



RACISM

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

REPORT

Edition 4

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UMSU People of Colour Officers 2025

**STUDENT
POWERED**

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1. Acknowledgement of Country

This report was written on the stolen lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present, and emerging. Sovereignty was never ceded. We extend our solidarity to all First Nations students who participated in this survey and whose experiences inform this report. Our anti-racism work must centre First Nations voices, because there is no racial justice without First Nations justice.

2. Definitions

People of Colour (POC): Individuals from non-white backgrounds, including Black, Indigenous, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin, and mixed heritage students

BIPOC: Bla(c)k, Indigenous, and People of Colour

Racism: A system of advantage based on race. It includes individual, cultural, and institutional practices, beliefs and attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, that uphold white supremacy

Overt Racism: Explicit discriminatory or hostile actions based on race

Casual Racism: Everyday behaviours, language, and assumptions that demean, other, or exclude people based on their race, often without malicious intent

UMSU: University of Melbourne Student Union Inc.

UniMelb: The University of Melbourne

CONTENT WARNING

This report includes firsthand accounts of racism, anti-Blackness, Islamophobia, xenophobia, bullying, and trauma. Please proceed with care. We have chosen not to investigate individual incidents to avoid re-traumatising students, and because we trust the authenticity of student testimonies.

All identifying details have been redacted. Where student responses were submitted via survey, spelling and grammar have only been corrected when necessary for clarity.

If this report raises issues for you, the following support services are available:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

Headspace: 1800 650 890

13 Yarn: 13 92 76

(for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

If you need an interpreter to help you when calling any of the above services, please call the **Translating and Interpreting Service** on 131 450

University Reporting Channels

If you or someone you know have experienced racism at the University, reporting channels are available here:

Student Complaints and Grievances:
tinyurl.com/UniMelbGrievances

Safer Community Program: 03 9035 8675
safer-community@unimelb.edu.au

UMSU Resources

UMSU Legal Service

(via intake form)

umsu.unimelb.edu.au/support/legal

UMSU Advocacy Service

(via intake form)

umsu.unimelb.edu.au/support/advocacy/contact-advocacy/

External Resources

Victorian Human Rights Commission (VHRC) — Enquiries: 1300 292 153

humanrights.vic.gov.au

Report racism to the VHRC

tinyurl.com/VicHRCReport

3. Officers' Statement

The 2025 Racism at the University of Melbourne Report reflects the enduring and painful reality that many students of colour continue to face at university. Racism, in both overt and casual forms, remains embedded within our University's culture, systems, and structures, despite years of student-led advocacy, incremental changes, and institutional promises. The lived experiences detailed in this report highlight how little progress has been made on addressing racism at the University of Melbourne since reporting began.

Our 2025 survey, which received 353 responses, provides a confronting picture of alienation, exclusion, and discrimination in the University of Melbourne environment. From being spoken over in tutorials, mocked for religious practices, and ignored in group assignments, to enduring xenophobic jokes and unequal academic treatment, these stories are not isolated, they are systemic. Moreover, the results of our 2025 survey are similar to those published in our 2023 report, despite the University of Melbourne's Anti-Racism Commitment in January 2021¹ and the launch of the University's Anti-Racism Action Plan 2024–2027². Students still report a Eurocentric curriculum, limited cultural competency among teaching staff, and a lack of safe, accessible pathways to report racism. When incidents of racism are reported through the University's formal processes, these matters are often minimised or ignored. Many international students continue to feel like outsiders, financially exploited but institutionally unsupported. First Nations and Black students report being tokenised, ignored, and excluded, even in spaces meant to elevate justice.

In May 2025, the University of Melbourne published its first Annual Report on Racism³. In it, the University reported only receiving 62 complaints, with 33 of them being against staff. Our own reports receive far more responses (855 in 2023, and 353 in 2025), suggesting that racism is underreported to the University, and that students of colour distrust University reporting procedures. Furthermore, as stated in a 2025 letter from UMSU President Joshua Stagg to the Provost⁴, the University report appears to misconstrue feelings of discomfort with being unsafe, leading to student activism being treated as racism, and thereby perpetuating racism by preventing Muslim students from speaking out about issues that affect them. President Joshua Stagg notes that the discomfort inherent in exercising democratic freedom does not equate to students and staff being unsafe, as racism does, and that the University should take care not to prioritise comfort over safety.

¹ about.unimelb.edu.au/diversity-inclusion/anti-racism-commitment

² about.unimelb.edu.au/diversity-inclusion/anti-racism.

³ <https://tinyurl.com/UnimelbRacismReport2024>

⁴ https://umsu.unimelb.edu.au/pageassets/communities/poc/racism-report/Racism-at-unimelb-report_final-1.pdf

"Students still report a Eurocentric curriculum, limited cultural competency among teaching staff, and a lack of safe, accessible pathways to report racism."

The 2025 UMSU Racism at the University of Melbourne Report is more than a collection of testimonials, it is a call to action. As the People of Colour Department, we reaffirm our commitment to amplifying marginalised voices, challenging institutional complacency, and pushing for transformative change. We cannot continue to rely on the unpaid emotional and educational labour of students of colour to drive anti-racism efforts. It is time for the University of Melbourne to step up with transparency, urgency, and accountability to deliver change in partnership with students of colour.

To the students who shared your truths, thank you. Your voices guide this movement. Your courage gives this report its power. We see you. We believe you. And we will continue to fight alongside you.

In Solidarity,

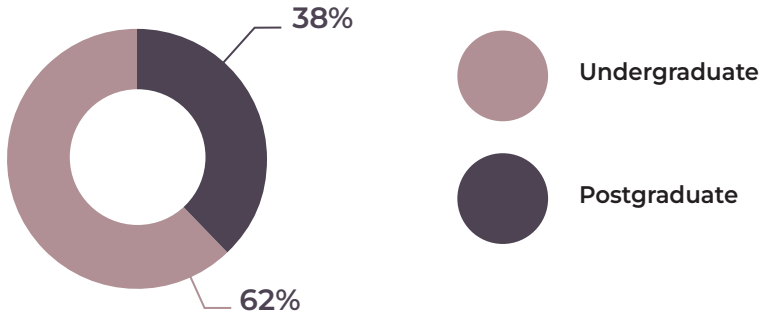
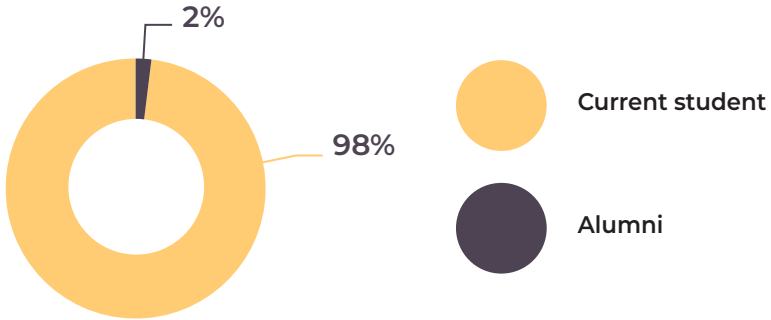
Divyanshi Sati & Wen Hao (Clement) Wu

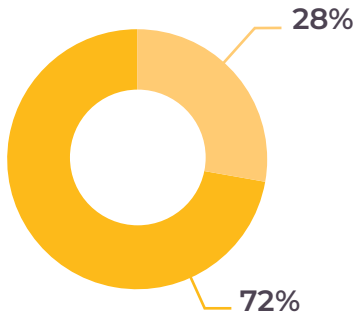
UMSU People of Colour Officers

2025

4. Demographics

The 2025 Racism at the University of Melbourne survey ran from 31 March to 28 April 2025 and received 353 responses. Our respondents were overwhelmingly current students, with a large proportion of international students, people of colour, and postgraduate students.

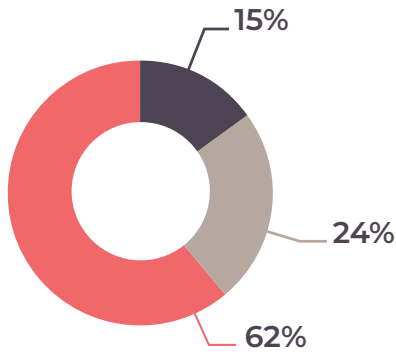




Domestic



International



Person of colour



Not a person of colour

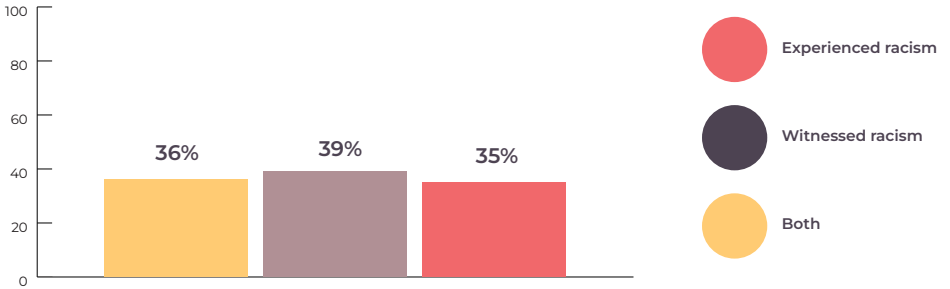


Unsure/prefer not to say

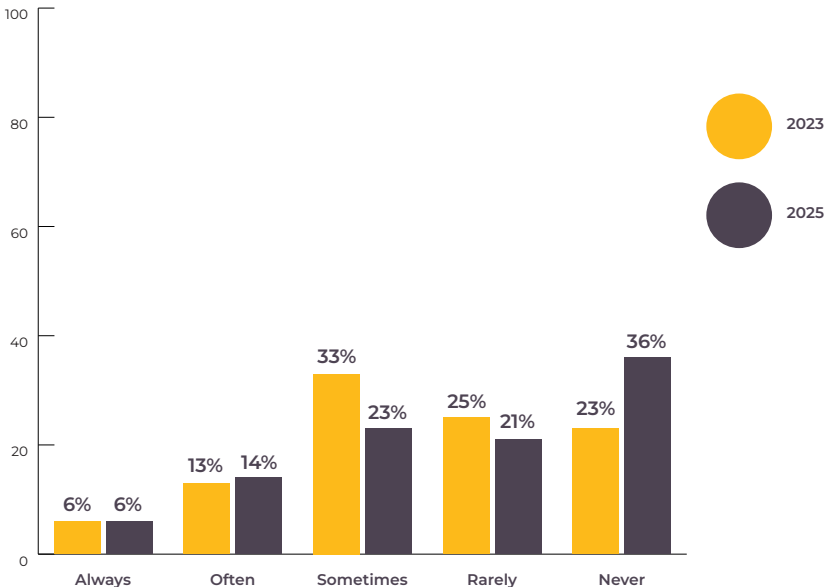
4.1 General Experiences

“I feel like there’s a gap between how I am treated by professors who are white and how they treat my white counterparts.”

I have:



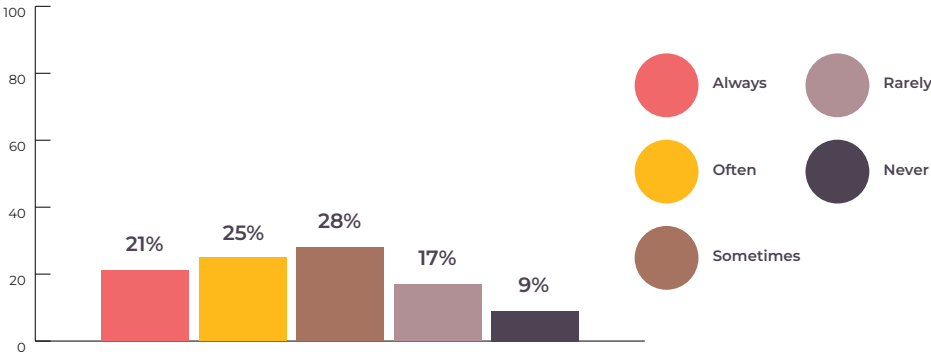
I have felt that I am/have been treated differently to my white counterparts at university due to my racial/ethnic background



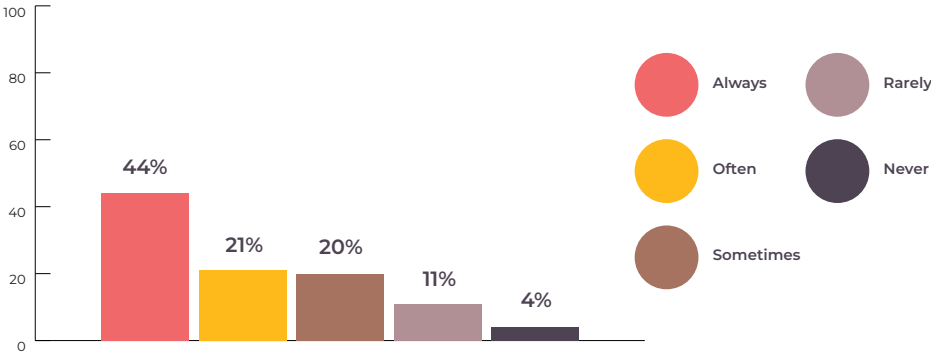
While over a third of our respondents have witnessed or experienced racism in their university life, efforts so far by the UMSU and the University have had a positive, if minor, effect. We can see this in the small shift towards a greater proportion of students having rarely or never experienced differential racialised treatment since we last conducted the survey in 2023.

4.2 General Experiences in the Classroom

I feel that subject content caters to people of different backgrounds/cultures



In my tutorials/labs/workshops/lectures I feel comfortable to freely contribute



“In class, when I try to ask a question, I sometimes notice unpleasant facial expressions from others. However, when a white peer asks—even if it’s a very basic question—the response is often much more encouraging and welcoming.”

General experiences in the classroom included the systemic centring of white voices and experiences in course content. The subject content figures are relatively unchanged from 2023, indicating that unfortunately, subject content reflecting a diversity of cultures has not increased. When subject content assumes that white experiences and cultural touchpoints are universal, it can discourage students of colour from participating.

While our data show that many respondents feel comfortable contributing in class, 35% still feel like they can’t do so often. Experiences of negative reactions from white peers and teaching staff when speaking up in class were common in our responses. Given that many subjects allocate a percentage of marks to class participation, students who feel uncomfortable contributing due to racism can experience unfair academic penalties on top of the racism they have already experienced. Therefore, by considering the white experience as a default, this educational model imposes systemic academic barriers on students of colour.

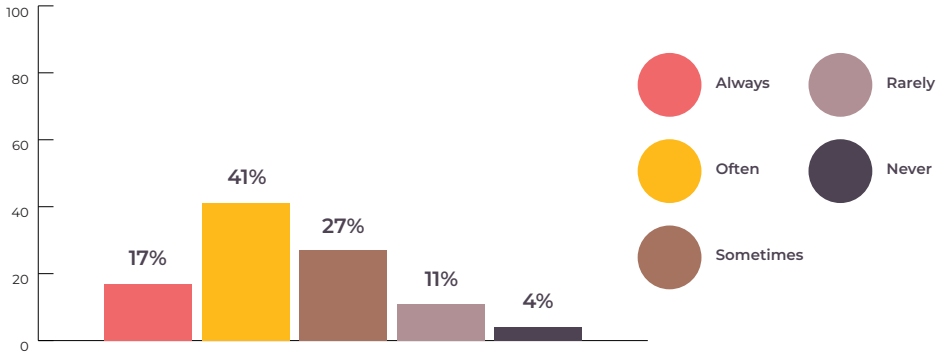
4.3 Treatment of International Students

- ▶ *“I feel like the international student is being treated like a cash cow bringing in money without receiving the same treatment that domestic students have.”*
-

While many respondents indicated they think the University treats international students reasonably fairly, the overarching sentiment in the qualitative responses was that international students are financially exploited and treated poorly compared to domestic students.

Respondents suggested ways of addressing the unfair treatment of international students and promoting their ability to participate academically, especially with reference to financial support, more comprehensive orientation, and addressing racist behaviour.

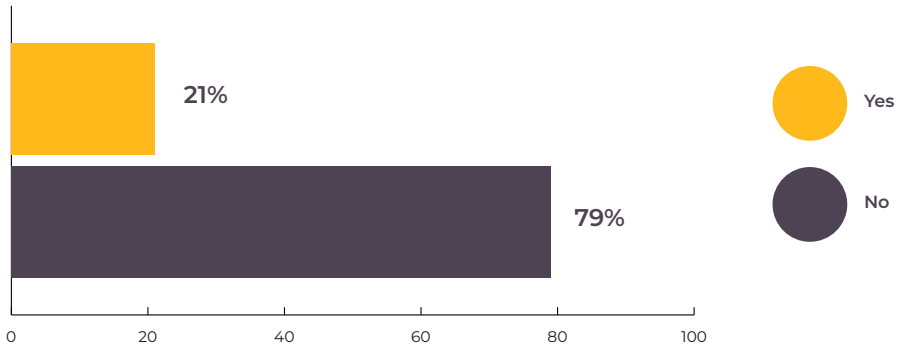
I think that the University treats international students fairly



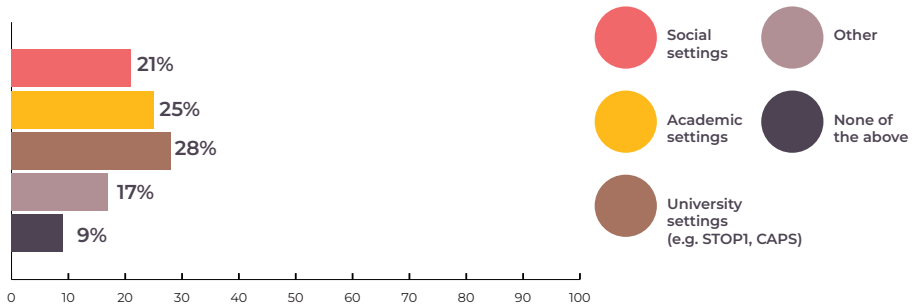
“They should have emails/websites prepared for international students with detailed information on accommodations, travels, food, city, etc so that a sense of familiarity could be developed before coming, moreover the university should have designated people responsible for being able to handle international student’s problems.”

5. Overt Racism

Have you experienced overt racism at the University?



Where do you mostly experience overt racism?



5.1 General Experiences of Overt Racism

- ▶ *“When I accompanied one of my friends wearing a hijab, there were guys playing around campus at night, mocking our greetings and throwing peanuts at her.”*
-

Our data show that over 20% of our respondents experienced overt racism, and that it permeates every area of campus life. The 9% of students who selected “Other” reported experiencing overt racism in public places including public transport, outdoor spaces on campus, and at the gym. This shows that perpetrators are emboldened to display racist behaviour in very public areas without consequence, including behaviour that could constitute physical assault. Other types of overt racism shared by our respondents included racist graffiti going unaddressed for months, derogatory comments, and harassment. That such blatant racism is allowed to flourish on the University of Melbourne campuses demonstrates that previous efforts to combat it have been grossly insufficient.

5.2 Systemic Racism

- ▶ *“The university’s repression of pro-Palestinian voices under the pretense of protecting harmony and eliminating antisemitism on campus by banning protests seems very much like overt racism to me.”*
-

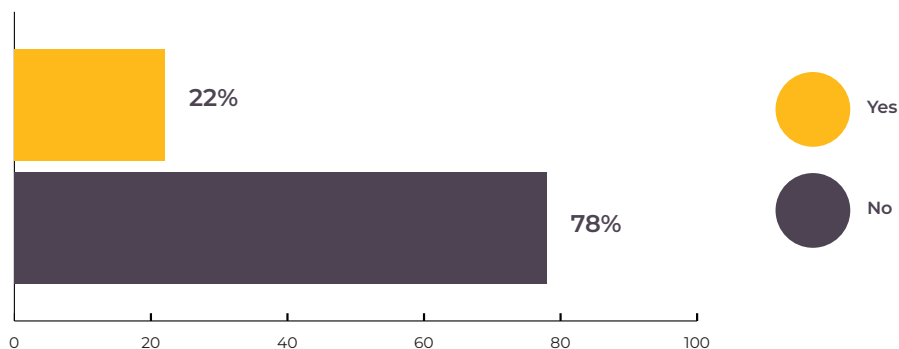
As stated in the letter from 2025 UMSU President Joshua Stagg to the University of Melbourne Provost, structural and policy decisions at the university level can constitute overt systemic racism when a particular group is repeatedly affected. In this instance, enacting protest bans regarding the ongoing genocide in Palestine has a clear and discriminatory impact on Muslim and Palestinian students.

5.3 Racist Comments and Jokes

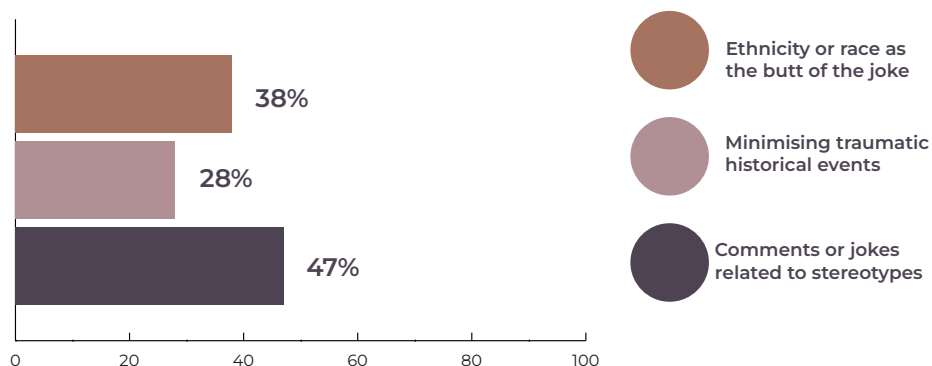
- ▶ *“Someone once said ‘I gassed the toilet just like they gassed the Jews’ and then that same someone also said the n word, slurs against gay people, and then masking it as a joke.”*
-

Some 34% of our respondents chose to share their experiences with insensitive comments and jokes. Their examples show that racism and discrimination against non-Christian religions does not exist in a vacuum: it often coincides with other discriminatory beliefs such as homophobia. Furthermore, they illustrate how perpetrators often try and frame extreme racist views as humorous to deflect responsibility.

Have you experienced lecturers, tutors, or other students making insensitive comments or jokes at the expense of yourself or non-white students



Types of insensitive comments and jokes⁵:



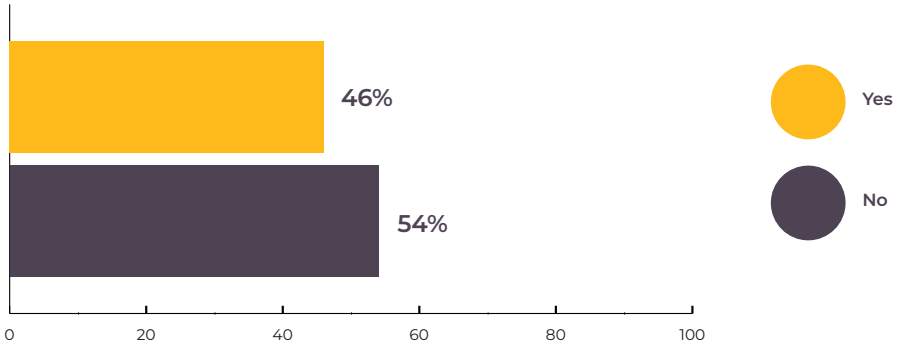
“... people at my university reinforce stereotypes about my country by calling me druggie, dealer, Chapo, Pablo Escobar etc etc.”

⁵ Note that multiple answers could be selected, so the percentages do not sum to 100.

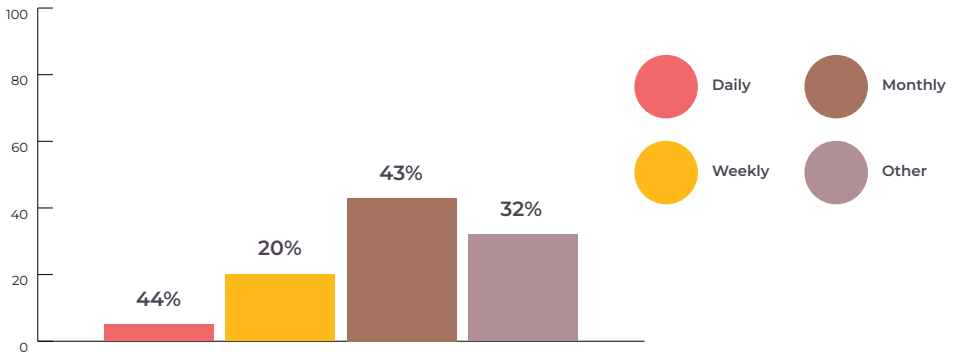
6. Casual Racism

"I asked my tutor some questions about the assignments, and she asked if I didn't understand the content in English."

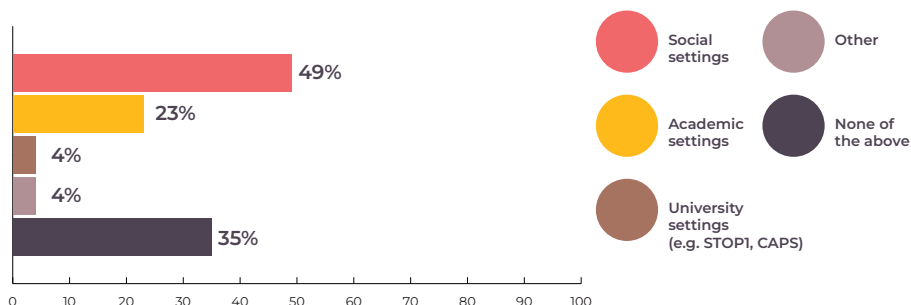
Have you experienced or witnessed any form of casual racism microaggressions at the University?



How often do you think you experience casual racism?



Where do you mostly experience casual racism/microaggressions?



6.1 Prevalence of Casual Racism

It can be difficult to distinguish between casual and overt racism, resulting in a broad grey area between the two. Generally, casual racism is considered less motivated by malicious intent than overt racism, with perpetrators often believing their actions are benign, or even positive.

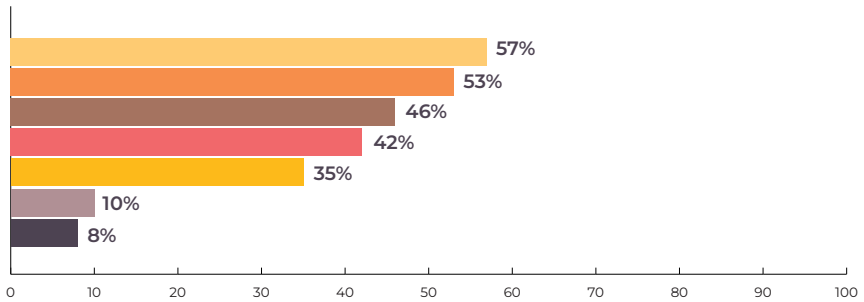
However, a lack of malicious intent can mean that casual racism is all the more common. More than double the number of respondents experienced or witnessed casual racism than overt racism in our survey, and they experienced it frequently. Based on the figures from our sample, a single student may encounter up to 100 discrete instances of casual racism over the course of a three year degree. This high level suggests that for every perpetrator of overt racism, there are likely many more who don't understand the racist impact of behaviours they see as benign.

6.2 Types of Casual Racism

- ▶ *“I've had to eventually resort to introducing myself with my English name, as I grow increasingly tired of lecturers and tutors not bothering to pronounce my name correctly even after private/public corrections.”*

Students reported a wide range of casually racist behaviour, detailed above, and the overlap between these behaviours and those detailed in the Overt Racism section show just how difficult it can be to distinguish between the two. The number of respondents who reported microaggressions from academic staff is particularly concerning, and may be one reason why students feel more comfortable reporting racism to UMSU than to University staff.


Types of microaggressions and casual racism experienced




 Assumptions about ethnicity/nationality based on looks or manner


 Assuming academic ability due to race

 Other

 Comments about how "good" one's English is

 Continually mispronouncing names even after correction

 Jokes and comments based on stereotypes

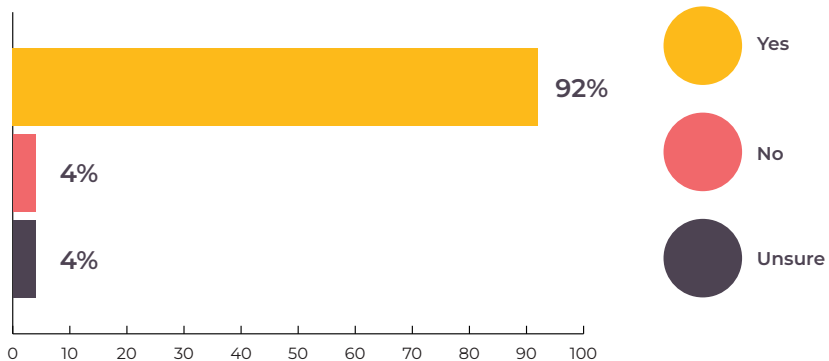
 Inappropriate comments about one's body and features, or unwanted touching

7. Institutional Responsibility

7.1 Mandate

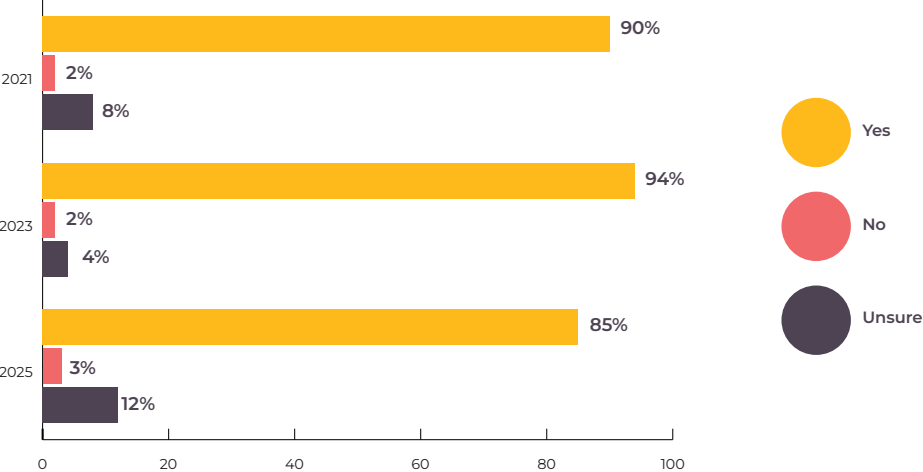
- ▶ *“Hold students and staff accountable in a way that holds no fear or favour.”*

I think that the University should implement a clear and public anti-racism policy.



A strong majority of respondents believe the University has a responsibility to address racism in the classroom through policy, training and creating clear reporting channels. They also believe that staff should be mandated and empowered to address racism in the classroom, although that number has decreased since we began reporting. It may be that students are increasingly aware that institutional responsibility is fundamental before staff are able to act.

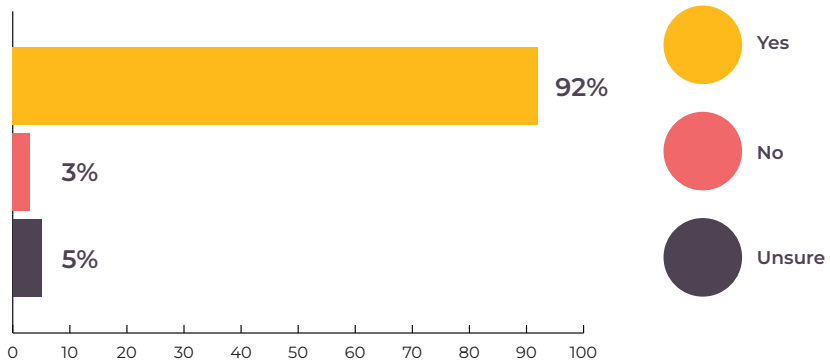
I think that academic staff have a responsibility to intervene when instances of discrimination occur within their classes



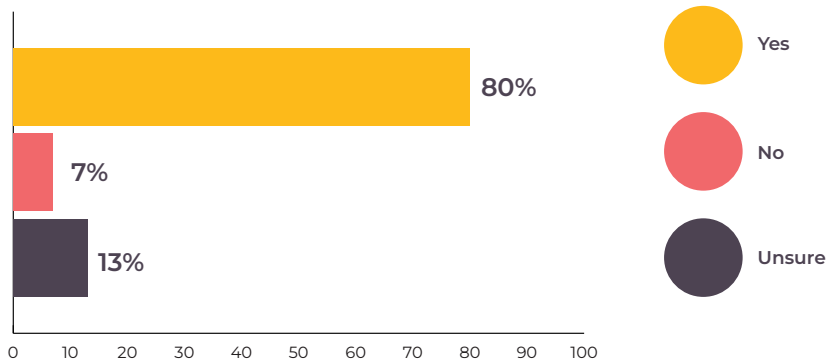
7.2 Recommendations for Institutional Responsibility

- ▶ *“Make space for learning, not just punishment.”*
 - ▶ *“Racism isn’t just overt or colour based. Racism starts with the Eurocentric bias in our system.”*
 - ▶ *“More posters and both verbal and written language communicating exactly what racism is. Because at Uni, it is often more vague and uncaught; more covert.”*
-

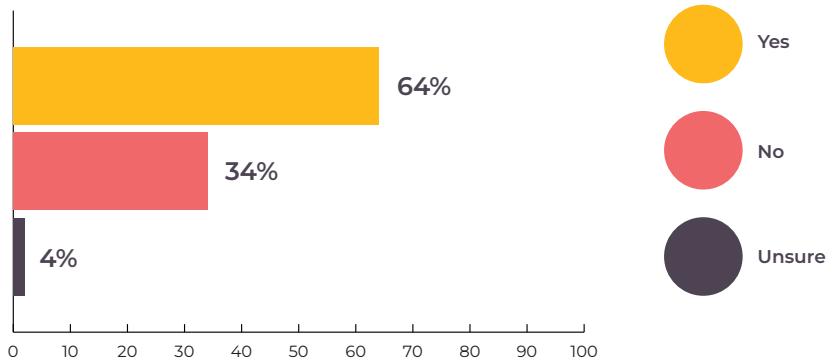
I think the University should provide staff with anti-racism training, including how to intervene and support students who experience racism



I think the University should provide students with an online module to spread awareness on racism, how to prevent it and intervene when it happens to other students



How important do you think it is that students and elected student representatives are included in the process of designing and implementing any of the above initiatives by the University?

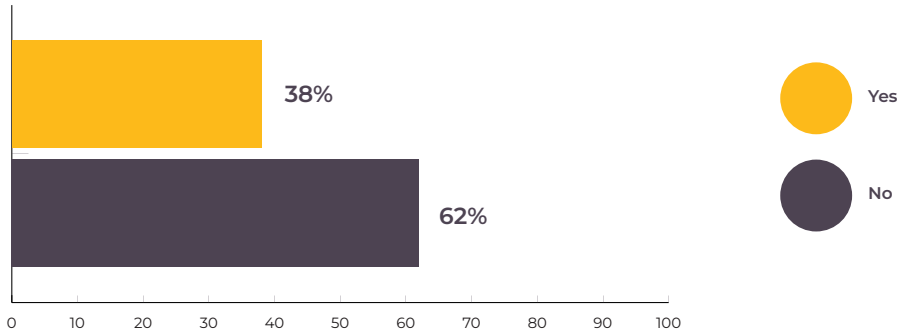


It is apparent from our qualitative responses that our respondents believe training and restorative justice are vital to addressing racism on campus. Furthermore, their voices should be centred when developing initiatives and policy. They are highly aware of the impacts of systemic racism, and believe that change should occur from the top down as well as the ground up. In order to fully centre student voices and build institutional trust, the University must collaborate with UMSU, especially the UMSU People of Colour Office Bearers.

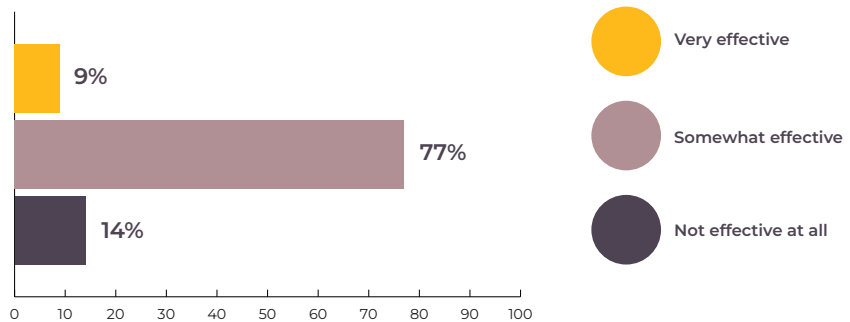
8. The University of Melbourne's Anti-Racism Action Plan

- ▶ *“We have a racism policy, but I believe that when racism is reported there is rarely any consequence.”*

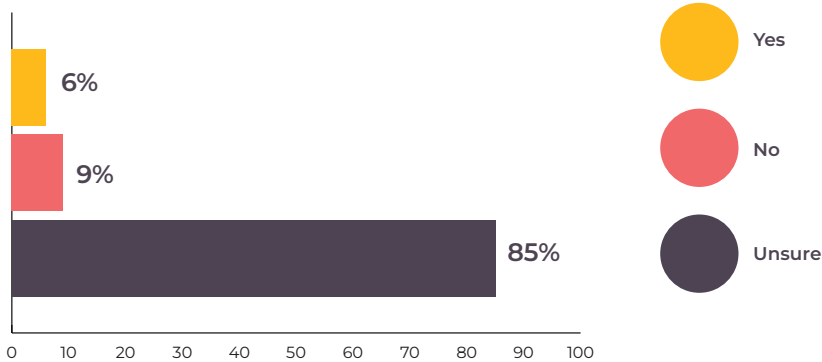
Have you previously read, heard about, or otherwise been made aware of the University of Melbourne's Anti-Racism Action Plan?



How effective do you think the University of Melbourne's Anti-Racism Action Plan will be at addressing racism on campus?



Is there anything that you think should be included in the University of Melbourne Anti-Racism Action Plan that is not currently included?

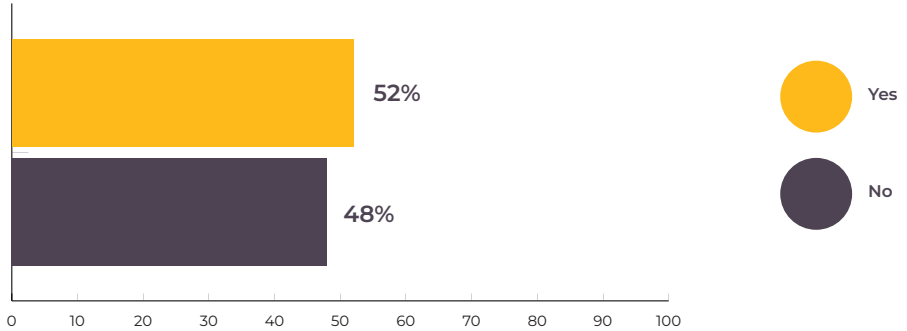


That almost two thirds of our respondents were not aware of the University's Anti-Racism Action Plan shows a failure to effectively communicate and consult with the very population the Plan is intended to protect. Furthermore, our results show an ambivalence around whether or not this plan will be successful.

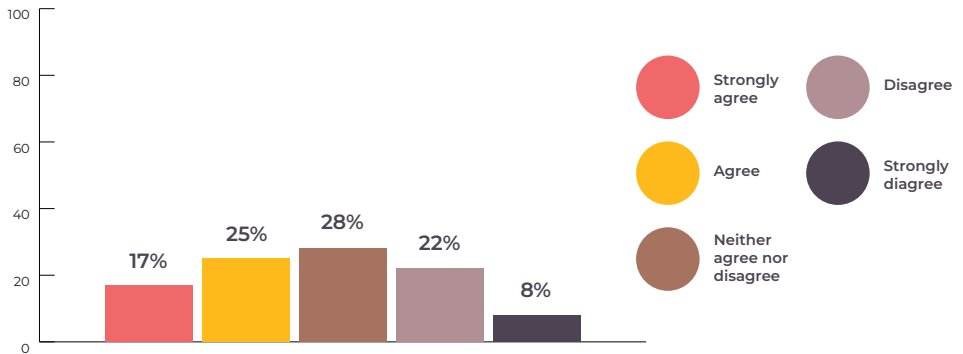
9. Reporting

► *“I feel helpless and don’t know how the process works so I just give up.”*

If you have or were to experience an incident of racism, would you report it?



As a student, I know where to go to report discrimination and racism

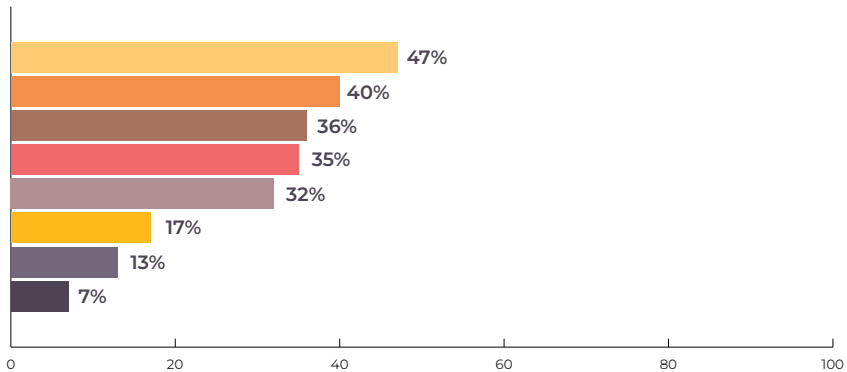


Unfortunately, reporting racism on campus is fraught with barriers. Only 52% of respondents indicated they would be willing to report racism if they experienced it. The open answers expanded on this point, frequently referencing a sense of pointlessness, helplessness, confusion, and disempowerment. Together, this indicates a lack of confidence in reporting structures. Furthermore, only 42% of our respondents indicated they knew where to go to report.

9.1 Barriers to Reporting

- ▶ *“I have considered speaking up to course coordinators about my team’s unacceptable behaviour towards me... but I’m worried it would affect my relationship with the other team members who are friends with the bullying ones.”*

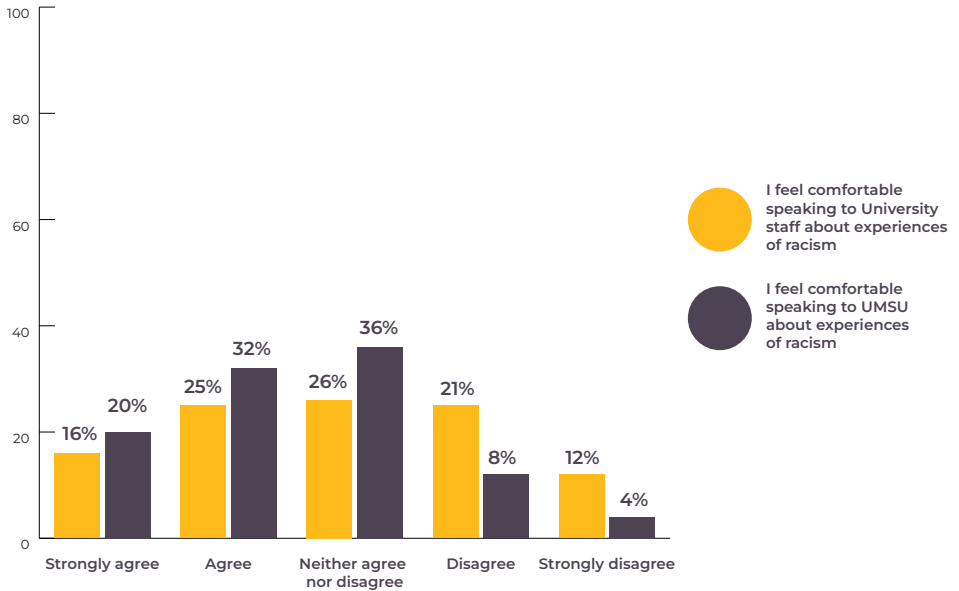
If you wouldn’t report or would be hesitant to, what would the main reasons be?



The barriers to reporting racism on campus go beyond not knowing where to report. As previously touched on in the Casual Racism section, the ambiguity of some racist behaviours makes them difficult for those on the receiving end to explain, leading to fears they won't be taken seriously. Many of our respondents expressed concern that they would be seen as overreacting, snitching, or causing trouble, especially when reporting to white members of staff who do not understand what racism feels like to experience. They also feared repercussions from disgruntled peers and staff, especially social alienation.

9.2 Barriers Reporting to the University

- ▶ *“Twice I went to report an incident, and nothing happened.”*
- ▶ *“I know theoretically where to go, but the university never does anything.”*



Overall, our respondents felt less comfortable reporting racism to the University than to UMSU. Reasons our respondents shared included inaction, a lack of cultural safety, worries about institutional racism, and fears of retaliation or not being believed.

Our previous reports in 2021, 2022 and 2023 explicitly called for an accessible reporting form on the Safer Communities page with an option to remain anonymous⁶. This recommendation has not been implemented, and only a reporting email address and phone number are listed, meaning a truly anonymous reporting option is not available. Moreover, the Safer Communities site is somewhat ambiguous, making it less accessible for people whose first language is not English.

While the University's 2025 Annual Report on Racism (ARR) details a commitment to greater transparency regarding complaints processes, our data show that students remain distrustful and confused. Furthermore, although it provides what seems like a detailed account of complaints data, the ARR doesn't show outcomes from the implementation of the Complaints and Grievances Policy, the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy, or other formal complaints processes. The Respect at Uni Interim Report noted a lack of confidence in complaint mechanisms in their consultation with students, and outlined how this led to underreporting. The responses we have received in this survey detailing a lack of confidence in reporting mechanisms certainly support these sentiments.

Student satisfaction with the offices of the Academic Registrar, the Safer Community Program and the Workplace Relations unit are integral to successful complaints mechanisms and processes at the University, but the ARR also fails to provide transparency regarding these issues. Institutional trust is low overall given that the University of Melbourne placed last in student experience for undergraduate students and fourth-last for postgraduate students⁷ in the 2024 Student Experience Survey. We can reasonably conclude, therefore, that satisfaction with complaints mechanisms would likewise be low. Consequently, it is unsurprising that students do not trust the University's reporting mechanisms to be culturally safe and responsive.

⁶ Racism at the University of Melbourne Report, M. Hadi, UMSU People of Colour Department, 2021; Racism at the University of Melbourne Report, Edition 2, H. Adam, UMSU People of Colour Department, 2022; Racism at the University of Melbourne Report, M. Hadi Omer, UMSU People of Colour Department, 2023.

⁷ tinyurl.com/StudentExperienceSurvey2024

9.3 Barriers Reporting to UMSU

- ▶ *“UMSU does so much to combat racism, I feel that UMSU really cares about student’s wellbeing. And the committee members and officers are so nice and understanding, they’re students too and so maybe they can relate.”*
 - ▶ *“I would be better off finding someone who has more power.”*
-

Our respondents were overall more comfortable reporting racism to UMSU than they are to the University, and valued the peer support they can receive from UMSU. However, we should be careful not to assume that UMSU is immune to poor experiences for students reporting racism. The comments from our respondents suggest the reasons for being uncomfortable reporting to us differ somewhat from those that underpin low reporting to the University. They included feeling as though UMSU doesn’t have the power to effect change, not knowing how to report, and worry that information could be shared with the University, resulting in repercussions.

9.4 Recommendations for Reporting

- ▶ *“In-person workshops and support groups to talk about it. Make it easier to report something, maybe create an online website with a text service where it is easy for students to anonymously report experiences of racism. Get volunteers to complete CAPS training and some Anti-Racism training and allow them to provide support and informational advice to students who report. There should be a supervisor who is a staff member monitoring the website and chats to give support to students when they need something beyond what volunteers can do. So like CAPS, but student-led, free for everyone, no signing up, for students to support other students experiencing racism.”*
 - ▶ *“We need staff who validate and support, instead of questioning or ignoring us.”*
-

From peer support mechanisms to formal systems, trust was the common theme to all the recommendations our respondents shared. In order to build that trust, they expressed the need for accessible, well-communicated, timely, emotionally safe and culturally attuned ways to report racism, formulated with their voices at the core. Their recommendations included peer support networks, simple text or web-based reporting mechanisms, dedicated staff, and training to ensure that staff or volunteers are empathetic and culturally-informed.

10. Discussion

Addressing racism at the University of Melbourne is not a one-time initiative. It remains an ongoing process of long-term cultural transformation. This is the fourth edition of the 2025 Racism at the University of Melbourne Report since 2021, and the data show that little positive progress has been made in that time. Racism at the University occurs in overt incidents, silences, microaggressions, exclusions, and both educational and administrative systems. Together, the testimonies in this report and the University of Melbourne's low scores on the QILT 2024 Student Experience Survey reflect how this pervasive racism strips away students' confidence, agency, and institutional trust, leading them to correctly question if their right to safety is only in principle.

Real organisational transformation must centre the voices of students and staff from racialised, international, and marginalised backgrounds, as they understand the impacts of institutional racism firsthand. University policies and training modules must be co-designed with their input, and inclusion must be genuine instead of performative. Institutional reflexivity, cultural humility, and transparency are essential for the University to actively engage with both students who make individual complaints, and the student leaders and unions that represent them. While we welcome the University's efforts to include UMSU student representatives in developing the Anti-Racism Action Plan, the scope of that inclusion was insufficient, and 2025 UMSU President Joshua Stagg reiterated the need for the University to build on UMSU reports and increase student input. The sense of urgency is palpable in our respondents' testimony, and we thank them for bravely sharing their experiences as they live with the harmful effects of marginalisation. We need action now.

Finally, it is of utmost concern that the University's Annual Report on Racism included the peaceful student protests such as the encampment on the Parkville campus and the Mahmoud's Hall protests at Arts West in 2024 regarding the University of Melbourne's divestment practices⁸. The inclusion of these protests in its first Annual Report on Racism imputes that it is racist to peacefully protest against the University's ties to weapon companies involved in the ongoing genocide in Palestine.

With these aspects in mind, we are eager to set out our recommendations which should inform and activate the University of Melbourne's Anti-Racism Action Plan.

⁸ theage.com.au/politics/victoria/melbourne-uni-students-agree-to-end-building-occupation-20240522-p5jfv.html.

11. Overall Recommendations

For the University:

1. Ensure that initiatives from the 2024 Annual Report on Racism are:
 - a. Benchmarked against other tertiary institutions' programs to ensure best practice
 - b. Reported transparently in the upcoming Annual Report on Racism, regarding their outcomes and progress
2. Commit to sharing outcomes from the implementation of all formal complaints processes at the University.
3. Engage in ongoing, regular communication and collaboration with the UMSU President, UMSU People of Colour and Indigenous departments so that student voices can be centred in processes that affect them, by:
 - a. Including the UMSU President, UMSU People of Colour and Indigenous departments in the Anti-Racism Action Plan Implementation Working Group
 - b. Consulting with the UMSU President, UMSU People of Colour and Indigenous departments regarding recommendations and improvements to the Student Conduct Policy
 - c. Formulating definitions of racism in direct consultation with the UMSU President, UMSU People of Colour and Indigenous departments, so that they:
 - i. Do not prioritise the minimisation of discomfort for one group at the expense of harm to another. Ensure that peaceful protest activities are not, in themselves, conflated with racism
 - ii. Allow for critical and intersectional understandings of racism
 - iii. Account for how structural racism permeates our communities
 - iv. Capture the full breadth of how racism manifests
4. Ensure reporting infrastructure is accessible, well-communicated, timely, culturally safe, and available across multiple platforms with clear options for reporting anonymously. This includes:
 - a. A fully accessible reporting form on the Safer Communities webpage, in addition to the existing email address and phone number
 - b. Clear options to report anonymously on both the Safer Communities

- webpage and on other platforms
 - c. Transparently showing how the process works at the point of reporting, including typical timelines
 - d. Presenting all reporting resources in multiple languages
5. Specialist external training for all staff on:
- a. How to respond to and direct students who report racism to them
 - b. How to identify and respond to unreported racism in university settings
 - c. Unconscious bias and microaggressions and how to avoid perpetrating them
 - d. Demonstrate how the resources provided by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education to internationalise the curriculum have been applied

For UMSU:

Since our previous report, UMSU has:

1. Introduced a network of Contact Officers embedded in the organisation across both student departments and staff areas to facilitate and guide reports of racism and other matters into the appropriate channels. These officers have been externally trained in reporting pathways, how to respond to reports and support reportees
2. Included anti-racism training for officers as part of their governance training during induction

Pending Recommendations

1. Advocacy and Legal online resources to be presented in multiple languages to increase accessibility in 2026
2. UMSU's upcoming website refresh should include easily discoverable links to reporting channels and resources
3. Finalise implementation of recommendations from the 2023 diversity and inclusion audit

12. Closing Statement

As we conclude this year's edition of the Racism at the University of Melbourne report, we are reminded once again that racism at this institution is not just a matter of individual ignorance. It is systemic, sustained, and deeply embedded in academic, social, and structural practices. The experiences shared by over 350 students in this report reflect the heavy emotional toll of navigating an environment that too often fails to acknowledge, protect, or value students of colour.

While some positive efforts have emerged over recent years — occasional inclusive events, minor curriculum revisions, or public acknowledgements of injustice — they remain insufficient in the face of persistent harm. Symbolic gestures without structural change only serve to frustrate and exhaust the very communities they claim to support, while simultaneously failing to address the problem.

This report is not meant to shame. It is meant to hold accountable. It is not designed to isolate, but to unite voices that have long been sidelined. The burden of fixing racism should never fall solely on those most affected by it. The responsibility belongs to the University as a whole organisation to dismantle white-centric structures, elevate marginalised perspectives, and create an inclusive academic space that reflects the diversity of its student body.

Our recommendations are clear, urgent, and implementable. But they require more than performative commitment, they require courage. They require action. They require leadership that listens, and a campus culture that does not tolerate complacency.

To every student who spoke up: your words matter. This report is your truth documented, your pain validated, and your hope for change preserved. We dedicate this work to you.

Let this not be another report that sits on a shelf. Let this be the one that finally demands the University of Melbourne to choose transformation over tradition and justice over comfort.

In unity,

UMSU People of Colour Department

2025



REPORT RACISM



To report racism at the University of Melbourne scan the QR code,
or visit: umsu.unimelb.edu.au/report-racism

Racism at the University of Melbourne Report

Edition 4

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UMSU People of Colour Officers (2025)

