

## **Inclusive language in SALC**

[Please note this document contains offensive language]

Contents	2
1. The situation	2
2. The problem	2
3. School-to-Department approach	3
4. Guiding principles on inclusive language	3
5. Timeline for developing guidance	4
6. Recommended processes and resources	10
7. Appendix 1 - Examples of content notification and transcripts of oral explanations	15
8. Appendix 2 – Examples of processes (workflows)	

## 1. The situation

Our course content may include offensive language which reflects usage of its time. Individual colleagues have developed strategies for how to deal with racist and discriminatory language in the classroom, and in some cases informal networks have been set up within Departments to share good practice.

## 2. The problem

The University offers the following resources for guidance:

[Inclusive language](#) | [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) | [StaffNet](#) | [The University of Manchester](#)

However, there is little guidance available to staff on the specifics of language within subjects - and these specifics are often complex. Some staff members have expressed uncertainty over the 'right' approach.

*For example, a racial slur for Roma and Romani people appears in the title of a composition by Dvořák. Should this be referred to in course content as 'G\*\*\* Melodies, Op 55' or is the original title 'Gypsy Melodies, Op 55' acceptable, given that it was chosen by the composer?*

Further, staff members have indicated that if English is not their first language, their attempts at explanation may inadvertently cause offence.

Another aspect is that students may not always be fully aware of historical or contextual factors.

*For example, a student has complained about the use of the term 'Coloured' in a conference. In the UK this is an outdated term to refer to people of colour. However, this term is an accepted reference used in South Africa to denote peoples of mixed heritage; the student had not fully grasped the context of the paper.*

### 3. School-to-Department approach

Given the range of subjects within our School, the expertise in the subjects that is required to address each situation and the complexity of the issues, we propose a framework of School-level guiding principles, and Department-level specific guidance. This will entail each Department establishing a panel (or ‘working group’), including the Departmental EDI rep, which will lead on developing specific guidance. HoDs will ensure that panel members are appropriately compensated in the WAM. This panel will report annually to the EDI Committee via the Departmental EDI rep.

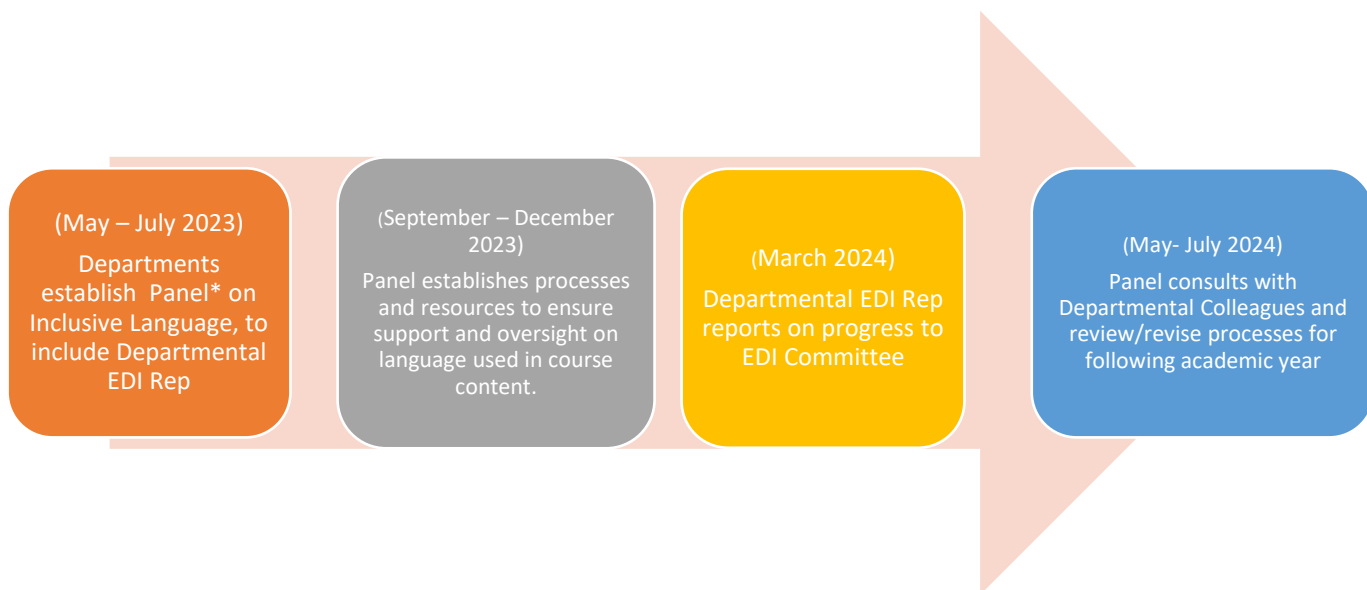
### 4. Guiding principles on inclusive language:

Below are SALC’s guiding principles on inclusive language.

- ❖ We must develop a framework which is iterative, reflecting social changes and awareness of the impact such changes have on language.
- ❖ We should give users the tools to make informed decisions about individual pieces of content. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to specific terminology or content warnings.
- ❖ Our work should be proactive not reactive.
- ❖ We will be transparent in our processes.

### 5. Timeline for developing guidance (2023-2024)

A recommended timeline is set out below:



\* ‘panel’ or ‘Working Group’

We will invite an external ‘critical friend’ to the March 2024 EDI Committee (and 3 annually thereafter) to give feedback on our School-wide project.

## 6. Recommended processes and resources

### Processes

Departments will need to decide the composition of the Panel, which should include the Departmental EDI Rep. Large and complex Departments may wish to consider setting up more than one Panel – but each should include the Departmental EDI Rep or the School’s EDI Lead.

Panels may wish to design a selection of workflows to offer staff support and empower individuals to make informed decisions, but also to ensure due consideration of language.

Some examples of workflows are shown in the **Appendix 2**.

### Resources

Resources could include:

- A bank of language in the subject area categorised from mildly to strongly offensive. See example from OfCom:

[Public attitudes towards offensive language on TV and Radio: Quick Reference Guide](#)  
([ofcom.org.uk](http://ofcom.org.uk))

- Panels may decide that ‘strongly offensive’ language will require mandatory ‘reporting’. This may involve an entry into a spreadsheet/Teams area/ shared doc which the Panel has access to.
- Examples of texts for inclusion in Course Handbooks and VLE sites to give rationales for including offensive language/imagery and advising how such language/imagery will be used in the lectures/seminars/tutorials (**see extracts below and complete examples in Appendix 1**). To note, Dr David Calder below shows how he deals specifically with the ‘n-word’.
- Models (videos) of how to give oral rationales for including offensive language/imagery or explanations of how and why language/imagery will be used in lectures/seminars tutorials (**see transcriptions of oral rationales and explanations in extracts below and complete examples in Appendix 1**).

Also in Appendix 1 is the following from Dr David Calder, from the Course Handbook:

**DRAM 20221: Performing America**

**Classroom Policy on Racist Language**

Some of the plays on the syllabus include racist language, including but not limited to the n-word. This is because these plays contain racist characters and/or characters who experience and discuss racism. Sometimes that racism is explicitly thematised in the play; sometimes it appears more 'casually.'

Because we are analysing and studying these plays rather than performing them, we will **not** be uttering the n-word in our classroom, **even if we are quoting dialogue**. The appropriate way to handle that racist and violent word

is simply to refer to it as 'the n-word.' So, in the event we need to refer to it, that's what we'll do.

I have adapted this policy from the work of Prof. Koritha Mitchell, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Antoinette Nwandu. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have questions or concerns.

Here's a link to the Koritha Mitchell materials that inspired this approach: <https://www.korithamitchell.com/teaching-and-the-n-word/>

(The podcast discussion Mitchell links to is well worth a listen.)

Below is an extract from Dr Francisco Eissa-Barroso's work (more examples are in the Appendix 1):

**Unit 5: Calidad, Ethnicity and Social Mobility in Early Modern Spanish America (Lecture Week 5 and Seminars Week 7)**

This week we will look at social structure and identity in Spanish America, particularly in the eighteenth century, focusing on *calidad*, both as a legal concept and a social category. We will discuss the relationship between *calidad*, class and ethnicity, and consider the difference between the theory and practice of *calidad* classifications and social hierarchy. We will also explore the opportunities and limitations to social mobility created by the concept of *calidad* and its fluid nature in colonial Spanish America.

Content notification: The set readings and primary sources for this unit include references to and discussion of *calidad*/ethnic/racial labels that some might find offensive; lecture materials and set readings also include references to racial stereotypes and discussions of prejudices which might make students uncomfortable; the lecture materials also include visual representations of domestic violence and abuse.

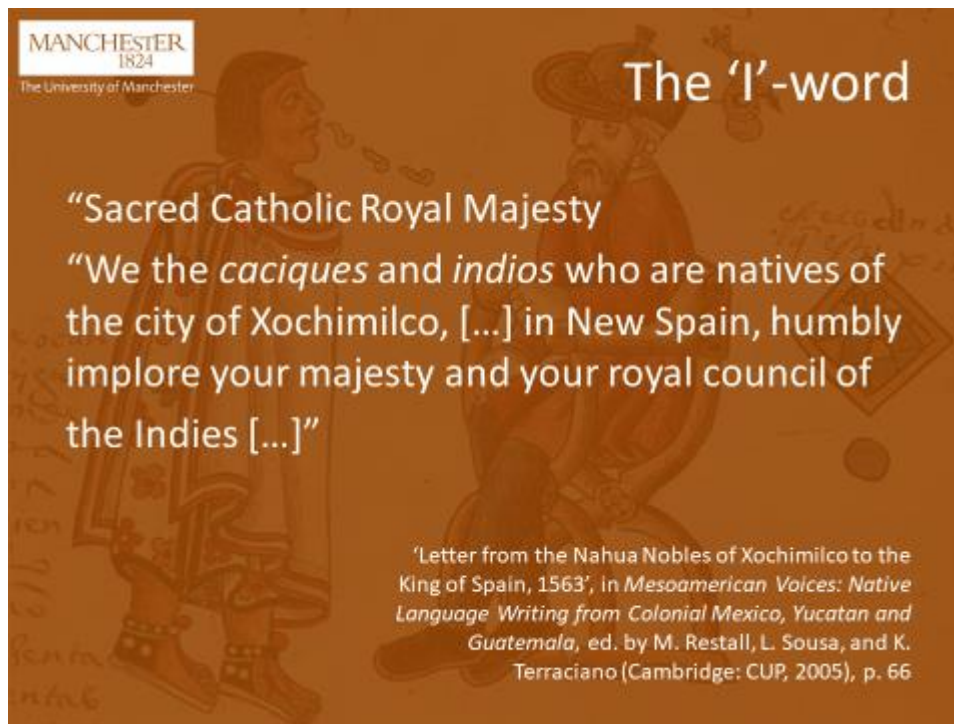
*For the sessions on Indigenous peoples under Spanish rule and slavery and enslaved resistance, units 2 and 3 respectively, I have both content notifications on Blackboard and the handbook and slides in the lecture materials that address some issues with terminology used in class. For example:*

***Unit 2: Indigenous peoples under Spanish Rule (Lecture Week 2 and Seminars Week 3)***

This week we will explore some of the ways in which Indigenous communities in Spanish America dealt with the political and economic system imposed by Spanish rulers in the aftermath of the conquest. We will focus on the structures created by Spanish rule and how communities dealt with the practicalities of economic demands and new economic activities introduced after the conquest. We will also look at how Indigenous communities' political negotiation with Spanish authorities, particularly the king, involved a process of creating new group identities designed to play to Spanish attitudes and expectations.

Content notification: Please note that the materials for this unit include discussions of significant physical abuse and exploitation; references to mass deaths -in some ways akin to genocide- will come up in the lecture and in class discussion. Lecture materials include representations of diseased bodies.

*Early on in the lecture, after introducing the topic and the learning outcomes, I point out that we need to be careful about how we refer to Native peoples of the Americas, particularly those who lived under Spanish rule as they will be the main focus of our discussion. I then show them the following slide with an excerpt from a document produced by the Indigenous rulers of Xochimilco in 1563 and ask students to identify the words the Xochimilca nobility use to define themselves and the commoners in their community. I then ask the students to think why the Xochimilca elite used these words in 1563 and whether they would have used the same words before the conquest.*

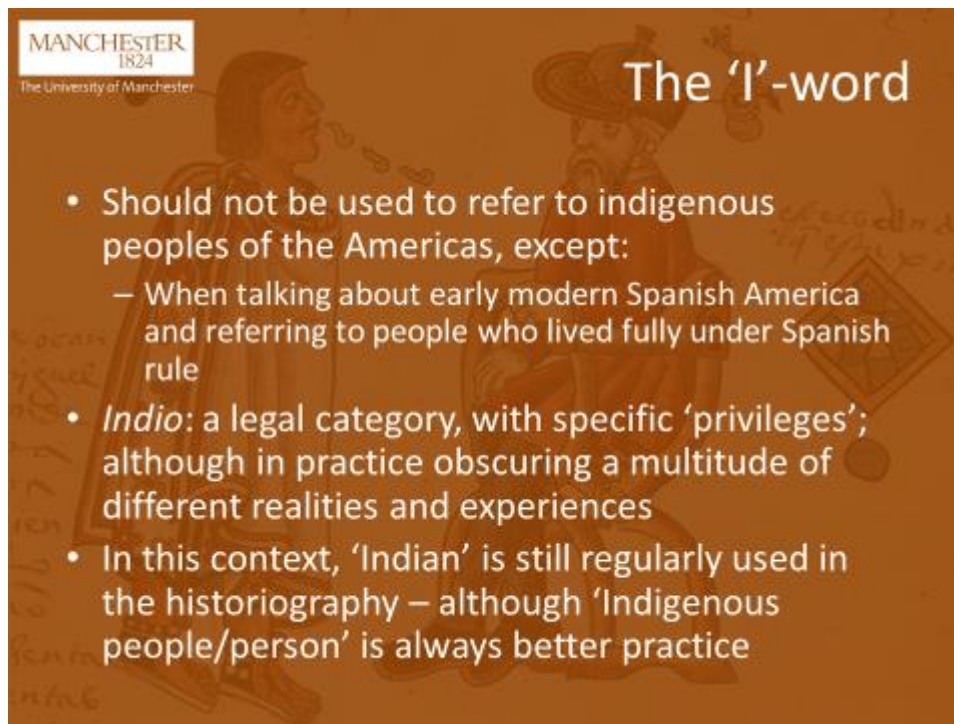


*I explain that cacique is a word of Caribbean origin, probably Taino or Arawak, used to designate a local chieftain. That the word was introduced by the Spaniards into Mesoamerica and became widespread, replacing the Nahuatl word for ruler or leader, tlatoani. I mention too that in the Andes, cacique was not regularly used until the 18<sup>th</sup> century; and that instead that Quechua word kuraka was normally used to refer to the leaders of indigenous communities.*

*I then explain that the word indio derives from Columbus’s mistaken assumption that he had arrived in las Indias or ‘the Indies’, a term used loosely in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to refer to what we would today call East and South East Asia. I point out that Spaniards, particularly the Spanish Crown, retained the term to refer to native peoples under Spanish rule outside of Europe (making no distinction between the people of the Americas and the Philippines, for instance) and that the term is therefore problematic on a number of ways. Not least because it was initially used to justify the enslavement of Native populations in the Caribbean and elsewhere, and then to justify the continued subordination of Indigenous peoples to Spanish authorities; because it was imposed by a colonising power; and because it homogenises groups that were significantly differentiated from one another and internally stratified.*

*I ask then (rhetorically) whether the term, or its English translation, should be used to refer to the indigenous peoples of the Americas and show students the next slide:*





MANCHESTER  
1824  
The University of Manchester

## The 'I'-word

- Should not be used to refer to indigenous peoples of the Americas, except:
  - When talking about early modern Spanish America and referring to people who lived fully under Spanish rule
- *Indio*: a legal category, with specific 'privileges'; although in practice obscuring a multitude of different realities and experiences
- In this context, 'Indian' is still regularly used in the historiography – although 'Indigenous people/person' is always better practice

*I explain that, today, the term is considered offensive by most Indigenous communities in Latin America and that it shouldn't be used when referring to modern or contemporary groups or individuals. I further explain that, however, the term indio had a specific legal meaning in the early modern period which conferred certain protections and advantages to individuals and communities. Indeed, many communities fiercely defended their status as indios while groups that didn't fall under this category often sought to be included in it. Hence, the term continues to be used in the historiography to identify specifically Indigenous peoples who lived fully under Spanish rule (as opposed to communities that remained independent, that lived in the boundaries between territories claimed by European powers, or whose lands had been colonised by other powers). I finally stress that while they will see the English word 'Indian' used quite liberally in the scholarship, even in some fairly recent work, in the Latin American context it's generally best to avoid it and use Indigenous instead.*

*Before moving on, I also like to point out that attitudes towards terminology are often context specific and give them the example of the word 'tribe'. While many Native American communities in the US and Canada describe themselves using the word, whether used in English or Spanish it is generally considered quite offensive by Indigenous peoples in Latin America, where community or people are often preferred.*

*Finally, I point out that while ideally we should refer to each community by the name they would have used themselves, the sources we have available often make this impossible. Because of what we know of naming conventions in Mesoamerica, best practice is generally to refer to people by the name of their main town or city; thus we tend to speak of the people of Tlaxcala or the Tlaxcalans, the community of Huejotzingo or Huejotzingans. The same practice is generally adopted for Indigenous peoples elsewhere in*

## Appendix 1

### Examples of content notifications and transcripts of oral explanations.

(From Dr Jack Webb)

From **HIST10192 Imperial Nation: The Making of Modern Britain, 1783-1902.**

In introducing sources pertaining to scientific racism, the handbook states:

**"nb: everything in this text is abhorrently racist.** We are analysing it to understand the history of racial theory (i.e. the history of racism), and its significance to imperialism and British history. We need to study this because the ideology of race came to dominate the worldviews of people throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. But in no way should this text be read as holding any truths in or of itself. For anyone wanting to know about the complete rejection of race as a scientific theory by modern science, see this explicit statement by the Human Genome Project: <https://www.genome.gov/genetics-glossary/Race>."

*I reinforce this point in the first lecture of the course, and in the lecture on racial theory by stating:*

"We never repeat racist language in the classroom or in the lecture hall as there is never any justified reason to do so. We study these words in order to understand racist logic in an effort to deconstruct and challenge it. Racism needs to be understood for it to be challenged. If you want to write about it in your essays, be absolutely crystal clear that you are quoting historical actors when using such language and feel free to write terms by blanking out letters so as to not reproduce the word entirely."

*In seminars I will often take the opportunity to ask students to reflect on the study of racism and certain terminology. Should we study histories of racism or is it too dangerous to risk reproducing that racism? How should we approach the use of certain words? This ensures students engage with this problem so that they get a more developed understanding of the problems of racist language in primary sources and scholarship.*

(From Dr Francisco Eissa-Barroso)

**From SPLA20362 History of Latin America.**

At the top of the course's Blackboard page and in the course handbook as part of the "Course Description":

**Content Notification:**

Because of the nature of the topics covered in this course (including conquest, slavery, ethnic discrimination and segregation, rebellions and war, amongst others), we will be engaging with potentially distressing issues. I will flag up content of this kind in the folders below and during teaching so students can either opt out of a specific session or prepare themselves. You can, if you would like to, absent yourself from a specific topic, lecture or teaching session because of potential distress over its content. Please let me know if you intend to do so, but know there is no need for you to tell me why you are opting out.

**During the first, introductory session of the course:**

MANCHESTER  
1824  
The University of Manchester

## Content notification

Students may find some of the topics covered in the course difficult or even distressful.

- In dealing with topics such as conquest, slavery, ethnic labelling, rebellions and war, the course materials inevitably make reference to instances of extreme violence (including racist and sexual violence, massacres, sexual assault and infant death).
- Race and ethnicity are central to the course and some of the primary sources we will work with may include racist slurs and expressions that might make you feel uncomfortable.

If you are concerned about engaging with any of this content please email me.

**Content notifications specific to each unit of the course, both on Blackboard and in the handbook.**

**Some examples:**

***Unit 1: The 'Spanish' Conquest of the Mexica and the Inca (Lecture Week 1 and Seminars Week 2)***

This unit explores the collapse of the Mexica (often, inaccurately referred to as Aztec) and Inca empires. We will start by considering the different ways in which historians have accounted for the seemingly inexplicable triumph of small Spanish forces over enormous Indigenous empires. We will focus on the role played by imported diseases, more advanced technology, and pre-existent political tensions in the collapse of pre-Hispanic empires.

Content notification: Please note that the materials for this unit include references to human sacrifice, civil wars, massacres and executions; instances of sexual violence and torture may come up in the readings and in class discussion. Lecture materials include representations of dismembered and deceased bodies.

***Unit 3: Slavery and Enslaved People's Resistance in Colonial Spanish America (Lecture week 3, seminars week 4)***

This week we will explore the development of the institution of slavery in Colonial Spanish America. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which enslaved men and women managed to resist and challenge their enslavers, including the establishment of run-away communities and the use of the Spanish legal system to their advantage. We will focus on the status of enslaved people in the Spanish world and how resistance often involved a combination of violent and non-violent strategies.

Content notification: Please note that the materials for this unit include discussions of racist prejudice, racial segregation, physical abuse and exploitation; references to mutilation, serious bodily harm, infanticide and other acts that may cause distress are likely to come up in the lecture and in class discussion. Assigned readings also include references to these topics. Primary sources and older historiography may make use of racial slurs.

*Then early on in the lecture, after introducing the topic and the learning outcomes, I again bring students' attention to issues of terminology using the following slide:*

MANCHESTER  
1824  
The University of Manchester

## Terminology

- African, Afro-descendant, Black

Primary sources and older historiography often use other terms which are either outright racist slurs or now considered outdated

- *The Journal of African American History* – new name since 2002
- *Cimarron / Maroon* : an enslaved person who ran away
- *Palenque* : a community of runaways

*I start by pointing out that the majority of enslaved people in Latin America, certainly from the 1550s onwards, were either African or of African descent.*

*I then point out that students will come across a range of terms in both primary sources and historiography but that they should be aware that these can reflect outdated practice and that some of them are considered offensive today.*

*I stress that the terminology that is considered appropriate changes over time, giving them as an example the *Journal of African American History*, one of the most highly renowned scholarly journals in the field that has been around since 1916. I point out that in the 1980s and 1990s articles published by the journal, often by Black scholars, played a key role in developing our understanding of slavery in both the US and other parts of the Americas and in highlighting the multiple ways in which people of African descent shaped the US and Latin American societies. Yet, until 2001 the journal had a different title; instead of African American, it used an English word, derived from the Spanish word for Black, negro (I use the Spanish pronunciation), which through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was considered to be a neutral, descriptive concept but that today is generally thought to be at least outdated if not outright offensive.*

*As a further example I point out how over the last four or five years the historiography on slavery and the enslaved has generally moved away from using the word 'slave', preferring instead the adjective 'enslaved' to describe men and women who were deprived of their freedom and autonomy by others.*

*I point out that understanding how use of language changes over time is an important part of what we do and that for that reason I have not removed from primary sources words that are today considered racial slurs, but that that does not mean we should use them in class discussions.*

*Finally, I point out that, as use of terminology is constantly evolving, they should feel free to challenge the use of any term they don't feel comfortable with and that they can do so live in class or, if they prefer, via email or during office hours.*

*(Dr Francisco Eissa-Barroso, May 2023)*

(From Dr David Calder)

### **Content notification**

DRAM20221: Performing America:  
**Classroom Policy on Racist Language**

Some of the plays on the syllabus include racist language, including but not limited to the n-word. This is because these plays contain racist characters and/or characters who experience and discuss racism. Sometimes that racism is explicitly thematised in the play; sometimes it appears more 'casually.'

Because we are analysing and studying these plays rather than performing them, we will **not** be uttering the n-word in our classroom, **even if we are quoting dialogue.**

The appropriate way to handle that racist and violent word is simply to refer to it as 'the n-word.' So, in the event we need to refer to it, that's what we'll do.

I have adapted this policy from the work of Prof. Koritha Mitchell, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Antoinette Nwandu. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have questions or concerns.

Here's a link to the Koritha Mitchell materials that inspired this

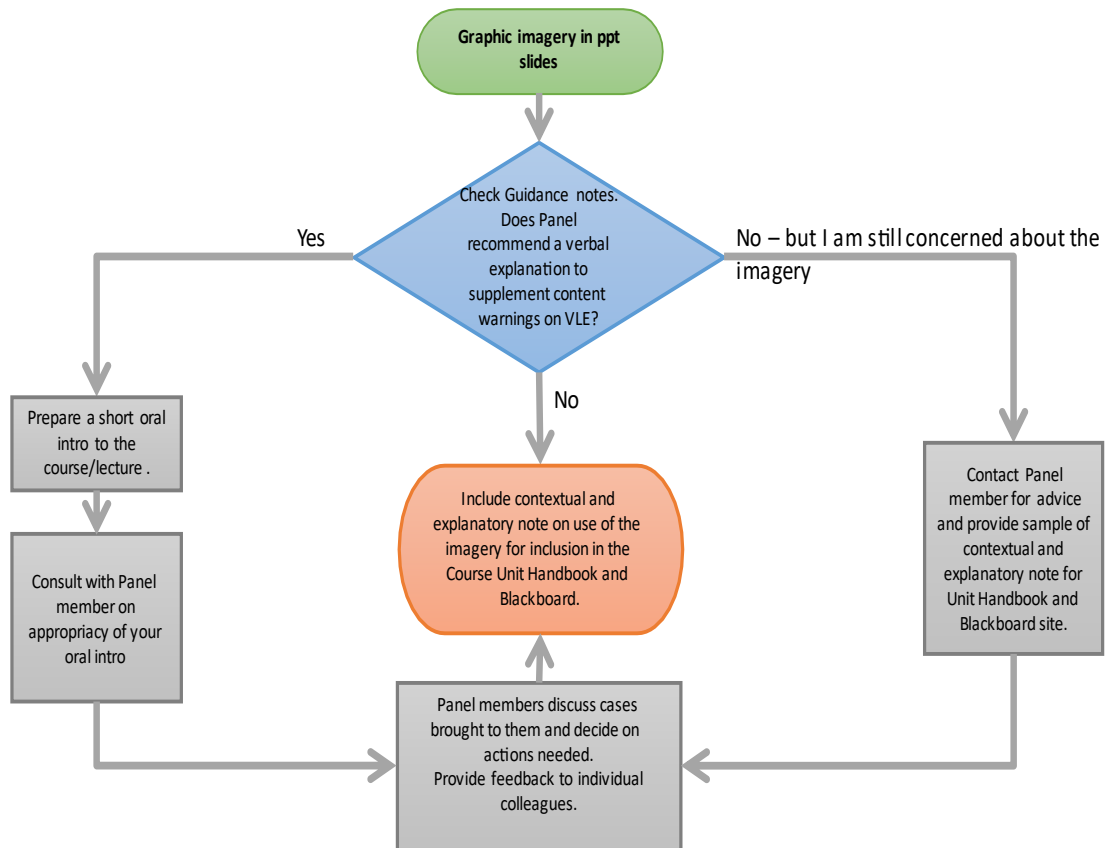
approach: <https://www.korithamitchell.com/teaching-and-the-n-word/>

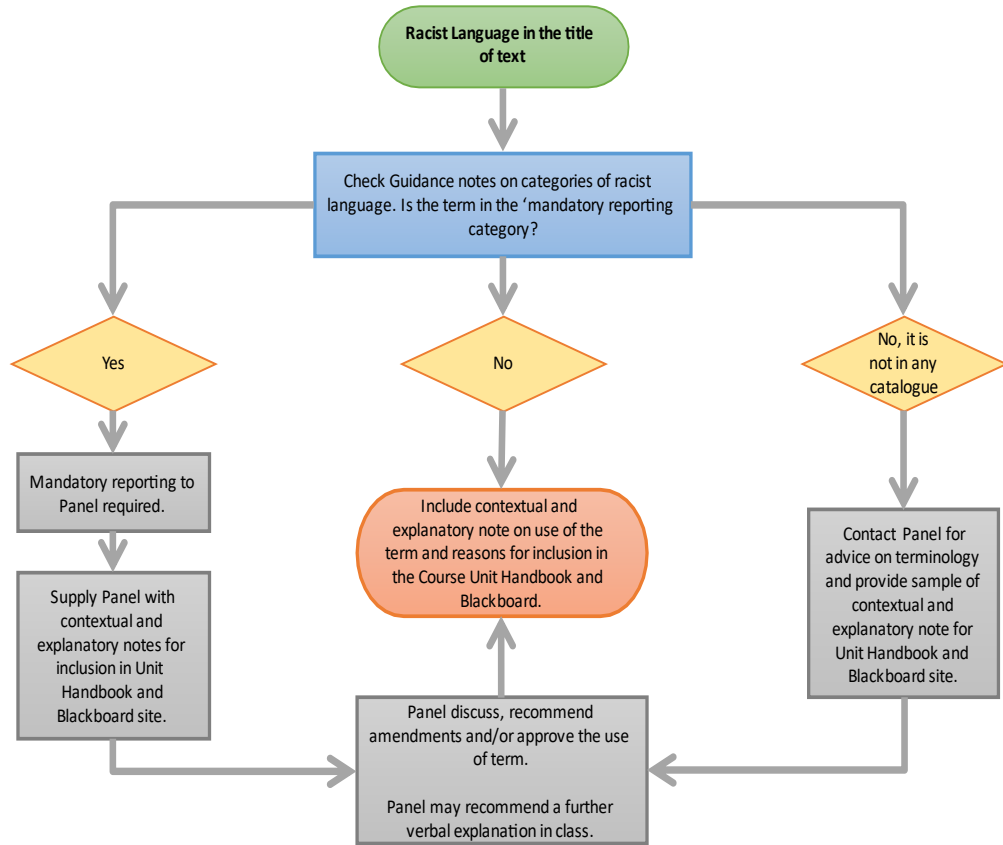
(The podcast discussion Mitchell links to is well worth a listen.)

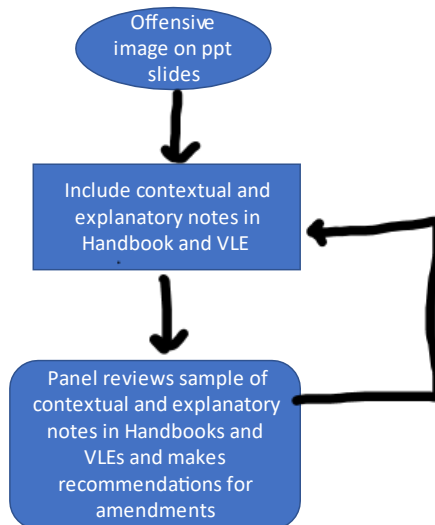
*(Dr David Calder, May 2023)*

## Appendix 2: Examples of Processes









## Useful resources

Hughey, M. W., & Daniels, J. (2013). Racist comments at online news sites: a methodological dilemma for discourse analysis. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(3), 332–347.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443712472089>

[Public attitudes towards offensive language on TV and Radio: Quick Reference Guide \(ofcom.org.uk\)](https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/consult/condocs/ol/ol_16/ol_16.pdf)

[racist-language-guidance\\_updated\\_september\\_2021.pdf \(bbc.com\)](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-58111111)