glossary of terms
for local and overseas students

**Academic Year** - The academic year in Australia begins in late February or early March and ends in mid November. There is a winter break of about three weeks in June/July. Summer break is from mid November through February. The academic year consists of two, 13-week semesters and two Summer School sessions between November and February. It also incorporates student study breaks, holidays and examination periods. Check the RMIT web site for accurate dates at www.rmit.edu.au.

**Advanced Standing** - For applicants who have substantial previous study or professional experience (see Recognition of Prior Learning) some courses making up the degree may be exempted. Also, entry into second and/or third year may be possible.

**Articulation** - For students with a TAFE (Tertiary And Further Education) or VET (Vocational Education and Training) certificate or diploma, recognition of that study may be the basis for entry to and exemptions within the Scientific Photography program. For example, a student may be eligible to enter directly into the second or third year of the course.

This may also apply to overseas students with the equivalent of an Associate degree from a Community College. Details must be negotiated with the Program Leader prior to starting the program. Courses and exemptions are outlined in the Articulation Map found under How to Apply.

**Award** – In some countries this means ‘degree’ such as a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science. It is given (awarded) when a student has completed all the requirements set out by the program to acknowledge completion of the program.

**Class** – A series of classes make up a course. Classes usually meet once or twice per week for two to four hours. Classes with studio or laboratory components may be longer. Classes may include lectures, studios, laboratories, seminars, tutorials, etc. Some classes may be held in the field or at locations off campus. A weekly schedule of classes is usually
given during the first meeting of the class in the form of a timetable.

**Core courses** - Core courses are what define the nature of the Scientific Photography program. Successful completion of these courses is mandatory for all Scientific Photography students. Each year of the program has its core courses.

**Course** - A course is a set of classes delivered over the semester that cover a selected topic area. In some universities it is referred to as a ‘subject’. In New Zealand it is called a ‘paper’.

**Course coordinator** – An academic staff member responsible for the delivery of a specific course. They may also be referred to as a lecturer.

**Credit Points** - RMIT University has adopted the terminology of credit points to recognise the time and effort a course takes to complete. It further defines the total points that a student must complete to fulfill the requirements for a degree.

The credit point weighting of a course is the combination of contact hours (time with a lecturer) plus expected non-contact hours (time spent in a self directed or self motivated activity).

One credit point represents one hour of activity in the course. For example, a course may indicate a three-hour lecture per week, but have a weighting of 12-credit points. That means it is expected that the student will be expected to devote another 9 hours per week on activities related to that course such as outside reading, completion of assignments, or preparing materials for the class.

Most undergraduate programs at RMIT University have a target of 96 credit points per year. Most degree programs require 288 credit points to be eligible for the award (degree conferred, i.e., Bachelor of Science – Scientific Photography). In practical terms, that means a student is engaged in their studies for 48 hours per week for the duration of the academic year, i.e., 2 semesters or 26 weeks.

**Degree** – See Award.

**Discipline** – In academic administration, it is an overall area of major study such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, etc. Within those disciplines are more specific programs that confer an award (degree). For example, Scientific Photography is a degree program in the discipline of
Physics. Some universities call these ‘departments’.

**Electives (Student electives)** - Each program at RMIT University incorporates time for the student to take courses from other academic areas in the university. These courses outside the core of a specific program, i.e., Bachelor of Science Photography, are referred to as ‘electives’.

**Exemptions** - Students having completed some tertiary (university) level courses at any university may be offered credit towards the degree in Scientific Photography. They may be exempted from core or elective courses depending on the type of previously completed course. Proof of successful completion must be shown. Exemptions are at the discretion of the Program Leader. Exemptions may also be granted for extensive work experience.

**Faculty** – RMIT has phased out administrative units previously called a ‘Faculty’. See ‘School’.

**Faculty member** – See staff.

**Honours Year** - In the Australian education system, a student may elect to do a further year of study after their undergraduate degree. The Honours Year in Scientific Photography is based on a project undertaken by the student with guidance of a staff member. The project may be defined by the student or in conjunction with research being done by a staff member. It may also be industry based. To be eligible, a student must have completed a university degree. Some projects may go on to become the basis of a Masters or Ph.D. program. The possibility exists for an Honours year to be completed overseas.

Honours students are chosen for their demonstrated academic performance and the merit of their project. It is not mandatory that an applicant has an undergraduate award (degree) in photography, but it is expected that the applicant demonstrate a high degree of competence in photography.

At the successful completion of the Honours project, the student is awarded a Bachelor of Science in Scientific Photography (Honours) degree, B.Sc. Scientific Photography (HONS).

**Information Day** - Usually held late November to early December, it is a 2-hour presentation by the Program Leader, staff and recent graduates to
discuss and clarify the specific nature of the program in Scientific Photography. Attendance at Information Day is mandatory for all applicants except those living overseas. The dates are printed in the VTAC (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre) Guide or may be found on the Scientific Photography web site www.rmit.edu.au/sciphto.

**Open Day** - Usually held on the second Sunday in August, it features displays of work representing aspects of technical and scientific imaging done by all year level students. There are also lecturers, students and industry representatives available to discuss the industry and the program. Attendance is encouraged.

**Portfolio** – In the terminology of RMIT University it is a group of major academic interests (Schools) under one administrative structure. For example, the program in Scientific Photography is in the Portfolio of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), School of Applied Sciences, discipline area of Applied Physics.

**Program** – A program is a collection of courses generally delivered over two semesters for three years. Successful completion of a program results in an award (degree) conferred to the graduate. Scientific Photography is a three-year program awarding a Bachelor of Science in Scientific Photography degree.

**Program Leader (Coordinator)** – A senior staff member in charge of an academic program.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** - For those who have been working in the industry and are recognized practitioners in their field, a scheme is available to upgrade qualifications and complete a Bachelor of Science Photography degree. Each situation is considered individually. The applicant must discuss the details with the Program Leader.

**School** – RMIT University has re-structured its academic units (previously faculties and departments) into Portfolios, Schools and Disciplines. For example, Scientific Photography is a program in the Discipline area of Physics in the School of Applied Sciences, in the Portfolio of Science Engineering and Technology.

**Staff (member)** – In some countries they are referred to ‘faculty’ members. They are individual teachers, lecturers and professors. The term can be broken down further to academic staff (as above), technical staff (lab/studio managers) and administrative staff (secretarial and support
Subject – See Course

Timetable – The timetable is the schedule of the day, time and location of each course. Timetables are published and distributed for each year level of the program. These timetables list all core courses and some electives that do not clash with core courses.

VTAC – The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre is the administrative body for the state of Victoria that handles all applications to all programs offered by Victorian universities and other tertiary institutions. The web address is: www.vtac.edu.au
The mailing address is:
   The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
   40 Park Street
   South Melbourne, Victoria 3205
   Australia

Note: This list is not comprehensive. If you are unclear on the terminology of anything related to the Scientific Photography program, please contact the Program Leader, Associate Professor Gale E. Spring at g.spring@rmit.edu.au or sciphotoselection@rmit.edu.au