Introduction

RMIT was founded as a vocational and technological college and has grown to be an institution that is distinctive in its technology and design focus. The Strategic Plan emphasises that: ‘As a university of technology and design, RMIT will focus on creating solutions that transform the future for the benefit of people and their environments. We will collaborate with partners to ensure the global impact of our education and research and we will reach out through our presence in cities across the world to make a difference’.

The Academic Plan will assist RMIT to make a difference to the lives of our students, our staff and our community. RMIT will offer academic programs that transform the lives of our students by offering pathway clusters and support that encourage successful student progress and completion. It will invest in learning technology, spaces and administrative systems that transform the student experience by facilitating excellent learning, by refining our program offerings, by seeking global connections with new educational partners and by ensuring strong student engagement and employment for our graduates in the professions and occupations of the future.

RMIT will deliver high quality and high impact programs through its three Colleges—Business; Design and Social Context; Science, Engineering and Health—and across campuses and international partnerships, with concentration on the following fields:

- Technology
- Design
- Global communities
- Health solutions
- Global business
- Communication
- Urban sustainable futures

Through the Program Annual Review process, RMIT will use evidence of program quality, viability and relevance to ensure that we are offering students the most appropriate, quality experience that will assist them in determining their own future. The Colleges, Schools, support areas of the University and the Learning and Teaching Investment Fund will enable us to work strategically to shape our academic programs.

RMIT is in a unique position to have impact on the many countries in which we have a presence. Our processes ensure appropriate quality and comparability of academic standards and we have a broad range of qualifications, from introductory foundation programs, through vocational awards to our higher education coursework and research degrees. RMIT will focus on smoothing the pathways between its programs and locations, through the refinement of program architecture and through delivery and service models that remove unnecessary barriers to student pathways and maximise the benefits of RMIT’s broad range of internationally and professionally recognised programs. Developing its tertiary range, RMIT will build on the current successes of associate degrees and skills electives.

The development of this Plan has been a partnership between the Academic Portfolio, Colleges and others from across the University. It is a Plan that belongs to us all and which will require all areas of RMIT to work collaboratively to achieve the stated aims. The Plan is designed to identify priorities and enablers to address the things that matter to students, to staff, to partner organisations and to the wider community. It starts with RMIT’s specialised focus on technology and design and then gives attention to the global, urban and connected goals.

Professor Gill Palmer
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and Vice-President
RMIT has long had a focus on technology and design and it will build on its strong reputation in these areas, ensuring the development of programs that excel in their quality, viability and relevance.

Priority 1
Transform the student experience.

Priority 2
Identify, support and develop academic programs and profile, especially the programs associated with the areas that are defined as high impact because of their quality, viability and relevance to technology and design.

Priority 3
Determine and encourage best practice in program and curriculum design for delivery across RMIT’s tertiary range and varied locations, establishing a national reputation for RMIT excellence.

Priority 4
Create a distinctive RMIT student experience through the student life-cycle by innovative use of new learning spaces and the continued development of the student cohorts.

Priority 5
Ensure the development and transformation of the academic workforce, to deliver the academic educational goals in addition to the research goals identified in the Research and Innovation Plan.
ENABLERS OF THESE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN PRIORITIES

1. Transformation of the student experience
   i) Leverage Information Communication Technology to improve the use of online learning, communication and services (including cloud computing and personal mobile devices) to enhance the learning outcomes of all students, regardless of location, and as a means of connecting students with educational resources, educational experts, industry partners and each other.
   ii) Ensure enhancements to ‘myRMIT’ that facilitate a personalised learning experience for students, allow for the integration of Web 2.0 features and enable academic staff access.
   iii) Improve the use of features within the Student Administration Management System (SAMS) to ensure automation of routine academic administrative tasks.
   iv) Improve online services to students and staff related to application, selection and admission; enrolment at all locations and for all modes of delivery; scheduling and timetabling of classes; enrolment management and progress; industry placements and work-integrated learning; and award completions and graduation.
   v) Build on and support the Koori and Wurreker strategies.
   vi) Ensure that transition to university is successful through appropriate support services and orientation programs.

2. Program quality, profile and high impact programs
   Use RMIT’s Program Annual Review (PAR) and Profile planning processes and the Learning and Teaching Investment Fund (LTIF) to focus on the support and development of high impact areas.

3. Best practice curriculum and teaching
   Use RMIT and national funded awards, professional development and communication strategies to encourage and disseminate best practice in curriculum and teaching.

4. Student cohort experience
   Develop and celebrate successful student cohort experiences and ensure the best use of the new physical environment and virtual learning materials.

5. Transforming the academic workforce
   i) Clarify the relative responsibilities of staff involved across all stages of the student and program management life cycles. This will cover Schools, Colleges (and their Deputy PVCs(L&T)); Vice Presidents Academic and Centre Heads; RMIT partners and service portfolios.
   ii) Develop and implement a revised Professional Development Plan so that all academic and teaching staff, including those employed at delivery partners, have an ongoing opportunity to enhance their educational practice and maintain currency of their industry and professional knowledge and practice. Ensure academics and teachers can use the new physical and virtual learning spaces to develop a vibrant student cohort experience, improved learning outcomes and higher levels of student satisfaction.
   iii) Continue recruitment and support to increase RMIT’s cohort of Indigenous academic staff.
   iv) Support the development of staff access to the ‘myRMIT’ portal for the courses they teach.
   v) Create spaces in which to teach staff and experiment with new physical layouts and technologies.
GOAL 2
THE GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

RMIT is well positioned to achieve the goal of being global in attitude, action and presence, offering our students a global passport to learning and work.

In 2010 the Academic International Project promoted and funded activities enhancing the internationalisation of the curriculum and the diversification of offshore education programs. It facilitated comparability and equivalence studies of RMIT’s academic programs, expanded work-integrated learning (WIL) in international settings and relocated various administrative functions for increased efficiency. For the period 2011 to 2015, we will build on these solid foundations to provide our students with opportunities and experiences that lead to a valued global passport to learning and work.

Priority 1
Maintain and develop our global reputation, ensuring that our programs have the appropriate delivery and curriculum wherever offered.

Priority 2
Deepen and diversify program offerings in current and future partnerships and campuses.

Priority 3
Improve student communication skills and English language proficiency through efficiently co-ordinating and developing global support services.

Priority 4
Ensure that all students have an opportunity for an international experience as part of their studies at RMIT.

Priority 5
Develop an integrated, global careers service that provides appropriate guidance to students and links to employers so students may make informed decisions about their studies, careers and employment futures.

Priority 6
Implement targeted professional development activities for academic and teaching staff to support a program of curriculum renewal that incorporates activities related to the global, urban and connected themes and the imaginative use of new technology and learning spaces.
ENABLERS OF THESE GLOBAL PRIORITIES

1. The global reputation
   i) Use the Program Annual Review (PAR) process, international accreditation and international benchmarks to establish and guarantee RMIT academic quality standards in all locations.
   ii) Harmonise and ensure appropriate implementation of academic policies, standards of student services, student administration and IT support in all locations.
   iii) Redevelop the course guide system to improve ease of use by staff and to ensure that students have timely access to information for course selection, learning management and assessment tasks.
   iv) Ensure student feedback is collected and acted on across all partnerships and locations.

2. Deepen and diversify program offerings in high impact areas
   Use RMIT’s Program Annual Review (PAR) process to inform Profile decisions to diversify offshore education by field of study and location to strengthen RMIT’s high impact areas in viable new programs and partnerships.

3. Support student English language and communication skills
   Implement the recommendations of the English Language Development Project.

4. Student international experience
   i) Increase international student mobility opportunities in actual and virtual forms through scholarships and online activities.
   ii) Increase international work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities for students.

5. Improve career outcomes
   i) Develop a globally focused careers and employment service.
   ii) Incorporate a career development learning perspective in programs.

6. Academic professional development
   Redesign a co-ordinated learning and teaching professional development program for academic and teaching staff.
GOAL 3
THE URBAN UNIVERSITY

Becoming an urban university means developing as a global leader in scholarship and teaching in the social, political and cultural aspects of living and working in an urban environment.

RMIT has long benefitted from its primary location in the Melbourne central business district as part of a vibrant, culturally rich city. The world, and the regions from which RMIT draws its students, are rapidly urbanising. In recognition of this, RMIT has the stated goal to be urban in orientation and creativity, shaping sustainable cities and drawing inspiration from the challenges and opportunities they provide.

We will further develop our capacity to be known as an urban university through imaginative approaches to curriculum design; through service provision that encourages and facilitates participation in and with city communities; and through a commitment to sustainability as a benchmark principle for all our activities.

Priority 1
Build deep relationships with a network of selected cities through relevant program delivery, including programs that focus on ‘the urban age’.

Priority 2
Engage with each city’s disadvantaged, Indigenous and immigrant communities, to support their aspirations and experiences.

Priority 3
Ensure RMIT campuses are permeable and integrated with the cities with which we engage.
ENABLERS OF THESE URBAN PRIORITIES

1. Relevant program development
   i) Enhance existing and develop new educational products relevant to the problems faced by cities and to urban sustainability.
   ii) Support academic and teaching staff through professional development activities.
   iii) Use urban facilities and infrastructure to develop learning tools, such as the capture of Melbourne’s architecture and design, by placing RMIT’s material on the Learning Repository in digital form.

2. Increased participation and engagement
   i) Develop inclusive approaches to teaching and assessment which respond to student diversity.
   ii) Improve access to and support for student diversity in all locations through scholarships that are funded by the University, by partners or campuses or their sponsors.
   iii) Strengthen RMIT’s Indigenous academic staff cohort, building on and continuing the funding provided from 2009.
   iv) Implement the Koori Cohort and Wurreker strategies on Aboriginal issues.
   v) Continue to develop the pathways available across RMIT’s tertiary range of programs to provide new opportunities for students’ careers and to encourage retention at RMIT.

3. Campus facilities and services that are permeable to cities and are interpreted with them
   Use innovative design of physical and virtual spaces to deliver integrated student services and leading library facilities, such as the creation of Student Central and Swanston Academic Building in the Melbourne City and Bundoora campuses and the Student Commons on the Vietnam campuses, to provide highly visible, flexible services that cater for the full range of student needs.
There are two critical partnerships that RMIT must foster in order to achieve the academic priorities and goals of being global, urban and connected. These are the partnerships that we build with the industries whose staff we educate and with the international partners with whom we deliver programs.

Industry partnerships in vocational education have been a feature of RMIT since its foundation, and these relationships become ever more important as RMIT uses the full range of its tertiary offerings to build educational pathways and opportunities for lifelong learning in order to enhance students’ preparation for career success and mobility. The international partnerships have become an increasingly important feature in the development of RMIT’s role in global education and research.

Priority 1
Build deep relationships with industry partners to support practical education and training aligned with careers.

Priority 2
Strengthen relationships with existing international partners and assist the sourcing of new institutional and industry partners with the values and capacity to work with RMIT in program delivery.
ENABLERS OF THESE CONNECTED PRIORITIES

1. Relationships with industry partners
   i) Streamline coordination of University management of work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities and industry placements.
   ii) Work with Human Resources to develop an Industry Practitioner staffing category and explore new options for attracting industry practitioners to participate more fully in teaching and in Program Advisory Committees.

2. Relationships with international partners

   Work with the Colleges and the International & Development Portfolio to strengthen existing partnerships and to build new relationships for the delivery of programs with appropriate quality, viability and relevance.