

Shift Survey 2023

Campus Climate and Culture Survey

Report of Student Responses

September 2023



Land Acknowledgement

Queen's is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. We acknowledge, with respect, the diverse histories and cultures of the Indigenous peoples of this land.

We understand the significance of community and place as we work to assess campus climate. We acknowledge that Education has played a specific role in colonization and that it will also play a role in moving us forward. We acknowledge that the work required is a process of continual learning, reflection, long-term commitment to doing better, and action.

We are all treaty people and accept our collective responsibility to each other and to reconciliation, leading to an equitable, inclusive and accessible campus for all.

Illustration by Portia Chapman, used with permission.

A Note to Readers

This report reviews Queen's students' experiences and perceptions of campus safety, incidents of exclusion, harassment, and racism. These are difficult topics.

If you feel overwhelmed at any point while reading this document or reflecting on the topics of this report, pay attention to your needs. There are [resources](#) to support you.

Index

- Survey overview
- Who participated?
- Survey results
 - Sense of safety
 - Harassment and Discrimination
 - Campus Culture and Connectedness
 - Food and Housing Security
- Ongoing work and next steps



“Ultimately, creating a welcoming and inclusive campus culture and climate requires the commitment and participation of **all members of the campus community**, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators.”

-- Graduate Student

Overview 2023 Shift Survey

- Queen's campus climate student survey was piloted in 2021, as part of a wide-ranging effort to understand and address overall campus culture and climate, including experiences, perceptions, and behaviours with respect to diversity, and inclusion at the university.
- The Shift Survey, and the broader work of The Shift Project, is aligned with institutional values and goals expressed in the Queen's Strategy, the Campus Wellbeing Framework, commitments made through the signing of the Scarborough Charter and the adoption of the Okanagan Charter, and UN Sustainable Development Goals, including Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, and Zero Hunger

Overview 2023 Shift Survey

- Invitations were sent by email to all registered Queen's students on January 23, 2023. The survey was open until February 20, 2023. Reminder emails were sent over this time, and the survey was promoted widely across campus and online.
- We are grateful to all students who take time to participate and share insight and perspectives on what may be challenging and deeply personal subjects – we know for many this isn't easy. Students' voices will continue to inform and measure the progress and effects of equity, inclusion, anti-racism and anti-violence initiatives.

Who participated?

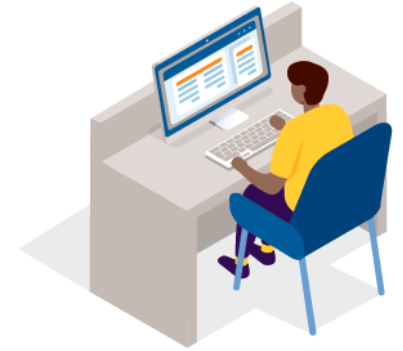
3,540 students (11.6% of registered students) participated in the survey

Identities of respondents include:

- Racialized students – 33%
- First-Generation students – 16%
- Indigenous students – 2.4%
- Non-Heterosexual students – 30%
- Students with a disability – 21% (43% of these students self-identified as having multiple or complex disabilities)
- Gender – 67% women; 26% men; 7% nonbinary, Two-Spirit, trans, gender queer, gender fluid
- Transgender students – 4.4%
- 13% international students (52% of these students are graduate students)

Respondent enrolment details:

- 80% undergraduate students (25% 1st year; 22% 2nd year; 23% 3rd year; 20% 4+ year)
- Of 20% of respondents who are graduate students, 33% are Doctoral and 67% are Masters students



Result Details

- This report comprises graphs that include the data from **all respondents**, as well as respondent data **by identity** where the responses have *practical significance*.
 - *Practical significance* means the results are statistically significant AND have a meaningful strength of correlation.
- Where differences are not practically significant, information may still be used to inform actions, with care given to the lower reliability of lower response counts. This consideration ensures that the experiences of smaller groups of students are not lost.
- Differences between 2021 data and 2023 data are noted where results have practical significance.



Intersectional Identities - informed by work with Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO)

We understand that identity is complex and not linear. We acknowledge that oppression for those students at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities is significant, systemic and affects their health, wellbeing, opportunities and outcomes.

With input from the HREO, staff from Queen's Institutional Research and Planning have analyzed this data with an intersectional lens.

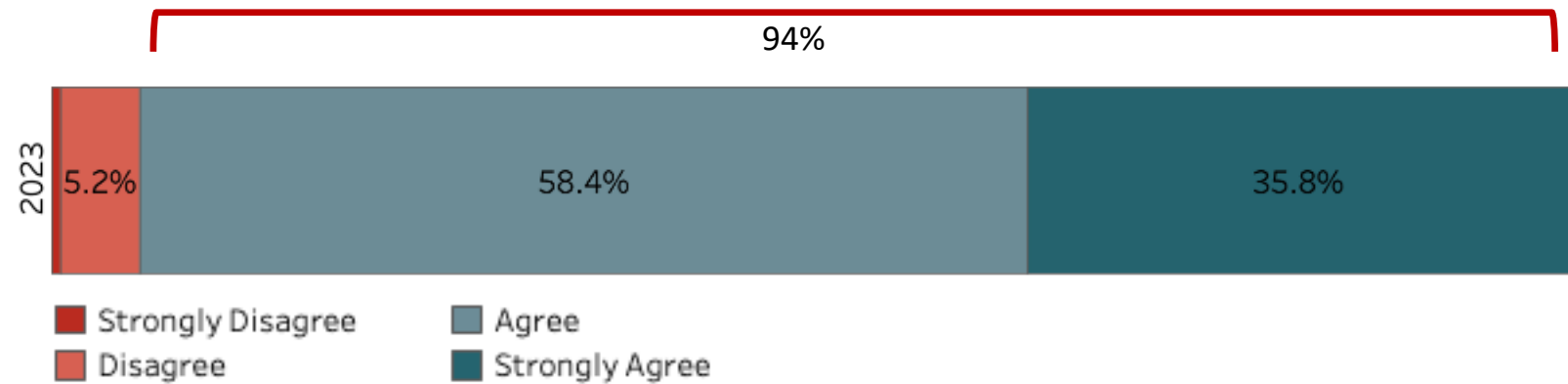
Identities explored include:

- Non-heterosexual, racialized students
- Non-heterosexual students with a disability
- Racialized women
- Racialized students with a disability
- Racialized women with a disability
- Indigenous students with a disability
- Non-heterosexual, racialized students with a disability
- Students with multiple, complex disabilities

Sense of Safety

“I feel safe at this school”

In 2023, 94% of all student respondents agreed with this statement.



Sub-group: Strongly Agree or Agree	2023	2021
----- QU respondents-----	94%	94%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual	90%	
Students with a disability	88%	
Students who identify as non-heterosexual and racialized	86%	85%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual with a disability	85%	84%
Students who identify as racialized with a disability	83%	80%
Students with multiple or complex disabilities	83%	82%
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	82%	82%
Students who identify as female and racialized with a disability	82%	
Students who identify as trans, gender non-conforming	81%	76%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual, racialized with a disability	79%	76%

Campus Culture and Connectedness

"Please please implement greater security measures. We need our campus buildings to be a safe place. I shouldn't be worried about going to campus buildings."

-- Undergraduate student

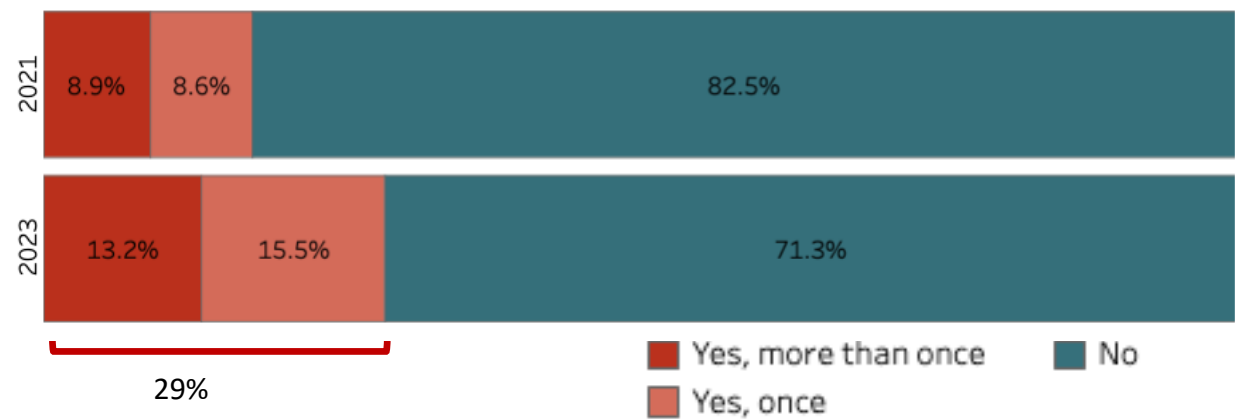
"The student body is not very diverse so welcoming students from various backgrounds would be good. But these students need to make sure they will be safe on our campus so disrespectful activities need very harsh consequences."

-- Undergraduate student

Harassment and Discrimination

“Has anyone shunned, ignored, or intimidated you, or acted directly or indirectly toward you or your community in an offensive or hostile manner?”

In 2023, **29%** of all student respondents said yes.



Sub-group: Yes, once or more than once	2023	2021
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	63%	33%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual, racialized with a disability	57%	47%
Students with multiple or complex disabilities	53%	
Students who identify as racialized with a disability	50%	47%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual with a disability	48%	36%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual and racialized	47%	38%
Students who identify as trans, gender non-conforming	47%	42%
Students who have a disability	43%	32%
Students who identify as South Asian	41%	235
Students who identify as Black	41%	34%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual	39%	26%
Students who identify as female and racialized	37%	26%
Students who identify as racialized	35%	27%
----- QU respondents-----	29%	18%

Harassment and Discrimination

5%

of students who reported
(via the survey)
experiencing harassment or
discrimination told us they
had formally reported the
incident to the school.

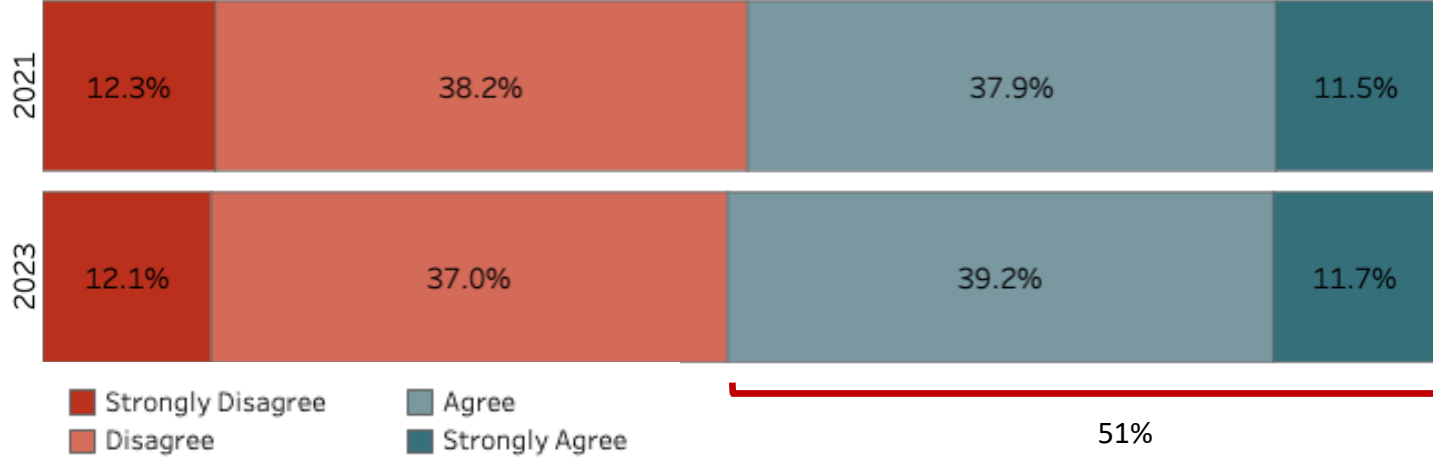
The most common reported **reasons that held students back from making a formal report** were:

- Didn't think it was serious enough to report
- Thought that no action would be taken
- Lack of proof that the incident happened
- Did not need assistance
- Wanted to forget that it happened
- Feared that I would not be believed or taken seriously

Campus Culture and Connectedness

“All students feel welcome and supported by students at this school, regardless of background or identity”

In 2023, **51%** of all student respondents agreed.



Sub-group: Agree	2023	2021
----- QU respondents-----	51%	50%
Students who identify as Black women	41%	32%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual	35%	35%
Students who have a disability	35%	34%
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	30%	35%
Students who identify as racialized women with a disability	30%	27%
Students with multiple or complex disabilities	30%	26%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual, racialized with a disability	30%	25%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual with a disability	30%	23%
Students who identify as trans, gender non-conforming	25%	27%

Campus Culture and Connectedness

56%

of student respondents felt their **peers had values different** from their own.

48% in 2021

53%

of students feel like they need to **hide some aspects of their identity to fit in.**

45% in 2021

25%

of students say they have been **treated differently in class** because of their identity.

13% in 2021

Marginalized, equity-deserving students report significantly more challenging experiences related to campus culture and connectedness.

Campus Culture and Connectedness

"I often feel paralyzed by the amount of equity and diversity training and considerations out there. It makes me feel like every step I take must be carefully considered and calculated.

I feel I am becoming less likely to ask questions or be engaged with people because I am worried about doing something wrong."

-- Masters student

Campus Culture and Connectedness

29%

of student respondents
said they had **heard**
instructors express
stereotypes based on
identity

27% in 2021

69%

of student respondents
felt comfortable sharing
their perspectives and
experiences in class

Same as in 2021

Marginalized, equity-deserving students report significantly more challenging experiences related to campus culture and connectedness.

Campus Culture and Connectedness

"Stop worrying so much about all this woke diversity nonsense. Start working on actual infrastructure to help students enjoy life at this school. Make housing affordable or something idk."

-- Undergraduate student

"I think that if the university were to tone down the artificial diversity encouraging stuff, and just let people be people, that would have a much better impact than some of this artificially forced diversity from the administration."

-- Undergraduate student

Campus Culture and Connectedness

74%

of students **feel close to people** at Queen's.

70% in 2021

Students with equity-deserving identities are less likely to feel close to people.

61%

of students agree they **have access to at least one faculty member, course instructor or staff member** "who I trust and who can connect me with information or support."

Same in 2021

Few statistically significant differences by identity

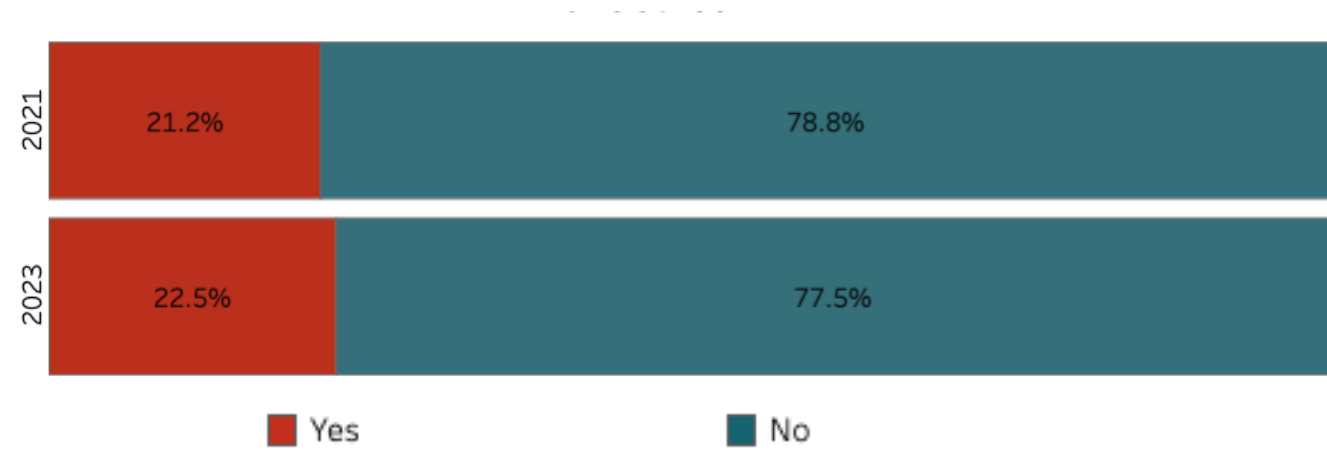
Students in higher years or in graduate programs are more likely to agree with the statement.

Campus Culture and Connectedness

“Since the beginning of the school year, have you seriously considered leaving this school?”

In 2023, **23%** of all student respondents said yes.

Correlation: Of those who have seriously considered leaving this school, 49% reported experiencing harassment and discrimination. Of those who had not considered leaving this school 23% reported experiencing harassment and discrimination.

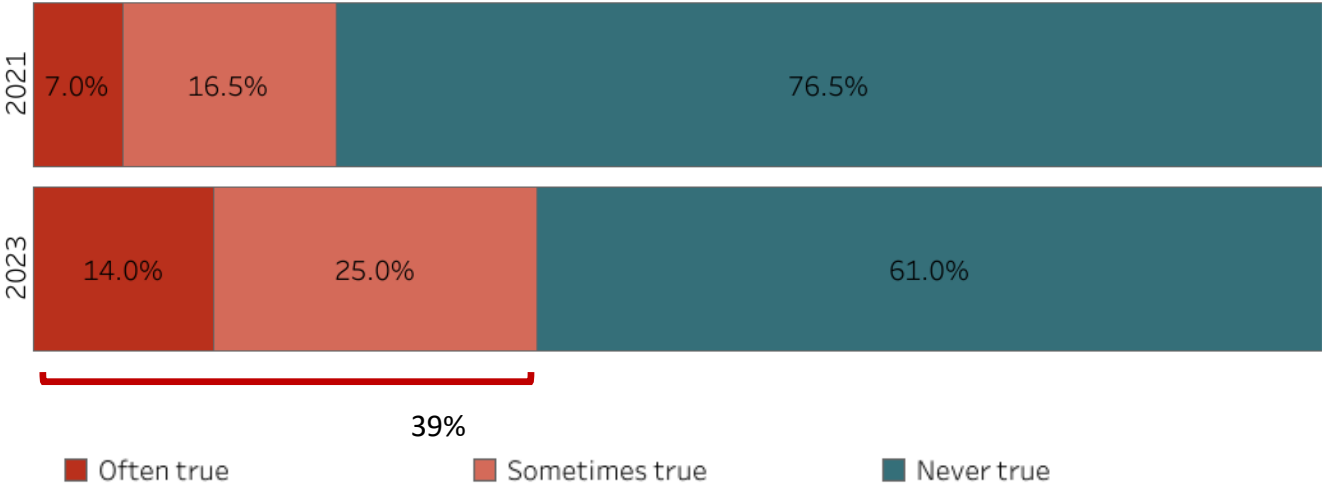


Sub-group: Yes	2023	2021
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	47%	52%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual, racialized with a disability	47%	46%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual with a disability	40%	46%
Students with multiple or complex disabilities	38%	46%
Students who identify as racialized with a disability	37%	38%
First-generation students	34%	
Students who have a disability	33%	36%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual and racialized	32%	35%
First year students	32%	
----- QU respondents-----	23%	21%

Food Insecurity

“I couldn’t afford to eat nutritious meals.”

In 2023, this was **sometimes or often true** for **39%** of all student respondents.

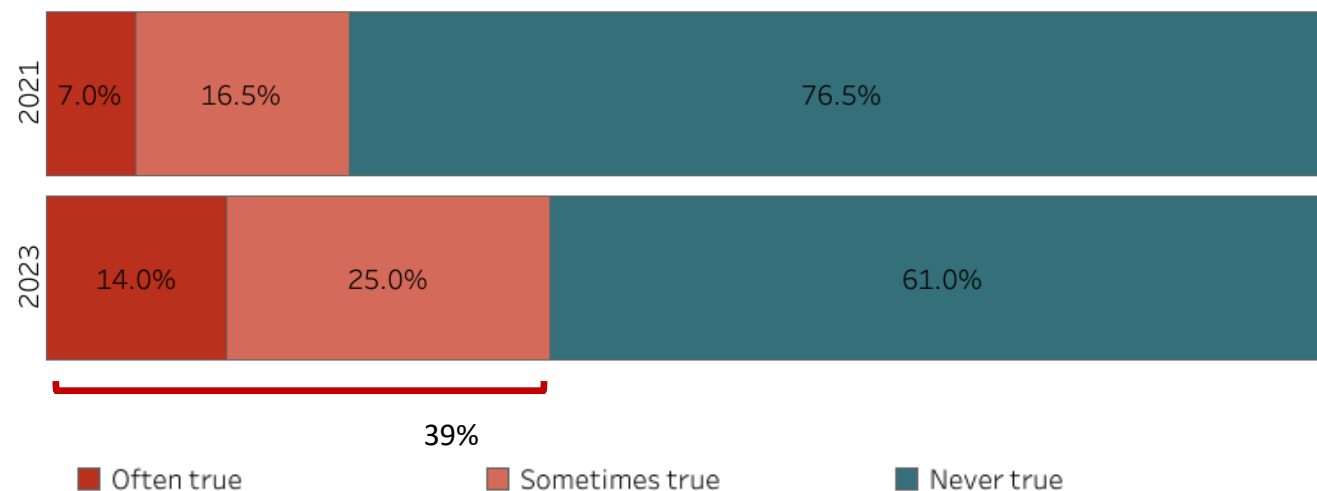


Sub-group: Often or sometimes true	2023	2021
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	77%	73%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual, racialized with a disability	65%	
Students who identify as non-heterosexual with a disability	55%	45%
Students with multiple or complex disabilities	55%	45%
First generation students	55%	35%
Students with a disability	49%	36%
----- QU respondents-----	39%	24%

Food Insecurity

“The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more.”

In 2023, this was **sometimes or often true** for **28%** of all student respondents.

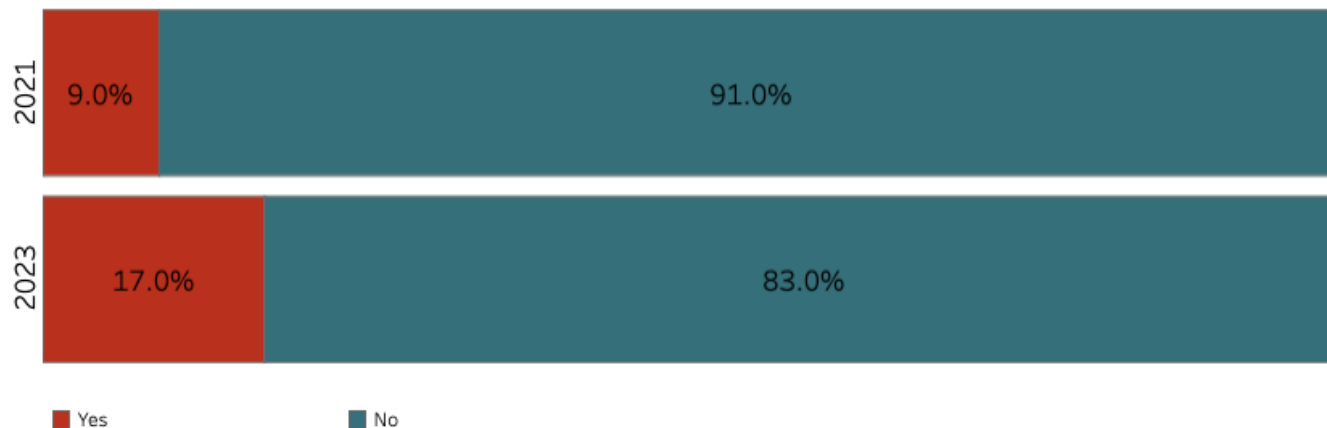


Sub-group: Often or sometimes true	2023	2021
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	63%	64%
First generation students	47%	29%
International graduate students	44%	27%
Students with multiple or complex disabilities	43%	
Students with a disability	37%	
Students who identify as racialized	36%	
----- QU respondents-----	28%	16%

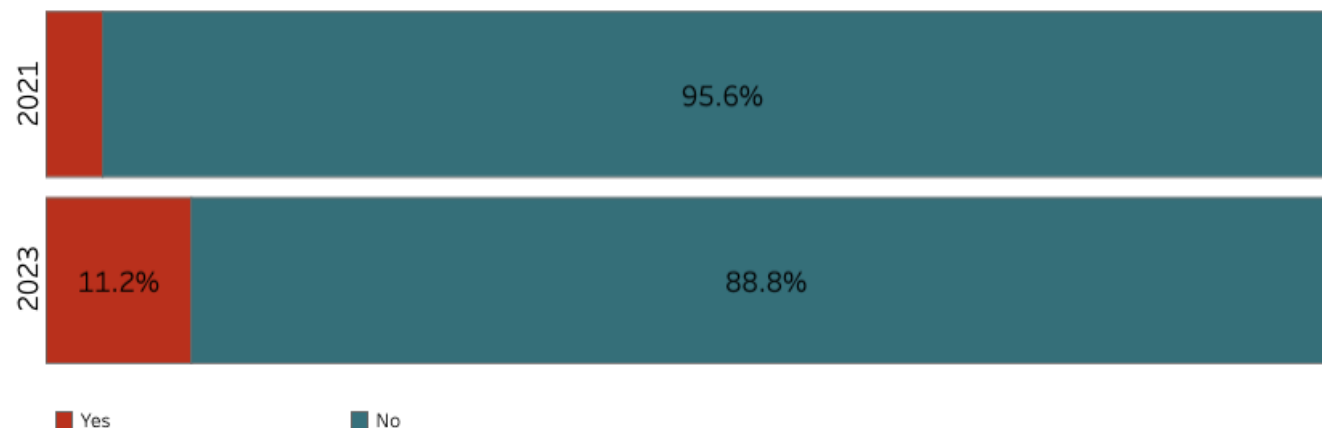
Food Insecurity

Marginalized, equity-deserving students, especially those with intersectional identities, are more likely to experience food insecurity than the overall student population.

Since the beginning of the school year, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?



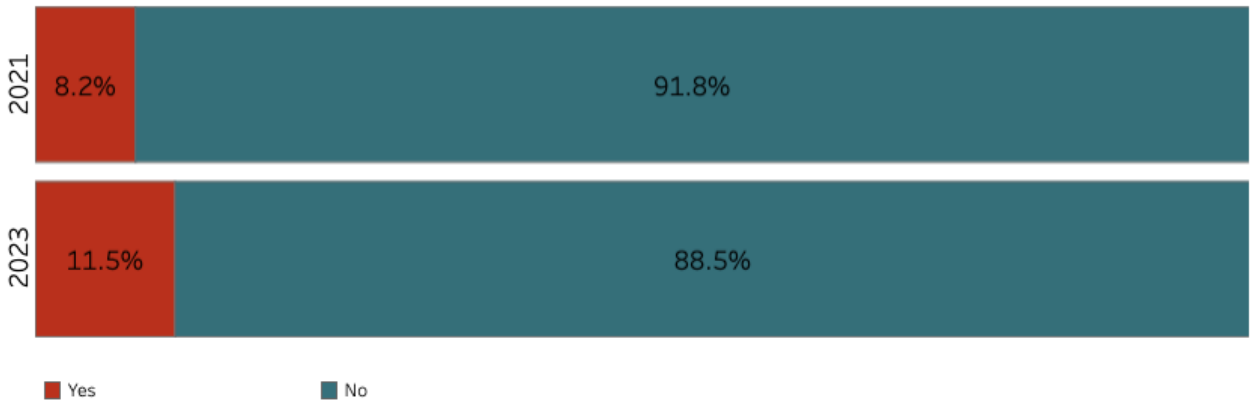
Since the beginning of the school year, did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?



Housing Insecurity

“Since the beginning of the school year, did you ever experience_____ (conditions of housing insecurity).”

In 2023, this was true for **12%** of all student respondents.



Sub-group: Yes	2023	2021
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	53%	
Indigenous students	33%	
International graduate students	29%	21%
First generation students	25%	16%
Doctoral level students	25%	
Students who identify as non-heterosexual with a disability	21%	
Students with a disability	17%	
Masters level students	17%	
----- QU respondents-----	12%	8%

Commitment and Action

“Do you think we are doing enough to embrace diversity and promote an inclusive campus?”

Diversity is
reflected in the
student body

51%

Diversity is
reflected in
**course
instructors /
faculty**

57%

Diversity is
reflected in **staff**

58%

Diversity is
reflected in
**senior
administration**

40%

These results are very consistent with findings in 2021.

Equity-deserving students were much less likely to agree that diversity is reflected in the student body, in course instructors, in staff, and in senior administration.

Commitment and Action

"I was very sad when not many Queen's students showed up for orange shirt day. It makes me sad because by now, it cannot be that they don't know what orange shirts represents. This demonstrates a lack of sensitivity of privileged students towards others."

-- Undergraduate student

Commitment and Action

“What actions do you think would improve campus climate?”

(in descending order of responses)

- Recruit more individuals from underrepresented, equity-deserving or minority groups for leadership, faculty, course instructor, and staff positions
- Strengthen consequences for acting disrespectfully
- Recruit more students from underrepresented, equity-deserving or minority groups
- Strengthen efforts to retain equity-deserving or minoritized students
- Provide opportunities for more inter-group discussion and interaction
- Incorporate principles or practices of equity, diversity, inclusivity and Indigenization more effectively into the curriculum
- Provide equity, diversity, inclusivity, Indigenization education workshops for faculty members, course instructors and staff
- Have more events to support diversity
- Mandate equity, diversity, inclusivity, Indigenization training and education for students

Campus Culture and Connectedness

"I feel that steps to educate students not of marginalized groups, both within and outside of the required courses, should be taken, as the social climate between students is where most impact can be felt by students of marginalized groups."

-- Undergraduate student

"Diversity quotas or performative efforts are never beneficial for minority representation in the long term and instead further isolate them from the school community. Look to ensure that the school community (students and staff) is aware of these pressing issues and institute changes in behaviour rather than band-aid initiatives."

-- Undergraduate student

Commitment and Action

"The events about diversity are numerous at Queen's, but it does not change the institutionalized discrimination that exists. More diverse people need to get roles, be presented, even be eligible for grants and other opportunities."

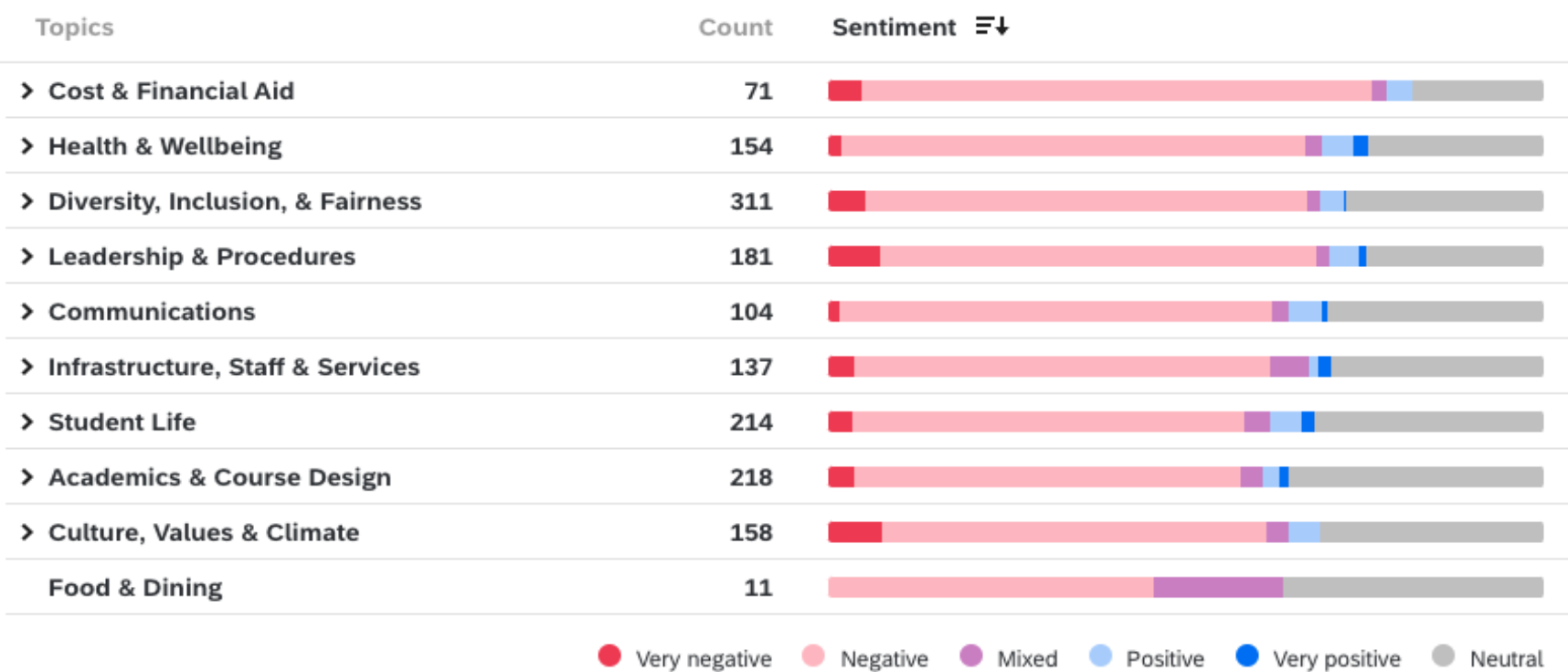
-- Graduate student

"Having been at Queen's for six years, I think overall the campus culture is becoming more inclusive and sensitive to the considerations of minorities and underrepresented groups, but there is still lots of work to be done. Despite all my years here, I have few friends who are from visible minorities and/or have a different background than I do."

-- Masters student

Are there additional actions Queen's could take to improve the campus climate?

Open-ended student responses by topic, in order of the amount of criticism (negative comments) regarding the existing university actions, policies, practices:



“More diversity is needed. I am often the only person in my classes who looks like me. At times, this feels quite discouraging, and I find that I deal with subtle microaggressions often.”

-- Undergraduate student

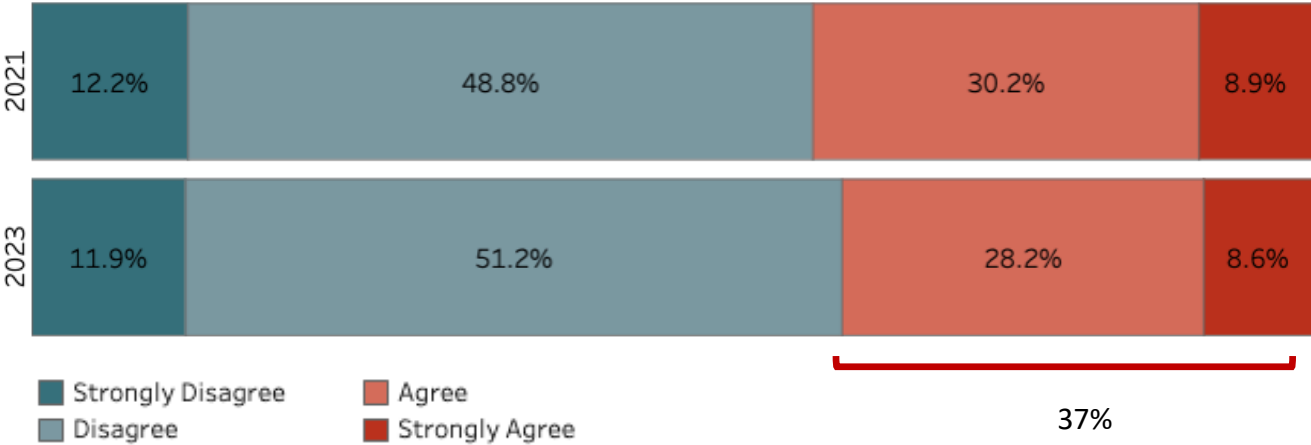
“Among your students lie intersectional individuals that deserve to feel seen, heard and represented. Queen’s will only become a safe and welcoming environment once the institution as well as students (empowered by the institution) are accepting of differing identities.”

-- Undergraduate student

Commitment and Action

“I feel like my peers at this school are insensitive and not doing enough to support inclusivity.”

In 2023, **37%** agreed with this statement.



Sub-group: Agree or strongly agree	2023	2021
Students who identify as non-heterosexual, racialized with a disability	74%	62%
Students who identify as having trans experience	65%	--
Students who identify as racialized women with a disability	60%	57%
Students who identify as trans, gender non-conforming	60%	60%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual and racialized	58%	59%
Students who identify as racialized with a disability	57%	56%
Students who identify as non-heterosexual with a disability	54%	57%
Students who identify as Indigenous with a disability	53%	--
Students with a disability	48%	--
Students who identify as non-heterosexual	47%	51%
----- QU respondents-----	37%	39%

Commitment and Action

“Do you think that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed.....?”

(% of those respondents who said **yes** appear here)

In **student organizations?**

77%

In **supports and services for students?**

71%

By **senior administrators?**

51%

By **faculty and course instructors?**

65%

These results are very consistent with findings in 2021.

Marginalized, equity-deserving students were much less likely to agree that diversity is reflected in the student body, in course instructors, in staff, and in senior administration.

Commitment and Action

"I think the climate at Queen's is a product of hundreds of years of status quo and is generally moving in the right direction at a pace that is not unexpected. Significant improvements to campus climate require significant improvements to society at large."

-- Undergraduate student

"Queen's University has developed action plans and policies aimed at improving campus culture and climate in these areas and have established various programs and initiatives to support diverse groups and promote social justice.

However, challenges remain, and issues such as discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence continue to be a problem on many university campuses in Canada.

Addressing these issues will require ongoing effort, including the development and implementation of policies and programs that promote awareness, education, and accountability. "

-- Graduate student

Stay informed



[The Shift Project on Instagram](#)



[Allyship & Belonging Student Calendar](#)



[Connect with the Shift Project and Survey team by email](#)

