INTERNATIONALISATION PLAN
2011–2015
The RMIT Internationalisation Plan 2015 demonstrates what being international and internationalised means for us and how we can build on our strong international foundation. It is a key enabler of the University’s Strategic Plan 2011–2015 ‘Transforming the Future’, supporting both the Academic and Research Plans.

Together these plans lay the groundwork over the next five years for what RMIT will look like in 2020 and beyond.

The Internationalisation Plan imagines RMIT in 2020 as a university with a very strong global presence—considerably stronger than in 2011.

The intention is to unequivocally position RMIT amongst the most reputable institutions in the 2020 global education space.

Stephen Connelly
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
International and Development
Introduction

RMIT’s Internationalisation Plan 2011-2015 brings international activity into alignment with strategic priorities. Over the last twenty-five years RMIT has established a considerable international presence and reputation—both within Australia and beyond our borders—building on international engagement which at least from a student perspective began with our first international enrolments under the Colombo Plan in 1955.

In 2011 we can justifiably call ourselves an international and internationalised university. RMIT is well rated in global rankings and has high levels of enrolments from international students both in Australia and elsewhere at branch campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in Vietnam, and in partnership programs in key cities in Asia. Among Australian universities, RMIT is first for overall international student enrolments, first for offshore enrolments, top ten for international student enrolments onshore in Australia, and fifth for total outbound student mobility. RMIT has teaching, research or industry engagement presences in a variety of countries and regions, including Vietnam, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Laos, Singapore, India, Belgium, Spain, the Americas and the Middle East. As a consequence we are well recognised in global academic communities and as a valued contributor to the social and economic successes of a number of countries around the world. The RMIT curriculum is internationalised with regard for the global delivery of RMIT programs and the global career trajectory of our graduates.

The context for internationalisation at the institutional level includes global trends in international education as well as national issues. In Australia, onshore international student enrolments have been in decline while numbers of international students worldwide continue to increase, although the review of Australia’s student visa program conducted by Michael Knight recommends a range of measures to streamline entry of international students into university programs. More Australian universities have exited from transnational programs than have entered them in recent years. Outbound mobility from Australia is increasing and our national average now outperforms the United States, but the imbalance between international student numbers in Australia and Australians studying overseas remains a cause of concern in international student source countries. Australian universities spend on average 5% of international student tuition revenue on scholarships, stipends and fee waivers for international HDR students as part of the global competition for HDR students and academic staff. RMIT needs to increase its expenditure in these areas. In Australia and overseas there is considerable interest in internationalisation of the curriculum, ‘comprehensive’ internationalisation and institutional approaches to internationalisation. RMIT’s Internationalisation Plan takes into account the broad context of internationalisation and its impact on institutions and nations.

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2 Australian Universities International Directors’ Forum; ‘AUIDF Benchmarking 2010’; April 2011
3 OECD Education at a Glance, 2002-2010
4 Australian Universities International Directors’ Forum; ‘AUIDF Benchmarking 2010’; April 2011
5 Hudzik et al, ‘Comprehensive Internationalization: From Concept to Action’, 2011
Strategic objective

RMIT understands that internationalisation in higher education institutions requires both breadth and scope not just in terms of numbers and global presence, but also in the depth of its strategic partnerships and the opportunities they create for staff, students and alumni. RMIT seeks to make a significant contribution to the communities in which it operates, and to further develop its capacity to engage students, educators, researchers, governments, business and industry around the world.

The Internationalisation Plan addresses the means for creating a fully global university with presences in key cities around the world, within the overriding theme of growth offshore to achieve scale and capacity as a global university of technology and design.

The focus of the University’s Strategic Plan Transforming the Future 2011–2015 is designed around three goals:

» **Goal 1**: ‘Global in attitude, action and presence, offering our students a global passport to learning and work.’
» **Goal 2**: ‘Urban in orientation and creativity, shaping sustainable cities and drawing inspiration from the challenges and opportunities they provide.’
» **Goal 3**: ‘Connected through active partnerships with professions, industries and organisations to support the quality, reach and impact of our education and research.’

**Priority 1** of Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan requires the University to ‘develop an integrated global strategy to guide development of our global presence’ in order to:

» ‘Strengthen our global reputation, by extending our physical and virtual presence through international campuses and partnerships’
» ‘Deepen and develop our global partnerships in selected cities with university, research and industry partners’
» ‘Diversify offshore education by field of study, and by increasing the number of countries in which we educate’
» ‘Develop an integrated approach to student recruitment involving pathways between campuses, qualifications and learning and work.’

The Internationalisation Plan 2011–2015 is the enabling plan for Goal 1 of the University's Strategic Plan.

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6 RMIT Strategic Plan 2015, Transforming the Future; p9–11
7 RMIT Strategic Plan 2015, Transforming the Future; p9
Priorities

The RMIT Internationalisation Plan 2015 has 8 priorities:

1. Development of global **Campuses, Partnerships and Networks**, supporting the planned global growth in student enrolments and student mobility.
2. Developing **Global Education** via a quality assured globalised curriculum.
3. Ensuring the **Student Experience** is comparable across RMIT program locations.
4. Increasing opportunities for **Student Mobility** by RMIT students globally.
5. Contributing to RMIT’s **Global Research** aspirations.
7. **Enabling and Supporting Staff** to achieve RMIT’s global objectives.
8. Continuing improvement of **RMIT Governance, Strategy, Policy and Culture** of internationalisation, underpinning RMIT’s global growth initiatives.

The Internationalisation Plan draws on contributions to RMIT’s strategic planning process conducted in 2010 and the ensuing Strategic Plan “Transforming the Future”, as well as considerable consultation during 2011. The eight priority areas and associated strategies of the Internationalisation Plan aim to build RMIT’s capacity for engagement around the world, maintaining and building our reputation as a quality provider of education and research with global presences in key cities in Asia, Europe and Latin America.

To assist in achieving these goals, the Internationalisation Plan proposes a framework for international activity in terms of the following transformative definition of internationalisation:

"Ensuring RMIT develops, maintains and grows its capacity and capability to achieve its objectives for engagement with students, educators, researchers, alumni, industry, government and communities around the world."
Priorities
Defining and implementing the framework that will grow enrolments, campuses, partnerships, networks, and activity in key cities around the world, including the development of transnational education, and research nodes and urban laboratories.

**Strategies**

1.1 Grow enrolments at RMIT branch campuses and in partnership programs around the world.

1.2 Implement a strategy to establish pathway nodes and degree granting locations for RMIT programs offered outside Australia, via campus or partner delivery models.

1.3 Achieve greater diversity by discipline in enrolments outside Australia.

1.4 Set direction to drive long term brand development and positioning across targeted international markets.

1.5 Maintain discipline diversity and achieve a balance of nationalities among the RMIT Melbourne-based international student population.

**Link to Strategic Plan:**

- Strengthen our global reputation, by extending our physical and virtual presence through international campuses and partnerships.
- Develop an integrated approach to student recruitment involving pathways between campuses, qualifications and learning and work.
- Diversity offshore education by field of study, and by increasing the number of countries in which we educate.

RMIT Vietnam has developed a Strategic Plan that supports the direction of the University and enables RMIT Vietnam to realise its full potential. Like the overarching plan for the University, RMIT Vietnam’s Strategic Plan is ambitious and inspirational, and has been developed by people passionate about its development and eager to see its aims realised. The result aims to see RMIT Vietnam a recognised leader in tertiary education and research in the region.

*RMIT Vietnam Strategic Plan 2011-2015*
GLOBAL EDUCATION

Assembling a quality assured globalised curriculum delivered flexibly in multiple locations around the world to diverse student cohorts.

Strategies

2.1 Ensure quality and comparability of curriculum experience for RMIT students wherever they study.

2.2 Implement programs across all locations to support student transition, retention and success in adopting the RMIT globalised curriculum.

2.3 Support the development of contextualised content, learning and teaching to meet the requirements of students and the communities in which RMIT operates.

Link to Strategic Plan:

» Increasing the quality and quantity of offshore education.

» Develop curriculum which is internationally relevant and incorporates cross-cultural learning.

» Initiating development and improvements to internationalise academic programs.

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.

RMIT Academic Plan 2011–2015; Transforming the Student Experience
PRIORITy 3

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Ensuring students’ pre- and post-enrolment experience is comparable across RMIT’s global programs network.

Strategies

3.1 Ensure delivery of a consistent level of quality assured student support and engagement services at all RMIT program locations. Location specific variations based on cultural sensitivities will augment this base level. Service delivery will be benchmarked across locations.

3.2 Ensure programs are in place at all campus locations that support home country students to understand and interact with foreign students, and to understand and integrate with the global RMIT community.

3.3 In all RMIT campus locations, ensure access to RMIT education and research for under-represented groups.

Link to Strategic Plan:

- Define and deliver an RMIT student experience that is characterised by its global engagement, international mobility and cross cultural opportunities.

True learning comes from remaining open to new perspectives and ideas. Creativity is built on this openness coupled with the courage to experiment.

These attributes are encouraged in the work placements, studios, projects and practice that are core to the work integrated learning at RMIT. However they also draw on another important strand—the global passport that is embedded in the RMIT educational experience. To learn with and from people from many different backgrounds and cultures is to experience the excitement and challenge of seeing the world through different eyes; to spend part of your education immersed in a place that is not your home.

A Red Paper on RMIT’s Strategic Plan 2011-2015;
Transforming the Future: Where Bold Hopes Can Be Realised
Growing student mobility, employing RMIT’s global network of campuses and partnerships and building on our profile as a global university of technology and design.

Strategies

4.1 Establish base levels of mobility, set annual targets based on sectoral best practice, college or program requirements and develop targeted strategies to grow student mobility across RMIT.

4.2 Set specific direction to increase student mobility between RMIT Vietnam and RMIT Australia.

4.3 Apply measures to ensure all RMIT programs offer students a physical or virtual mobility opportunity.

Link to Strategic Plan:

» Increase opportunities for studying with partner institutions.

» Ensure that all students have the opportunity for an international experience as part of their enrolment at RMIT.

In 37 Australian universities in 2010, 18,340 students (out of 242,647 total completions) at all levels undertook international study experiences. This represents 7.6%, up from 6.1% in 2009.

The two key cohorts of importance to universities are domestic undergraduates and postgraduate research students.

» In the 36 universities that participated in this study, 12,809 Australian undergraduate students (12.0%) undertook international study experiences in 2010 (RMIT was 18.5%; the top university in Australia was 28%).

» 24 universities reported 2,309 postgraduate research students (50.4%) undertaking international research experiences (RMIT was 4.3%; the top university in Australia was 131%).

Australian Universities International Directors’ Forum; Outgoing International Mobility of Australian University Students, 2010; September 2011
Growing the profile of our research internationally, diversifying sources of international research funding, increasing HDR student mobility, and developing urban laboratories in key city locations around the world.

Strategies

5.1 Develop a strategy to achieve diversification in sources of international research funding.
5.2 Apply measures to increase HDR student mobility.
5.3 Support development of research nodes and urban research laboratories in key city locations around the world.
5.4 Develop priority partnerships across high impact areas, helping maintain and develop RMIT’s reputation for research and as a globally connected university.
5.5 Implement strategy to increase international HDR student numbers, including targeting students with partial or full funding from foreign sponsorship organisations.

Link to Strategic Plan:
- Increasing the quality and quantity of global research activity and funding.
- Building international research partnerships in selected areas.

In 2011, the International Year of Chemistry, RMIT University opened a joint Research Centre with the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) in Hyderabad, India. With focus on environmental and industrial research, the centre is RMIT’s first collaborative research footprint in India.

Each year, Indian students will compete for PhD scholarship places at the Centre, and will be jointly supervised by RMIT and IICT researchers.

Researchers at RMIT and IICT are already working on joint projects including research into nano-engineered materials, methods for the removal of mercury from industrial air effluents and environmentally sustainable industrial process design.

A new joint facility will further allow researchers to work collaboratively on projects, including catalysis for green chemistry, advanced materials and renewable energy, processes for water quality monitoring and waste water treatment, control of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, and bio-nanotechnology.
Engaging with industry globally by participating in global skills development and capacity building; establishing links between RMIT and local administrations, leadership bodies, cultural and community groups wherever we operate; and ensuring that alumni networks around the world are actively engaged with the university.

Strategies

6.1 Set targets to guide the advancement of global industry engagement activity, in different locations around the world, and aligned with cities and countries of focus.

6.2 In key RMIT locations, increase industry involvement in RMIT education, training and research initiatives, including program advisory boards, industry training and research projects.

6.3 Develop methodology that will establish links between RMIT and local administrations, leadership bodies, cultural and community groups across targeted global cities.

6.4 Build connectivity with international alumni by supporting local and overseas alumni chapters and encouraging engagement with RMIT’s global aspirations.

Link to Strategic Plan:

» Deepen and develop our global partnerships in selected cities with university, research and industry partners.

» Increasing the quality and quantity of industry partnered activity.
Enabling staff to deliver RMIT’s global curriculum and supporting staff to operate in a global organisation, in education, research and professional roles.

**Strategies**

7.1 Support staff to deliver RMIT’s global curriculum while working in a global education context.

7.2 Build organisational capability and support the development of research and professional roles consistent with RMIT’s global operating framework.

7.3 Continue to embrace diversity in background and experience as a key element of staff recruitment strategy.

**Link to Strategic Plan:**

- Support global engagement by all RMIT staff.
- Enhancing international education and research activity and using international benchmarks of quality to measure performance.
- Enhancing the international and cultural diversity of the staff of the University.

**RMIT Strategic Goal:**

- Fostering commitment to fairness, openness and creativity through embracing diverse cultures and different ways of working among staff

RMIT will be recognised as a sector leader for developing the skills of our people and developing great leaders.

RMIT will have flexible organisational structures, clear job design and accountabilities, and develop strong succession and career pathways. Managers use workforce intelligence to enhance long term planning.

Continuing improvement of governance, policy frameworks and support systems that enable internationalisation to be embedded as a key strategic imperative and central to the core business activity and culture of the University.

Strategies

8.1 Develop governance structures, monitoring systems and processes that will oversee and assess relevant international RMIT activity.

8.2 Develop a policy framework to guide RMIT activity in priority cities, countries and regions.

8.3 Build ICT capability and capacity to support global recruitment, enrolment, education, training, and research activity at a consistent and high quality level across all locations.

8.4 Develop a culture supportive of RMIT’s internationalisation objectives and global aspirations.

Link to Strategic Plan:

» Develop an integrated global strategy to guide development of our global presence.

» Developing administrative systems and services that support a global university.

‘Comprehensive internationalisation is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility.

‘Comprehensive internationalisation not only impacts all of campus life but the institution’s external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of trade, research, and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalisation and the motivations and purposes driving it.’

John K. Hudzik, NAFSA Association of International Educators
This five year plan is accompanied by an annual workplan, which details the key objectives for each year of the plan. The International Advisory Committee assists the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development) in monitoring progress towards objectives and targets.