

Annual Report on Racism 2025



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE







Foreword

This is the University of Melbourne's second Annual Report on Racism. The Report provides information on complaints of racism made by staff and students through the University's formal reporting channels between 1 January and 31 December 2025. The Report also includes an update on the implementation of the key anti-racism initiatives such as the Anti-Racism Action Plan and Murmuk Djerring, the University's Indigenous Strategy.

As a diverse, multi-cultural and multi-faith community of more than 80,000 staff and students, the University of Melbourne condemns all forms of racism and actively stands against it. We recognise the destructive impact of racism on individuals and the damage it causes our community and our institution. Institutionally, collectively and individually we all share the responsibility to actively address racism.

We recognise that the founding of the University was a settler-colonial act, and the impacts of that act continue to be felt 173 years later. Building upon Dhoombak Goobgoowana Volume I: Truth, the publication of Volume II: Voice in 2025 focuses on the pivotal role played by Indigenous people in the history of the University of Melbourne. It demonstrates the many ways in which Indigenous people and communities contributed to the University, often in the face of deliberate attempts to silence them.

Throughout 2025, Australia experienced an increase of racism with far-reaching impacts across society. The University was not immune to shifts in community attitudes and the public discourse locally and globally. The drivers of racism on campus have long been complex and multi-faceted, and became even more so in 2025.

Rising anti-immigration sentiment, protests targeting particular groups, backlash against Welcomes to Country and Acknowledgements of Country, and a marked intensification of antisemitism and Islamophobia had a significant impact on members of our university community and required a targeted response. Throughout this period, the University continued to work with government and sector partners to monitor and address all forms of racism while progressing the implementation of the University's Murmuk Djerring Indigenous Strategy 2023–2027 and Anti-Racism Action Plan 2024–2027.

In the months between the end of 2025 and the publication of this Report in 2026, the policy and regulatory landscape in which racism is managed in the Australian university sector has changed significantly. The Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) has introduced new Threshold Standards relating to racism, which all universities must implement by 1 January 2027. These standards require universities to strengthen their approaches to preventing and responding to racism. This includes the adoption of definitions of racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Interim Vice-Chancellor Professor Glyn Davis provided a statement to, and appeared before, the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion. Further recommendations relevant to universities are anticipated when the Commission delivers its final report in December 2026.

Taken together, these developments reinforce the importance of the work already underway at the University and the need continued action to foster a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all members of the University community.



Professor Jane Gunn AO
Acting Vice-Chancellor



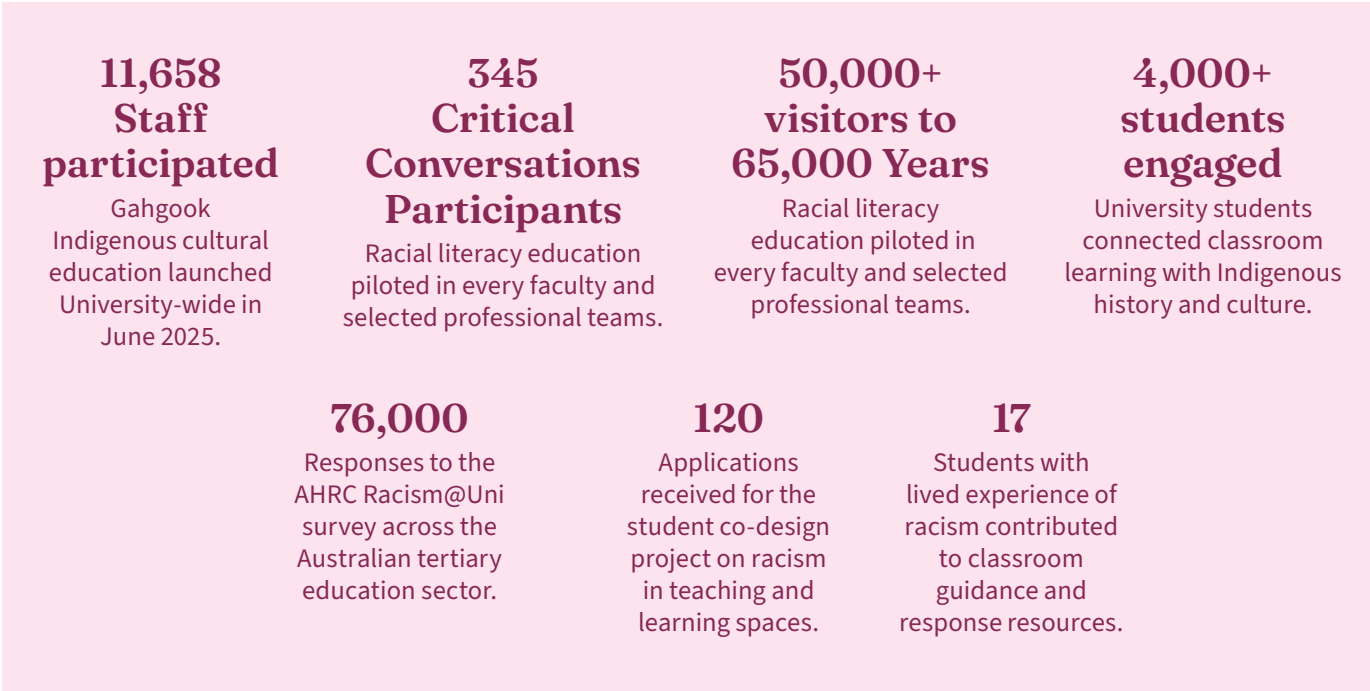
Professor Barry Judd
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)

Anti-Racism Action Plan and Murmuk Djerring

The four-part Anti-Racism Action Plan (ARAP) was launched in August 2024, and focuses on four pillars of action. There is alignment between the ARAP and Murmuk Djerring indigenous Strategy 2023–2027 and the ARAP makes clear that the University’s Indigenous strategy is foundational to our approach to antiracism. In 2025, significant progress was made on these strategic documents. Key projects include:

- Gahgook Indigenous Cultural Education Program.** Award-winning, Indigenous cultural education program Gahgook, meaning ‘respect’ in the Woi Wurrung language of the Wurundjeri people, is a signature project under Murmuk Djerring. This university-wide cultural education program strengthens cultural understanding, celebrates Indigenous contributions, and equips staff with the tools to support respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Launched to all staff in June 2025, the program has since won the Award for Professional Excellence and Innovation at the University’s Melbourne Professional Excellence Awards and received a Platinum award in two categories at the LearnX awards – Best eLearning Project and Best Ethical Training. Gahgook provides an Indigenous Cultural Education Program with practical guides and materials to support cultural competence, alongside facilitated spaces for meaningful conversations about reconciliation and cultural respect. As of December 2025, 11,658 staff had begun their Gahgook journey. This work demonstrates the University’s dedication to creating a culturally safe environment where Indigenous knowledges and perspectives are understood, respected and valued.

- Indigenous Student Campus Barometer.** This survey was conducted for the first time in 2025, with 130 respondents. The resulting Report providing the University with vital information on Indigenous students’ experiences and perceptions of campus climate at the University.
- Critical Conversations Racial Literacy Education.** This project, overseen by the Addressing Everyday Racisms Working Group and led by academics based in the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health and Anti-Racism Hallmark Research Initiative, has seen the piloting of in-person racial literacy education in every faculty. Following positive evaluation, a train-the-facilitator model is now being rolled out in two faculties, with more to follow.
- Guidelines to address racism in the classroom.** Co-designed with undergraduate and postgraduate students with lived experience of racism, these guidelines are designed to support teaching staff to set up an anti-racist classroom and respond to incidents of racism when they occur. These guidelines will be evaluated and revised as required in 2026.
- Policy review.** Explicit reference to racism was added to the University’s Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy in 2025, and was added to the Student Conduct Policy in early 2026. Work to ensure that the University’s robust policies are operationalised efficiently and effectively is ongoing. The Student Complaints Framework Review, in particular, has incorporated work to ensure that the policy is effectively supported by complaints process.



National Context

In 2025, the national focus on racism at universities continued to intensify as global geopolitical tensions and conflict continued. Anti-immigration protests, including targeted campaigns against South Asian and Muslim immigrants, impacted the University community. Racism against Indigenous Australians has also increased. December's Bondi terrorist attack, targeting Jewish Australians, highlighted the prevalence of antisemitism in Australia, and significantly impacted Jewish staff and students.

The Australian Universities Accord was published in February, and included 47 recommendations, designed to reform the tertiary education sector. The Accord included recommendations relating to improving participation for underrepresented groups, student safety and wellbeing and valuing and supporting First Nations knowledge and research.

Also in February, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (PJCHR) tabled its *Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian Universities* report. This report found there was a “disturbing prevalence of antisemitism” on campuses which has left Jewish students and staff feeling unsafe, resulting in many hiding their identities or avoiding campus altogether. The committee made 10 recommendations aimed at improving safety, accountability and transparency, all of which have been accepted and implemented by the University.

The National Student Ombudsman (NSO) launched in February, providing a free, independent and impartial complaints service for higher education students. The NSO is a statutory authority, with investigative powers across a broad remit, including student safety and welfare, racism, course administration, and the effectiveness of student complaints processes.

Australia's Special Envoys to Combat **Antisemitism** and **Islamophobia** handed down their reports in June and September 2025, respectively. These reports revealed extensive antisemitism and Islamophobia in the Australian community. The Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia put forward a plan that included recommendations to improve social cohesion in educational settings. The Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism commenced the Antisemitism Report Card process with the Group of Eight universities.

In August and September, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) conducted its Racism@Uni Survey that formed the basis for the AHRC Report **Respect at Uni: Study into antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and the experience of First Nations people**, to be published in 2026. This survey was distributed to all staff and students across the University sector, and 76,000 responded.

Actions to Address Antisemitism

The University of Melbourne is committed to addressing antisemitism on campus. The University has accepted and considered all ten recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (PJCHR) *Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian Universities*, which was tabled in February 2025. The University has cooperated with Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism (ASECA), and has participated in ASECA's Antisemitism Report Card process, which commenced late 2025. Actions undertaken by the University to address antisemitism in 2025 have included:

- University senior leaders met regularly with Jewish student leaders.
- The Interim Provost met with Jewish staff.
- The University made a public **submission** to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities. This submission is publicly available.
- Antisemitism training was delivered to 25 members of University Executive and senior leadership, and 28 nominated staff representing frontline services in February 2025; in June a further 75 members of staff (including senior leadership) were trained over three additional sessions, in order to meet demand. Further rollout of this and other anti-semitism training is anticipated in 2026, along with the introduction of an anti-racism staff module (incorporating antisemitism).
- In 2026, the University continues to respond to recommendations including those arising from the University Report Card Sectorial Assessment, the 2026 Report of the Group of Eight's Expert Advisory Committee to Combat Antisemitism, and any that may arise from the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.

Progress and Priorities

Safety on campus

In 2025, the University continued to improve response and reporting mechanisms to ensure issues could be identified and addressed promptly and effectively. The SafeZone app enabled the easy reporting of offensive posters, stickers and graffiti, while the Speak Safely Portal provides a confidential avenue for anonymous reporting. Complaints processes were further simplified to improve accessibility and responsiveness, and work to enhance systems and user experience is ongoing. The University also commenced a review of the Student Complaints Framework, which resulted in recommendations to update policies, procedures and complaints handling mechanisms. Implementation of these recommendations is ongoing.

Work to improve inclusion, belonging and cultural safety at the University has continued in 2025. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported via Murrup Barak, while targeted support to students impacted by conflict in the Middle East has included options for academic adjustments, revised eligibility for special consideration, and dedicated study spaces for Jewish students.

The Gahgook Indigenous Cultural Education Program launched in 2025 and included compulsory core modules for Indigenous staff and for all staff. This program equips Indigenous staff to better respond to racism, while providing non-Indigenous staff with insight into Indigenous-specific experiences of racism, and with tools to intervene. The Office for Indigenous Employment and Development (now Korin Korin) continued to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at every stage of their career, from recruitment to professional development and career progression.

Everyday racisms

The Addressing Everyday Racisms Working group is made up of subject matter and lived experience experts from across the University. This group has oversight of a number of projects designed to address racism across the institution. In particular, 2025 saw the successful roll-out of the pilot of the Critical Conversations Racial Literacy Education Program in every faculty and some professional teams, with 345 participants taking part. This in-person education program can be adapted to meet the specific requirements of the group undertaking the training. Following a successful evaluation of the program pilot, a train-the-facilitator model has been adopted, to be trialled in two faculties.

The Addressing Everyday Racisms Working Group also initiated a student co-design project to develop guidelines to address racism in teaching and learning spaces. Seventeen students from second year to PhD level, with lived experience of racism, were selected from 120 applicants to participate in this project over several weeks. The project produced guidelines on setting up an anti-racist classroom, and guidelines on responding to incidents of racism in teaching and learning spaces. These guidelines will be piloted and evaluated in 2026, and are designed to be a living document.

Truth-telling and justice

In addition to the launch of Gahgook, outlined above, the University advanced its commitment to truth-telling and justice in 2025 in a number of ways.

The Potter Museum of Art, on the Parkville campus, was reopened in 2025, and featured a landmark and award-winning exhibition – *65,000 Years: A short History of Australian Art* – that honoured the extraordinary continuity of Indigenous artistic practice. Curated by Professor Marcia Langton AO, Judith Ryan AM and Shanyssa McConville, the exhibition attracted more than 50,000 visitors, and engaged more than 4000 University students, connecting classroom study with living Australian history and culture.

The second volume of *Dhoombak Goobgoowana: A History of Indigenous Australia and the University of Melbourne* marked progress in the University's truth-telling journey. In 2025, the University's Repatriation Oversight and Compliance Committee was formed to work with Indigenous communities under Victoria's *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, supporting communities with the return of Ancestral remains and cultural materials.

The University appointed Travis Lovett to lead the new Centre for Truth-Telling and Dialogue, alongside an international Truth-telling Symposium focused on the practical application of truth-telling.

The annual Dungala Kaiela and Naarm Orations brought together Indigenous thought leaders, fostering dialogue on Indigenous agency and culture within and beyond campus. In the Goulburn Valley, partnerships with the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence, the Academy of Sport, Health and Education, and the Department of Rural Health continued to expand education, health equity and employment pathways.

Governance, Accountability and data

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Sub-Committee (DEISCo) to University Executive is responsible for the oversight of the University's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2030 and associated action plans, including the ARAP. In November 2025, the second comprehensive report against the ARAP was delivered to the Sub-Committee, giving visibility to University leaders of progress against this plan.

In 2025, the ARAP Implementation Working Group was chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Community). This group includes subject matter and lived-experience experts as well as student representatives from UMSU, UMSU-I and GSA. Accountable leaders from across the University provide reports and updates to this group, which provides expertise and decision-making to inform the prioritisation of actions. The Addressing Everyday Racisms Working group, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), delivers projects that emerge from the ARAP and impact on the everyday experiences of staff and students.

Both the ARAP Implementation Working Group and the Addressing Everyday Racisms Working Group work in partnership with the University's Anti-Racism Hallmark Research Initiative (ARHRI), Korin Korin (formerly the Office of Indigenous Employment and Development), the Legal and Risk portfolio, Student and Scholarly Services (SASS), the Chief People Officer, the Office of the Provost, and Deans and leaders across the University.

In 2025, the Indigenous Student Campus Barometer Survey was launched. This survey, incorporating a questionnaire and yarning circles, is designed to assess the efficacy of measures put in place to support Indigenous students. It will run again in 2026, gauging progress in this area. A signature project of Murmuk Djerring, the survey provides a detailed and comprehensive understanding of how Indigenous people experience racism on our campuses.

The Australian Human Rights Commission's Racism@Uni survey was delivered to all students and staff across the tertiary education sector in 2025. The data from this survey, and the 2025 Student Experience Survey and Staff Experience Survey provided data to inform our work in 2026. No stand-alone lived experience racism survey ran in 2025. Work will be undertaken in 2026 to determine the best approach to data collection in the coming years.

Complaints Policies and Processes

In 2025, the Student Complaints Framework project commenced. This is a University initiative to strengthen the governance, processes and accessibility of student complaints handling. The project aims to ensure the University meets evolving regulatory obligations while improving transparency, consistency and responsiveness in how student concerns are managed. The

work responds to several drivers, including new regulatory expectations (in particular the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence), sector guidance from regulators, and the University's commitments relating to safety, inclusion, and responding to racism and discrimination. Recommendations included policy changes such as the incorporation of explicit reference to racism in the Student Conduct Policy, to align with the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy. Other recommendations included a single student landing page for complaints, and updates to Speak Safely, the University's anonymous reporting tool.

Government and sector engagement

In 2025, the University collaborated with the Group of Eight and Universities Australia on matters relating to racism, including as an active participant in Go8 working groups to combat antisemitism. The University contributed to the development of the Universities Australia Definition of antisemitism that was announced in 2025 and subsequently adopted by the University, alongside the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition. The University welcomed the reports of Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Jillian Segal AO, and Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, Aftab Malik. The University commenced its response to the University Report Card process initiated by the Office of the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism involving the Group of Eight universities.

The University will actively continue sector and government engagement in 2026, including with the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.



The Student Lounge at the Southbank campus is a space to gather, study or relax. Image: Michael Kai.

Complaints at the University of Melbourne

Overview

The University has made a commitment to report transparently on complaints concerning racism, and outcomes relating to these complaints. How the University addresses complaints of racism is set out in the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy (AWBP), the Student Conduct Policy and the Student Complaints Policy. Sections 1–4 below provide data on formal complaints made under these policies.

To protect the confidentiality of complainants and respondents and to respect the University's obligations under privacy laws, this report does not provide information about individual complaints.

The report details a total of 80 complaints received in 2025 that are broadly connected with matters of racism, comprising:

1. 40 complaints alleging racism, discrimination, harassment or vilification, in breach of the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy (MPF1328)
2. 20 complaints alleging racial or religious discrimination, harassment or vilification in breach of the Student Conduct Policy (MPF1324)
3. 20 complaints relating to other behaviours, experiences in teaching and learning, University policies and cultural responsiveness, which were managed in accordance with the Student Complaints Policy (MPF1066) and other relevant policies.

The University's formal complaints processes do not require complainants to identify the form of racism experienced. However, where complainants did describe their experiences in 2025, most relate to the experience of international students at University, or to an individual's experience of antisemitism.

Complaints overview

40

staff-related
complaints

20

student
conduct
complaints

20

other
student
complaints/
formal
matters

Trauma-informed approach

The University is committed to ensuring that its complaints processes are culturally responsive, trauma-informed and timely, and continues to work to build confidence in members of the University community to report instances of racism.

The Safer Community Program provides support and advice to members of the University community about inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviour, including racism. Staff and students may contact the Program directly in advance of making a complaint, or may be referred for support by complaint-handling staff. The Safer Community Program takes a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach to the provision of advice and support, that may include referrals to other support services within the University. It works to ensure that complainants are aware of their options and are supported and empowered to make the decisions that are right for them in pursuing a complaint.

In investigating complaints, the University also takes a trauma-informed approach that is led by the complainant's priorities and decisions. This is balanced with procedural fairness in an approach that ensures the University meets its duty of care to the complainant, respondent and broader University community.



Students and staff participate in a smoking ceremony to mark the beginning of the academic year, with a formal Welcome to Country by Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Bill Nicholson. Image: Gregory Lorenzutti.

Terminology and limitations

There are a number of factors limiting what can be reported by the University in relation to racism. Processes for making complaints about racism do not involve collection of demographic data. Complainants have the opportunity to describe or categorise the form of racism they are alleging, but it is not a requirement. Complaints may be made anonymously, and those that are not made anonymously may not proceed if the complainant decides not to participate in investigations. Investigations may not be able to proceed without sufficient information. In some cases, this can reflect the fact that formal complaints processes do not capture and address everyday forms of racism, particularly where a potential complainant experiences repeated racist microaggressions, none of which on their own meet the policy thresholds for a formal complaint

In the context of the *Annual Report on Racism*, complaint refers to an issue raised or escalated via formal complaints channels, requiring further action and managed according to the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy, Student Conduct Policy or Student Complaints and Grievances Policy (now the Student Complaints Policy). Informal disclosures of racism are not captured in this report.

In the ARAP, the University has identified among its priorities the need for continued improvement in data collection on racism, processes to document and address formal and informal complaints and reports of racism, and to ensure end-to-end transparency regarding timelines and potential outcomes. The Student Complaints Framework Review, which commenced in 2025, looked to address issues associated with transparency, availability of anonymous reporting and mechanisms for recording disclosures. The implementation of the review’s recommendations is in progress.

The University is aware that racism is likely significantly underreported by students and staff. In the 2025 *Racism at the University of Melbourne Report*, produced by the University of Melbourne Student Union, 35% of the 353 survey respondents had experienced racism, 39% witnessed racism, and 36% had both experienced and witnessed racism. The disparity between these numbers and the numbers of formal complaints made in 2025 suggests that racism is underreported at the University of Melbourne. It may also suggest that there are not sufficient available mechanisms for reporting everyday racism that may not necessarily meet the thresholds of a formal complaint.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that international students experience significant levels of racism, in classrooms and in student accommodation. However, these students may not feel confident enough to make formal reports, due to concerns around impacts on visa status, or a lack of confidence in navigating the system. The complaints outlined below do not differentiate between international and domestic students.

The Indigenous Student Campus Barometer Final Report suggests that racism is also underreported amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with respondents reporting that they experience casual racism and microaggressions either ‘once or twice this year’ (27.8%) or ‘once or twice a month’ (24.6%). This data is not reflected in formal complaints, only two of which are clearly attributable to a student who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Actions contained in the ARAP relate to addressing the problem of underreporting, and improving knowledge and awareness of complaints processes and the University’s anti-racism work more broadly. Trust in processes will improve as the University reforms its complaints frameworks. The modest increase in complaints from 2024 to 2025 suggests that trust in processes is slowly increasing.

2025	2024
40 complaints made under the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy	33 complaints
20 complaints made under the Student Conduct Policy	9 complaints
20 complaints made regarding structural or systemic issues	20 complaints

Complaints against staff

In 2025, 40 complaints were received by the Workplace Integrity team alleging racism, discrimination, harassment or vilification by staff, in breach of the AWBP.

The Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy sets out the University’s expectations of staff behaviour and processes available should any individual wish to raise a concern about the conduct of a University employee. The policy specifies the following relevant prohibited conduct:

- Racism, including but not limited to racial discrimination, racial harassment, racial vilification, and offensive behaviour because of race, colour or national or ethnic origin.
- Unlawful discrimination based on a protected attribute.
- Harassment.
- Vilification of an individual or group of individuals.

The Workplace Integrity team assesses all formal complaints about employee behaviour. The team may work closely with various University portfolios to conduct this assessment and ensure appropriate support is available to all parties throughout the process. The assessment process can lead to a range of outcomes. These are outlined in Table 1 below.

In 2025, two complaints resulted in termination of employment, one in a written warning, one in performance management and two were referred to Workplace Relations for review under the Enterprise Agreement. Two complaints relating to structural issues resulted in reviews of processes and culture. Twelve complaints remained under investigation at the end of 2025.

Sixteen matters did not result in further action. Of these, six complaints were dismissed, one complainant did not want to proceed, and one provided insufficient information. Investigation of two complaints has been paused. Of the complaints that were dismissed, three related to social media posts that were not deemed to be breaches of the AWBP, and three were closed during the preliminary investigation as no breach of policy was identified. Seven of the complaints were referred to HR and were the subject of an educative-based response.

Where matters are determined to be out of scope of the policy, or complainants do not wish to proceed with an investigation, other actions may be taken to address the matter. In addition to the provision of feedback and educative conversations with employees and work units, actions included recommendations to faculties for facilitated discussion, and performance improvement plans.

Outcome/Status of complaint	Number of matters	Details
Termination of employment	2	Complaints substantiated under the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy (AWBP) resulting in termination
Written warning	1	Complaints substantiated under the AWBP resulting in a written warning
Performance management	1	Complaint substantiated under the AWBP resulting in performance management
Referred to Workplace Relations for review under the Enterprise Agreement	2	Complaints referred for consideration under the EA
Complaints relating to structural racism	2	Complaints resulted in reviews of organisational processes and workplace culture
Complaints made to the Governance team	3	Responded to by the Chancellor
Did not meet the AWPB threshold – no action taken		
• Dismissed	6	Three related to social media posts that were not deemed breaches of the AWBP and three were closed during preliminary investigation
• Complainant did not wish to proceed	1	Matter was closed
• Insufficient information provided	1	Matter could not proceed due to insufficient information
• Referred to HR for educative follow-up	7	Matters did not meet the AWBP threshold but were referred to HR and addressed through educative conversations
Investigation paused	2	Investigations paused at the request of complainants
Under investigation	12	Remain under investigation with outcomes yet to be determined as of December 2025
Total	40	

Table 1: Complaints made under the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy (AWBP)

Complaints against students

In 2025, 20 complaints were received alleging breaches of the Student Conduct Policy relating to racial or religious vilification.

The Student Conduct Policy sets out behavioural expectations for students, and outlines processes by which misconduct is reported and addressed. The Policy prohibits inappropriate behaviour that harms another member of the University community, including:

- Harassment
- Discrimination against other individuals based on a protected attribute defined in University policy or at law
- Vilifying an individual or group of individuals¹

Complaints about racism are managed in accordance with this policy when:

1. The complaint is made about a named student, a group of students, or a person who may subsequently be identified as a student
2. The behaviour is alleged to have occurred on University premises, or while using University facilities and services, or while engaging in University activities, and
3. The complainant wishes the matter to receive a formal response, or the Academic Registrar determines there is a need to formally respond to the matter.

Formal complaints made about student behaviour are assessed by the Academic Registrar, who is the officer with responsibility for student conduct (general misconduct) and student complaints. Following preliminary assessment, matters found to be within the scope of the policy may be referred directly to a student disciplinary committee or referred for investigation. If the Academic Registrar determines that the findings of an investigation have sufficient merit, the matter will then be referred to a student disciplinary committee. The Committee makes a finding in relation to each allegation and determines a penalty as appropriate. Should the Committee make a finding that the student breached the policy, penalties range from a reprimand or caution, educative directives, enrolment restrictions or conditions, or recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor of suspension or expulsion from the University.

When an anonymous complaint is raised, the Academic Registrar undertakes a preliminary assessment to determine whether there is sufficient detail to progress the complaint in a procedurally fair way, while maintaining the anonymity of the complainant.

The assessment process can lead to a range of findings. The outcomes of assessments conducted in 2025 are listed in Table 2 below. A number of complaints resulted in warnings from the Academic Registrar or were referred to the relevant faculty for

follow-up. Determinations were yet to be made in six cases, as of the end of 2025. No finding of racism was made in eight cases, and two were determined to be out of scope.

Outcome/status of complaint	Number of matters
Warning from the Academic Registrar	5
Referred to faculty for follow-up	3
No finding of racism	8
Complaint out of scope of the policy	2
Considered under Student Conduct Policy (General)	1
Other	1
Total	20

Table 2: Complaints made under the Student Conduct Policy

Types of complaints

Complaints made by students

- 64% related to interpersonal racism.
- 56% of complaints of interpersonal racism related to classroom conduct (by staff and students).
- 33% of all complaints made by students related to structural or systemic issues.

Complaints made by staff

- 64% of complaints by staff related to discriminatory language or conduct.

Under-reporting gap

UMSU’s 2025 Racism Survey received 353 responses. Of these respondents, 35% experienced racism, 39% witnessed racism and 36% both experienced and witnessed racism. These figures suggest that incidents of racism are still underreported through University channels.

¹ The additional clause added to this policy in March 2026 prohibits ‘acts of racism including but not limited to racial discrimination, racial harassment, racial vilification and offensive behaviour because of race, colour or national or ethnic origin’.

Student Complaints and Grievances Policy and other formal complaints

A number of matters reported in 2025 that were related to alleged racism did not fall under the AWBP or Student Conduct Policy, as they did not allege misconduct by students or staff of the University. The Office of the Academic Registrar received 20 complaints of this nature.

Fourteen of these complaints related to students’ experiences of racism in the course of engaging with processes relating to admissions, enrolment, assessment, results and graduation. Where these complaints were treated as teaching and learning issues (as in the case of assessment-related complaints) they were referred by the Academic Registrar to the relevant faculties, in line with policy.

Six complaints were received that related to student experiences with University systems and services. The majority of these were referred to the relevant part of the University for consideration. Two complaints were dismissed due to no finding of racism or bias, and two recommendations were made to improve cultural responsiveness.

Two complainants described feelings of being unsafe due to the presence of protest activity on campus. These complaints were escalated to relevant leaders and in each case, the University responded to the complainant.

Complaints made by students under the Student Conduct and Complaints Policies were resolved in under 3 weeks, on average, with the majority of complaints resolved in under two weeks.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Protest activity at the University of Melbourne decreased significantly in 2025, after the encampments and building occupation that occurred during 2024. Complaints of antisemitism and Islamophobia in 2025 are included in the numbers reported above, and are also detailed below.

Eighteen complaints were made in 2025 that related to antisemitism. The nature of these complaints varied significantly. Complaints related to social media posts made by students and staff from personal accounts, were found to be outside of the scope of University policy and/or not a breach of the relevant policy. This included a complaint made by an external advocacy group and one made by a member of the public. Complaints also related to tutors’ comments and a staff member’s stated support for Hamas. One academic staff member was dismissed for antisemitic conduct, two casual staff members were not re-engaged, and two students received warnings for misconduct due to antisemitic vilification of Jewish staff members.

Complaints also related to the shouting of slogans, and the distribution of materials, including an anti-war petition and anti-Israeli government materials. At least one complaint of antisemitic conduct was directed by a Jewish member of the University community towards other Jewish staff or students. The University also received an anonymous call about posters on campus, and an email from a member of the public about a sign used in a pro-Palestine protest.

Two complaints of Islamophobia were made by students, and one by a staff member. Of the complaints made by students one was found not to be Islamophobia, and one remained under investigation at the end of 2025. The complaint made by a staff member related to comments made online, and the commenter could not be identified.

Find out more about Anti-Racism at the University of Melbourne at
about.unimelb.edu.au/diversity-inclusion/anti-racism