



*Society for Research
into Higher Education*

**The impostor phenomenon among racially
minoritised UK undergraduate and postgraduate
students:
A Scoping Review**

**Final Research Report
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List of Abbreviations

BAME: Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnicity

BME: Black and Minority Ethnicity

CIPS: Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale

HE: Higher Education

HESA: Higher Education Statistics Agency

IP: Impostor Phenomenon

JB: Joanna Briggs Institute

OfS: Office for Students

OSF: Open Science Framework

PCC: Population Concept Context

PRISMA-ScR: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews

SOGI: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

STEMM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine

UCAS: the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

UK: United Kingdom

US: United States

Note: We use UK spelling (imposter, imposterism) and US spelling (impostor, impostorism) interchangeably as a reflection of its varied use across studies cited.

Executive summary

Purpose

This scoping review examines what is known about the impostor phenomenon (IP) among racially minoritised undergraduate and postgraduate students in United Kingdom (UK) higher education (HE), exploring its relationship with sense of belonging, institutional experiences and awarding inequalities. Drawing on critical race and social identity perspectives, the review positions IP not as an individual deficit, but as a phenomenon shaped by racialised institutional contexts, representation, exclusion, academic cultures and experiences of belonging.

Methods

Following JBI guidance and PRISMA-ScR reporting standards, eight empirical studies published between 2021 and 2026 were included in the scoping review. First, Title and Abstract screening was piloted and carried out against the prespecified PCC eligibility criteria. Second, full texts of potentially relevant records were retrieved and assessed for eligibility. Data from included studies were charted using a structured extraction form and synthesised descriptively to map study characteristics.

Findings

The selected studies indicate that IP is experienced across undergraduate and postgraduate populations and is associated with factors such as underrepresentation, racial and gendered expectations, perfectionism, academic comparison, exclusionary environments and limited culturally relevant support. Sense of belonging emerged as a key intersecting factor, with students describing how recognition, representation, and supportive academic communities can mitigate feelings of illegitimacy and unbelonging.

Conclusions

This scoping review synthesised eight studies on IP among racially minoritised students in UK HE, revealing a sparse and methodologically diverse body of evidence. While studies identify connections among IP, belonging, help-seeking, academic confidence, and attainment-related experiences, none of the included studies established IP as a direct explanation for the degree-

awarding gap. None of the studies included in this review evaluated an intervention designed to counter impostorism among racially minoritised students in UK HE.

The review highlights the need for culturally responsive institutional approaches, improved measurement of racialised IP, greater intersectional analysis and evaluation of interventions addressing belonging, equity and student success. Future research should therefore adopt intersectional approaches and examine how IP in relation to interacts with student outcomes and institutional inequalities without positioning racially minoritised students' experiences as individual deficits.

Keywords: impostor phenomenon; racially minoritised students; UK higher education; scoping review

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1. Introduction and rationale

Racially minoritised students continue to experience unequal outcomes and differential experiences within UK higher education. The degree-awarding gap remains one of the clearest indicators of these inequalities: minority ethnic students are less likely than White British students to receive a “good” degree classification, even when prior achievement is taken into account (Bunce et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2021). This gap is not only an attainment issue but also a structural, institutional and relational concern, as it reflects how students experience curricula, assessment cultures, academic support, belonging, representation and institutional climates (Bunce et al., 2021; Sappor & Franks, 2025; Wong et al., 2021). Research on UK higher education has therefore increasingly argued that awarding inequalities for racially minoritised students must be understood in relation to systemic racism, structural barriers and the social organisation of academic life rather than through deficit accounts (Sappor & Franks, 2025; Wong et al., 2021).

Psychosocial processes may be important in understanding how students experience racialised institutional contexts and how they relate to academic engagement, confidence and belonging. For example, Bunce et al. (2021) draw on self-determination theory to show that racially minoritised students’ experiences of learning and teaching can undermine relatedness, competence and autonomy, while Cureton and Gravestock (2019) link belonging with retention, success and differential degree outcomes. Sappor and Franks (2025) further identify belonging, help-seeking, communication, inequities and heightened impostor phenomenon as interrelated themes in students’ accounts of the awarding gap. These studies suggest that racialised inequalities in higher education involve both institutional structures and students’ lived experiences of academic legitimacy, support and recognition.

The impostor phenomenon may be one such psychosocial process. In higher education, IP is commonly understood as persistent feelings of intellectual or academic fraudulence despite evidence of competence or achievement (Cisco, 2020; Pákozdy et al., 2023). However, this scoping review does not treat impostorism as an individual deficit or student-level pathology. Instead, drawing on critical race and social identity perspectives, it approaches IP as a phenomenon that may be shaped by racialised institutional contexts, underrepresentation, exclusionary academic cultures, microaggressions and structural racism (Husbands et al., 2025; McGee et al., 2022; Murray et al., 2023; Sappor & Franks, 2025). This distinction is important

because locating IP solely within students risks obscuring the institutional conditions that may produce or intensify self-doubt, unbelonging and perceived illegitimacy.

1.1 Population: Racially minoritised students in higher education

The population of interest in this review is racially minoritised students in UK higher education, including undergraduate and postgraduate students. The term ‘racially minoritised’ is used to foreground processes of racialisation and minoritisation rather than treating racial or ethnic difference as a fixed characteristic located within students themselves. Kilby et al. (2022) explicitly reflect on terminology and note that language within equality, diversity and inclusion work is evolving, while Chiu et al. (2026) similarly acknowledge that broad terms such as ‘minority ethnic’ can obscure differences between ethnic groups. This review, therefore, uses ‘racially minoritised’ as an analytic term while remaining attentive to how individual studies define and categorise participants.

This population matters because racially minoritised students may encounter institutional practices, curricula, assessment cultures and interpersonal interactions that shape their belonging and perceived academic legitimacy. UK studies in this evidence base examine, for example, Black female undergraduates (Husbands et al., 2025), postgraduate students from minoritised racial backgrounds (Kilby et al., 2022), South Asian undergraduates (Aqsa et al., 2025), minority ethnic Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) students (Chiu et al., 2026), and marginalised Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) undergraduates at elite universities (Murray et al., 2023). These studies suggest that students’ experiences of IP and belonging may be shaped by ethnicity, gender, class, discipline, level of study, home/international status and prior educational experiences. Therefore, the review will attend to intersectionality where the evidence allows, while avoiding homogenising racially minoritised students.

The need for such attention is reinforced by emerging subgroup-specific evidence. Husbands et al. (2025) show that IP among Black female undergraduates is shaped through the intersection of racialised and gendered identities, while Aqsa et al. (2025) argue that South Asian students’ experiences may involve academic othering, culturally ascribed perfectionism and academic humility. Chiu et al. (2026) also show that minority ethnic STEM students’ belonging can be conditional, shaped by prior educational experience, perceptions of minority status, and academic and social interactions. These studies suggest that the review should map

not only whether IP is present among racially minoritised students, but also how it is described, for whom, and under what institutional and identity-related conditions.

1.2 Concept: The impostor phenomenon and related psychosocial and academic factors

The central concept in this review is the impostor phenomenon, commonly understood as feelings of intellectual or academic fraudulence despite evidence of competence or achievement (Clance & Imes, 1978). Cisco (2020) defines IP as a belief that one is an intellectual fraud who may be exposed, while Kilby et al. (2022) define it as persistent feelings of insufficiency and fraudulence despite evidence of success. Pákozdy et al. (2023) similarly describe IP as involving self-doubt and fear of exposure. Across the wider literature, IP has been understood and investigated using different conceptual definitions (such as impostor syndrome) and measurement tools (see Leary et al., 2000), meaning that a key task for this review is to map how IP is defined, measured, and reported in studies of racially minoritised students in UK higher education.

IP matters because it has been associated with wellbeing, academic confidence, self-evaluation and engagement. In a UK student sample, Pákozdy et al. (2023) found that Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) scores were negatively related to self-efficacy and happiness and positively related to maladaptive perfectionism. However, belonging and perceived competition were not directly correlated with CIPS scores. Among UK postgraduate researchers, Berry et al. (2021) found that impostor phenomenon, perfectionism and reduced supervisory communion were among the strongest predictors of mental health symptoms. In a UK postgraduate intervention study, Cisco (2020) argued that academic contexts can foster impostorism and found that academic skill-set interventions reduced IP relative to a control group. These findings support the relevance of IP for student wellbeing and academic development, while also showing that relationships between IP, belonging and academic outcomes may vary across populations and contexts.

When IP is examined among racially minoritised students, a critical framing is necessary. Cokley et al. (2024) argue that traditional IP measures may inadequately capture race, culture and discrimination, and they call for a reconceptualised racialised impostor phenomenon and culturally informed measures. McGee et al. (2022), in a United States (US) study of Black STEM doctoral students, go further by arguing that racism can be camouflaged as impostorism,

thereby placing responsibility on students while leaving institutional racism unchallenged. UK sociological work also critiques individualised accounts of impostorism: Murray et al. (2023) conceptualise “imposter work” as an unevenly distributed form of emotional labour produced and intensified by exclusionary university climates. Together, these studies support an approach that situates IP within racialised educational environments rather than framing it as a purely internal psychological problem.

Sense of belonging is treated as a closely related concept in this review. Belonging refers to students’ feelings of being accepted, included, supported and valued within an academic community (Cureton & Gravestock, 2019; Goodenow, 1993). UK evidence suggests that belonging is linked to retention and success, differs across ethnic groups, and may fluctuate across the student lifecycle (Advance HE, 2023; Cureton & Gravestock, 2019; Thomas, 2012; Thomas et al., 2017). Chiu et al. (2026) extend this by showing that minority ethnic STEM students may experience belonging as conditional, requiring ongoing negotiation to fit within dominant academic cultures. In IP-focused UK evidence, Kilby et al. (2022) emphasise the relationship between representation, belonging and impostorism, while Husbands et al. (2025) identify a sense of “unbelonging”, low levels of culturally relevant support and reluctance to seek support as important features of Black female students’ experiences.

The review also considers award outcomes, including the degree-awarding gap. The gap refers to identifiable disparities in students’ final grades or degree classifications (see Advance HE, 2023). These disparities have significant long-term implications for racially minoritised graduates, including constrained opportunities for progression to postgraduate study (Office for Students [OfS], 2021), poorer employment outcomes, and reduced earnings (Kollydas, 2023). In the current review, these are reported in connection with IP and/or belonging. However, IP is not positioned as a sole or direct explanation for awarding disparities. The UK evidence supports a more cautious interpretation, in which impostorism may be one psychosocial mechanism that interacts with belonging, help-seeking, academic confidence and institutional inequalities (Bunce et al., 2021; Sappor & Franks, 2025; Wong et al., 2021). In Sappor and Franks’ (2025) study, heightened impostor syndrome is discussed alongside belonging, communication, help-seeking and inequities. In Cureton and Gravestock’s (2019) work, differences in ethnicity-based belonging are discussed in relation to differential degree outcomes. This review, therefore, examines whether and how IP is discussed within a wider

institutional and relational ecology of racialised inequality, rather than as an individual-level cause of the awarding gap.

1.3 Context: UK higher education

The context of this review is set in the global North, and with a focus on UK higher education, suggesting a limited scope. By contrast, international research, particularly from the US, has made important contributions to understanding IP among racially minoritised students. This points to the need for UK-specific mapping as racial categories, histories of racialisation, institutional structures and policy contexts differ across national settings. For example, Perkins and Durkee (2025) show how racial microaggressions, gender and school belonging can be linked to impostor phenomenon among Black undergraduates at a predominantly White institution, while Canning et al. (2020) show that competitive STEM classrooms can generate IP among first-generation students. These studies are relevant for theorising possible mechanisms, but their findings cannot be assumed to transfer directly to UK higher education.

UK evidence points to a distinct policy and institutional context. Wong et al. (2021) note that universities have made public commitments to race equality, while the persistence of the ethnicity degree-awarding gap remains a central concern. Despite institutional commitments to addressing racism and advancing race equality, the persistent gap in “good” degree outcomes, defined as the proportion of students awarded a first-class or upper second-class degree, remains a major concern. In 2019, 81.4% of White students graduated with a first or upper second class degree, compared with 58% of Black African students, representing a 23.4 percentage point gap (Advance HE, 2020). By 2022/23, the degree-awarding gap for Black students stood at 21.4%, up from 17.6% in 2020 (Higher Education Statistics Agency [HESA], 2026). More concerningly, an unexplained gap remains even after accounting for prior attainment, such as A-level grades or the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) entry points (Wong et al., 2021).

Although there have been some marginal improvements, progress in reducing racial and ethnic inequalities in higher education remains insufficient to meet performance target requirements, such as those mandated by the OfS for institutions in England. These targets are to eliminate the unexplained degree-awarding gap between White and Black students by 2024–25, and the absolute gap (including both structural and unexplained factors) by 2030–31 (OfS, 2018). Similarly, qualitative evidence from the devolved nation of England suggests that institutional

environments can act as both barriers and enablers for racially minoritised students navigating impostorism (Husbands et al., 2025).

For the above reasons, the review focuses specifically on UK higher education rather than treating international evidence as interchangeable. This does not mean excluding international studies from the rationale where they illuminate theoretical mechanisms, such as racial microaggressions, stereotype threat, discrimination, classroom competition or institutional belonging. Rather, it means that the review mapping questions centre on how IP has been defined, measured and discussed in relation to racially minoritised students within UK higher education specifically. This distinction is especially important because UK evidence is developing across different literatures, including psychology, sociology of higher education, belonging, widening participation, attainment, equality and diversity.

1.4 Why a scoping review is needed

A scoping review is appropriate because the evidence base on IP among racially minoritised students in UK higher education is emerging, uneven and conceptually dispersed. Some UK studies focus directly on IP among racially minoritised students (Aqsa et al., 2025; Husbands et al., 2025; Kilby et al., 2022), while others focus on belonging, conditional belonging, STEMM marginalisation, student mental health, help-seeking or awarding inequalities (Bunce et al., 2021; Chiu et al., 2026; Cureton & Gravestocklik, 2019; Murray et al., 2023; Sappor & Franks, 2025; Wong et al., 2021). Studies also vary in methods, contributing different kinds of evidence. A scoping review is therefore suitable because the primary task is to map the existing literature, examine how concepts are used, identify which populations are included, and where gaps remain.

The need for mapping is also methodological and conceptual. Cokley et al. (2024) argue that IP research with racially and ethnically minoritised groups requires greater attention to racialised measurement, subgroup differences and culturally tailored interventions. Para et al. (2024) similarly show, in a broader scoping review of IP interventions, that intervention studies are heterogeneous in design, modality and evaluation. In the UK context, Cisco (2020) provides evidence that academic skill set interventions may reduce IP among postgraduate students. However, this evidence is not specific to racially minoritised students or to awarding-gap interventions. A scoping approach, therefore, allows the present review to map whether institutional practices or interventions have addressed IP, belonging and awarding outcomes

together, and to identify whether this work has been sensitive to racialisation and intersectionality.

1.5 The present review

The present scoping review maps research on the impostor phenomenon among racially minoritised students in UK higher education, including undergraduate and postgraduate students. Guided by critical race and social identity perspectives, the review examines how IP is defined and measured, how it is linked to sense of belonging and awarding outcomes, and whether studies consider intersectional patterns where data allow. The review aimed to inform institutional interventions and policy by identifying where, how and for whom IP relates to belonging and attainment, and by highlighting priorities for future research and practice to reduce racialised awarding disparities.

Using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Population Concept Context (PCC) framework, the review defined the population as racially minoritised undergraduate and postgraduate students in UK higher education; the concept as the impostor phenomenon, including its definitions, measures, racialised interpretations and links with sense of belonging; and the context as UK higher education, particularly institutional cultures, support practices and degree-awarding inequalities where reported.

The aims of this scoping review were to:

- Map what is known about IP among racially minoritised students in UK HE, including how IP is defined and measured, and whether intersectional analyses are reported.
- Identify factors associated with higher IP, including any overlap with sense of belonging.
- Identify and summarise institutional practices and interventions in relation to IP, belonging and awarding outcomes, including the degree-awarding gap where reported.

2. Methods

2.1 Design

This review was conducted as a scoping review in accordance with JBI guidance and reported using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR; Peters et al., 2020; Tricco et al., 2018). A scoping review design was appropriate because the aim was to systematically identify, chart and map the breadth of available evidence on the impostor phenomenon among racially minoritised students in UK higher education, rather than to estimate pooled effects or conduct a meta-analysis. Scoping reviews are suited to topics where evidence is emerging, conceptually dispersed or methodologically heterogeneous, and where the purpose is to clarify concepts, identify key characteristics of the evidence base and map gaps for future research (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Munn et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2020).

2.2 Protocol and registration

An a priori protocol was registered using the Generalized Systematic Review Registration Form on the Open Science Framework (OSF):

https://osf.io/xz4u5/overview?view_only=f6275f0135c3461984cbe2bb5f11c49f.

The protocol specified the review type, aims, research questions, eligibility criteria, information sources, search strategy, screening process, data charting procedures and synthesis plan. Developing and registering a protocol before conducting the review was consistent with JBI guidance, which emphasises that protocols increase transparency, reduce arbitrary decision-making and provide a clear plan for the conduct and reporting of the review (Peters et al., 2022).

2.3 Review questions

The primary review question was:

What is known about the impostor phenomenon among racially minoritised students in UK higher education?

The secondary review questions were:

1. How is the impostor phenomenon operationalised and reported in UK higher education studies of racially minoritised students, including any intersectional analyses where available?
2. Which factors are reported to be associated with higher impostor phenomenon, and which of these are also linked to sense of belonging?
3. What institutional practices or interventions related to reducing awarding gaps are described in connection with the impostor phenomenon, and do any also address sense of belonging?

2.4 Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria (see Table 1) were structured using the JBI PCC framework, which is recommended for scoping reviews because it aligns the review question and inclusion criteria with the population, central concept and context of interest (Peters et al., 2020; Peters et al., 2022).

Table 1. Eligibility Criteria Based on the Population–Concept–Context Framework

PCC element / criterion	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	Racially minoritised students enrolled in UK higher education, including undergraduate and postgraduate students. Studies with mixed samples were eligible if data for UK higher education students, particularly racially minoritised students, were reported separately or could be extracted.	Studies were excluded if the population did not focus on UK higher education students, or where racially minoritised student evidence was not disaggregated or extractable.
Concept	The impostor phenomenon, including recognised variants such as impostor syndrome, impostorism and impostor feelings. Sources were eligible where the impostor phenomenon was defined, measured or substantively analysed. The review also charted links with sense of belonging, unbelonging, academic confidence, engagement, attainment, progression, retention, degree classification and awarding outcomes, where these were reported.	Sources that used the term “impostor” only casually or in an unrelated sense were excluded.
Context	UK higher education, including universities and higher education institutions in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Studies of home and international students studying in the UK were eligible.	Studies conducted outside UK higher education, including school-based, workplace or non-UK higher education studies, were excluded unless UK higher education data were reported separately and were extractable.
Source type	Primary empirical studies using quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods designs. Dissertations, theses and other grey literature were included where they reported primary empirical data and provided sufficient methodological and results detail to chart the core review fields. Conference papers or abstracts were included only if they provided sufficient methodological and results detail for data charting.	Systematic reviews, scoping reviews and other evidence syntheses were not included as charted evidence, although they were used for background, citation searching and contextual interpretation where relevant. Theoretical papers, commentaries, editorials, protocols, policy reports and sector reports that did not report primary empirical data were not charted as included evidence.
Date and language	English-language publications from 1978 onwards. The starting point of 1978 was selected because it marks the publication of Clance and Imes’ foundational work on the impostor phenomenon.	Non-English sources and sources published before 1978 were excluded.

2.5 Information sources

The following databases and platforms were searched: APA PsycINFO via EBSCOhost, Web of Science via Clarivate, PubMed, ProQuest Education Collection and Ex Libris Primo as the University’s Library Search discovery service. Grey literature was sought through Ex Libris Primo, including repository holdings, dissertations, theses and conference proceedings.

Additional non-journal materials were identified through ProQuest Education Collection, where available, and conference proceedings were also identified through Web of Science, where relevant. Forward and backward citation tracking was conducted for all included publications. The search was updated before final synthesis on 11 June 2026.

2.6 Search strategy

The search strategy was developed using terms aligned with the PCC framework and refined through internal review and testing against known relevant studies. The strategy combined terms relating to the impostor phenomenon, race and ethnicity, UK higher education and UK location. A basic validation check was carried out before screening by testing the strategy against a seed set of known relevant sources. Pilot searches were conducted in Web of Science, and search terms were refined until the sentinel sources were retrieved (see Appendix I: Table 3).

The search strategy was designed to provide complementary coverage of psychological, educational, multidisciplinary and health-related literature relevant to the impostor phenomenon, racially minoritised students and UK higher education. APA PsycINFO was searched for psychological literature; Web of Science for multidisciplinary coverage; PubMed for health-related literature; ProQuest Education Collection for educational research, and Ex Libris Primo for additional library-held and grey literature records.

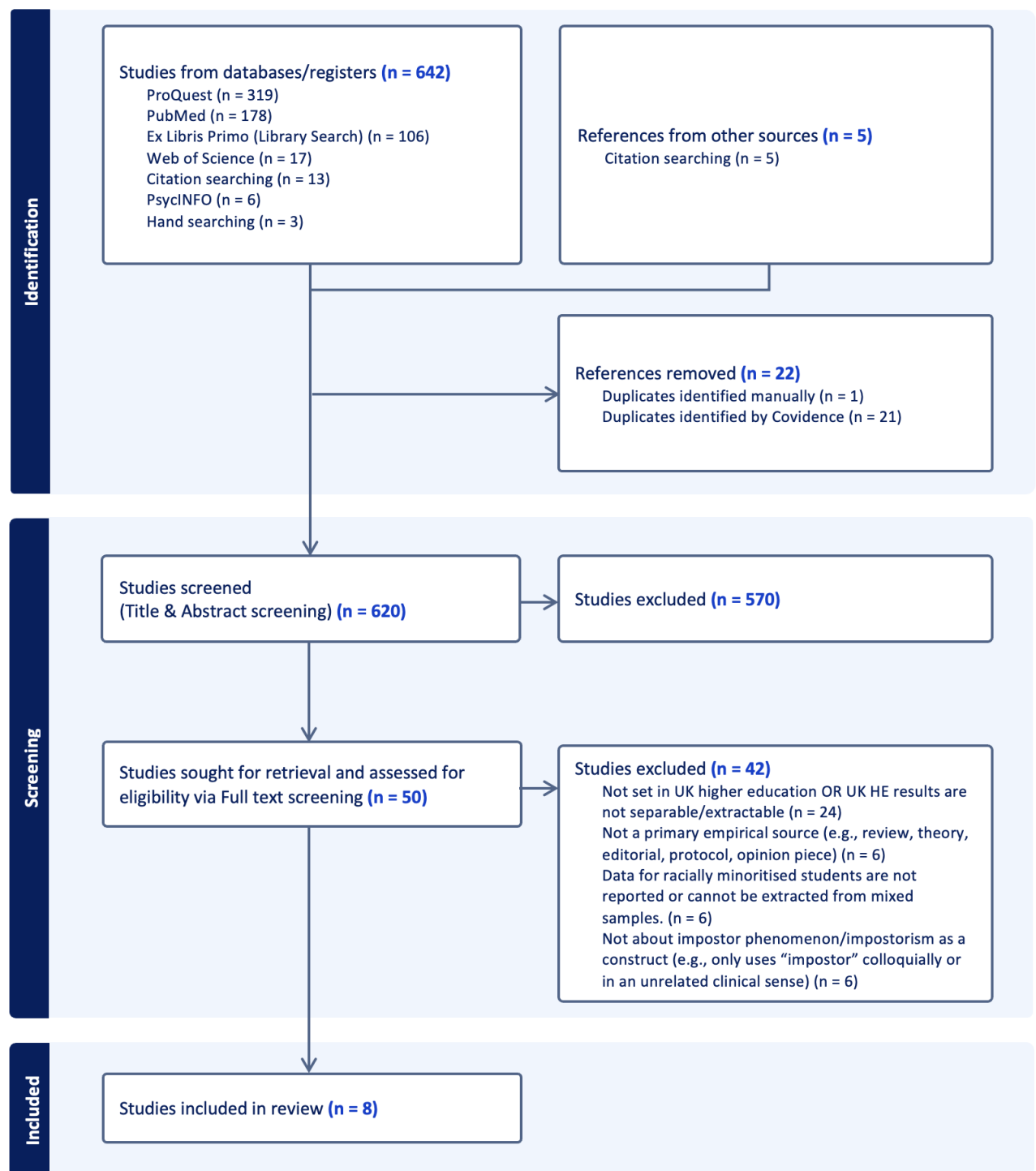
2.7 Source selection

Search results were imported into Mendeley, de-duplicated and then exported to Covidence for screening. Covidence was used to manage deduplication checks, title and abstract screening, full-text screening, exclusion reasons and consensus workflows. Selection took place in three stages. First, Title and Abstract screening was piloted to test eligibility criteria on a random sample of 25 records. All screeners independently applied the criteria using a shared eligibility guide, and the team met to reconcile discrepancies and refine the guide where needed. Formal screening began once at least 75% agreement had been achieved. Second, titles and abstracts were screened by two reviewers independently against the prespecified PCC eligibility criteria. Third, full texts of potentially relevant records were retrieved and assessed for eligibility. Screening decisions at the title and abstract stage were coded as include, exclude or maybe. Records marked as include or maybe proceeded to full-text screening. At the full-text stage,

two reviewers independently made include/exclude decisions, and reasons for exclusion were recorded using predefined exclusion categories. Disagreements during formal screening were resolved through discussion, and a third reviewer adjudicated any unresolved disagreements. Where a reviewer was an author of a potentially eligible record, that reviewer recused themselves from screening the record, and a third reviewer made or verified the final decision.

The selection process was reported narratively and using a PRISMA-ScR flow diagram (see Figure 1). The flow diagram reported records identified, duplicates removed, records screened, records excluded, full-text reports assessed, full-text exclusions with reasons and final included sources. The use of a flow diagram was consistent with PRISMA-ScR and PRISMA 2020 reporting guidance (Page et al., 2021; Tricco et al., 2018).

Figure 1. PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram for Study Selection



2.8 Data charting

Data were charted using a standardised charting form developed from the review questions and PCC framework. In line with JBI guidance, data charting was treated as an iterative process and was refined as the team became more familiar with the evidence base (Peters et al., 2020; Pollock et al., 2023). The charting form was piloted by two reviewers on two included sources.

The reviewers compared extracted information, discussed inconsistencies and refined the form and accompanying codebook before main charting began. One reviewer charted data from each included source, and a second reviewer independently verified the charted data for accuracy and completeness. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and, where required, adjudication by a third reviewer. Peer group checking was used throughout the charting process through regular team calibration meetings. These meetings were used to review ambiguous cases and agree on decision rules.

The charting form captured bibliographic and methodological information, population characteristics, concept-related information, outcomes and key findings relevant to the review questions (see Appendix II: Table 4).

2.9 Data synthesis

The charted data were compiled into a master Excel file and cleaned by standardising labels and codes, including study design, setting, population, UK nation or region, IP measure and scoring direction. The synthesis included frequency counts, cross-tabulations and descriptive mapping of study characteristics. Where relevant, descriptive content analysis was used to classify definitions, measures, themes, outcomes, institutional practices and reported gaps. Results were presented in tables, figures and narrative form. Gaps in the evidence were identified regarding population coverage, intersectional reporting, measurement, UK-specific evidence and intervention evidence.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Locale and characteristics of included studies

This scoping review mapped the available evidence on the impostor phenomenon among racially minoritised students in UK higher education. Across eight included studies, the evidence base was small, recent and methodologically heterogeneous.

The devolved nation for each study is as follows: Aqsa et al. (2025, England); Berry et al. (2021, UK); Bunce et al. (2021, England); Husbands et al. (2025, England); Kilby et al. (2022, UK), Leyton et al. (2026, UK); Murray et al. (2023, UK); and, Sappor and Franks (2025, UK).

The included studies were published between 2021 and 2026. Two studies used quantitative cross-sectional survey designs (Berry et al., 2021; Leyton et al., 2026), and six used qualitative designs involving focus groups, qualitative online surveys or semi-structured interviews (Aqsa et al., 2025; Bunce et al., 2021; Husbands et al., 2025; Kilby et al., 2022; Murray et al., 2023; Sappor & Franks, 2025). The studies varied in scope, disciplinary focus and student population. Three studies focused on undergraduate students (Aqsa et al., 2025; Husbands et al., 2025; Murray et al., 2023), three focused on postgraduate populations (Berry et al., 2021; Kilby et al., 2022; Sappor & Franks, 2025), one included mixed undergraduate and postgraduate students (Bunce et al., 2021), and one focused on STEM students in UK and Indian higher education without clearly reporting programme level in the extracted data (Leyton et al., 2026).

Sample sizes ranged from 10 participants in three qualitative studies (Aqsa et al., 2025; Husbands et al., 2025; Sappor & Franks, 2025) to 3,352 participants in a national survey of UK postgraduate researchers (Berry et al., 2021). Across the eight studies, the total sample represented 3,958 participants, of whom 3,715 were in UK higher education samples. The number of racially minoritised participants could not be calculated precisely across all studies because ethnicity was reported, grouped and analysed differently. Some studies focused entirely on racially minoritised students (Aqsa et al., 2025; Bunce et al., 2021; Husbands et al., 2025; Kilby et al., 2022), whereas others included mixed samples and reported ethnicity through broader categories such as White versus BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnicity), non-White/BAME, minority ethnic background, or racially/ethnically minoritised students (Berry et al., 2021; Leyton et al., 2026; Murray et al., 2023; Sappor & Franks, 2025).

Race and ethnicity reporting varied considerably. Husbands et al. (2025) focused on Black female undergraduate students and reported categories including Black, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black African/Indian and Black Hispanic. Aqsa et al. (2025) focused on South Asian undergraduates, including British Pakistani, British Indian and Indian students. Kilby et al. (2022) recruited postgraduate students who self-identified as BAME, but allowed participants to describe their ethnic identities in their own terms. Bunce et al. (2021) focused on BME (Black and Minority Ethnicity) students in health and social care-related subjects and reported categories including Black African, Asian, and White and Black Caribbean. Murray et al. (2023) included marginalised STEMM undergraduates, 18 of whom were racially or ethnically minoritised. Berry et al. (2021) used White ethnicity versus BAME ethnicity in analysis, Leyton et al. (2026) reported UK minority ethnic background but centred gender and sexual orientations and gender identities (SOGI) in the main analysis, and Sappor and Franks (2025) used non-White/BAME and White categories without disaggregating ethnic groups. Table 2 below summarises the key characteristics and findings of the included studies.

Table 2. Characteristics and Key Findings of Included Studies

Author / year	Aim, context and design	Sample and race/ ethnicity reporting	IP terminology and operationalisation	Belonging outcomes	Key findings and institutional implications
Aqsa et al. (2025) [England]	Explored imposter phenomenon among South Asian undergraduate students in UK higher education, with attention to culturally specific pressures and stereotypes. Qualitative semi-structured interviews.	10 South Asian undergraduate students aged 18–22 studying at UK universities; nine women and one man. Ethnicity was reported as British Pakistani, British Indian and Indian.	Used “imposter syndrome,” “imposterism”, “imposter phenomenon” and “imposter feelings”. No psychometric measure; IP was explored qualitatively through interviews.	Belonging was explored qualitatively through academic othering, cultural difference, underrepresentation , relatability and peer connection.	Three themes were generated: academic othering, culturally ascribed perfectionism and academic humility. Participants described feeling undeserving, attributing achievements to luck, second-guessing themselves and fearing exposure. Institutional implications included recognising heterogeneity among South Asian students, avoiding homogenising minoritised groups and developing culturally responsive support.
Berry et al. (2021) [UK]	Tested demographic, occupational, psychological, social and supervisory predictors of depression, anxiety and suicidality among UK postgraduate researchers. National UK cross-sectional online survey using bivariate and regression analyses.	3,352 UK postgraduate researchers. Ethnicity categories included White British, White other, Chinese/ Chinese British, Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, Asian/ Asian British, Mixed ethnicity, Other ethnicity and Prefer not to say. Analysis used White ethnicity versus BAME ethnicity.	Used “impostor thoughts”. Measured using the 20-item Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS); higher scores indicated greater IP; reliability $\alpha = .94$.	Belonging was not directly measured. Related constructs included loneliness, multiple group memberships and supervisory agency/ communion.	Impostor thoughts were positively correlated with depression, anxiety and suicidality and significantly predicted all three outcomes in final models. Loneliness, perfectionistic discrepancy and reduced supervisory communion were also consistent predictors. No intervention was evaluated, but the authors recommended attention to self-beliefs, social connectedness and supervisory relationships.
Bunce et al. (2021) [England]	Examined BME students’ experiences of learning and teaching in health and social care-related subjects, using self-determination theory to understand the BME attainment gap. Qualitative focus group study.	17 full-time BME students from two health and social care-related degree programmes at a post-1992 university in England. All participants were women. Ethnic categories included Black African, Asian, and White and Black Caribbean.	Used “imposter” and “imposter syndrome”, but IP was not a primary construct or formal analytic focus. One participant described feeling “like an imposter”, and the discussion briefly linked this to imposter syndrome.	Belonging/ relatedness was central to the analysis.	Thematic analysis identified obstacles to relatedness, competence and autonomy. Students described exclusion, isolation, being judged by skin colour or accent, disappointment with grades and feeling they had to be “twice as good.” The study was framed around the BME attainment gap and discussed grades, assessment concerns and experiences of having effort unrecognised. Institutional implications included strengthening belonging, competence and autonomy through inclusive teaching, support and curriculum practices.

Author / year	Aim, context and design	Sample and race/ ethnicity reporting	IP terminology and operationalisation	Belonging outcomes	Key findings and institutional implications
Husbands et al. (2025) [England]	Explored the role of IP in the experiences of Black female undergraduate students at UK universities, with attention to intersecting racialised and gendered identities. Semi-structured online focus groups analysed using inductive thematic analysis.	10 Black female undergraduate students at UK universities, mostly in England. Reported categories included Black, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black African/ Indian and Black Hispanic.	Used “impostor phenomenon,” “impostorism” and participants’ references to “impostor syndrome”. No psychometric measure; IP was explored qualitatively through focus groups.	Belonging was explored qualitatively through the theme “finding sense of belonging.”	Four themes were generated: contextual experiences of IP; finding sense of belonging; struggling to maintain and value an authentic self; and taming my impostor. IP was linked to onliness, racialised and gendered expectations, comparison with peers and pressure to maintain a high-achieving Black female identity. No formal awarding or attainment outcome was reported, although academic identity, achievement pressure and progress were discussed. Institutional implications included culturally sensitive support, safe spaces, representation and earlier recognition of IP.
Kilby et al. (2022) [UK]	Explored factors that may trigger or maintain imposterism among postgraduate students from minoritised racial backgrounds and examined what HE institutions could do to reduce it. Online qualitative survey analysed using inductive thematic analysis.	71 postgraduate taught and research students from minoritised racial backgrounds at a large UK university. Recruitment used “BAME” terminology, while participants self-defined their ethnic identities in varied terms.	Used “imposter phenomenon” and “imposterism”. No psychometric measure; IP was explored through open-ended qualitative survey questions after participants were given examples of imposterism.	Belonging was explored qualitatively through representation, visibility, exclusion, withdrawal, internationality and whether students felt they belonged.	Four themes were generated: Hidden away; Problematic awareness; Hell is other people; and Our complicated lives. IP was connected to visibility, transitions, praise, self–other comparison, stereotypes, lack of representation and intersecting identities. Recommendations included challenging deficit-focused language, normalising conversations about IP, inclusive communities, staff training, mentoring, coaching and skills development.
Leyton et al. (2026) [UK]	Analysed STEM students’ imposter phenomenon experiences in relation to wellbeing and belonging, focusing on gender, sexual orientation, race/ ethnicity and marginalised SOGI in the UK and India. Cross-sectional survey using PCA, summative indices and mean comparisons.	461 STEM students overall; UK n = 218 and India n = 243. UK minority ethnic students comprised 23.5% of the UK sample, but exact n was not reported in the extracted data. Race/ ethnicity was considered, but the main analysis centred on gender and SOGI.	Used “impostor feelings”, “impostor phenomenon” and “impostorism”. Measured using the 20-item CIPS. PCA identified three dimensions: fear of failure, misrecognition of merit/unworthiness and entrepreneurial fakeness.	Belonging was measured through indices of fitting in, alienation/isolation, safeness and connectedness/ respect/ hospitality.	Affective inequalities were more intense among students with marginalised SOGI, indexed by higher impostor feelings, lower wellbeing and precarious belonging. In the UK sample, fear of failure and unworthiness were higher among heterosexual women and students with marginalised SOGI. No intervention was evaluated.

Author / year	Aim, context and design	Sample and race/ ethnicity reporting	IP terminology and operationalisation	Belonging outcomes	Key findings and institutional implications
Murray et al. (2023) [UK]	Explored imposter syndrome/feelings among marginalised STEM undergraduates at two elite UK universities and conceptualised imposter feelings as unevenly distributed “imposter work.” Qualitative interview study.	27 marginalised STEM students/interviewees from two pre-1992 elite UK universities; 18 were racially or ethnically minoritised. The sample also included disabled, working-class, first-generation, LGBTQ+ and international/ EU students.	Used “imposter syndrome,” “imposter feelings” and “imposter work.” No psychometric measure. Ten interviewees explicitly named imposter syndrome; 17 additional interviews were coded as discussing imposter feelings.	Belonging was explored qualitatively through underrepresentation, exclusionary STEM environments, alternative peer spaces, student societies, mentoring, counselling and pastoral support.	Three themes were developed: situated and relational imposter feelings; uneven distribution of imposter work; and the myth of individual overcoming. The study argued that imposter feelings are produced in relation to people, spaces, moments and exclusionary institutional contexts. No formal attainment outcome was reported, although assessment periods were discussed as times when imposter feelings intensified. Institutional implications emphasised collective rather than individualised responses.
Sappor and Franks (2025) [UK]	Examined issues and factors affecting the BAME awarding gap between BAME/ non-White and White students on a master’s level module at a UK university, with particular attention to academic help-seeking. Focus group study analysed thematically.	10 master’s level students; nine identified as non-White/ BAME and one as White. All participants were female. Ethnic groups were not disaggregated, and age was not collected.	Used “impostor syndrome” and “feeling of being an impostor.” No psychometric measure; heightened impostor syndrome was generated as a qualitative theme.	Belonging was analysed qualitatively in relation to identity, academic space, representation, prior experiences and institutional understanding.	Five themes were generated: belonging, help-seeking influences, heightened impostor syndrome, communication and inequities. Heightened impostor syndrome was linked to lower belonging, prior experiences, pressure to maintain standards, feeling lucky rather than deserving and reluctance to seek help. The study was framed around the BAME awarding gap in a master’s-level module, but detailed numerical module outcome data were not reported. Recommendations included involving BAME/non-White students in designing support, scaffolded help-seeking, academic language support and improved representation.

3.2 Operationalisation and reporting of the impostor phenomenon

Across the included studies, IP was operationalised both as a measurable psychological construct and as a qualitative, situated experience embedded in academic, relational, racialised, gendered and institutional contexts. Two quantitative studies used the CIPS. Berry et al. (2021) used the 20-item CIPS to measure “impostor thoughts” among UK postgraduate researchers. Leyton et al. (2026) also used the 20-item CIPS but analysed “impostor feelings” through three affective-discursive dimensions: fear of failure, misrecognition of merit/unworthiness and entrepreneurial fakeness. Both studies treated higher scores as indicating greater IP, although neither reported cut-off categories in the extracted data.

The remaining six studies were qualitative and did not use psychometric measures. In these studies, IP was examined through participants’ accounts and interpreted using terms such as “impostor phenomenon,” “imposter syndrome,” “imposterism,” “imposter feelings”, and “imposter work” (Aqsa et al., 2025; Husbands et al., 2025; Kilby et al., 2022; Murray et al., 2023; Sappor & Franks, 2025). Bunce et al. (2021) was more peripheral to the IP concept, but was relevant to the review because they addressed the experiences of racially minoritised students in learning, teaching and attainment and included a participant account of feeling “like an imposter.”

3.3 Factors associated with higher impostor phenomenon

Across these studies, IP was rarely presented as a purely individual psychological difficulty. Instead, the studies situated impostorism in relation to underrepresentation, academic othering, visibility, comparison, racialised and gendered expectations, family and cultural pressures, assessment experiences, help-seeking, institutional norms and exclusionary higher education environments.

The two quantitative studies identified different factors associated with higher IP or IP-related dimensions. Berry et al. (2021) found that CIPS scores were positively correlated with depression, anxiety and suicidality. In the final regression models, greater impostor thoughts significantly predicted depression, anxiety and suicidality, alongside factors such as loneliness, perfectionistic discrepancy and reduced supervisory communion. Although Berry et al. (2021) included ethnicity as a White versus BAME predictor, IP findings were not reported separately for racially minoritised groups.

Leyton et al. (2026) reported that, in the UK sample, fear of failure and unworthiness were significantly higher among heterosexual women and students with marginalised Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities (SOGI). Women with marginalised SOGI reported particularly high fear of failure, while students with marginalised SOGI reported higher unworthiness than their heterosexual counterparts. Race/ethnicity was considered, but the authors reported no significant UK differences in IP, wellbeing, or belonging across students' ethnic backgrounds, while noting limitations linked to small Black and mixed-ethnicity subgroup sizes and diversity among international students.

The qualitative studies identified contextual, relational, cultural and institutional factors that participants associated with impostorism. Aqsa et al. (2025) linked imposterism among South Asian undergraduates to academic othering, cultural pressure to excel, family expectations, academic comparison and a perceived need for academic humility. Husbands et al. (2025) linked IP to onlyness, racialised and gendered expectations, hypervigilance, peer comparison, 'high-achieving Black female' labelling and pressure not to misrepresent Black people. Kilby et al. (2022) identified visibility, progression, participation in teaching activities, praise, self and other comparison, stereotypes, lack of representation and international student status as triggers for maintaining conditions of imposterism. Murray et al. (2023) identified imposter feelings during the transition to university, assessment periods, in competitive STEMM cultures, in hyper-underrepresentation, in microaggressions, in tokenism, and in exclusionary environments. Sappor and Franks (2025) linked heightened impostor syndrome to prior educational experiences, pressure to maintain standards, feeling lucky rather than deserving and reluctance to seek help. Bunce et al. (2021) did not formally analyse IP, but one participant's account of feeling "like an imposter" was situated within pressure to adapt to dominant academic norms, including accent, voice and perceived cleverness.

3.4 Overlap between impostor phenomenon and sense of belonging

In the qualitative studies, belonging was closely connected to representation, recognition and access to culturally meaningful support. Aqsa et al. (2025) found that academic othering, prejudice, cultural difference and underrepresentation contributed to alienation and a reduced sense of belonging among South Asian undergraduates. Husbands et al. (2025) found that Black female undergraduates' weak sense of racial and academic belonging was linked to underrepresentation, isolation, onlyness, lack of safe spaces and limited culturally relevant support. Kilby et al. (2022) similarly reported that the lack of racial and cultural representation

intensified visibility and vulnerability among postgraduate students from minoritised racial backgrounds. Murray et al. (2023) showed that alternative spaces of belonging and peer support, including student societies, friendship groups, mentoring, counselling and pastoral support, helped students cope with IP within exclusionary STEMM environments. In Sappor and Franks (2025), belonging was shaped by prior experiences, representation, staff support, academic space and whether institutions understood students as more than simply students. Bunce et al. (2021) analysed relatedness as one of three basic psychological needs and found that exclusion, isolation and being judged by skin colour or accent undermined belonging and wellbeing.

Leyton et al. (2026) measured belonging using indices of fitting in, alienation/isolation, safeness and connectedness/respect/hospitality. Students with marginalised SOGI reported higher isolation, and women with marginalised SOGI reported higher isolation/alienation than other groups. Although the study was not primarily focused on racially minoritised students, it demonstrated how belonging, wellbeing and impostorism can be mapped intersectionally within STEM higher education contexts. Berry et al. (2021), while not measuring belonging directly, found that loneliness and reduced supervisory communion were important predictors of mental health symptoms among postgraduate researchers, suggesting that social and relational dimensions are relevant to IP-related experiences in postgraduate contexts.

Taken together, the included evidence suggests that IP and belonging are closely connected but inconsistently operationalised. In qualitative studies, belonging was described as part of the relational and institutional context in which impostorism was intensified, negotiated or resisted. In quantitative studies, belonging-related constructs were measured differently across studies, limiting direct comparison. Overall, inconsistent definitions and measurements limit our understanding of the strength and nature of this relationship, pointing to the need for standardised approaches and, in the case of the degree-awarding gap, longitudinal studies to clarify how belonging influences the development and maintenance of impostorism.

3.5 Awarding, attainment, progression and engagement outcomes

Evidence directly linking IP with awarding, attainment, progression or engagement outcomes remained limited, even after the inclusion of three additional studies. Sappor and Franks (2025) explicitly framed their study around the BAME awarding gap in a UK Master's-level module. They identified help-seeking, belonging, communication, heightened impostor syndrome and

inequities as interrelated themes. However, detailed numerical attainment results were not reported, and IP was not statistically tested as a predictor of awarding outcomes.

Bunce et al. (2021) also focused on the BME attainment gap and explored how BME students' experiences of learning and teaching related to relatedness, competence and autonomy. Students described disappointment with grades, feeling that effort was not reflected in marks, needing to be "twice as good," and concerns that assessments might be marked down because of cultural misunderstandings or stereotypes about BME intellectual ability. However, IP was not a central construct in the study and was not analysed in relation to attainment outcomes.

The remaining studies did not report formal awarding or attainment outcomes. Berry et al. (2021) focused on mental health symptoms among postgraduate researchers rather than academic outcomes. Husbands et al. (2025) qualitatively discussed academic identity, achievement pressure and academic progress, but did not report degree outcomes or attainment measures. Kilby et al. (2022) explored experiences of imposterism among postgraduate students but did not report outcomes related to awarding or progression. Leyton et al. (2026) examined IP, wellbeing and belonging among STEM students but did not report attainment or awarding outcomes. Aqsa et al. (2025) discussed academic pressure, perfectionism, career expectations and financial/family responsibilities, but did not report formal attainment results. Murray et al. (2023) discussed assessment periods as moments when imposter feelings intensified, but did not report formal attainment outcomes.

Therefore, the included evidence does not support a direct conclusion that IP explains the degree-awarding gap. Instead, the evidence reviewed suggests that IP may intersect with belonging, help-seeking, academic confidence, mental health, representation, cultural pressure, assessment experiences and institutional belonging. The relationship between IP and awarding outcomes remains underdeveloped in UK higher education research.

3.6 Institutional practices and interventions

No included study empirically evaluated an institutional intervention that directly addresses IP, belonging and awarding outcomes among racially minoritised students in UK higher education. However, several studies reported institutionally relevant implications or recommendations grounded in their empirical findings.

Berry et al. (2021) recommended that institutions supporting postgraduate researchers attend to self-beliefs, social connectedness and supervisory relationships, including supervisor training to improve agency and communion. Husbands et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive support, safe spaces, diverse representation, speaker series or empowerment workshops, hybrid learning opportunities and earlier recognition of IP characteristics. Kilby et al. (2022) recommended moving away from deficit-focused language, normalising conversations about imposterism, developing inclusive and culturally aware postgraduate communities, providing staff training and offering mentoring, coaching and skills development. Aqsa et al. (2025) recommended attention to South Asian students' specific cultural pressures and warned against treating racially minoritised students as a homogeneous group. Bunce et al. (2021) recommended teaching and support practices that strengthen relatedness, competence and autonomy for BME students. Murray et al. (2023) argued for collective rather than individualised responses to IP, including addressing exclusionary institutional environments and recognising the uneven distribution of imposter work. Sappor and Franks (2025) recommended involving BAME/non-White students in the design of interventions, embedding routine and scaffolded support, improving academic language and writing support, attending to the language of "support," and increasing representation among faculty. Leyton et al. (2026) did not report an institutional intervention, but their findings highlighted the importance of addressing heteronormativity, wellbeing and belonging in STEM environments.

3.7 Interpretation in relation to existing literature

The findings support the need for a scoping review approach because the evidence base is emerging, uneven and conceptually dispersed. The included studies were not sufficiently homogeneous to support a quantitative synthesis, and the review did not aim to estimate effect sizes or assess intervention effectiveness. Instead, consistent with JBI guidance, the review mapped how IP has been defined, measured and discussed, which populations have been studied, and where gaps remain (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Munn et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2020; Pollock et al., 2023). This mapping shows that IP research in UK higher education spans psychology, sociology of higher education, STEMM inequality, postgraduate mental health, student belonging, academic help-seeking and awarding gap research.

The findings also complicate individualised accounts of IP. Traditional definitions of IP emphasise internal feelings of fraudulence, self-doubt and fear of exposure despite evidence of competence or achievement (Clance & Imes, 1978; Pákozdy et al., 2023). This framing remains useful for identifying and measuring the construct, particularly in quantitative work using instruments such as the CIPS. However, the included qualitative studies suggest that, for racially minoritised students, impostorism is often experienced in relation to institutional and social conditions. For example, Husbands et al. (2025) linked IP among Black female undergraduates to onliness, racialised and gendered expectations, authenticity and belonging. Aqsa et al. (2025) highlighted academic othering, culturally ascribed perfectionism and academic humility among South Asian undergraduates. Kilby et al. (2022) connected imposterism among postgraduate students from minoritised racial backgrounds to representation, visibility, comparison and exclusion. Murray et al. (2023) went further by conceptualising ‘imposter work’ as the unevenly distributed emotional labour marginalised students undertake in response to imposter feelings produced or intensified within exclusionary university environments.

These interpretations are consistent with wider literature, which cautions against treating IP as a decontextualised individual deficit. Cokley et al. (2024) argue that IP research with racially and ethnically minoritised groups needs greater attention to race, culture, discrimination and measurement. Similarly, critiques of individualised IP frameworks suggest that racialised students may be encouraged to interpret institutional exclusion as personal inadequacy, thereby obscuring the role of racism, underrepresentation and academic cultures in producing feelings of fraudulence or unbelonging (Cokley et al., 2024; McGee et al., 2022; Murray et al., 2023). The current review supports this concern. Although the included studies differed in method and focus, they collectively suggest that impostor phenomenon among racially minoritised students cannot be fully understood without considering the institutional environments in which those feelings arise.

The review also reinforces the importance of belonging as a relational and institutional concept. Prior UK higher education research has linked belonging to retention, engagement and success, while also showing that belonging differs across ethnic groups and can fluctuate across the student lifecycle (Cureton & Gravestock, 2019; Thomas, 2012). Chiu et al. (2026) extend this literature by conceptualising minority ethnic students’ belonging as conditional, shaped by prior educational experiences, minority status within institutional contexts and

interactions with staff and peers. In line with this literature, in the included studies, belonging was shaped by representation, recognition, safety, peer connection, staff support, academic spaces, and students feeling understood as whole people rather than simply as learners. In this sense, IP and belonging were not separate domains. Rather, impostorism appeared to intensify when students experienced exclusion, invisibility, pressure to prove legitimacy, or a lack of culturally meaningful support.

The evidence on awarding and attainment outcomes was limited. The wider literature on the degree-awarding gap emphasises institutional, structural and relational drivers, including racism, curriculum and assessment practices, academic support, representation and belonging (Bunce et al., 2021; Sappor & Franks, 2025; Wong et al., 2021). The current review suggests that impostorism may be relevant to this wider ecology through its links with belonging, academic confidence, help-seeking, wellbeing and perceived legitimacy. However, the mapped evidence does not support the conclusion that IP causes the degree-awarding gap. Instead, impostorism is one possible psychosocial and affective process through which students experience racialised academic environments. This distinction is important: positioning IP as the cause of awarding disparities risks shifting responsibility to students, whereas the evidence points towards institutional conditions that shape students' access to belonging, recognition, support and confidence.

3.8 Strengths and limitations of the review

A key strength of this review is its systematic and transparent scoping review design. The review was conducted in line with JBI guidance and reported in accordance with PRISMA-ScR expectations. It used an a priori OSF registration, PCC-based eligibility criteria, systematic searching across multiple databases and platforms, citation tracking, structured screening, and a charting process designed to support descriptive mapping. This was appropriate for an emerging evidence base where the aim was to identify the nature, range and characteristics of the available evidence rather than to conduct a meta-analysis or assess intervention effectiveness.

The review also contributes conceptually by bringing together literatures that are often discussed separately: IP, belonging, racialised student experience, STEMM marginalisation, postgraduate mental health, academic help-seeking and awarding inequalities. This synthesis helps clarify that IP among racially minoritised students in UK higher education is not a

single, well-established phenomenon, but stems from a dispersed field that requires further conceptual, methodological and empirical development.

However, several limitations should be noted. First, the included evidence base was small and uneven. The review included only eight studies, most of which were qualitative and had relatively small sample sizes. This limits the extent to which patterns can be generalised across racially minoritised students in UK higher education. Second, race and ethnicity were reported inconsistently across studies. Some studies focused on specific groups, such as Black female or South Asian students, while others used broad terms such as BAME, non-White, minority ethnic or racially/ethnically minoritised. These differences limited comparison across studies and restricted the ability to map subgroup-specific patterns.

Finally, the review was limited by what was reported in the included sources. Missing or unclear data on ethnicity, UK subsamples, belonging measures, attainment outcomes, IP scoring, intervention components or subgroup analyses restricted the level of detail that could be charted.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

This scoping review mapped an emerging and uneven evidence base on the impostor phenomenon among racially minoritised undergraduate and postgraduate students in UK higher education. The evidence suggests that IP is operationalised in varied ways, from psychometric measures of impostor thoughts or feelings to qualitative accounts of impostorism as situated, relational and institutionally produced. Across the included studies, impostorism was closely connected to belonging, representation, help-seeking, academic confidence, wellbeing, cultural expectations and institutional climate. However, evidence directly linking IP to award outcomes remains limited, and no included study evaluated an intervention designed specifically to address IP among racially minoritised students in UK higher education. The review, therefore, highlights the need to move beyond individualised and deficit-based accounts of impostorism and to examine how racialised, gendered, cultural, disciplinary and institutional conditions shape students' sense of academic legitimacy. Future research and practice should address IP as part of broader work to transform belonging, support and equity in UK higher education.

4.2 Implications for UK higher education policy and practice

The findings suggest several implications for UK higher education policy and practice, which can be translated as recommendations:

(i) Interventions should avoid deficit framing. If impostor phenomenon is treated solely as a problem within individual students, institutional practices may focus on helping students adjust to exclusionary environments rather than changing the environments that contribute to IP. Support for racially minoritised students should therefore be framed not as “fixing” students' confidence or resilience, but as addressing academic cultures, assessment practices, representation, belonging and support structures that shape students' sense of legitimacy.

(ii) Universities should attend to belonging as an institutional responsibility. The review suggests that belonging is shaped through everyday interactions with peers, staff, curricula, feedback, academic spaces and support systems. Strategies to strengthen belonging may include increasing representation among staff and students, creating culturally meaningful peer and mentoring spaces, embedding inclusive pedagogies, addressing racialised

microaggressions, and ensuring that students can access support without stigma. These implications align with the included studies' recommendations for safe spaces, culturally sensitive support, inclusive communities, improved representation and student involvement in designing support (Aqsa et al., 2025; Husbands et al., 2025; Kilby et al., 2022; Sappor & Franks, 2025).

(iii) Universities should consider how institutional cultures shape academic confidence and help-seeking. Sappor and Franks (2025) showed that heightened impostorism, belonging and stigma around help-seeking were interrelated in students' accounts of the awarding gap. This suggests that institutions should make help-seeking routine, normalised and embedded within teaching rather than positioned as remedial. Academic writing, assessment literacy and feedback support should be framed as part of the curriculum for all students, while also recognising that racially minoritised students may encounter additional barriers linked to stereotypes, prior experiences, language, representation and trust. The language of support itself may need careful attention so that students are not made to feel deficient for accessing it.

(iv) Postgraduate and supervisory contexts require specific attention. Berry et al. (2021) identified IP, perfectionism, loneliness, and supervisory communion as important predictors of postgraduate researcher mental health symptoms, while Kilby et al. (2022) highlighted the role of representation, visibility, transition and postgraduate academic cultures in imposterism among students from minoritised racial backgrounds. Institutions should therefore consider how postgraduate induction, supervision training, mentoring, peer communities and research culture can support belonging and reduce isolation. Supervisors may need training not only in technical doctoral supervision, but also in culturally responsive supervision, relational support and recognition of how racialisation and underrepresentation shape postgraduate experiences.

(v) The findings have implications for STEMM contexts. Leyton et al. (2026) and Murray et al. (2023) indicate that STEM and STEMM environments can shape IP through competition, heteronormativity, exclusionary cultures, underrepresentation and assessment pressure. This aligns with wider evidence that competitive classroom climates can intensify impostorism and affect engagement (Canning et al., 2020). Practice in STEMM should therefore move beyond individual confidence-building and address the norms of competition, meritocracy and "fit" that can make some students feel conditionally included. Cohort building,

collaborative pedagogies, diverse role models, inclusive curriculum design and explicit attention to minoritised students' experiences may be particularly important.

(vi) The findings are relevant to awarding-gap work, but they should be applied cautiously. IP should not be presented as the explanation for racialised awarding disparities. Instead, it may be one part of a wider set of psychosocial and relational processes through which institutional inequalities are experienced. Awarding gap interventions should therefore address structural and institutional factors, including assessment design, curriculum, feedback, academic support, staff-student relationships, racism and representation. IP-related support may have value when embedded within broader institutional change, but it should not replace action on structural inequalities.

4.3 Implications for future research

The review identified several priorities for future research. First, there is a need for more UK-specific quantitative research with sufficiently large and diverse samples of racially minoritised students. Current evidence is dominated by small qualitative studies, which provide rich contextual insight but cannot estimate prevalence, group differences or associations across student populations. Future quantitative studies should avoid treating racially minoritised students as a single homogeneous category and should report subgroup data where sample sizes allow.

Second, research on constructs such as IP highlights concerns. For example, constructs are often adopted without sufficient critical examination, leading to conceptual ambiguity and weakening the quality and credibility of research (Flake & Fried, 2020; Hodson, 2021). Furthermore, strong relationships among overlapping constructs can make it difficult to distinguish between them, thereby limiting the usefulness of findings. While recent studies have started to critique the measurement of IP (Pownall et al., 2025), further investigation is needed to determine whether its overlap with related constructs challenges its theoretical independence and validity.

Third, future research should develop and test culturally informed and context-sensitive measures of IP. The CIPS remains widely used, but traditional measures may not capture racialised dimensions of impostorism, such as the effects of discrimination, stereotype threat, academic othering, racialised expectations, tokenism or questioning of intellectual legitimacy

(Cokley et al., 2024). UK research would benefit from measurement work examining whether existing IP scales function equivalently across ethnic groups and whether additional items are needed to capture racialised and institutional dimensions of impostorism.

Fourth, future research should use intersectional designs. The included studies show that IP may be shaped by ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, disability, first-generation status, home/international status, discipline and level of study. However, intersectional analyses were often limited by small sample sizes or broad demographic categories. Future studies should be designed from the outset to examine intersecting identities and institutional contexts, rather than adding variables solely for descriptive purposes.

Fifth, belonging and IP should be examined together more systematically. The review found that belonging was frequently discussed but inconsistently measured or conceptualised. Future studies could examine how IP relates to belonging, unbelonging, social connection, academic identity, supervisory relationships, help-seeking and sense of legitimacy. Longitudinal research would be particularly useful for understanding whether IP and belonging change across transition points, such as entry to university, assessment periods, progression to postgraduate study, placement, doctoral milestones or graduation.

Sixth, future research should examine IP in relation to awarding, attainment, progression and retention outcomes without reducing racialised inequalities to individual psychology. This could include studies that examine whether IP is associated with academic engagement, feedback use, help-seeking, progression decisions, retention intentions or attainment, while also measuring institutional and relational variables such as discrimination, representation, curriculum belonging and support. Such research should be carefully framed so that students' IP is not positioned as the cause of structural inequalities.

Finally, intervention and evaluation studies are needed. The wider intervention literature suggests that IP interventions are heterogeneous, with education, group support and skills-based approaches showing potential (Cisco, 2020; Para et al., 2024). However, the current review found no evaluated intervention specifically designed to address IP among racially minoritised students in UK higher education, nor any intervention that addresses IP, belonging and awarding outcomes together. Future interventions should be culturally responsive, co-designed with racially minoritised students, and embedded within broader institutional change. They should then be evaluated using outcomes that include belonging,

academic confidence, wellbeing, help-seeking, engagement and progression, as well as student experiences of institutional climate.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Search strategy

Table 3. Search Strategy Used in Web of Science

Search component	Concept covered	Search terms
#1	Impostor phenomenon	“imposter feelings” OR “imposter phenomenon” OR “imposter syndrome” OR “imposter thoughts” OR imposterism OR “impostor feelings” OR “impostor phenomenon” OR “impostor syndrome” OR “impostor thoughts” OR impostorism
#2	Race and ethnicity	AAME OR African OR Arab OR Asian OR BAED OR BAME OR Bangladeshi OR BIPOC OR Black OR BME OR Caribbean OR Chinese OR decolonis* OR EMB OR ethnic* OR Gypsy OR Indian OR “Irish Traveller” OR “Mixed heritage” OR Pakistani OR POC OR racial* OR racism OR Roma
#3	Higher education context	“Higher education” OR universit* OR student*
#4	UK location	Britain OR England OR “Northern Ireland” OR Scotland OR UK OR “United Kingdom” OR Wales
Final combination	Full search	#1 AND #2 AND #3 AND #4
Limits	Language and year	English language; 1978 to present

Appendix II: Data charting steps

The de-duplicated reference library was stored and shared with the review team as RIS files. Covidence decisions and full-text exclusion reasons were exported as CSV or XLSX files. The final charting sheet, codebook, eligibility guide, search strategies and protocol materials were stored in Microsoft Word, PDF, CSV or XLSX formats and shared with the research team. Working synthesis outputs were stored internally with team access only.

For mixed-country or mixed-population studies, UK higher education student data were charted separately where possible. Where UK or racially minoritised subgroup data were not disaggregated or extractable, this was recorded as “not disaggregated/not extractable.” Where quantitative results were reported, the review recorded the statistics provided by the authors.

Where qualitative results were reported, the review charted the relevant themes, illustrative interpretations and author-reported implications. Missing or unclear data were recorded as “not reported” or “unclear.”

Table 4. Data Items Charted From Included Sources

Category	Data items charted
Study identification	Study ID, author(s), year, full citation, DOI or URL
Publication details	Publication type, journal or source, funding and conflicts of interest
Study context	UK nation, institution type, setting and discipline or subject area
Study aim	Study aim or purpose
Study design and methods	Quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods; recruitment; data collection; analysis approach
Population and sample characteristics	Sample size, undergraduate/postgraduate status, home/international status, race/ethnicity categories as reported, gender, class, first-generation status and other intersectional characteristics where reported
Impostor phenomenon terminology and operationalisation	Term used, definition, measure or instrument, item or response format where reported, scoring, reliability, cut-offs and whether the measure was validated or bespoke
Belonging or unbelonging	Term used, definition, measure or qualitative operationalisation
Awarding, attainment or progression outcomes	Degree classification, grades, GPA, retention, progression, engagement, performance intentions or related outcomes where reported
Other relevant outcomes	Well-being, academic confidence, help-seeking, school satisfaction, academic identity or other psychosocial variables
Results relevant to the review questions	Quantitative estimates, directions of effects, subgroup or intersectional findings, qualitative themes, author interpretations and stated implications
Institutional practices or interventions	Intervention or practice type, target population, setting, components, duration, implementers, comparator if applicable, and reported outcomes
Limitations and notes	Author-reported limitations and extractor notes

Appendix III

Table 5. Full text screening.

Reference	Decision	Primary reason for exclusion
Addison, M., Breeze, M., & Taylor, Y. (Eds.). (2022). <i>The Palgrave handbook of imposter syndrome in higher education</i> . Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.	Excluded	Not a primary empirical source (e.g., review, theory, editorial, protocol, opinion piece)
Akam-Baxter, E., O'Brien, C. M., Sinharay, S., Clavijo-Jordan, V., Rodriguez, S. B., Ijoma, J. N., ... & Alvarez, N. H. (2025). Visions by WIMIN: Imposter phenomenon. <i>Mol Imaging Biol</i> 27, 17–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11307-024-01971-5	Excluded	Not a primary empirical source (e.g., review, theory, editorial, protocol, opinion piece)
Aqsa, N., Pownall, M., & Harris, R. (2025). 'I wanna make my parents proud rather than I wanna make myself proud' imposter phenomenon among South Asian undergraduate students. <i>Equity in Education & Society</i> , 27526461251387268.	Included	N/a
Ayres, Z. J. (2022). <i>Managing your mental health during your PhD</i> . Springer International Publishing AG. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-14194-2	Excluded	Not a primary empirical source (e.g., review, theory, editorial, protocol, opinion piece)
Berry, C., Niven, J. E., & Hazell, C. M. (2021). Personal, social and relational predictors of UK postgraduate researcher mental health problems. <i>BJPsych Open</i> , 7(6), e205.	Included	N/a

Blackmon Jr, W. J. (2018). <i>A sequential explanatory mixed-method study of the impostor phenomenon experiences of first-generation students of color at a predominately white institution</i> . Drexel University.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Bunce, L., King, N., Saran, S., & Talib, N. (2021). Experiences of black and minority ethnic (BME) students in higher education: Applying self-determination theory to understand the BME attainment gap. <i>Studies in Higher Education</i> , 46(3), 534-547.	Included	N/a
Chang, S., Lee, H. Y., Anderson, C., Lewis, K., Chakraverty, D., & Yates, M. (2022). Intervening on impostor phenomenon: Prospective evaluation of a workshop for health science students using a mixed-method design. <i>BMC Med Educ</i> 22, 802. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03824-7	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Chiu, Y. L. T., Wong, B., Murray, Ó. M., Horsburgh, J., & Copsey-Blake, M. (2026). 'I deserve to be here': Minority ethnic students and their conditional belonging in UK higher education. <i>High Educ</i> 91, 1273–1290. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-025-01469-1	Excluded	Not about impostor phenomenon/impostorism as a construct (e.g., only uses “impostor” colloquially or in an unrelated clinical sense)
Cisco, J. (2020). Using academic skill set interventions to reduce impostor phenomenon feelings in postgraduate students. <i>Journal</i>	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

of *Further and Higher Education*, 44(3), 423–437.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2018.1564023>

Cozzarelli, C., & Major, B. (1990). Exploring the validity of the impostor phenomenon. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 9(4), 401-417.

<https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.1990.9.4.401>

Excluded

Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Duncan et al. (2023). An evaluation of impostor phenomenon in data science students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(5), 4115.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20054115>

Excluded

Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Fitriyah, S. M. (2022). Surviving impostor syndrome: Navigating through the mental roller coaster of a doctoral sojourn. *Journal of International Students*, 12(2). DOI: 10.32674/JIS.V12I2.3274

Excluded

Not a primary empirical source (e.g., review, theory, editorial, protocol, opinion piece)

Fuller, T. (2020). *The Effect of Mentoring on Feelings of Impostor Phenomenon in Black Women Pursuing a Terminal Degree* (Master's thesis, Texas A&M University-Commerce).

Excluded

Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Goodwin, L. L. (2016). *Resilient spirits: Disadvantaged students making it at an elite university*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315829326>

Excluded

Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Husbands, D. (2019). <i>Multiple Selves, Marginalised Voices: Exploring Black Female Psychology Students' Experiences of Constructing Identity in UK Higher Education</i> (Doctoral dissertation, University of Westminster).	Excluded	Not about impostor phenomenon/impostorism as a construct (e.g., only uses "impostor" colloquially or in an unrelated clinical sense)
Husbands, D., Linceviciute, S., & Yetkili, O. (2025). The impostor phenomenon among racially minoritised university students: 'Who knows how to get rid of this?' <i>Race Ethnicity and Education</i> , 28(5), 670-688.	Included	N/a
Ikhlaq, H., Agarwal, S., Kwok, C., Golamgouse, H., Derby, S., McRae, N., ... & Kumar, S. (2023). Medical students impacted by discrimination: A qualitative study into their experiences of belonging and support systems at medical schools in the UK. <i>BMJ open</i> , 13(12), e078314. DOI: 10.1136/BMJOPEN-2023-078314	Excluded	Data for racially minoritised students are not reported or cannot be extracted from mixed samples.
Ives, S. K. (2010). <i>The impact of an online orientation program on the impostor phenomenon, self-efficacy, and anxiety</i> . Walden University.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Kilby, L., Porritt, J., Labinjo, T.O., & Machaka, R. "What am I doing in a place like this?: Understanding imposter phenomenon amongst postgraduate students from minoritised racial backgrounds." <i>QMiP Bulletin</i> 34 (2022): 6-21.	Included	N/a

Landry, M. J., Bailey, D. A., Lee, M., Van Gundy, S., & Ervin, A. (2022). The Impostor Phenomenon in the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession: An Online Cross-Sectional Survey. <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i> , 19(9), 5558. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19095558	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Lanehurst, A. N. (2019). <i>An Impostor's Resistance: The Protective Role of Critical Consciousness from the Mental Health Impacts of the Impostor Phenomenon</i> . The University of Texas at Austin.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Lee, H., Anderson, C. B., Yates, M. S., Chang, S., & Chakraverty, D. (2022). Insights into the complexity of the impostor phenomenon among trainees and professionals in STEM and medicine. <i>Curr Psychol</i> 41, 5913–5924. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-01089-1	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Leyton, D., Read, B., Slade, B., Evangelista, Z., Maitra, S., & Maitra, S. (2026). Affective inequalities beyond heteronormativity. Impostor feelings, wellbeing and belonging in STEM students in the UK and India. <i>Educational Review</i> , 78(1), 39-60.	Included	N/a

Loper, R. (2025). <i>Perfectionism, Impostor Phenomenon, and Burnout in CES Students</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Regent University).	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Meadhbh Murray, Ó., Tiffany Chiu, Y. L., Wong, B., & Horsburgh, J. (2023). Deindividualising imposter syndrome: Imposter work among marginalised STEMM undergraduates in the UK. <i>Sociology</i> , 57(4), 749-766.	Included	N/a
Nelson, M. A. (2016). <i>Relationship of impostorism and guilt on belongingness among college students</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Regent University).	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Neureiter, M., & Traut-Mattausch, E. (2016). An inner barrier to career development: Preconditions of the impostor phenomenon and consequences for career development. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> , 7, 48.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Newar, R., Gupta, R. K., Krishnan, R. G., Shekhawat, K., & Walia, Y. (2025). Self-esteem as a mediator of the relationship between imposter phenomenon and academic performance among college students. <i>International Journal of Adolescence and Youth</i> , 30(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2025.2496449	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Van Niekerk, M. (2020). <i>Exploring the Occurrence of the Impostor Phenomenon and Level of Self-Efficacy amongst Students in University Courses Dominated by the Opposite Gender</i> (Master's thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa)).	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Ogunyemi, D., Lee, T., Ma, M., Osuma, A., Eghbali, M., & Bouri, N. (2022). Improving wellness: Defeating impostor syndrome in medical education using an interactive reflective workshop. <i>PloS one</i> , 17(8), e0272496. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0272496	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Osarfo-Mensah, E. (2024). What I wish I knew: Deciding on when to pursue the PhD. In <i>The Black PhD Experience</i> (pp. 26-30). Policy Press. https://doi.org/10.51952/9781447370000.ch003	Excluded	Not a primary empirical source (e.g., review, theory, editorial, protocol, opinion piece)
Pákozdy, C., Askew, J., Dyer, J., Gately, P., Martin, L., Mavor, K. I., & Brown, G. R. (2024). The imposter phenomenon and its relationship with self-efficacy, perfectionism and happiness in university students. <i>Current Psychology</i> , 43(6), 5153-5162. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04672-4	Excluded	Data for racially minoritised students are not reported or cannot be extracted from mixed samples.
Perlus, J. G. (2019). <i>On very thin ice: Impostor phenomenon and careers of women graduate students</i> (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Rana, K. S., Bashir, A., Begum, F., & Bartlett, H. (2022, May). Bridging the BAME attainment gap: Student and staff perspectives on tackling academic bias. In <i>Frontiers in Education</i> (Vol. 7, p. 868349). Frontiers Media SA.	Excluded	Not about impostor phenomenon/impostorism as a construct (e.g., only uses “impostor” colloquially or in an unrelated clinical sense)
Rogers-Shaw, C., Brion, C., Jordan, C. R., & Burden-Cousins, M. (2024). Overcoming imposter syndrome in doctoral classrooms. <i>Journal of Thought</i> , 58(3/4), 43-59.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Sakulku, J. (2011). The impostor phenomenon. <i>The Journal of Behavioral Science</i> , 6(1), 75-97.	Excluded	Not a primary empirical source (e.g., review, theory, editorial, protocol, opinion piece)
Sappor, G., & Franks, J. (2025). The BAME awarding gap: understanding student perspectives. <i>London Review of Education</i> , 23(1), 1-16.	Included	N/a
Seuwou, P. (2021). BAME Attainment in Higher Education: Exploring the experiences of Black students of African descent and the factors that impact on their low grades at Northampton University.	Excluded	Not about impostor phenomenon/impostorism as a construct (e.g., only uses “impostor” colloquially or in an unrelated clinical sense)
Simon, M. E. (2017). <i>Collins' Black Feminist Epistemology as a Theoretical Basis for Mixed Methods Research: Using the Impostor Syndrome to Explore the Experience of Black Female Ph. D. Students in STEM Fields</i> . The University of Alabama.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Stone, B. (2023). <i>"Take Up Space, Sis:" A Phenomenological Study on the Experiences of Black Women Graduate Degree Completers, Resilience, and Imposter Phenomenon</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Cardinal Stritch University).	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Sverdlik A, Mcalpine L, Hall N (2021), "Insights from a survey "comments" section: extending research on doctoral well-being". <i>Studies in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education</i> , Vol. 12 No. 2 pp. 262–282, doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/SGPE-06-2020-0035	Excluded	Data for racially minoritised students are not reported or cannot be extracted from mixed samples.
Swettenham, L. D. (2021). <i>Sport & Exercise Psychology Professional Doctorate Portfolio</i> . Liverpool John Moores University (United Kingdom).	Excluded	Data for racially minoritised students are not reported or cannot be extracted from mixed samples.
Todd, V. J., & Mcilroy, D. (2025). Construction and initial validation of an academic impostor syndrome measure. <i>Current Psychology</i> , 44(6), 4498-4510. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-07499-3	Excluded	Data for racially minoritised students are not reported or cannot be extracted from mixed samples.
Torres Acosta, M. A., Chandra, S., Li, S., Yoon, E., Selgrade, D., Quinn, J., & Ardehali, H. (2023). The impact of underrepresented minority or marginalized identity status on training outcomes of MD-PhD students. <i>BMC Medical Education</i> , 23(1), 428. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-023-04399-7	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable

Ullman, C., Mangelsdorf, K., & Muñoz, J. (2020). <i>Graduate students becoming qualitative researchers: An ethnographic study</i> . Routledge.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Wade, E. D. (2019). Counselor self-efficacy re-examined: Components of racial identity development and impostor phenomenon among counseling graduate students of color. Northern Illinois University.	Excluded	Not set in UK higher education OR UK HE results are not separable/extractable
Whiteside, C., & Klabbers, G. (2025). Exploring the perceptions of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental well-being and medical education of medical students in Northern Ireland, in addition to the perceived barriers to seeking support: A qualitative study. <i>PloS one</i> , 20(1), e0314115. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0314115	Excluded	Data for racially minoritised students are not reported or cannot be extracted from mixed samples.
Wong, B., ElMorally, R., & Copsey-Blake, M. (2021). 'Fair and square': what do students think about the ethnicity degree awarding gap? <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i> , 45(8), 1147–1161. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1932773	Excluded	Not about impostor phenomenon/impostorism as a construct (e.g., only uses “impostor” colloquially or in an unrelated clinical sense)
Wong, B., Copsey-Blake, M., & ElMorally, R. (2022). Silent or silenced? Minority ethnic students and the battle against racism. <i>Cambridge Journal of Education</i> , 52(5), 651–666. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2022.2047889	Excluded	Not about impostor phenomenon/impostorism as a construct (e.g., only uses “impostor” colloquially or in an unrelated clinical sense)