



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment**

2021-2023 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

## 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.

Like all universities 2020-1 saw significant, ongoing disruptions for RMIT. During the global pandemic, RMIT has focused expertise and effort where needed to deliver life-changing education experiences for our students and to shape the future with our research and industry collaboration, while adapting to the changed conditions in order to provide continuity, sustainability and pathways to the future for our whole community.

In 2021 RMIT has created a bridge between our 2021 Annual Operating Plan and our (prospective) 2025 Strategy ([RMIT NEXT](#)).

2021 is also a period of leadership transition at the University, with Vice-Chancellor Professor Martin Bean stepping down at the end of June, and Professor Alex Cameron assuming the role of Vice-Chancellor in early 2022. Chief Operating Officer Dionne Higgins is providing leadership as interim Vice-Chancellor during the intervening period. During 2021 RMIT, as guided by its 2021 Annual Operating [Plan](#), and for the purposes of this Compact process, is prioritising three areas of delivery:

1. A university-wide, multi-year program (Student@RMIT) that will improve the quality of service and support that our students receive across the entire student lifecycle. This aspect is further elaborated, for the purposes of the Compact Period, in the Teaching and Learning outcomes section of this document.
2. RMIT's second Reconciliation Plan, Dhumbah Goorowa 2019-2020, now carried forward to 2021 and beyond, will continue to drive priority activity to embed reconciliation into the University and support our goal of becoming a leader in reconciliation within the tertiary sector.
3. Throughout 2021, our bridging year, we have been continuing to build a transformative strategy for the next five years. The RMIT NEXT Strategy will be developed along with induction of RMIT's new Vice-Chancellor, ready to be finalised in early 2022. It will address issues ranging from digital delivery to inclusion and wellbeing, global sustainability, lifelong learning and impact-driven approaches to innovation as RMIT pursues its mission and purpose in an altered world over the next decade.

RMIT commits to updating and refining this Compact to incorporate a three-year horizon and in relation to formal consultations conducted with the Commonwealth DESE, particularly as soon as our RMIT NEXT Strategy is finalised.

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

In March 2020, RMIT Council approved the [Intellectual Freedom Policy](#) which outlines the rights, expectations and responsibilities of the University, staff, and students in relation to academic freedom and freedom of speech. The Walker Review found that RMIT is fully aligned with the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom, and further noted RMIT's policy as an exemplary adaptation of the Model Code.

To embed the policy across the operations, management, and governance of the University, RMIT has:

- Promoted the policy to staff and students via targeted and university-wide communications channels.
- Revised its Policy Governance Framework to recognise the Intellectual Freedom Policy as the highest policy in the hierarchy.
- Reported all compliance assessments of the Intellectual Freedom Policy to Academic Board and Council.
- Noted the development of the Intellectual Freedom Policy in the [2020 RMIT Annual Report](#).

RMIT has undertaken a staged review to ensure policies, rules and codes do not limit academic freedom and freedom of speech in ways that are inconsistent with the Intellectual Freedom Policy.

The [Code of Conduct](#), [Workplace Behaviour Policy](#), [Research Policy](#) and [Research Funding Procedure](#) have all been amended to ensure they are fully aligned with the policy. Further reviews are scheduled or currently underway for policies that address student conduct, philanthropy and fundraising, program design, delivery and assessment, candidature and supervision, and intellectual property.

Staff and student induction and professional development will be reviewed in 2021-2022 to identify further opportunities to reinforce RMIT's commitment to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

## IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

Student@RMIT will improve the quality of service and support that our students receive across the entire student lifecycle. The key teaching and learning performance areas include:

#### Renewing RMIT's Curriculum Architecture

By the end of 2022 RMIT will have a streamlined suite of undergraduate programs redesigned with first year built for 2023. This work will also focus on:

- Ensuring our programs, courses and credentials are aligned to demand
- Consistent and distinct program learning outcomes
- Deeply embedding industry in curriculum to significantly improve employability

#### Develop an RMIT Blended Learning Framework

RMIT will develop and implement a new university-wide Blended Learning Framework that drives holistic and coherent blended learning experiences for students across online and face to face.

This framework aims to ensure RMIT provides an optimal mix of face to face and online learning for students. This approach integrates RMIT's return to campus strategy by ensuring that the blended learning models for each program enable rapid and seamless responses to circumstances such as COVID-induced lockdowns while maintaining the learning experience.

#### Implement an authentic assessment framework

The framework will focus on ensuring assessment is authentic and reflects the complex problems of the workforce and is guided by academic integrity, quality and student support. It will also ensure assessment is inclusive and equitable, recognising abilities and cultural backgrounds.

#### Admissions Transparency

RMIT is committed to meeting admissions transparency compliance requirements and to creating a consistent approach in the delivery of our Admissions related information across all avenues.

RMIT has developed the [Admissions Transparency](#) webpage to provide prospective students with information to help them understand admissions at RMIT and make informed choices about applying to their chosen program.

Following the release of TEQSA's [summative evaluation](#) of the sector's response to the HESP recommendations, RMIT's Internal Audit team are scheduled to undertake an internal review of RMIT's response and provide their findings to the RMIT Admissions Governance Steering Committee (AGSC) in September 2021. These findings will drive further improvements in this space.

RMIT's employment plans can be found at the following [link](#).

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

RMIT's [research](#) mission is to support RMIT researchers to achieve excellent research outcomes that help shape a better world. RMIT is defining an impact-driven approach to research and innovation to empower talented researchers and extend RMIT's reputation for partnership, co-creation and excellent applied research.

Strategies to ensure excellence in research and the building of research impact

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. Success factors are outlined in the ECP Charter to measure how the ECPs have supported Pathways to Impact through its initiatives and programs, including periodic review.

Strategic researcher recruitment programs, including the Vice-Chancellor's Outstanding Researcher Program. Success in these programs are tracked by both recruitment and retention of outstanding researchers aligned to the University's research priorities.

Embedding impact literacy and competency into all levels of our research and innovation work. Implement an impact maturity framework to assess impact awareness/skills and application of agreed impact frameworks.

RMIT researcher networks, for example Women Researchers' Network and Early Career Networks, provide collegial researcher support among other initiatives. Ensuring adequate support for such networks through periodic surveys and consultation.

Strategies for the provision of high-quality research training

RMIT's Masters by Research focuses on end-user engagement providing targeted industry focussed research training for the research candidate. The University measures the proportion of industry-focused/sponsored Masters by Research candidates as well as the number of Masters by Research candidates with at least one industry-partner on their supervisory team.

Higher degree by research candidates are given the opportunity to undertake industry internships, industry mentoring or participate in industry networks to enhance their employability. The University uses current Research End-User reporting to track the proportion of candidates undertaking these opportunities.

RMIT has embarked on a re-development of all curricular and co-curricular offerings for higher degrees by research candidates. The new, aligned offerings will offer opportunities for candidates to build work-ready skills for academic and non-academic careers. The new curriculum and co-curriculum will be available in 2023. Student satisfaction will be measured through RMIT's Student Experience Survey and, long term, through the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ).

Strategies to encourage industry engagement and research commercialisation

As an applied university with a reputation for collaboration with partners, RMIT's major research initiatives strategy prioritises collaboration and partnerships for Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs), CRC-Projects (CRC-Ps), and the Industrial Transformation

Research Program (IIRP), and focuses on developing bilateral strategic partnerships with industry to deliver value directly to their business.

RMIT success in research translation, commercialisation and engagement is measured 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 IIRP.

RMIT's research translation function supports researchers to plan pathways to impact for their research, which also includes policy and social impact pathways for research.

#### Strategies to mitigate foreign interference

RMIT has a clear commitment to the important task of securing universities and the nation against foreign interference over the Compact period.

Some key initiatives that relate to RMIT's activity in countering foreign interference and cyber security measures include:

Across-functional Foreign Interference Working Group.

Due diligence assessments are conducted by the Global Development and Research and Innovation portfolios.

RMIT has robust cyber capabilities and protocols including network security technologies to assist with preventing and detecting cyber threats; global IT security standards to configure technologies in a secure manner across all regions; Critical Incident Management capabilities that coordinates and responds to all incidents; and cyber security induction training to new staff.

RMIT has implemented robust systems and processes over all international partnerships and collaborations to ensure compliance with the range of national standards, codes and laws. The regulation includes the Defence Trade Controls Act, Australia's sanctions regimes, the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018 and the Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University sector.

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

The three key priorities and associated strategies RMIT has to improve student equality and outcomes are:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student access and success

RMIT's Dhumbah Goorowa 2019-2020, Reconciliation Plan supports First Nations education, employment, students and staff community and governance and leadership plans.

In addition to the Reconciliation Plan the RMIT University Scorecard has a reconciliation focused KPI that has been expanded to include measures on Indigenous student completions and Indigenous staff recruitment and retention, coming into effect in 2021.

These new measures will sit with the already existing KPI metrics on student and staff engagement with reconciliation and a measurement of actions completed out of Dhumbah Goorowa.

These KPIs will be supported through:

Indigenous Admissions and support through the [Indigenous Access program](#) [Gama-dji](#) Orientation program, a specialised program provided to commencing students to support their entry into RMIT.

Academic support and tutoring provided to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Indigenous student Wellbeing. The Ngarara Willim Centre in collaboration with the RMIT Counselling and Wellbeing service have improved the support provided to students through timely counselling support and wellbeing workshops.

Dhumbahli, cultural programs and opportunities throughout study.

2. Widening participation and lifelong learning, with a focus on low SES and regional/ remote students:

RMIT will ensure that no student is left behind as they respond and adapt to the double disruption of digital and blended learning and the global pandemic. This will be achieved by the:

renewal of the [Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Action Plans for priority groups](#) including retention

[SNAP partnership and I Belong equity outreach scheme](#) to access for under-represented secondary school students

[Scholarships](#) and [Support services](#)

[implementation of new plans](#) supporting financial inclusion, as well as access and success of regional and remote students

expanding outreach through communities to mature-age under-represented

review of admissions and new modes such as the RMIT [early offer scheme](#)

3. Supporting students with disability and mental health issues

RMIT will continue to support inclusive learning and teaching environments, made more prominent by the barriers that students have faced as they have shifted to remote and blended forms of learning in response to the pandemic. This will be achieved by:

additional staffing resources to support the provision of [adjustments for individual students](#), as well as University-wide systemic change, including in teaching and technologies

capability building for staff regarding inclusive teaching

Implementing the [Accessibility Action Plan](#) and the [Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan](#) supporting whole-of-RMIT change for students and staff

Strategies will be assessed using both quantitative and qualitative measures, including data on access, retention, success and graduate outcomes, as well as surveys and other methodologies to ensure 'student voice' and other stakeholder feedback informs design and delivery.

OFFICIAL

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

In the presence of:

by

Dom English

Ryan Kinder

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

A/g Director

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

of the Department of Education, Skills and  
Employment as delegate of the Minister for  
Education and Youth

Signature

Signature

28/12/2021

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
RMIT University

In the presence of:

Rosemary Mould

Full name (please print)

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Dionne Higgins

Witness (please print)

Rosemary Mould

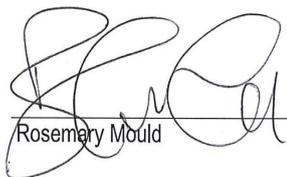
Position

Interim Vice Chancellor

Position or profession of witness (please print)  
Executive Officer OVC

Signature

Signature

  
Rosemary Mould