

We invite your comments on this page.

Statement on Changes in Preferred Terms

Language is alive. Over time, preferred terms and language for sensitive subjects will change. New terms are sometimes coined because original terms are determined to be offensive or inadequate. The Society Library recognizes the power of terms, names, and labels, and recognizes how meaningful it can be to communities that preferred terms are used. Sometimes, terms are slow to gain adoption, and so too will our collections likely fall behind some groups' preferences.

The Society Library will incorporate into our processes a means of assessing if our terms in reference to: individuals, groups, and social/political circumstances, is up to date. However, there will be some instances in which the terms themselves will be subject to debate. In which case, disparate representations of the term will likely need to be present. It is important to the Society Library that we do not acquiesce group preferences to the detriment of comprehension and inclusivity of others. Currently, there are no concrete rules to disambiguate these conditions, however it is a matter we are thinking about. The Society Library's debate mapping software has the ability to input multiple, disambiguating terms and definitions to accommodate multiple terms and include the etymology of terms when relevant.

The Society Library asks that we be contacted immediately if terms we are using are out of date, disempowering, or offensive. We also ask for patience and understanding, as language is constantly changing.