

Universities Forcing Students to Embrace Progressive Gender Ideals

Students at a British university have been told they will be marked down in essays unless they use gender-neutral pronouns.

Undergraduates in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Hull have been told that if they do not use “gender-sensitive” language, it will have an “impact on their mark”.

While other universities already advise students to use ‘gender-neutral’ language, Hull is the first to penalize students for not doing this.

‘Will impact your mark’

The news emerged as a result of a document obtained by *The Times* via a Freedom of Information request.

The document, from a course on religious activism, says: “Language is important and highly symbolic. In your essay, I thus expect you to be aware of the powerful and symbolic nature of language and use gender-sensitive formulations. Failure to use gender-sensitive language will impact your mark.”

A senior lecturer in religion at the university said: “Should any student use language which is not deemed gender-neutral, they will be offered feedback as to why. Deduction of marks is taken on a case-by-case basis.”

Gender-neutral equivalents

Other universities already advise students not to use masculine pronouns such as ‘he’, ‘his’ and ‘him’ if the person

referred to could be either male or female. They are told to use “he or she,” “she/he” or “they.”

Cardiff Metropolitan University includes a “gender-neutral term” checklist, giving alternatives for 34 words or phrases.

It includes equivalents for common phrases such as “best man for the job,” “mankind” or “waitress.”

‘Pettifogging’

Commenting on the news, Professor Alan Smithers, director of the center for education and employment research at Buckingham University, said: “Malcolm Bradbury satirized it brilliantly in the 1970s in *The History Man* where an examiners’ meeting could not get underway until it had agreed on whether to call the chairman Mr. Chairperson,” he said.

“That was more than 40 years ago, and by now, we should have grown beyond this pettifogging.” {eoa}