

## YORK UNIVERSITY POLICY: YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

York University is committed to sustaining learning and working environments that embed the principles of respect, equity, diversity and inclusion. If you believe you are experiencing or have witnessed a form of racial discrimination or harassment:

1. Address the person directly if it is safe and if you are comfortable to do so
2. Notify your manager, supervisor, professor, residence don/co-ordinator and/or Dean with your concerns
3. If applicable, inform your union representative
4. Contact the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion

### YORK'S POLICY ON RACISM

[secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/racism-policy-and-procedures/](http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/racism-policy-and-procedures/)

## YORK RESOURCES

For more resources on preventing and/or addressing racism contact the **Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion**, or visit [yorku.ca/rights](http://yorku.ca/rights).

## EXTERNAL RESOURCES

### Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy and Guidelines on racism and racial discrimination

[ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Policy\\_and\\_guidelines\\_on\\_racism\\_and\\_racial\\_discrimination.pdf](http://ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Policy_and_guidelines_on_racism_and_racial_discrimination.pdf)

### Ontario Antiracism Directorate

[ontario.ca/page/anti-racism-directorate](http://ontario.ca/page/anti-racism-directorate)

## SOURCES

Henry, F., & Tator, C. (2006). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society*. 3rd Ed. Toronto: Nelson.

### University of Calgary: Forms of Racism

[ucalgary.ca/cared/formsoracism](http://ucalgary.ca/cared/formsoracism)

### Changing Minds

[changingminds.org/explanations/theories/stereotypes.htm](http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/stereotypes.htm)

### Ontario Human Rights Commission: Racial Harassment and Poisoned Environments

[ohrc.on.ca/en/racial-harassment-and-poisoned-environments-fact-sheet](http://ohrc.on.ca/en/racial-harassment-and-poisoned-environments-fact-sheet)



*This fact sheet provides general information about human rights to York University students, staff, and faculty members and should not be construed as legal advice.*

## MAKING YORK UNIVERSITY REDI

The Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion promotes and builds a respectful, equitable, diverse and inclusive university community that upholds human rights, facilitates equitable access to opportunities, and champions diversity and inclusion as a strategic objective. It strives to be a leader in:

- Providing and assuring excellence in the fair resolution of conflicts and complaints from faculty, staff and students under provincial human rights legislation and related university requirements.
- Consulting, coordinating, educating and guiding the university community on best practices to instill human rights, equity and inclusion in all facets of York's operations and governance.
- Providing programs and services that are accessible, impartial, non-adversarial and confidential.

### CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Room 2070  
Technology Enhanced Learning Building  
York University  
4700 Keele St. Toronto, ON Canada

- ☎ Phone: 416 736 5682
- ☎ Fax: 416-650-4823
- ☎ TTY: 416-650-8023
- ✉ Email: [rights@yorku.ca](mailto:rights@yorku.ca)
- 🌐 Web: [yorku.ca/rights](http://yorku.ca/rights)

## WHAT IS RACISM?

Racism is a form of discrimination which is defined as any individual action or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their colour or ethnicity. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission:

*“Racism is a belief that one group is superior to others. Racism can be openly displayed in racial jokes, slurs or hate crimes. It can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs.”*

## THERE ARE TWO MAIN FORMS OF RACISM

- Individual Racism: refers to an individual's assumptions, beliefs or behaviours that supports or perpetuates racism. It is a “form of racial discrimination that stems from conscious and unconscious, personal prejudice” (Henry & Tator, 2006).
- Institutional/Systemic Racism: includes the policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, which result in the exclusion of racial groups.

## RACIAL STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are generalizations about a group of people whereby a defined set of characteristics are attributed to this group. A stereotype based on race ignores differences amongst individuals. Actions based on racial stereotypes can be harmful as it can result in discriminatory and harassing behaviors such as:

- Racial profiling: action undertaken for reasons of safety, security or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, or place of origin rather than on reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or different treatment
- Racial slurs and offensive, derogatory comments
- Unfair and unequal treatment of individuals in the work environment

## RACIAL HARASSMENT AND THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Based on the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code), all individuals have the right to be free from harassment in the workplace and in learning environments based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship and

religion (creed). Harassment is defined as a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Racial harassment often times intersects with other forms of harassment such as harassment on the basis of gender identity/expression, sexual orientation and disability. Examples of racial harassment include:

- being subjected to racial name calling or nicknames;
- microaggression - subtle comments and behaviors that communicate negative and hostile messages to racialized persons;
- racial jokes, epithets, slurs, cartoons or graffiti, including when circulated by e-mail;
- ridiculing comments related to race-related characteristics; and
- being subjected to references to racist organizations, such as having “KKK” written on your work station.

Ongoing harassing behaviors leads to the creation of poisoned environments. The Code recognizes poisoned environments as a form of discrimination given the adverse effects on all individuals in the work space even if they are not directly involved.