What is a preferred gender pronoun?
One chosen by the person to whom it refers.

Why do preferred gender pronouns matter?

- You can’t always know what someone’s preferred gender pronoun is by looking at them.
- Asking and correctly using someone’s preferred pronoun is one of the most basic ways to show respect.
- It is a privilege not to have to worry about which pronoun someone uses based upon their assumptions. If you have this privilege, yet fail to respect someone else’s gender identity, it is not only disrespectful and hurtful, but also oppressive.

How do I ask someone for their preferred pronoun?

- “What are your preferred pronouns?” or “Which pronouns do you like to hear?”

In the classroom, faculty have an opportunity to address preferred gender pronouns. Ask your students their preferred gender pronouns. This sets an example for students to follow, especially if you practice consistency.

In the office or around campus, discussing and correctly using preferred gender pronouns sets a tone of respect and allyship that trans and gender non-conforming individuals appreciate.

In electronic communication, note your preferred gender pronouns in your email signature block. Being mis-gendered in any communications can be hurtful.

Mistakes Happen!

- It’s okay! Everyone slips up from time to time. The best thing to do if you use the wrong pronoun for someone is to say something right away, like “Sorry, I meant she.” If you realize your mistake after the fact, apologize in private and move on.
- After correcting the mistake, consider giving back by making a donation to the Pronoun Jar located in the Office of LGBT Programming.

Adapted from material written by Mateo Medina for Hampshire College, modified for use at Central Connecticut State University