

BME STUDENT GUIDE

HOW TO REPORT RACISM AND WHERE TO ACCESS SUPPORT



**STUDENT
ADVICE SERVICE**

BME STUDENT GUIDE

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This guide has been developed by the Student Advice Service in collaboration with BME Sabbatical Officers and has been guided by feedback received from College BME Officers. We hope this information will help you find the support you need. We have made every effort to include support services where you can speak with a BME person, although this might vary from service to service. We also hope this information will help you navigate the reporting options available from the University, College and externally.

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FOREWORD FROM THE BME OFFICER 2021/22

Both as BME Officer and from my own experiences as a student at Cambridge, I have felt firsthand how difficult it can be to navigate this institution as a person of colour at times. Year on year, admission statistics are evidencing the steady progress the University is making to improve racial diversity amongst incoming students. Whilst this is welcome news, an increase in BME admission does little to address the longstanding inequalities and structural barriers that continue to negatively impact the experiences of BME students throughout our time here.

Our community is not a monolith. There will never be a singular 'Cambridge experience' for BME students. But currently, when things go wrong, accessing support and specialist advice to address the racialised experiences we face is an isolating, unclear and unfulfilling process. In lieu of professional guidance, we turn to one another for support, solidarity and perhaps most importantly, assurance that we are not alone in our experiences. Building communities of care is undoubtedly something BME students at Cambridge should be proud of, but for too long, we have carried the burden of looking after one another to the detriment of our own welfare and study.

This is why I'm so pleased to have contributed to the creation of this fantastic resource from the Students Advice Service. Whilst a guide will not remedy the longstanding systemic inequalities of our University, this resource should serve as a vital tool for any BME student who understandably may feel intimidated and isolated in their efforts to seek help. I cannot pretend that the institutional support available for BME students is anywhere near where it should be, but there is help out there.

I hope this resource will be of use to the students who have experienced racial discrimination and empower them to seek the help that is right for them.

Tara Choudhury

RACISM

On the [End Everyday Racism](#) website, racism is defined as *an ideology and a set of practices based on ideas of inherent white 'racial' superiority that normalises control, domination and exclusion over people of colour, while legitimating privilege and oppression, having substantive effects on the organisation of our economic, political, and social lives.* Racism includes microaggressions, islamophobia, antisemitism, etc.

The University's [Code of Conduct for Students in Respect of Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) provides examples of the types of behaviour which the University considers to be unacceptable. These include *making offensive references to a person's race, ethnicity, skin colour, religion or nationality, dress, culture, background or customs which have the effect of ridiculing or undermining an individual or fostering hatred and/or prejudice towards individuals or particular groups.*

ISLAMOPHOBIA OR ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED

[TELL MAMA](#) (a charity that helps people report any form of anti-Muslim abuse) *classifies an anti-Muslim incident as any malicious act aimed at Muslims, their material property or Islamic organisations and where there is evidence that the act has anti-Muslim motivation or content, or that the victim was targeted because of their Muslim identity. This also includes incidents where the victim was perceived to be a Muslim.*

RACISM

ANTISEMITISM

The University of Cambridge has adopted the international definition of antisemitism which defines antisemitism as a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

You can report anti-semitic incidents and access support from the dedicated team at Community Security Trust (CST). More information can be found [here](#).

SUPPORT

If you have experienced racism, there is support available to you. Whether you wish to discuss your experience with someone you trust or explore reporting options, it is important to access support. You can talk to a friend, your College Tutor, the College Nurse, the Chaplain, a BME counsellor at the University Counselling Service (UCS), an academic from your College or the University, an Advisor at the Student Advice Service, etc.

Whether the conversation is formal or informal, you could bring a supporter with you. If so, you might wish to tell the person you meet in advance if someone will accompany you.

It is important to remember that disclosing your experience to someone does not necessarily mean that you made an official complaint or report and action would be taken. If you are not sure whether any action will be taken as a result of your disclosure, ask the person you spoke with what will happen next.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Usually, any information you disclose to a College or University member of staff will be kept confidential. Although it would be a good idea for you to ask about confidentiality before the conversation takes place to be sure that this will not be shared with anyone without your permission. This will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions and raise concerns you may have about confidentiality.

ACCESSING SUPPORT FROM A BME STAFF MEMBER

It's important to access support from someone you trust and feel comfortable with. There is support available to you from your College and University, although not all of the support options will have BME staff members. If you prefer to speak to a BME member of staff when accessing support or engaging in a procedure, you may request this. Further information should be provided to you then.

SUPPORT

COLLEGE SUPPORT

You can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with or trust. This could be your Tutor, Nurse, Chaplain, etc.

Discrimination and Harassment Contact

Colleges have appointed a Discrimination and Harassment Contact whose role is to provide a listening year, signpost you to further sources of support and help you explore reporting options, should you wish to report the incident.

BME Officers

Most colleges in their JCR and/or MCR have a BME Officer who could act as an approachable point of contact and direct you to further support. You can find your BME Officer through the College Reps page of the SU website which can be accessed [here](#). To view a list of committee members of your College J/MCR you would need to log into the website using your CRS id. You can also speak with your J/MCR President to find out who your BME Officer is.

Loud and Clear Guide

This is a project initiated by a group of students from Clare College Cambridge, aiming at raising awareness about sexual assault and harassment in colleges and the University. The guide includes a list of resources students can access categorised on student demographics comprising resources for BME students. Please note that you will need to request access to the Guide.

To find out more about the project please visit <https://linktr.ee/loudandclear>

SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

University Counselling Service (UCS)

The UCS is a free service available to all Cambridge University students. If you prefer to speak with a BME Counsellor you could indicate this on the Student Support Request Form. Further information about counselling and a copy of the online referral form can be found [here](#).

You can contact them by email at reception@studentsupport.cam.ac.uk

Race Equality at Cambridge

[Here](#) you can find further sources of support and reporting options available for students at the University.

End Everyday Racism

This research project aims to develop an understanding of everyday racism to build a collective case to support antiracism advocacy and social justice activism at the University and further afield. You can read more about the project [here](#), access further support and share your experiences [here](#).

Black Advisory Hub

[Here](#) you can access information about dealing with racism and discrimination, including first points of contact and reporting options to your College or the University.

SUPPORT

SUPPORT FROM YOUR STUDENTS' UNION

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Campaign

The BME Campaign represents, supports, and advocates for all BME students at the University of Cambridge.

The BME Campaign aims to bring together anti-racist organisations from across the University to campaign for change. They organise events to build communities of care and compassion for BME students, coordinate with JCR/MCR reps and societies to strengthen BME student representation, and campaign on the big issues that matter to BME students - everything ranging from the lack of targeted mental health support for BME students and racist treatment by student-facing staff to the Prevent Duty and the Collegiate University's continued connections with the arms trade, the fossil fuel lobby, and corporations that profit from the death and destruction of communities of colour across the globe.

FUSE and **FLY** are community-building spaces for BME students who also self-identify as LGBT+ and/or women, respectively. Both run private groups and social events where members can build community. You can join their public Facebook pages where they share news stories and events, in addition to a secret group where people can freely share their experiences and ask for advice.

Further information can be accessed [here](#).

BME Mental Health Toolkit

This is a guide containing detailed advice for BME students on how to access appropriate support and reasonable adjustments for mental health-related issues.

Last updated in the academic year 2022 - 23.

SUPPORT

The Student Advice Service

We are a student support service provided by Cambridge Students' Union. This means that we are independent of the University and colleges. We provide free, confidential and impartial support on any topic, from making friends to working relationships, from welfare concerns to intermission, and from exams to discipline.

What can you expect when accessing the Student Advice Service?

All students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, race or disability will be treated with respect and can expect access to a confidential, non-judgemental, non-directive and inclusive service. We can provide a safe space for you where you can share your experiences. We can help you explore reporting options and identify support available from your College, University and external.

Confidentiality - no information you share with us will be disclosed to any third party without having your express prior permission to do so. This includes not confirming that you have used or are using the service without your consent. There may be instances where we need to break confidentiality, such as where there appears to be a serious and imminent risk to the student's own or to others' safety. More information can be accessed [here](#).

Inclusive

We welcome and support students from all social backgrounds, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, race or disability. Although we do not currently have a BME Advisor, all our Advisors have experience and knowledge of the available reporting procedures and support available to students within the colleges and University. Between July 2021 and May 2022 of the students who gave us information on their ethnicity, 55% identified as BME or other ethnicities.

To book an appointment to speak with an Advisor please follow [this link](#) where you can fill in the appointment request form or submit an enquiry.

EXTERNAL BME SUPPORT AND REPORT SERVICES

Please note that we do not guarantee the quality of the service provided by these organisations, as such we do not endorse them.

TellMAMA

This is a charity that helps people report any form of anti-Muslim abuse. Some of the services they offer are: free counselling support to victims of anti-Muslim hate or islamophobia, emotional support, legal signposting, advocacy and court attendance support.

You can report an incident or a hate crime [here](#).

To contact them please fill in their Contact Us form [here](#).

Further resources can be accessed [here](#).

The Community Security Trust (CST)

You can report anti-semitic incidents and access support from CST's dedicated team. They can liaise with the police and other bodies to help ensure that any incident is dealt with properly. If you do not want to contact the police directly, CST can do so on your behalf as a 'Third Party Reporter'.

For more information, you can call 020 8457 9999 or email incidents@cst.org.uk.

To report an incident please click [here](#).

UJS - The Voice of Jewish Students

This is the Union of Jewish Students which includes 69 Jewish Societies across campuses across the UK and Ireland. They create and deliver campaigns, fight prejudice, advance inclusion, and inspire education and action.

Cambridge J-Soc hosts weekly Friday night dinners, socials and events for Jewish holidays, as well as pub quizzes, kosher formals, barbecues, etc.

Instagram - [@cambridgejsoc](#)

Facebook group - Cambridge University Jewish Society

EXTERNAL BME SUPPORT AND REPORT SERVICES

The Monitoring Group

This is a community-based anti-racist organisation where you can report racism. If you need assistance you can indicate this in your report and you will be contacted as soon they can.

You can contact them on the details below:

Telephone 020 7582 7438

Email office@tmg-uk.org

Hub of Hope

On [this link](#) you can search for services and resources by area and by the type of service.

EXTERNAL BME-SPECIFIC SERVICES FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT, ASSAULT OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Please note that we do not guarantee the quality of the service provided by these organisations, as such we do not endorse them.

Ashiana

Ashiana is an independent charity led by and for BME women. They offer specialist services for BME women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of VAWG (violence against women and girls). Some of the services offered are specialist advice and advocacy, counselling and support groups. Further information can be found [here](#).

Phone 020 8539 0427

Email info@ashiana.org.uk

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK)

This is a national organisation for Muslim women aiming to improve social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls. Some of their support services include a helpline, counselling, advocacy and much more.

Contact the MWN Helpline

www.mwnhelpline.co.uk

0800 999 5786 / 0303 999 5786

info@mwnhelpline.co.uk

MWNUK Counselling

To be referred to one of the counsellors please contact the Muslim Women's Network Helpline on 0303 999 5786 or 0800 999 5786.

https://www.mwnuk.co.uk/counselling_196_c.php

EXTERNAL BME-SPECIFIC SERVICES FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT, ASSAULT OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Sistah Space

This is a community-based non-profit organisation for African heritage women and girls, that provides a safe space for anyone who is concerned about domestic abuse. Their services include domestic, sexual, discriminatory, organisational and financial and material abuse. They provide advocacy, one-to-one support, group sessions, support in court and educational classes.

You can contact them by phone at 0207 846 8350 or by email at info@sistah-space.co.uk.

Hersana

This is a charity whose projects and services aim to end violence against black women and girls, empower and educate. Their services and projects include counselling, advocacy, outreach, live chat and training&development.

You can contact them by phone at 07376 293 487 or by email at info@hersana.org.

The Latin American Women's Rights Service (LARWS)

LARWS offers free and confidential specialist services for all Latin American women, including advice and counselling for women facing gender violence.

You can contact their helpline on 0808 145 4909, Monday - Friday between 11am - 1pm.

EXTERNAL BME-SPECIFIC SERVICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Black Minds Matter UK

This is a charity that seeks to connect Black individuals and their families with free mental health services provided by Black therapists. Their vision is to make mental health topics more relevant and accessible for all Black people in the U.K., removing the stigma and remodelling the services to be relevant for the Black community.

You can enquire about therapy [here](#).

You can access mental health resources [here](#).

Chayn

Is an online platform where you can access further information and specialist resources that can help you if you struggle with your mental health. On this page you can access advice on what to do if you think you are at immediate risk of harm from someone or yourself, you can access a global directory of helplines to help you find help near you, a list of techniques to help you self-regulate. You can also email or get in touch with them through social media if no other services are available and nothing else has helped you feel better.

Muslim Youth Helpline

This charity offers faith and culturally sensitive support by phone, live chat, whatsapp or email. The website also has a webchat function. Their helpline workers come from diverse Muslim backgrounds in the UK. They understand the issues young Muslim people face and are trained in faith and cultural sensitivity.

Open hours: 4pm-10pm, 365 days a year

Call: 0808 808 2008

EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR BME INDIVIDUALS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

UK Black Pride

celebrates LGBTQI+ people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Middle Eastern descent. They organize an annual celebration during pride month, as well as a variety of activities throughout the year in and around the UK, which also promotes and advocates for the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual health and wellbeing of the communities we represent.

QTI Coalition of Colour

is an organisation based in Cambridge that provides community and support for queer people of colour. This is open to students and local residents and is a great opportunity to form wider support and community networks within Cambridge.

AZ Magazine

is a platform that allows Black people and people of colour (QTIBPOC) to showcase their talents, and a voice for those who have felt excluded from the wider LGBTQ+ community.

BlackOut UK

is a not-for-profit social enterprise run and owned by a volunteer collective of black gay men.

COLOURS Gendered Intelligence

is a registered charity that works to increase understanding of gender diversity and improve the lives of trans people.

DesiQ

is a space created by and for the members of the LGBTQ+ and GNC South Asian Diaspora.

Gaysians

is a movement highlighting South Asian LGBTQ+ voices. You can access resources on topics such as housing, faith and mental health.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR BME INDIVIDUALS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

Hidayah

is a charity for queer Muslim people. Their mission is to provide support and welfare for LGBTQI+ Muslims, aspiring to promote a society free from discrimination.

House of Rainbow

supports sister organisations in twenty-two countries in Africa and the Caribbean and has become a leading, global advocate for LGBTQI+ people of faith.

Purple Rain Collective

is a collective space for Queer, Trans and Intersex Black, People of Colour in the UK to mobilise, converse on their experiences and develop strategies for safety, resistance and liberation.

Sarbat LGBTQ Sikhs

is a volunteer-led group addressing LGBT+ issues from a Sikh perspective. They aim to raise awareness of the issues experienced by LGBT+ Sikhs by fostering conversations; they develop spaces where LGBT+ Sikhs meet each other and find support; they provide useful resources about the Sikh perspective on LGBT+ issues.

Naz and Matt Foundation

aims to empower and support LGBTQI+ individuals, their friends and family to work towards resolving challenges linked to sexuality or gender identity, particularly where religion is heavily influencing the situation.

OTHER EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)

EASS is a helpline where individuals can access informal advice and assistance on issues relating to equality and human rights, including racism. They can support you in trying to resolve the issue experienced informally through processes that might be available to you. The EASS helpline does not offer legal advice.

If you have a question or wish to discuss your situation, you can contact their free phone line on 0808 800 0082, or textphone 0808 800 0084. Lines are open Monday - Friday 9am - 7pm and Saturday 10am - 2pm.

Victim Support

Can help anyone affected by crime, not only those who experience it directly, but also their friends, family and any other people involved. They provide free and confidential support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police. Some of the support they offer are

- Information and advice
- Immediate emotional and practical help
- Help in navigating the criminal justice system

To find out more about what support you can access from Victim Support, please click [here](#).

To contact them, please click [here](#).

You can also contact the Victim's Hub in Cambridgeshire

Phone 0800 781 6818

Lines are open 8am-7pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-5pm on Saturdays.

The Victims' Hub is run by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Out-of-hours Supportline 08 08 16 89 111.

REPORT RACISM

The reporting options available to you from the University and your College depend on whether the report is about another student or a member of staff. The below flowcharts can assist you to identify the options available in both cases.

STUDENT ON STUDENT

Flowchart of reporting options for BME students who wish to report racist behaviour of other students

STUDENT ON STAFF MEMBER

Flowchart of reporting options for BME students who wish to report racist behaviour of staff members

REPORT RACISM TO THE UNIVERSITY

ANONYMOUS REPORTING FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

Use this form to anonymously report inappropriate behaviour from students and staff members. As the report is anonymous, no action will be taken. The information is recorded for monitoring purposes.

The Office of Student Conduct, Complaints staff members have received race awareness training and all decision-makers are required to complete training. Those who make decisions regarding any protected characteristic (including race) will have received training in relation to that protected characteristic.

REPORT A UNIVERSITY STAFF MEMBER

If the report is about a member of staff, you could submit a formal complaint. The complaint will usually be investigated if:

- It was submitted within the deadline - 20 working days from the time of the incident;
- It is within the purpose of this process.

If the complaint is formally investigated, outcomes could include:

- A formal investigation into the behaviour with the HR office;
- An apology;
- Diversity training.

More information on the next steps and options available can be found [here](#).

REPORT RACISM TO THE UNIVERSITY

REPORT ANOTHER STUDENT

Informal Complaint Procedure

This is a mechanism used to reach a behavioural agreement by limiting student interactions. It will not investigate the behaviour and it will not make any findings.

Outcomes would include a list of proposed actions. If all or some are agreed to, these will become a formal behaviour agreement.

You can refer the case to a disciplinary concern at any time.

Raise a disciplinary concern

You can submit a concern form if you want the University to formally investigate the incident. If the University finds that there has been a breach of the rules of behaviour, outcomes could include:

- An apology if wanted;
- A written warning;
- An educative or reflective session;
- Restrictions or conditions on the right to use University premises, facilities or services;
- Permanent or temporary exclusion from the University.

REPORT RACISM TO YOUR COLLEGE

END EVERYDAY RACISM

REPORT TO THE POLICE

REPORT RACISM TO YOUR COLLEGE

Speak with your Tutor, College Discrimination and Harassment Contact or someone you trust in your College about your experience.

Some colleges have an Advisor to BME students, a BME Tutor, a Race and Equality Champion or other BME roles where students can go for support. Check with your College if you can speak with a BME staff member about your experience. You can also check the table available on our website to help you find this information. Please note that while we try to update this information regularly, it is always a good idea to check with the College and let them know if you have a preference.

When wanted, you can ask about the formal procedures and how to initiate these. If unsure, you can check with your College if a formal process has been initiated following your report. They should be able to tell you if your report remains confidential and no action will be taken unless you indicate otherwise. They can also tell you how you can initiate a formal process.

END EVERYDAY RACISM

This is a safe and confidential way of recording racist experiences at Cambridge that have happened to you, someone you know or you have witnessed. It is not a formal reporting procedure and no action will be taken. Share your experience [here](#).

REPORT TO THE POLICE

Click [here](#) for options for reporting a hate crime to the Police.

Further details on each option can be accessed on the links provided in the flowcharts. If you have any questions or wish to discuss these options further, please contact the [Student Advice Service](#), your College Tutor, your Chaplain, or a member of the [Office of Student Conduct Complaints and Appeals \(OSCCA\)](#).