



RACISM

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

REPORT

Edition 5

Anyang Wal & Eason Gu
UMSU People of Colour Officers 2026



University of Melbourne Student Union

Acknowledgement of Country

UMSU acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past, present, and emerging. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Glossary of Definitions

- **PoC:** People of colour. That is, people who identify as being non-white.
- **UniMelb or University:** The University of Melbourne
- **UMSU:** University of Melbourne Student Union
- **Tokenisation:** A form of benevolent racism where an individual is presumed to speak for, or be an expert on, their entire race or culture. It can additionally comprise the individual not being included in topics unrelated to their race or culture.

CONTENT WARNINGS

This report contains subject matter and real student experiences of racism that may be distressing. We have left quotes unedited wherever possible, but some quotes have been minimally edited for grammar and/or spelling where required for clarity. Where necessary, information has been redacted to preserve anonymity.

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- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467
- **Headspace:** 1800 650 890
- **13 Yarn** (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers): 13 92 76

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*“I feel very
regretful about
choosing to
study here.”*

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Officers' Statement

This publication marks the fifth instalment of *UMSU People of Colour's Racism Report*. This report was published on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nations.

We acknowledge the plight of First Peoples, who since the invasion and subsequent disposition of their people from this land have been subjected to and continue to combat Racism and anti Bla(c)kness.

We as an organisation acknowledge that the walls of the very institution we sit inside is complicit and continues to be an agent of the ongoing colonial project of so-called Australia, a project that holds racism as its corner stone.

We are at a point of five iterations of this report: five iterations that seemingly replicate the same experiences, the same stories, the same pain.

Our data suggests that personal experiences of racism at UniMelb are more prevalent than at Australian Universities overall. This is shameful.

Racism is a problem at the University of Melbourne and must be addressed.

Universities are sites of Truth making and Truth telling, and we have chosen to platform, publish and tell the stories of students that may otherwise go untold. These are stories that are not far removed from ourselves, stories that do not require a face to be human.

Our intention is not to study, scrutinise or investigate the racist experiences of our peers. We intend to candidly speak to and address experiences that have often gone unvalidated, reduced and dismissed.

We see you and we believe you.

We acknowledge the work of the people who came before us, as this is a project that did not begin with us and will not end with us.

What has become of this report could not have ever happened without the countless hours of work we have inherited from this department's former officers, especially Mohamed Hadi who began this project in 2021.

It takes much bravery to be a first, and we are incredibly honoured to be able to continue this project. Working in student representation has taught us that meaningful changes are always collective. No officer, department or report can eliminate racism alone. Progress depends on people being

prepared to listen, support one another and turn concern into action.

It also requires institutions to accept responsibility and provide transparent, accessible and culturally safe ways for students to report discrimination and receive meaningful support.

We demand that the University of Melbourne carefully considers the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

An institution that has a commitment to zero tolerance on racism must demonstrate this through accountability, resources, and action, not through words and empty policies.

We commend and thank all of the brave students who have trusted us with their experiences. Every student deserves to study in an environment where their identity is respected and where building anti-racist environments is not another burden for them to carry.

While we commend the University for its transparency in sharing the outcomes of reporting racism in the Annual Report on Racism 2025, this is just the beginning.

They also acknowledge that racism on campus is extremely underreported, and we can only empower students to report when they trust that the environment will change as a result.

That half of the reports of racism they disclose were made against staff shows that there is a long way to go in constructing an anti-racist environment at the University of Melbourne.

Finally, we would like to thank our committee members and our wonderful team at UMSU, namely, Belinda Dalton, Lushy Chinganya, Hana Arai, Nikki Flux and Juliette Elfick. Their steadfast commitment to anti-racist work, including the making of this report, is invaluable.

In solidarity,

Anyang Wal & Eason Gu
People of Colour Officers
2026

Constructing an Anti-Racist Environment (C.A.R.E.) Campaign

Constructing an Anti-Racist Environment (C.A.R.E.) is a student-led campaign by the University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) People of Colour Department, and with my full support, calling for meaningful action to address racism and create a genuinely anti-racist university environment.

We've had five years of racism reports and what feels like five years of inaction, so as students, we're picking up the tools and doing it ourselves!



The C.A.R.E campaign was developed in response to the experiences of University of Melbourne students, and the findings from *UMSU People of Colour's 2026 Racism Survey*.

We C.A.R.E. Do they?

CONSTRUCTING
an ANTI
RACIST
ENVIRONMENT



C.A.R.E. focuses on three key areas for change:

- First, C.A.R.E. calls for a **clear and accessible racism complaints portal**, alongside transparent reporting on how complaints are handled and their outcomes.

Students should be able to report racism without navigating confusing processes or feeling that their concerns will disappear. Students deserve meaningful action.

- Second, C.A.R.E. calls for the **renaming of the Baldwin Spencer Building and Agar Theatre**.

Both names were still in place at the time of writing, and both names are associated with historical figures whose documented support for eugenicist ideas targeted people they considered to be of inferior genetic stock.

We believe that University spaces should reflect values of inclusion. Students deserve to enter spaces and classrooms free from racist associations.

At its core, C.A.R.E. is about moving towards **concrete, accountable action**. We're calling on the University to actively construct an anti-racist environment for their students. We want to continue advocating for a university where students from all backgrounds can learn, participate and belong without experiencing racism or discrimination.

- Third, C.A.R.E. calls for **no partnerships or collaborations with the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation**.

In July, the Academic Board voted against the scholarship proposal. In September, it was brought back and accepted. We're concerned about the Centre's promotion of Western civilisation over other cultures, and the potential implications of external philanthropic influence on how students learn at university.

Additionally, the scholarship aids students after their first year, therefore it does not address an access inequity issue. Students deserve scholarships that don't come with controversial political strings attached.

Lushy Chinganya
UMSU President
2026

Demographics

The 2026 *UMSU People of Colour's Racism at University of Melbourne Report* survey ran from 14 May to 14 June and received 1,072 responses, of which 898 were suitable for analysis. This is a robust sample size, and the largest UMSU has received for this survey since it first ran in 2021.

The proportions of different types of students in our sample are a reasonably good match for the proportions of those types of students at the University overall, so we can be confident that our results accurately reflect the experiences of students at the University overall.

Proportions of respondents by gender (see Figure 1) and international student status (see Figure 2) align with the most recent student load data from Universities Australia for the University of Melbourne.¹

Our proportion of undergraduate student respondents (58.69%) is higher than the proportion of undergraduate students enrolled at the University.²

The mean age of our sample was 24 years. Additionally, 3.6% identified as First Nations, 13.8% identified as having a disability, and 26% lived in either University-run or commercial student accommodation.

Figure 1: Gender

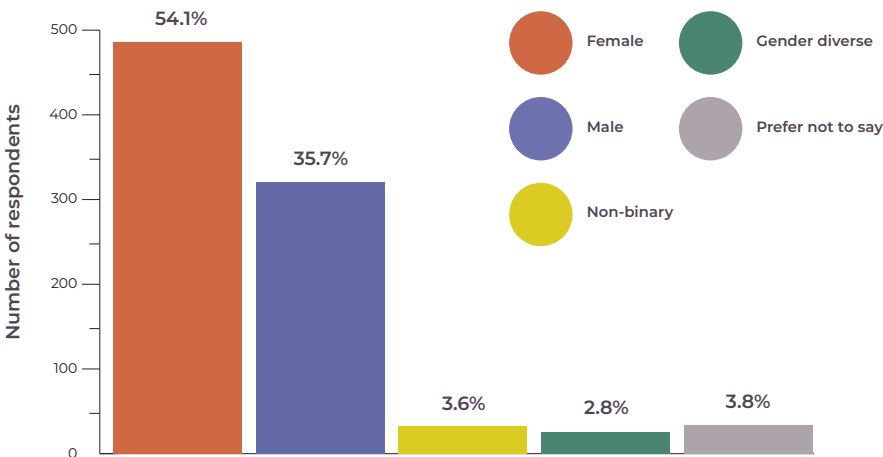


Figure 2: International Student Status

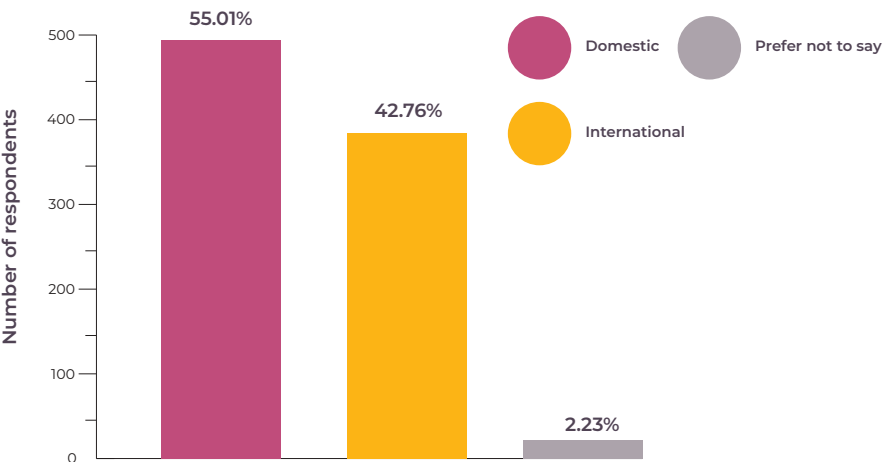
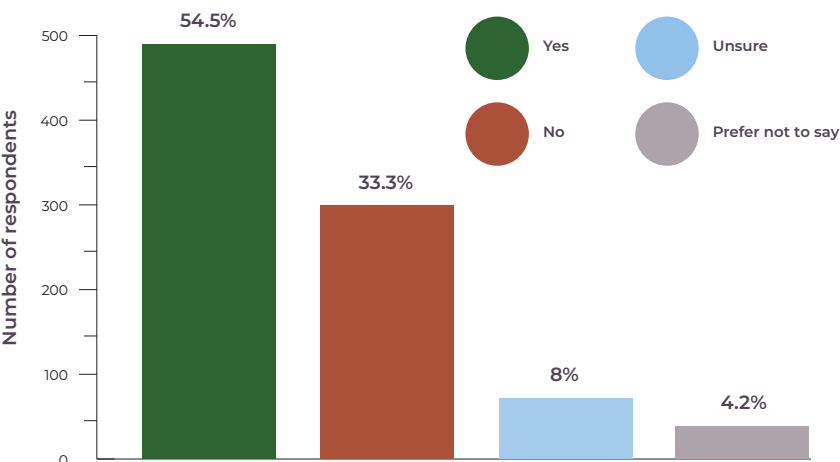


Figure 3: People of Colour



The prevalence of racism at UniMelb

We define ‘prevalence’ as the number or proportion of people who experience a phenomenon. Of our total respondents, 34.8% indicated they personally experienced racism in the 12 months prior to our survey.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the proportion of People of Colour (PoC) who experienced racism during this time period was more than double the proportion of non-PoC, and the proportion of international students who experienced racism during this time period was higher than the proportion of domestic students.

It is important to note, however, that of the 39.1% of non-PoC participants who chose to share their race or ethnicity, 38.46% had non-white ethnic backgrounds (mostly East Asian, but also South Asian, Pasifika, Latin and Middle-Eastern). This likely accounts for some of the racism experienced by respondents who self-identified as non-PoC.

Figure 4:
Experienced racism over previous 12 months: PoC vs non-PoC

STATUS	%
PoC	43.59%
Non-PoC	19.26%

Figure 5:
Experienced racism over previous 12 months: International vs domestic

STATUS	%
International	40.89%
Domestic	29.57%

Our data strongly suggests that personal experiences of direct racism are more prevalent at the University of Melbourne than at Australian universities overall.

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in their 2026 report *Respect at Uni: Study into antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and the experience of First Nations people*³

shared that for international and domestic students, experiences of direct racism followed a similar shape to ours but were lower, at 19% and 13% respectively.

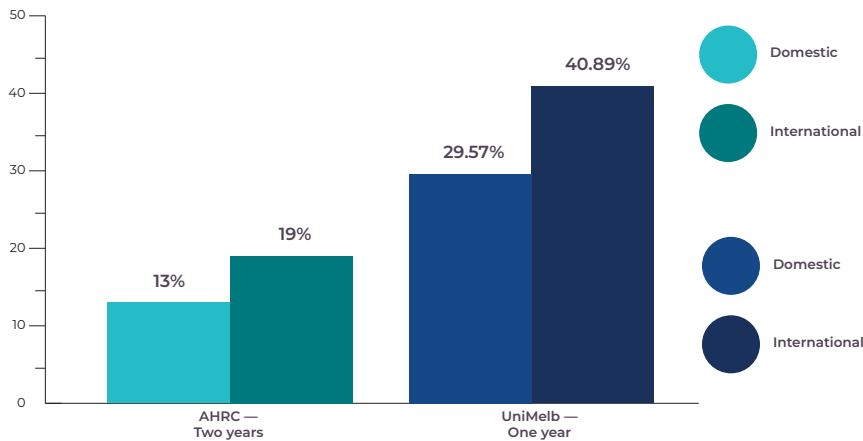
Figure 6 illustrates this difference. Considering that the *AHRC Racism@Uni survey*⁴ captured experiences over the previous two years, and our prevalence question captured experiences just in the last 12 months, we expected that the AHRC figures would be higher than ours to reflect the longer period.

That our figures are higher instead indicates that racism is particularly prevalent at the University of Melbourne.

Further intersectional analyses will be provided in the an online Supplementary Materials document at a later date.

“It was definitely a shock and disappointment as you expected academic environments to be a welcoming and safe spaces for POC. As an exchange student from Canada I think UniMelb needs [to] take serious actions against racism and become more inclusive to Black and Indigenous students.”

Figure 6: Experiences of Racism: Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) report compared to University of Melbourne Racism Survey 2026



What racism looks like at UniMelb

Categories of racism

We measured seven different types of racism based on responses from previous surveys. Figure 7 shows the categories in order of prevalence within just the four weeks leading up to the survey.

Figure 7: Categories of racism by prevalence over previous four weeks

CATEGORY	% EXPERIENCED
Being treated differently to white peers	38.1%
Experiencing difficulty making friends or working relationships outside their ethnic or racial background	32.1%
Choosing to interact mainly with people of a similar background in class	30.5%
Being ignored, sidelined or excluded during group work due to their racial or ethnic background	24.6%
Being treated worse than white peers	23.7%
Being overlooked, interrupted, or taken less seriously due to their racial or ethnic background	22.6%
Choosing to contribute less in class due to their racial or ethnic background	20.3%

Respondents' experiences

If respondents indicated they had experienced a category of racism, we asked them to describe an instance.

Analysis of these responses found major themes of exclusion, social impacts and overt verbal racism, as well as patterns of behaviour distinct to peers and staff.

The patterns and themes we found were consistent with those found by the AHRC in their *Respect at Uni report*.⁵

'Different' versus 'worse' treatment

We measured being treated 'differently' to white peers separately from being treated 'worse' than white peers, but 'different' treatment was almost always synonymous with worse treatment.

Objectively worse treatment was present in 78.71% of examples respondents gave in the 'differently' question. While the 'worse' treatment measure tended to contain more egregious examples, including intimidation and harassment, there was much overlap between the two categories.

“A lot of the older white students assume I don't have any experience in my field.”

“Some students call Asian students 'chinchong' and that happened in front of Stop 1 at a raining [sic] day.”

Exclusion and segregation

The largest thematic category across all questions related to exclusion. Exclusion encompassed active or passive attempts to prevent respondents from joining, participating, or feeling welcome in groups.

“In one of my classes there is a white people table and a table for mixed students.”

Many respondents felt a strong sense of implicit segregation right from the start of their university life.

This occurs with social groups, study groups, classrooms and learning spaces split along racial lines which they struggled to cross. The AHRC report also observed this phenomenon, labelling it "de facto segregation."⁶

Direct exclusion

This was most often perpetrated by peers, and affected respondents both socially and in their ability to participate in group work. Direct exclusion prevented respondents from joining a group, or if a group was assigned, blocked them from participating outright.

Tactics used by perpetrators were usually non-verbal but unambiguous, and included obstructing physical access, turning and moving away, or blatantly ignoring attempts to interact.

“ They blocked the seats with their bags so POC have to sit on the other side of the room — like it's segregated so they wouldn't sit next to them.”

“ If we're sitting at a table during a workshop, they will lean over you to interact with other white people at the table and purposely not try to talk to you.”

Academic exclusion

Both peers and staff discouraged respondents of colour from participating in group and classroom settings through indirect behaviour. This included repeated instances of being ignored, overlooked, sidelined, or experiencing hostile body language and facial expressions.

Multiple failed attempts to engage in good faith and repeated instances of exclusion in the classroom lead our respondents to feel helpless, frustrated, and to stop contributing. Understandably, many respondents felt anxious about the potential subsequent impact on their studies.

“ In [REDACTED], the tutor has different attitudes for Caucasian-looking students and Asian-looking students, being unnecessarily mean and impatient to students who are not fluent in English or even students who speaks fluent English but has Asian backgrounds.”

“ There was one time and she asked if anyone has questions and I was the only student with my hand raised up high, the professor looked directly at me and chose to resume the class without acknowledging me.”

Tokenisation

A smaller proportion of our respondents held back from participating in class because they worried about drawing well-intended but harmful attention to themselves, having previously been tokenised, othered, or seen as the spokesperson for their entire group.

“ Sometimes the lecturer specifically wants me to contribute because they feel I must definitely have an experience about that particular issue coming from a ‘poor nation’ in Africa.”

“ They go on and on about white privilege and how we should be wary of this. But they single out students based on their ethnicities in lectures, and they ask ‘Where is my Cambodian?’”

Language-based exclusion

Another smaller theme was language-based exclusion, where a group would refrain from speaking a common language with a peer.

This was sometimes an example of racism from one non-white group to another, but also accounted for the majority of instances where white students felt excluded.

“ I wouldn’t consider it racism, however I was unable to participate and felt excluded from a tutorial table discussion exercise due to me not speaking Mandarin... I recognise that white people do not experience forms of racism at a scale comparable to people of colour, however it did feel as though my characteristics prevented me from feeling included ...”

Social exclusion

A similar pattern was present in social interactions, where respondents attempted to befriend peers of different racial or ethnic groups but gave up after experiencing rejection, overt racism, or needing to constantly explain their perspective.

Of those who chose to interact mainly with people from their own ethnic or cultural group, 25.8% referenced negative experiences with people of other backgrounds as the reason why.

Respondents explained that in contrast, befriending students of a similar background to themselves provided a sense of safety, understanding, and relief.

These factors likely interact to keep students within their own groups, reinforcing the sense of "de facto segregation" noted by the AHRC.

“ I don't mind explaining my background or experiences to those who don't understand but it becomes a lot when I find I have to do it for every little thing and/or justify myself, and even defend/challenge negative stereotypes about my culture.”

Overt verbal racism

The specific behaviour that our respondents referenced most often overall was overt, unambiguous verbal racism.

This comprised comments and jokes, racialised assumptions, making fun of accents and experiences, and even intimidation and harassment.

When examining the combined examples of overt verbal racism, 78.5% came from peers rather than staff.

The extremely overt and stereotyped nature of many of these comments suggests that students are often aware that they are being racist but don't care, making insensitive attempts at 'edgy' humour, or actively intending to cause harm.

“ On my first day at uni I was sat next to two people that were talking about how much they don't like Aboriginal people and how unsafe they feel around us.”

“ They call us useless, go back to your country, bloody this and that, from your accent you sound xyz. These are not good experiences.”

“ Two students on two separate occasions told me that I don't look like I'd be a good driver because I'm Asian and female.”

“ ...the professor responded saying: 'This is how Chinese student present their analysis. You guys, Chinese students always tell a story from the very beginning, and only present the conclusion or findings in the very last sentence. We are [REDACTED], we know much more than you do.... But you guys just don't try hard enough to blend in the local community or environment.'”

Assumptions and application of rules

Respondents of colour noticed that rules and policies were often applied more rigidly to them than their white peers, based on racialised assumptions about capability, intent or misconduct. This mostly came from staff, both academic and non-academic, but could also come from peers during group work.

The most commonly cited instance was that non-white students' work was more likely to be assumed to be AI than that of their white peers. Respondents noticed that AI detection software also displayed this bias.

This bias was strong enough that white respondents also noticed it happening to their non-white classmates.

“The tutor treated us differently in tutorials and accused a lot of Asian students for using AI but none of our assignments showed AI flags.”

“Turnitin's AI detection algorithms definitely present more false positives for my Asian group members than my work... even when I have witnessed them write directly into a shared doc live (i.e., clearly not AI generated work).”

Racism towards specific groups

Examples of racism towards First Nations respondents were particularly egregious and overt. Furthermore, First Nations students who had other identities of colour mostly reported experiencing discrimination related to their First Nations identity rather than other identities they held.

“A peer drew a picture of a First Nations [REDACTED FACULTY] student depicting them as a monkey and posted the same drawing to their Instagram story.”

“I have lost any sense of trust I had in the systems and processes of the university designed to keep First Nations students safe. I now wonder why I should bother reporting any racism I may witness in the future.”

Both Islamophobia and antisemitism were present in our responses, though they showed up in different ways. Jewish respondents were more likely to be verbally harassed by peers on the assumption they support genocide, whereas Islamic respondents were more likely to feel as though they couldn't openly support Palestine without risking academic repercussions.

“I've witnessed a lot of Islamophobic racism structurally within the university. Even tutors teaching subjects on colonialism have expressed that they are not able to discuss the experience of Palestinians due to risk of being fired.”

“Was called a baby killer and apartheid supporter just because I'm Jewish.”

The frequency of racism at UniMelb

We defined frequency as the number of discrete instances a given person experienced of each kind of racism within the four weeks prior to the survey. We only measured frequency if a respondent indicated they had experienced that kind of racism.

This offers us a snapshot of the final four weeks of Semester 1, 2026, and can reasonably be assumed to reflect how frequently the average student might experience racism during semester time. Our results indicate that respondents experienced racism frequently.

Figure 8 (page 22) shows how many instances of racism most of our respondents experienced in the four week measurement period.

“It happens roughly once a week.”

“Too many to count — predominantly in college.”

Figure 8. Frequency of racism in the four weeks preceding the survey

CATEGORY	MEDIAN ⁷ NUMBER OF INSTANCES IN PREVIOUS FOUR WEEKS
Choosing to interact mainly with people of a similar background in class	3
Being treated differently to white peers	2
Experiencing difficulty making friends or working relationships outside their ethnic or racial background	2
Choosing to contribute less in class due to their racial or ethnic background	2
Being overlooked, interrupted, or taken less seriously due to their racial or ethnic background	1
Being ignored, sidelined or excluded during group work due to their racial or ethnic background	1
Being treated worse than white peers	1

The impacts of racism at UniMelb

We asked respondents to tell us the effect that experiencing racism on campus had on them, or on someone they knew who had experienced racism.

Understandably, all the effects of racism our respondents experienced were negative.

“Even though I cannot know the intentions behind these experiences, their cumulative effect was real. They made me feel less included, less valued, and less certain that I would be treated with the same level of respect and support as other students.”

Harm to mental wellbeing

In the most serious cases, students reported extreme mental distress, requiring therapy or driving them to withdraw from classes, or consider leaving the country.

Overwhelmingly,
harm to emotional
wellbeing was the
most common effect,
reported in 78.6% of
responses.

For every respondent who had withdrawn from class or uni, three had expressed wanting to.

“The situation had a significant impact on my mental wellbeing. On one occasion, after returning home from class, I became so distressed that I cried uncontrollably for approximately an hour.”

“Had to change tutorials and totally soured the subject for me — desperately wanted it to be over.”

“Extreme stress and inability to participate in university.”

Loss of institutional trust

Some 10.15% percent of respondents directly expressed a loss of trust in the University of Melbourne as an institution, based on their experiences of racism on campus.

“To me, it makes me feel so uncomfortable on campus. It makes me absolutely despise the uni, want to transfer etc. as I truly can't stand for such behaviour.”

“I feel very regretful about choosing to study here.”

Academic impacts

Relatively few respondents directly referenced impacts to study when asked what effect racism had on them (8.12%), but many had previously mentioned effects in responses to previous questions.

Firstly, 22.6% of respondents had been overlooked, sidelined or ignored in class, and 20.3% had refrained from contributing in class due to racism. Additionally, respondents shared experiences of receiving less help than their white peers from teaching staff, having negative assumptions made about capacity and work ethic.

Together with the reported high levels of mental distress, it is reasonable to conclude that experiences of racism likely prevent students from reaching their full academic potential.

“ *Instead of seeing the classroom as a safe space to make mistakes, learn, and grow, I sometimes viewed it as a place where I needed to protect myself from embarrassment or unfair treatment.*”

“ *I think that it prevents people from studying in the fullest capacity they can.*”

Social isolation

Building networks and making friends are important parts of university life, but as detailed earlier in this report, these opportunities are limited by the presence of racism on campus.

In response to what the effect of racism had been on them, 14.21% of respondents described serious social withdrawal, loneliness and isolation.

“ *Sometimes I just want to attend class and leave as quickly as possible, rather than stay, socialise, or build connections. It has made the campus feel less like a community and more like a place where I have to protect myself emotionally.*”

Reporting racism to UniMelb: difficult and futile

Of the respondents who reported experiencing racism in the previous 12 months, 87.9% did not report it to the University. The most common reason was the belief that nothing would happen (28.3%), and our data shows that belief is reasonable.

We asked participants who did report to share their experiences and any outcomes they received, and they were overwhelmingly disappointing. A breakdown of reporting results is shown in Figure 9. When summed, 56% received an insufficient outcome, and 28% received no outcome at all.

This means that more of our respondents received no outcome at all than received a satisfactory outcome.

“ I got sent links to take psychological counselling. I appreciate it yes. But doesn't help if the racist person keeps doing it around to everyone.”

“ No response to my enquiry.”

Figure 9: Outcomes of reporting racism to the University

OUTCOME TYPE	%
Inadequate response, including: incidents continued to happen, or victim stopped pursuing because not adequately assured retaliation wouldn't happen	36%
Nothing happened	16%
Felt heard or helped	16%
Wasn't provided any update	12%
University did not deem incident as severe	8%
Victim was told to attend counselling in place of an outcome	8%
Outcome was too slow	4%

The number of respondents who reported racism to the University was very small (25), however in the recently-released Annual Report on Racism 2025, the University reported receiving 40 complaints of racism, of which half were made against staff.

The University claims that their system is timely and is slowly building confidence in the student body, however, the experiences reported to us by our respondents reveal a frustrating, inaccessible, emotionally confronting and often futile process.

“ However, the reporting process itself was emotionally difficult.”

“ He has actively made students feel uncomfortable and unsafe and has been repeatedly reported for racism, only for him to return and continue to teach and say racist things... Given the amount of reports and the continual evidence that he will not change his behaviour, it seems to reflect the university's willingness to allow and even condone racist behaviour.”

What is currently being done about racism at UniMelb?

Reporting through Safer Communities

The University has a reporting portal through the *Safer Communities Program*,⁸ but racism is packaged into the page for Discrimination,⁹ buried in a list of 15 other forms of discrimination. Other avenues for reporting are limited, and listed separately under their diversity and inclusion pages.¹⁰

Of our respondents who experienced racism over the previous 12 months but didn't report it, 13.58% cited not knowing how or difficulty as the main reason.

As our data shows, racism is an enormous problem at the University of Melbourne, and thus warrants a highly visible, dedicated reporting pathway.

“ No one I know would know how to report racism to be honest.”

Research and working groups

The University maintains a number of anti-racism working groups and advisory boards,¹¹ in addition to the *Anti-Racism Hallmark Research Initiative*.¹²

While these comprise an important part of a multi-pronged approach, they have limited visibility to — and input from — the student body.

Additionally, some faculties have their own Diversity and Inclusion teams, which means that approaches can differ greatly between faculties.

It is vital that these initiatives exist in addition to practical, immediate initiatives to address students' lived experiences on the ground, as part of a coordinated, whole-of-organisation approach.

“ I do not think that the university has allocated the resources to prevent and educate students from using racist rhetoric and behaviours against groups, most particularly from larger Asia.”

Anti-Racism Action Plan

The *Anti-Racism Action Plan*¹³ will enter its final year next year (running 2024–2027.) From our data, it is clear that there are gaps in this plan and target areas that have not been sufficiently addressed.

For instance, the Complaints Processes (4.6 and 4.6) do not contain an action to ensure that reporting processes are clear, navigable and accessible to students in distress.

Furthermore, Accountability and Transparency (4.7 and 4.8) do not require the University to share the outcomes of student reports of racism publicly, only with Deans and Chancellery leaders.

This suggests that the University is more interested in managing reputational risk than students' rights to a safe learning environment.

We welcome the reporting on racism complaints and their outcomes that the University released in its most recent report on racism, however, they must officially commit to continuing to do so.

Recommendations

Our recommendations fall under three categories: transparency, safety and education to reflect the needs presented in our data.

Additionally, they mirror the categories provided in the *National Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence*¹⁴, as we believe many aspects of the Code would be equally applicable to addressing racism in the tertiary sector.

Transparency

Reporting Portal

1. The University must implement a dedicated portal for students and staff to report instances of racism specifically. This reporting portal must:
 - a. Operate in a person-centred and trauma-informed manner across content, presentation, processes, staffing and application.
 - b. Be hosted in an area online where students in distress are likely to look for reporting information.
 - c. Publicly share outcome statistics on a six-monthly basis to:
 - i. Demonstrate accountability to students and staff.
 - ii. Enable outcomes to be monitored over time.
 - iii. Show how student and staff reports of racism are handled, and how long complaints take to resolve.
 - d. Publicly display easily-accessible information in plain English in the same location on:
 - i. What kinds of instances can be reported and how instances that cannot be reported should be handled.
 - ii. How reporting through the portal works, including the different kinds of reports that can be made (e.g., disclosures, formal reports, grievances, etc.), and how those can be initiated.

- iii. How reports do or do not intersect with other University policies and procedures (e.g., Special Consideration, Fee Remission, Academic Process, etc.)
- iv. Expected resolution timelines where possible.
- v. Additional support services, with clearly accessible contact information.

Using UMSU's Racism Data

1. As reporting numbers are inadequate to gauge the prevalence of racism on campus, the University should commit to using UMSU's racism data as a key part of:
 - a. Measuring the prevalence and frequency of racism on campus over time.
 - b. Evaluating student perception of prevention and redress interventions, including the racism reporting portal.
 - c. Identifying key issues to address.
 - d. Understanding the extent to which racism on campus prevents students from meeting their academic goals.

Safety

Creating a safe environment

1. The University must make all reasonable efforts to provide safe learning, professional and/or residential environments for students that are free from racist behaviour and speech, including ensuring:
 - a. Prospective employees declare any investigations related to allegations of racist conduct during previous employment.
 - b. Substantiated reports of racism against employees be considered when determining promotions, recognition and ongoing employment.
 - c. Adequately addressing risk where non-employees engage or are investigated for racist conduct.
 - d. As a priority, ensuring the safety of students who experience racism without denying them fair access to education, university services and accommodation.

Addressing mental health impacts

2. Equip Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) with dedicated staff to support students who have experienced racism.
 - a. These staff should:
 - i. Be able to guide students through reporting processes.
 - ii. Be trained extensively in cultural safety and sensitivity.
 - b. The existence of this service option should be communicated clearly to students, but especially when students report racism to the University.
 - c. This service must exist as a support option alongside and not in place of other actions to address reports of racism.
3. Reports of racism made against CAPS staff should be addressed quickly and with the utmost seriousness.

Whole of organisation approach

1. Approaches, processes and policies for addressing racism must be deliberately and explicitly consistent across departments, professional and academic divisions, and residential settings.

Education

Targeted communication and education on racist behaviour

1. Training and educational communications should be targeted, based on evidence of what groups we have found are most likely to engage in specific types of racist behaviours:
 - a. **Staff** communications and training should particularly focus on:
 - i. Promoting cultural safety and equitable interactions with all students.
 - ii. Applying standards, policies and rules equitably, especially regarding AI use or suspicion.
 - iii. How to identify and address implicit segregation and racist behaviours between students in classes and group work.
 - b. **Student** communications and training should focus on:
 - i. Promoting cross-cultural socialisation and friendship-making.
 - ii. Explicitly naming exclusionary behaviours as racist.
 - iii. Positioning overtly racist comments as weird, antisocial and not cool or edgy.
 - iv. Bystander intervention.

Conclusion

Our data shows that racism remains a serious issue that affects University of Melbourne students' safety, wellbeing and ability to reach their full academic potential.

The fact that it appears to be more prevalent at UniMelb compared to the average shown by the AHRC 'Respect at Uni' report is concerning, and indicates that current racism prevention and redress measures are insufficient to produce the immediate effects that students need.

Students of colour start their university lives eager to participate, and it is incumbent on the University to create a safe and welcoming environment

where their attempts are not punished. When racism occurs, they should feel empowered to report it, confident in the knowledge that outcomes will be effective, timely, and will not result in repercussions.

In contrast, our data shows that the current environment is unsafe for students of colour, and that reporting mechanisms are woefully unfit for purpose.

We therefore call on the University of Melbourne to adopt our recommendations.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Professor Piers Howe and Skye Burney for their assistance with the survey and intersectional analysis.

“Even though I cannot know the intentions behind these experiences, their cumulative effect was real. They made me feel less included, less valued, and less certain that I would be treated with the same level of respect and support as other students.”

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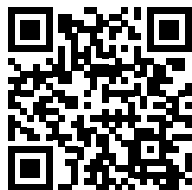


peopleofcolour@union.unimelb.edu.au

Racism at the University of Melbourne Report Edition 5

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