

# Animated Inclusive Personae – alt-text and tags

## Introduction

The Animated Inclusive Personae (AIP) project is fundamentally about representation of minoritized groups within Imperial and providing a platform for visibility, discussion, and development. The project to develop and deliver artwork is inherently visual however, for a number of reasons, primarily accessibility, these visual assets also need to be described using written language.

Language to talk about protected characteristics will never be simple and there will never be a definitive lexicon. However, that is not to say language can't be defined at a project level by those involved. It is hoped that having an agreed list of terms will give users of the AIP assets the confidence to appropriately tag work and users the information they need about the characters. This is with the caveat that it can be changed and adapted if necessary.

## What is alt-text?

Adding alt-text is about accessibility and enabling those who cannot see an image to understand what it is showing. This could be because of visual impairment, poor connectivity, or because the person accessing the information has another reason for listening to, rather than reading, the content.

Alt-text needs to be accurate and informative and within the AIP project this is simpler than in most areas because the characters are contrived and given stories by those developing them therefore, we can accurately state where they are from without making assumptions. This is often not the case in other scenarios where choosing alt-text needs to be much more nuanced. However, for this project each character will be given an alt-text tag which will become part of their digital package.

## Defining the alt-text for AIP characters

This alt-text, to describe the images, will take the following format.

- Name – their chosen name not their given name (Cat rather than Kathryn)
- Nationality/skin colour + Gender – Skin colour will only be noted when it is not implied by the nationality. For example, Chinese Male or Black British Female. As with LGBTQ+ below gender will be determined as male/female/non-binary

- Glasses
- Religious clothing
- Protective equipment (lab coat, googles etc)

## Tagging

The alt-text will be attached to the image to convey verbally information which is present in the image. For the purposes of searching and understanding the characters and who/what they represent there is also a need for them to have tags that quickly and simply share what can be found within their stories. This will show what is represented across the catalogue of characters but also allow users to access stories which have more information on certain areas.

The standard biography information which will include:

- Details - age and where they are from
- Imperial Course
- Optional modules – including AA, Imperial Award etc. (where relevant)
- Previous Education (where relevant)
- Clubs and Societies (where relevant)
- Job (where relevant – this only relates to jobs which these characters undertake during term time)
- Volunteer role (where relevant)

They will also have ‘tags’ shown in the bio and cover two areas.

Educational information:

- Home/Overseas
- Level – UG, PGT, PGR
- Faculty – FoNS, FoE, MED, BS
- Department – Life Sci, Maths, Mech Eng etc.

And other personal information which will include the following where relevant:

- Religion
- Disabilities and health conditions (listed by official term e.g Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD)
- LGBTQ+ (used to denote anyone from the broad community as the language is varied and dynamic)
- Commuter

- First in Family
- Mature
- Carer

## Rationale

Throughout the project and within the character biographies some elements, specifically relating to gender and sexuality are explicitly stated and in some areas they are not. For example, some characters are listed as being a member of IQ (the student LGBTQ+ society) but specifics are not defined, similarly a number of the characters have 'partners' without specified gender. This is deliberate to allow those interacting with these personae to make their own decisions and allow more flexibility in what they may identify with. This is also a tacit acknowledgement of the fact that many people choose not to disclose who they are dating, or their sexuality, and should not feel compelled to do so. For the same reason only a selection of these personae has their pronouns listed. While we wish to highlight diversity, it is also important to maintain choice and privacy. These things have an impact on education from the perspective of belonging, acceptance, and representation but should not need accommodations of any kind. Similarly, descriptions of skin colour and religion are included for their inherent importance for representation.

In terms of other characteristics such as disability and family situations, while choice and privacy are still significant, it is important that these are openly discussed and normalised so issues specific to education can be addressed. In addition to belonging, acceptance, and representation, these areas also need broader understandings of their impacts from an educational perspective.

One of the purposes of these characters is to share stories, motivations and frustrations that our students may relate to, but without putting any one person in the position of needing to share their personal stories and difficulties.