

Living Black at University: Appendices

Appendix I: Defining 'Black'

As with the majority of literature that reports on ethnic groupings, we capitalise all ethnic groups. This maintains consistency and aids readability. The experiences of students are not homogenous, and neither is there a single Black, Asian or female experience¹.

Emic ethnographic research that investigates the experiences of marginalised groups acknowledges the intersectionality of identity in contrast to etic research, which is outside and 'looking in', tending to take an essentialist approach that homogenises certain groups. An example of this homogenisation would be the term BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) or BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)² which groups together a diverse group of all those who are non-White.³

Further to this, in much research - such as that by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) - the terms BME or BAME are used exclusively to refer to home/EU students and exclude international students. The experiences of Black students differ from those of Asian students, mixed-race students, and others not racialised as White. The experiences of international students are important to this research.

Our research therefore disaggregates racial groups and focuses specifically on the experiences of Black students. What we mean as 'Black', within the context of this project, is now explored.

Race is a social construct, and whilst it is a part of everyday life⁴, its usefulness is contested⁵. Self-identification is not particularly helpful when dealing with social constructs as we are asking individuals to use classifications they had no part in developing and may not ascribe to⁶.

Additionally, self-identification imposes a responsibility on those from already marginalised groups to work out where they fit within a social construct. This responsibility creates work for those who already suffer oppression and it would be unethical to do this. It is society, rather than the individual, that racialises people⁷, and for those defined as 'Black' it is a term that identifies a group of people who have been racialised as Black.

The rapper Akala, for example, discusses his mixed Scottish and Jamaican ancestry but holds that from an early age it was his Blackness that meant he was racialised by others - be they school friends, teachers, peers, or the police - as 'Black'.

The writer and broadcaster Afua Hirsch, also of mixed ancestry, notes that she is racialised as 'Black' and that this seems to either dwarf her identity as British or erase it altogether.

In this report, the term 'Black' is therefore used to include all those who are racialised as 'Black', whether home/EU or international students. Whilst there are differences between the experiences of

¹ Emma Dabiri, *What White People Can Do Now: From Allyship to Coalition* (Penguin, 2021)

² The acronym BAME stands for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and is defined as all ethnic groups except White ethnic groups. It does not relate to country origin or affiliation.

³ Afua Hirsch, *Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging (Reprint Ed.)* (2018, Vintage)

⁴ Afua Hirsch, *Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging (Reprint Ed.)* (2018, Vintage) and; Akala, *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* (2018, Two Roads)

⁵ Emma Dabiri, *What White People Can Do Now: From Allyship to Coalition* (Penguin, 2021)

⁶ Devon W. Carbado and Mitu Gulati, 'Working Identity' (1999-2000) *Cornell Law Review* 85 1259

⁷ Akala, *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* (2018, Two Roads)

Black home/EU students and Black international students, this research focuses on the impact of Blackness on the student experience.

Appendix II: Details about the main survey

We surveyed students studying at UK HEIs, requesting that only those that lived in halls of residence or PBSA participate. We collected 1055 responses, all of whom responded that they either lived in university halls of residence (72%) or PBSA (28%).

The survey data gives an opportunity to test how students responded by ethnicity, specifically testing the differences between responses from White students and Black/Black British students. The mean score results to all statements in the survey are given in Appendix III and it is noticeable that in most statements the Black/Black British respondents' scores were less positive than the White respondents. The report focuses on those statements where there were statistically significant differences. The survey results were tested by YouthSight for differences between White students and Black/Black British students to 95% confidence level or better using t-tests for the mean scores and z-tests for the percentage results.

We collected data on age, gender, disability, ethnicity, and nationality to ensure that we had a cross-section of the relevant population and to check for anomalies within the data. We have analysed the data below by ethnicity, specifically focusing on the experiences of Black/ Black British students.

In addition to the monitoring questions, we asked 22 questions about students' perceptions of their accommodation, relationships, environment and policies and procedures. These questions were framed as statements and the students were asked on a scale of 1-5 to indicate whether they agreed. 5 was 'strongly agree', 4 was 'agree', 3 was 'neither agree nor disagree', 2 was 'disagree' and 1 was 'strongly disagree'.

Where a numerical value is given to cumulative answers to a statement, this is the mean score of those numerical answers. Students indicating 'N/A' were given a score of 0 and these were disregarded when calculating the mean scores.

There were a further eight questions about experiences of racism in accommodation. Students were asked to rank the frequency they had had an experience from 'Always' through 'Often', 'Sometimes' and 'Rarely' to 'Never'. We felt that a mean score here did not help with understanding the data and instead calculated a percentage against each of the responses.

We included free-text boxes at the end of each section inviting the students to add qualitative responses to each of the following questions:

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the policies and procedures in your halls of residence?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience of race and racism in your accommodation?

Appendix III: Results for main survey statements

Key to tables

Positive statements, where agreeing or strongly agreeing is a positive experience.

Negative statements, where agreeing or strongly agreeing is a negative experience.

Mean score and scores that do not deviate from the mean.

Mean score for an ethnic group that differs from the mean average in a way that shows a more positive experience.

Mean score for an ethnic group that differs from the mean average in a way that shows a more negative experience.

Bold type marks statements where the GPA from White students and Black/Black British students showed a statistically significant difference to a 95% confidence level or better.

Summary of How Students Generally Feel About Their Accommodation by Ethnicity

Statement	Mean Average	Mean White	Mean Black/Black British
My accommodation was as I expected it to be before I arrived.	3.7	3.7	3.6
I feel comfortable expressing who I am in my accommodation.	3.8	3.9	3.7
I feel a sense of belonging in my accommodation.	3.5	3.6	3.2
I find it difficult to fit in with others in my accommodation.	2.8	2.8	2.9
I feel safe and secure in my accommodation.	3.9	4.0	3.7

Summary of How Students Feel About Their Environment by Ethnicity

Statement	Mean Average	Mean White	Mean Black/Black British
I can easily access culturally relevant services like hair care, food and makeup close to where I live.	3.8	3.9	3.4
I feel comfortable participating in formal and informal activities within my accommodation.	3.7	3.8	3.5
I expected there to be more people that looked like me in my accommodation.	2.8	2.6	3.2
My accommodation feels like a White space.	2.9	2.9	3.1
In my accommodation students of different ethnicities tend to stick together and not mix.	3.2	3.1	3.3
There are positive images of diversity in my accommodation.	3.5	3.5	3.5
There are references in my accommodation to historic figures or events, i.e., slavery, that are offensive.	2.2	2.2	2.3
My accommodation needs to be decolonised	2.7	2.7	3.0

Summary of How Students Feel About Relationships by Ethnicity

Statement	Mean Average	Mean White	Mean Black/Black British
I have close friendships with students of different ethnicities in my accommodation.	3.7	3.7	3.5
My ability to form significant friendships has been negatively affected by COVID-19.	3.9	4.0	3.7
I have a good support network that I could rely on if things went wrong.	3.7	3.7	3.6

Summary of How Students Feel About Policies and Procedures by Ethnicity

Statement	Mean Average	Mean White	Mean Black/Black British
There are clear and accessible policies promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in student accommodation.	3.6	3.6	3.5
There is a zero-tolerance policy on racism in my accommodation.	3.8	3.9	3.5
I feel comfortable reporting incidents of racial discrimination that occurred in student accommodation.	3.7	3.8	3.4
I would know how to report acts of racism in my accommodation.	3.5	3.6	3.3
If I had a comment or complaint about my accommodation, I would know how to report it.	3.8	3.8	3.7
If I reported a concern about my accommodation, I am confident it would be taken seriously and dealt with.	3.6	3.6	3.5

Appendix IV: Main Survey Full Question Set

1. I agree to take part in the survey and I understand that my participation is voluntary. I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I consent to my information being anonymously stored for use in future research.

Yes/No

TELL US ABOUT YOU

2. Which of the following best describes where you live during term-time?

Please note definition of PBSA* in answer list: PBSA (Purpose Built Student Accommodation) is housing built specifically by private developers for students to live in, usually taking the form of cluster flats (many rooms with shared kitchen and living areas), or private studios, both with attached leisure facilities and these days 'cool' added bonuses like cinemas, gyms, and games rooms.

1. University halls of residence
2. Private PBSA (Purpose Built Student Accommodation)*
3. Parent/guardian home
4. Prefer not to say
5. Other (please specify)

3. What is the name of the University or HEI (Higher Education Institution) you attend or most recently attended?

[drop down box]

4. Which of these terms best describes your status:

Full-time undergraduate student
Full-time post-graduate student
Part-time undergraduate student
Part-time post-graduate student
Recent graduate (from 2015 onwards)
Recent post-graduate (from 2015 onwards)
Other (please specify):
Prefer not to say

5. Which best describes your student status?

Home/EU
International
Prefer not to say

6. What is your ethnicity?

White

- British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Other

Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed or multiple background background

Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other black background

Other Ethnic Group

- If any other ethnic group (please specify):[text box]

I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin

7. What is your nationality?

[text box]

8. Which age bracket are you in?

17 or younger
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
Over 64
Prefer not to say

9. What is your gender?

Male
Female
Non-binary
Other (please specify):
Prefer not to say

10. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes
No
Prefer not to say

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LIVING IN YOUR ACCOMMODATION?

For each of the following statements indicate how you feel on a scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. If the statement is not applicable to you please select n/a.

1. My accommodation was as I expected it to be before I arrived.

[Strongly Agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree – Disagree - Strongly Disagree – n/a]

2. I feel comfortable expressing who I am in my accommodation.

3. I expected there to be more people that looked like me in my accommodation.

4. I feel a sense of belonging in my accommodation.

5. I find it difficult to fit in with others in my accommodation.

6. I can easily access culturally relevant services like hair care, food and make up close to where I live.

7. It is important to me that there is a racially diverse student population.

8. My accommodation feels like a White space.

9. My accommodation feels safe and secure.

10. In my accommodation students of different ethnicities tend to stick together and not mix.

11. I have close friendships with students of different ethnicities in my accommodation.

12. My ability to form significant friendships has been negatively affected by COVID-19.
13. I feel comfortable participating in formal and informal activities within my accommodation.
14. I have a good support network that I could rely on if things went wrong.
15. There are clear and accessible policies promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in student accommodation.
16. There is a zero-tolerance policy on racism in my accommodation.
17. I feel comfortable reporting incidents of racial discrimination that occurred in student accommodation.
18. I would know how to report acts of racism in my accommodation.
19. If I had a comment or complaint about my accommodation, I would know how to report it.
20. If I reported a concern about my accommodation, I am confident it would be taken seriously and dealt with.
21. There are positive images of diversity in my accommodation.
22. There are references in my accommodation to historic figures or events, i.e. slavery, that are offensive.
23. My accommodation needs to be decolonised.
24. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the policies and procedures in your accommodation or halls of residence?

TELL US ABOUT YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RACISM IN YOUR ACCOMMODATION?

For each of the following statements indicate how often the following have occurred on a scale of 'always' to 'never'. If the statement is not applicable to you please select n/a.

1. **Racial diversity is celebrated in my accommodation.**

[Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never - n/a]

2. **I have been the victim of racism in my accommodation.**
3. **I have witnessed acts of racism in my accommodation.**
4. **I have heard other students say racist things in my accommodation.**
5. **I have witnessed other students positively confront racist attitudes in my accommodation.**
6. **I have witnessed staff (i.e. security, residential life team etc) positively confront racist attitudes in my accommodation.**
7. **I have witnessed instances of racism because of COVID-19 in my accommodation.**
8. **Racism affects my mental health in a negative way.**

- 9. I have witnessed staff (i.e. security, residential life team et.) act in a racist way in my accommodation.**
- 10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience of race and racism in your accommodation?**