broader Australian standards.

* How [do/does] [you/Person’s name/they] describe [your/their] gender?
  + Man
  + Woman
  + Non-binary person
  + [I/They] use a different term (please specify)

**Option set four: for organisations that do not have gender-neutral title options.**

The title field does not have a gender-neutral option in your form except those based on an academic or professional rank. As such, non-binary people would be forced to choose a gendered title, such as Mr or Mrs.

Many businesses are getting rid of title fields altogether these days, given they are no longer used as much. If you really want to keep it, there is a gender-neutral title, 'Mx', that you could include.

**Option set five: for organisations that deal face-to-face with customers and don't have a pronoun field**

While looking at changing your forms, you could also consider providing a pronouns field, so you and your staff know to use the correct language about your client or customer.

You can find more information on [Diversity ACT's website](https://diversityact.org.au/advocacy/inclusive-forms/).

As noted above, I'm sure this was just an oversight when developing your forms. However, a little change on your forms can make a big difference for your clients or customers who are gender-diverse or have variations of sex characteristics, and improve their experiences of dealing with your organisation.

I would appreciate it if you could let me know if you will be making changes to this form.

Diversity ACT is also publicly promoting organisations that make these changes if you want to participate in the program. Diversity ACT can provide you with social media tiles and messaging to demonstrate your commitment to inclusion. Please contact [info@diversityact.org.au](mailto:info@diversityact.org.au) for more information.

If you would like more information about these definitions and how to make your forms gender-inclusive, here are some resources:

* + [*Intersex for Allies* by Intersex Human Rights Australia](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lgbtihealth/pages/632/attachments/original/1589077767/IHRA-Intersex-Ally.pdf?1589077767)
  + [*I just can out as non-binary, here's what that means* by Minus18](https://www.minus18.org.au/articles/i-just-came-out-as-non-binary-here's-what-that-means)
  + [*Where to start: gender diversity* by A Gender Agenda](https://genderrights.org.au/resources/where-to-start-gender-diversity-brochure/)
  + [*Where to start: intersex* by A Gender Agenda](https://genderrights.org.au/resources/where-to-start-intersex-brochure/)
  + [ABS *Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables*](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/latest-release).

You can also get training from local community service organisations [A Gender Agenda](https://genderrights.org.au/training/), [Meridian](https://www.meridianact.org.au/training_and_education), [Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT)](https://www.shfpact.org.au/development-training) and the [ACT Safe & Inclusive Schools Initiative](https://saisact.info/index.php/sais-news/63-new-sais-core-training).

Kind regards,

[Your name]