Australian Government

Department of Education

2019 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and RMIT University

PURPOSE

This compact is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the University. Entering into a compact is one of the quality and accountability requirements, which a higher education provider must meet under the *Higher Education Support Act* 2003 (HESA) as a condition of receiving a grant. Specifically, subsection 19-110(1) of HESA requires that Table A and Table B providers must, in respect of each year for which a grant is paid to the provider under HESA, enter into a mission-based compact with the Commonwealth for a period that includes that year.

All strategies should provide qualitative and/or quantitative measures of assessment.

MISSION

RMIT exists to create transformative experiences for its students, getting them ready for life and work, and to help shape the world with research, innovation, teaching and engagement. RMIT embraces the task of extending the benefits of a fast innovating, high-skill knowledge economy to our whole community and our world. We are dedicated to helping shape a new urban and industrial renaissance in the global economy. We are driven by impact and focused on the challenges and opportunities emerging around us. Our 2020 Strategy is underpinned by three directions that support our vision of "Ready for Life and Work":
1. Life Changing Experiences
2. Passion with Purpose
3. Shaping the World

Ready for Life and Work: Shaping RMIT to 2020
http://mams.rmit.edu.au/876tl55i1af1.pdf

RMIT has six core values that define the foundation of our strategy and how we operate. These are:
1. **Passion** - We take pride in RMIT and its achievements and we are deeply committed to extending and deepening RMIT's positive impact
2. **Impact** - RMIT achieves impact through an applied, practice-based approach to meeting contemporary needs. We shape the world for the better through collaborative design, research, learning and problem-solving
3. **Inclusion** - RMIT creates life-changing opportunities for all, welcomes students and staff from diverse backgrounds, honours the identity and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, and is an accessible and open institution dedicated to serving the needs of the whole community
4. **Courage** - We are honest and fair in our conduct and relationships. We embrace new thinking and evidence, test it rigorously and apply it to our own learning. We are strongly committed to performance, accountability and value for money. We speak out on issues of importance to our community and our world. We respect the rights of others and our obligations to the health of the planet
5. **Agility** - We are forward-looking, balanced and sustainable in our approach to organisation and resourcing. We are able to adapt quickly and effectively to new pressures and opportunities

6. **Imagination** - We value innovation and creativity as essential qualities of our work and resources for the economy and society. We are committed to developing, applying and sharing new ideas and perspectives.

In February 2019, the Chair of the Academic Board authorised the establishment of a short-term advisory group to review the effectiveness of the University's policies and procedures relating to academic freedom and freedom of expression. The process to date has included a thorough review of RMIT's current policy provisions pertaining to matters of intellectual freedom in light of the findings from the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers (the "French Report"). The Group has given careful consideration to the principles outlined under the recommended 'Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers' and is expected to provide final recommendations in late 2019 to early 2020 for consideration by the RMIT Academic Board and RMIT Council.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

RMIT's Education Plan to 2020 sets out how we are delivering on our goals to enable our learners to meet their aspirations for life and work and cultivate their skills to be active contributors to a dynamic and complex world. Our education vision and objectives will be achieved through a range of strategies enabled by our: people and culture; processes and practices and systems and environments, including advancing reconciliation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and students, building our analytics capabilities to leverage student and industry data and insights.

Our five objectives are:
1. Position RMIT's students, graduates and staff for the global workforce of the future
2. Build respectful, supportive and inclusive environments for all students globally
3. Create a dynamic environment for students and staff, and invest in a digital future
4. Deliver inspiring, inclusive and current teaching
5. Support and invest in our staff to deliver an innovative curriculum and transformative experience

Objectives 4 and 5 above define RMIT's vision for learning and teaching and encapsulate strategies that include:
- Enhancing our learning and teaching practice
- Innovating program design to create stronger connections between life, work and learning
- Enabling our teachers to deliver innovative pedagogy aligned to industry and community needs
- Fostering a strong learning community and innovative environment

Further information on activities relating to the strategies above can be found in our Education Plan to 2020
https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/documents/staff-site/our-structure/educationportfolio/education-plan-2020.pdf

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY
RMIT's Admissions Information web page is accessible for all applicants and provides details on selection principles and admissions processes with links to search for all program specific requirements. RMIT's selection framework includes methodology for admitting students who have completed Year 12 or an equivalent qualification, whether recent or in the past, along with consideration of life and work experience as appropriate for the qualification.

Admissions Information

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

While RMIT's retention rate is comparatively higher than the national sector average (RMIT: 89%, Sector: 81%)[1], RMIT remains committed to ensuring strong student retention. As such we have a comprehensive range of strategies and initiatives that aim to drive retention:

- We are in the process of centralising and uplifting initiatives and strategies into a formal university-wide Retention Management Plan, which will be regularly evaluated to ensure the right support is offered to all our students as needed, including online and international (both onshore and offshore).
- We have developed and implemented an Early Warning Signs (EWS) data model that uses predictive analytics to target student interventions and inform teaching staff of the students in their cohort who are at risk of disengaging with their program or dropping out of the University. It guides program level action and centralised interventions to direct students to the appropriate support service for their individual needs, i.e. academic study support, financial support, career advice and/or health and wellbeing services. EWS will soon commence its fourth iteration.
- A comprehensive Mental Health Strategy and implementation plan has been developed and is already in place across the University. The most recent addition to a suite of health and wellbeing services offered is the Medical Hub @ RMIT. Open to all students and staff, it is on campus and a free service (including for international students), with General Practitioners and referrals to RMIT counselling services available.
- The Equity and Diversity team provide support to the general student population as well as resources for students with an Indigenous or low socio-economic background and those seeking asylum. These resources include accommodation, laptop and coursework scholarships, as well as customised welcome events. This team helps to create an environment and culture where all staff and students from all genders, sexes, sexualities, cultural background and abilities can feel recognised and valued for their distinct talents and perspectives. This helps foster a sense of community, belonging and support.
- Careers & Employability offers an extensive range of curriculum and co-curricula career services to students to assist them in supporting their career aspirations. Student facing services are carefully triaged to ensure that students who are at risk, unclear about their program choice or career direction are prioritised for career consultations in order to aid their retention. Specific high touch career interactions for Low SES and indigenous students are implemented.
- The Library team offer a suite of services aligned for both on-campus and online (or external) students, which includes offering extended hours to accommodate night classes and overseas students.
- RMIT Online aims to ensure all online students have access to the same support as their on-campus counterparts. This includes access to Skype counselling or phone counselling, as well as a system of interventions that direct students to support services based on their individual and personal needs.
- Student experience programs, like How2RMIT and Mates at RMIT, help students transition into university life and create lasting connections with their peers.
- RMIT does offer some nested courses (i.e., allowing students to exit a qualification earlier, and still successfully obtain a minor qualification e.g. Certificates, Diplomas, Bachelors). These are currently offered at the discretion of individual Schools. Moving to a

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[1] 2017 Institutional Performance Portfolio, Department of Education and Training, April 2018

centralised model is being considered as part of our wider retention strategy and plan development.

- RMIT University Student Union provides a holistic support service including: student rights services, emergency support, food-banks, and our Compass drop-in centres to connect students with information and services in RMIT and out in the community, including counselling services.
- I Belong program visits SNAP Schools (including regional) to discuss tertiary education & careers. They bring around 3000 school students to campus each year to introduce them to disciplines & career paths, offer busses to open day, supported places in accommodation partners, and various scholarships. This program connects students to the ideas and expectations of university life, setting them up before they arrive.
- Student calls:
  - *Welcome calls* – made to all commencing students referring to services and support
  - *Outreach calls* – in-depth peer calls, like virtual mentoring, aimed to guide students to appropriate services and support

As part of the development of the Retention Management Plan (RMP) we have been reviewing all activities at RMIT that support retention. Recently, RMIT commissioned the Social Research Centre to conduct a series of interviews with students who had left the university to help us better understand the reasons that informed their decision to leave. The resulting report has informed the EWS project, communications to students, and the future development of the RMP.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

RMIT has defined a strategy for Research and Innovation (Research & Innovation Directions 2020) which outlines our strategic focus aligned to the University's "Ready for Life and Work" Strategy. RMIT is significantly investing in research support and infrastructure to enable its researchers to deliver excellent research outcomes which deliver economic, environment and societal benefits.

STRATEGIES TO ENSURE EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND THE STRENGTHENING OF RESEARCH CAPABILITY
- RMIT values its research and innovation capability as its people, their skills and expertise, our partnerships, and our physical and virtual infrastructure.
- RMIT's eight Enabling Capability Platforms (ECPs) are the primary mechanism to strategically connect researchers from multiple disciplines under thematic umbrellas to solve critical global problems and to deliver positive economic, social and environmental impacts. This mechanism ensures research projects are strategically aligned with clear translation objectives and impact planned.
- Strategic researcher recruitment programs, including the Vice-Chancellor's Outstanding Researcher Program maximise strategic investment in people and expertise, by aligning with ECP priorities and address imbalance of female representation in key disciplines.
- RMIT's Internal research funding schemes are designed to build collaborative networks, nurture capability development, support projects to deliver positive impact through capability deployment, and support researcher career interruption.
- A comprehensive professional development framework is designed to uplift key researcher skills, including quality supervision skills, using online training modules, innovation challenges, mentoring schemes, and impact leadership programs. RMIT researcher networks, for example Women Researchers' Network and Early Career Networks, provide collegial researcher support.

STRATEGIES FOR THE PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH TRAINING

- RMIT delivers high-quality professional, transferable and enterprise skills through its integrated PhD delivery and variable admission pathways to suit the prior experience of prospective higher degree by research candidates.
- RMIT's Masters by Research is reimagined as a key research training program focussed on end-user engagement providing targeted industry focussed research training for the research candidate.
- Higher degree by research candidates are given the opportunity to undertake industry internships, industry mentoring or participate in industry networks to enhance their employability. RMIT further enhances its industry placement opportunities by building global partnerships and facilitating international experiences. RMIT aims to increase its number of industry placements for HDR students by 10% in the next 12 months.

STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE RESEARCH TRANSLATION AND COMMERCIALISATION
- RMIT's research translation function supports researchers to plan pathways to impact for their research. The Intellectual Property Strategy and Policy and comprehensive professional development framework supports researchers to enhances key skills to recognise translation and commercialisation opportunities early in the research project development.
- The Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Engagement Program provides support to facilitate exchange between local manufacturers and RMIT researchers.
- A Major Research Initiatives strategy prioritises collaboration and partnerships for Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs), CRC-Projects (CRC-Ps), and the Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP).
- RMIT measures its success in research translation, commercialisation and engagement by: industry research income (Categories 2-4); the number of projects and return business with SMEs; the number of patents and licenses; the number of graduate researchers engaged in industry projects; and the number of PhDs completed through CRCs and the ITRP.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE OPEN ACCESS TO PUBLICATIONS AND DATA
- RMIT is developing a new Research Data Management strategy and investing in systems and digital research infrastructure to support the enhancement and automation of our open access practices.
- RMIT promotes open access to publications and data. The implementation of a new research repository will automate data collection to enable systematic open access of publications. Researchers are encouraged to utilise platforms such as Figshare to enable data sharing.
- RMIT commits to improving open access through promoting participation in global forums and generating discussion papers to progress strategies and elevate considerations for implementation.

<u>Research and Innovation Directions to 2020</u>
http://mams.rmit.edu.au/62syqn1hehun.pdf

EQUITY

RECONCILIATION
RMIT's reconciliation agenda continues in 2019, to prepare all non-Indigenous staff, students and its wider community to be in a relationship with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially in the context of Victoria's *Advancing the Treaty process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018*. In 2016, we launched a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which was embraced across RMIT and resulted in a significant shift in the ways we think and work. Our new reconciliation plan,

Dhumbah Goorowa 2019-2020, builds on the journey of work to date and centres around the following themes:

- Shifting our approach to teaching, learning and research with a shared futures mindset – embedding reconciliation into all aspects of teaching, learning and research operations
- Driving self-determination and sustainable reconciliation through practice – establishing the foundational framework for sustainable reconciliation via cultural change, investment, and ensuring policy and governance frameworks are appropriate and supportive
- Strengthening relationships and engagement with community – through effective and productive internal and external communities focused on building capacity in best practice reconciliation implementation
- Pathways, support and development – for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff, and for non-Indigenous students and staff in support of their journey to a relationship with Indigeneity.
- Supporting innovation and entrepreneurship – by remaining open and flexible in the implementation of Dhumbah Goorowa to promote innovation, growth and evolution of ideas, targets and goals as we progress on our journey to relationship

Other strategies employed are:

- Elders in residence program;
- Roll out of staff professional development workshops and online learning, Bundyi Girri (shared futures), to assist non-Indigenous staff engage with Indigenous self-determination, sovereignty and reconciliation;
- Developed for implementation in 2020, Reconciliation Advisor roles within College and Strategic Units to embed reconciliation in programs, systems and staff performance;
- Developed an Indigenous perspectives in RMIT curriculum for rollout in 2020;
- Realign and improve Indigenous student access, including bundling of offer and support packages;

Reconciliation at RMIT
https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-values/respect-for-australian-indigenous-cultures/reconciliation

EQUITY
RMIT's commitment to equity is evidenced in our Diversity and Inclusion Framework and related Action Plans, that outline the University's key priorities and objectives to build a more diverse and inclusive student and staff community and to ensure equitable outcomes.

In 2019-2020 RMIT will implement projects arising from:

- Diversity and Inclusion Framework Action Plans
- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds, focussed on improving student access and graduate outcomes
- Accessibility for people with disabilities, including a University-wide Mental Wellbeing Strategy
- Cultural inclusion, considering issues of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity
- Diverse genders, sexes and sexualities
- Gender equality, including a new focus on building the pipeline of women and girls into STEMM disciplines and careers

Selected programs include:

- **SNAP partnership with 230 low socioeconomic status Victorian schools and communities** to deliver an equity outreach program and access scheme, to drive awareness of and aspiration towards higher education and related careers among under-

represented populations (with 2,252 students admitted through the scheme in 2019); additional equity access schemes to achieve greater student diversity (e.g. 1,915 enrolments in 2019 via Special Entry Access Scheme)

- RMIT hosts a **Skills & Job Centre** funded by the Victorian Government that provides career and course advice to job seekers, retrenched workers and people returning to the workforce
- RMIT works with large **regional and metropolitan employers with staff redundancies**, to provide high-touch intensive career planning workshops and individual career counselling including opportunities to retrain across the breadth of RMIT's VE and HE pathways options
- **Scholarships for low SES and regional students**, with a living allowance, laptop, Myki travel card and/or accommodation scholarship (e.g. 50 accommodation scholarships awarded to students (of which 13 were indigenous) for living in RMIT selected 'purpose-built student accommodation' complexes, and 20 living allowance scholarships for students living away from home).
- The **Career Success project** aims to increase the employability of low SES and Indigenous higher education students through partnerships with employers and community organisations, Work Integrated Learning support, and proactive tailored supports for individual students including intensive one-to-one coaching.
- RMIT is committed to **increasing community access** to its many and varied cultural assets. RMIT has four galleries open to the public as well as an extensive art collection, a design archive and a film research collection available by appointment and for loan in public exhibitions. In 2019 RMIT also delivered the transformation of The Capitol as a cultural hub for Melbourne, a magnificent state-of-the-art facility for students, staff and the community.
- Implementation of the **Athena SWAN Action Plan**. RMIT's efforts to improve gender equity were recently acknowledged with an Athena SWAN Bronze award, part of the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) initiative. RMIT's involvement in the Athena SWAN program provides the impetus to consider revisions and updates to policies, recruitment practices, and working culture, with the aim of encouraging greater participation of women in leadership and research.

RMIT Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Action Plans
https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-values/diversity-and-inclusion

RMIT Culture & Community
https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/culture

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

IDENTIFYING SKILLS GAPS

RMIT has always been in touch with the changing patterns of work and enterprise. Our strategic plan to 2020 is centred around the goal of ensuring our students are graduating ready for the world of work and we continue to invest in labour market strategies and projects including:

- Empowering our staff with access to timely and relevant labour market analytics tools to identify skill demands and trends for Australia and New Zealand. RMIT has provided a combination of staff with access to data since 2017 and will aim to continue access into 2020
- Delivering custom labour market dashboards and analysis that brings together a combination of external data sets to provide insights into the capability and skill requirements of industry.

ALIGNING LABOUR MARKET PRIORITIES WITH RECRUITMENT AND COURSE DEVELOPMENT

RMIT has formed a Proposition Innovation team in the Global Marketing and Student Recruitment portfolio that works in collaboration with program proponents and other relevant stakeholders to provide market insights through Opportunity Assessments. Opportunity Assessments are part of a market, student, and viability appraisal framework that provides a consistent approach to identifying market opportunities and priorities. The appraisal framework synthesises various labour market data sources, internal metrics and measures and other published data. This informs decisions based on product desirability, feasibility and viability for all levels of higher education, from non-accredited through to accredited learning products for urban, regional and national markets.

Labour market priorities have always played a role in the development of courses at RMIT. We are currently in the process of delivering a large-scale transformation of key RMIT Programs and respective courses which includes:

- Delivering the 'embedded micro-credentials' model into 30 Programs for 2019, which will allow students to acquire transferable skills relevant to their chosen career or discipline.
- Focusing on our largest enrolled programs ensuring programs adhere to the design principle of "Contemporary professional practice and industry relevance are central to the design and delivery of our programs."
- Leveraging feedback from RMIT's Careers & Employability team, through their extensive employer engagement with graduate recruiters.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS EMPLOYABILITY AND GRADUATE ATTRIBUTE SKILLS GAPS

RMIT has always considered labour market dynamics and employability when determining the size and shape of enrolments for programs and disciplines. Labour market data along with employability trends and qualitative information from industry partners helps RMIT admit students into programs where there are tangible outcomes. Where employment outcomes are identifiably low, places are limited to ensure graduate student outcomes are met. In addition, RMIT also implements the following strategies to address employability and graduate skill gaps:

- A university wide approach to building student employability which is guided by the Employability Plan 2017-2020.
- RMIT students are encouraged and supported in building their employability through the Create your Future Career Strategy which focuses on raising student's awareness and building skills through experiences from Day 1 at RMIT.
- Work integrated learning is a mandatory component of most RMIT programs providing students with industry linked experiences, opportunities to develop work ready skills and a rich learning experience. RMIT is continually innovating in this area to provide

enhanced opportunities for industry to engage with RMIT students (20,000 students undertaking 33,000 activities in 2017).

- RMIT 's Job Shop provides a focal point for career advice, industry events and career counselling with over 11,000 students attending per year. Tailored events for specific student cohorts are run throughout the year.
- The Careers team has strong engagement with employers with an average of 32,000 student log ins to the RMIT Careers & Jobs Portal and engagement with 2,425 employers per year
- RMIT Activator is RMIT's home of entrepreneurship, preparing our ever-growing community of staff, students and alumni for the future of life and work. Activator works with industry experts and top organisations around the world to identify the key skills that are required to help students thrive in their future workplace. These skills are fostered around six pillars of the entrepreneurial mindset – curiosity, creative problem solving, tech literacy, teamwork, emotional intelligence and resourcefulness.
- The Careers team works in collaboration with academic areas to provide discipline-specific career development workshops, support, resources and a range of work-ready credentials that are embedded into academic programs.
- A range of co-curricular programs including career mentoring and RMIT's co-curricular award Future Edge are available with over 5,000 students participating (2019 data point).
- After assessing sector wide reports and research identifying skills gaps in traditional coursework, RMIT now offers all students access to a wide variety of micro credentials to support them alongside their coursework. To date, 128 credentials exist and have been developed in partnership with industry to ensure they are relevant, practical and job-ready. These cover topics including innovation, emotional intelligence, adaptability and critical thinking.

Employability Plan 2017-2020
http://mams.rmit.edu.au/uvq7ogrohc7n1.pdf

Create Your Future Career
https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/rmit-images/students/Life-and-work-opportunities/Jobs-and-career-advice/Careers-Create-Your-Future-Career-2018.pdf

SECURITY MEASURES

RMIT takes cyber security seriously and is actively working across the University to implement initiatives and strategies to protect the students, staff and all entities involved. RMIT has performed a self-assessment against the Australian Cyber Security Centre's (ACSC) "Strategies to Mitigate Cyber Security Incidents" and are mostly or highly compliant with 50% of the recommendations proposed. Further work will be performed in 2019 and 2020 across both people, process and technology domains to improve RMIT's compliance to ACSC's recommendations. These include the following:

PEOPLE AND PROCESS INITIATIVES:
- Cyber awareness training is increasing in frequency and scope in terms of the number of people trained and the channels of messaging reaching those people, including face to face training, compulsory online compliance training, events, web, social media, printed material, ambassador program, topical new items.
- A new partner has been engaged to support us with conducting email phishing simulations to all staff on a periodic basis.
- Enhancement of the IT and Security policy to better reflect the minimum behaviours needed to protect data in the current University environment.

- Embedding data security risk as a core component of security risk assessments of all new solutions and vendors being onboarded by ITS
- The University data environment data map continues to evolve to identify what critical data are, where they reside and how well its controlled.

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES:
- Data Loss Prevention: Tagging of documents and emails in Office 365 with the University data classification and attaching data controls proportionate to their sensitivity has commenced and rollout across the university is planned for 2020.
- Reviewing the use of live data for test and development purposes with the intent to restrict the spread of sensitive data to as fewer locations as possible.
- Uplift in controls and governance over access to sensitive data with a new identity platform supporting single sign-on, automated user access reviews and multifactor authentication for access to sensitive data.
- Review of technology for the better security of laptops and mobile devices.
- Enhancement of security logging with new Office 365 capabilities, a new in-house logging tool, and network monitoring provided by a third party to analyse and alert suspicious user activity.

MITIGATION ACTIVITIES IN CASES OF DATA BREACHES
RMIT's mitigation strategies to manage possible data breaches include the following:
- Documented and tested capabilities and procedures in disaster recovery and security incident management to handle University wide critical incidents
- Business continuity management uplift with two dedicated senior resources driving this capability across the University
- Engagement of a cyber forensic partner to provide post incident forensic analysis to aid in the identification and evidence gathering of the causes of cyber incidents
- Implemented a formal process for the Chief Risk Office to notify and engage relevant agencies in the event of a data breach.

MEASURES IN PLACE TO IDENTIFY AND DETER FOREIGN INTERFERENCE
- Developing threat intelligence capability through collaboration with ACSC
- Logging and alerting of network traffic and intrusion attempts
- Cyber defences: Governance and risk-based control prioritisation, policy and standards, third party and solution design and build risk assessments, secure architecture patterns, patch management program, extensive cyber awareness program, data loss prevention implementation.
- Legislative compliance: Collaborative working group established with Privacy, Legal, and business stakeholders to monitor and gauge compliance with Australian and global legislative requirements

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Dom English
Full name (please print)

GROUP MANAGER
Position

of the Department of Education as delegate of
the Minister for Education.

Signature

_23/12/19_
Date

In the presence of:

Drew Menzies-McVey
Witness (please print)

Branch Manager
Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

UNIVERSITY

Martin Bean   CBE

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor and President
Position

Signature

In the presence of:

Rosemary Mould

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer
Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature