ELECTROTECHNOLOGY UPSKILLING

Graham Williams, Program Coordinator: My name is Graham Williams, I teach instrumentation, I co-ordinate the instrumentation programs here. We run instrumentation programs for a number of trades who are upskilling, so I have a very diverse group of tradespeople coming through my programs who want to learn instrumentation.

Chris Farrell, Studying Certificate IV Instrumentology: Originally I started in this area back in 1973, I did my apprenticeship back then, I did my trade back then and was in the game for about 12 years. I actually achieved my Certificate IV ticket but didn’t finish two subjects. I’ve now had to come back, re-apply and re-do those studies to get Certificate IV ticket.

Graham Williams, Program Coordinator: Electrician is the trade that everyone knows about but in Electrotechnology there are a number of trades including electronics technician, instruments technician, electrician, there’s a dual trade category in Victoria, you can do an apprenticeship in both Electrical and Instrumentation.

Frank Lunardi. Electrical Teacher: You are also getting now, a lot of cross training of apprentices where you get apprentices or trades people that decide that they want to get their electrical licence and that fits in well with their other trades.

Student: I actually did my apprenticeship in instrumentation, 20-odd years ago but now you’ll find that there are a lot of dual traders around and to get the jobs you need to be in both trades so that was what drew me to it in the first place.

Frank Lunardi. Electrical Teacher: A lot of times you have to be able to go out there and work by yourself so you have to use your initiative in there because jobs sometimes are not that straight forward, so we try to teach you and give you an idea, using different methods to try to do the job properly.

Student: It pretty much relates straight to the job so we’re getting a bit of on the job training as well as backing that up here with the course that we’re doing at RMIT.

Frank Lunardi. Electrical Teacher: Industry does look to us to try to give apprentices other ideas, or other ways of doing jobs and that’s what we try to do, use our experience, to try to pass those onto the students.

Student: A lot of the subjects that we’re doing, like heating or lighting, motor control, I can use that directly at work, straight away, so yeah, very beneficial.

Graham Williams, Program Coordinator: We’ve opened our program to non-apprentices. So we take a lot of electricians and upskill them, we now take refrigeration technicians and upskill them into instrumentation.
Student: I’ve spent probably 10 years being a break down electrician and not really knowing quite what I was doing. I sort of knew where to start looking and what was supposed to happen at the end but I didn’t really understand in between, you feel a lot safer at work, you start to understand what you’re doing and you get good results.

Graham Williams, Program Coordinator: The facility here is fantastic. The instrumentation laboratory, to set something up like that would cost millions. The university is supporting us really well but also industry support is fantastic. We get hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of equipment free, mostly from multinationals but also from the local manufacturers of instrumentation who really want to support this area and see it maintain its really high standards. We’ve got four qualified instrument technicians teaching the program, now, if anyone in Australia can get four qualified instrument technicians at the moment, good luck to them. And the reason we’ve got them is that RMIT has a great reputation in this area.

Student: My dream job is what I do now but having done this course, I actually know more about what I am doing. Everything I learn here, I use at work, everyday.

**Electrotechnology**
For more information contact RMIT