

## Examples of what can be seen as inappropriate and transgressive behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour can take many forms and can be found just as much in our language as in the actions we carry out. Often, inappropriate language and action build on assumptions and stereotypes. Also, it often takes place in a subtle way, where language, actions, tone of voice, and body language in combination can make something that otherwise could seem innocent, into inappropriate language or action. It is therefore important to be aware of how for example terms and phrases we use can be perceived by our colleagues. It is also central to be aware not to make assumptions about colleagues and their background.

Below are some examples of inappropriate language. The list is not exclusive but is meant to create a better understanding of what kind of language that is not accepted at the department.

- Examples are taken from research project that studies sexism at Danish universities. Read more here: <https://sexismedu.dk/>

### **Examples**

#### **Gender:**

The statements she's talking about regards indicating that women are inferior to men when it comes to technology, and that women have it easier than men (thus demanding women to prove their worth to a higher degree): "I regularly hear from my male developer colleagues that I have gained special privileges due to my gender. That women cannot figure out technology of any art."

Promoting stereotypical descriptions of men and women, and degrading LGBT+ people simultaneously: "Men and women ARE different, right!? Men are risk takers and physically endowed. The sexual harassment issues from the Work Assessment (APV) should not be taken too seriously, because most of the men here are so god damn inhibited. Academia in general is almost like a gay place."

Stereotypical characterization of women's competencies: "From a job satisfaction point of view it is good with an equal participation in academia, because of women's great social, and cake-baking, skills."

Suggesting that women don't like work environments that are technical and without a collegial focus: "The University is a harsh environment; it is lonesome hard work in front of the computer. Women actively opt-out of this (..) "

#### **Culture, religion, ethnicity:**

Referring to e.g. a person's skin color, and not accepting an answer that includes e.g. Denmark, thus creating a limited understanding of who "Danish identities" can include: "Where do you come from? No, I mean where do you really come from?"

Assuming someone's religion and perspective on a topic, and alienating both muslims and LGBT+ people: "I know you don't accept gay people in your muslim religion, but here we are OK with them"

Displaying one's belief that Western education systems are superior to education from majority world countries, and degrading the education students and researchers have received from

other contries: "In Europe, our Universities have very advanced research. It is highly unlikely that a masters degree from a university in e.g. Singapore corresponds to the level we have here."

Portraying a stereotypical combination of ethnicity/skin color and criminality: "Do you live in Gellerupparken? That area is filled with criminals."

### **Different personality types and cognitive positions:**

Degrading language towards some one who has dyslexia: "With all those spelling mistakes, he doesn't seem particularly sharp"

Undermining comment on introverts, and normative expectations that everyone should act like an extrovert: "Why don't you just speak up if you have something on your mind? You can't just sit there like a silent mouse if you want to get somewhere"

### **Sexual orientation and gender identity:**

Alienating LGBT+ people, indicating that they shouldn't act similarly to straight people and that they should not bring their whole self to work: "I didn't like to see Hanna kiss her girlfriend in the parking lot. I don't care what people are, but it's not professional to flash it at work."

Commenting about a colleague who is open about being gay, indicating that they should not bring their whole self to work: "Why do gay people always have to show it off?" or "We don't have a straight pride - why do LGBT+ people have to constantly display their identity?"

Policing how people should present themselves, and promoting that male colleagues should act in a more normative way: "Being so flamboyant takes the focus away from his research"

### **Academic background and hierarchy:**

Degrading colleagues who don't have a university background and creating a distance between colleagues: "I don't see the benefits of having him on the research team. He is not a proper researcher. He took his education at the technical school and not the university."

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\*If you have been exposed to or hear similar language at the department, we hope that you will inform us. This will help us in our continuous efforts to shut down unacceptable behaviour and to promote a more inclusive work environment.

If you think it is difficult to know what is appropriate to say or how to act, we recommend that you consult your manager or one of our union- or work environment representatives.