Academic Information for International Students

Information on Satisfactory Progress

Please note that as part of your student visa requirements, you are required to complete your study at RMIT within the minimum standard duration as well as achieve a satisfactory progress. All international students are required to pass at least 50% of your enrolment in each semester and you cannot repeat the same course more than once.

If you are an RMIT Business Higher Education student who has not progressed satisfactorily, you will receive a warning letter and consequently be deemed “at risk”. You will be invited to come to an academic progress meeting to discuss your academic performance and be advised of the support services at RMIT to improve it. If you have not improved your academic performance, your School may recommend you for exclusion. You have the right to appeal against your exclusion with a written appeal through the Faculty Executive Manager within 20 working days of the receipt of the letter from your School recommending that you be excluded. You can refer to the Academic 7.32.10.1 – Academic Progress (HE) – Unsatisfactory Performance: http://mams.rmit.edu.au/mqnimixmi05t.pdf for the full Academic Operating Procedure.

Statement on plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of trying to pass off someone else's work as one's own, without proper acknowledgment or citation, and the following general points might be noted concerning its use.

The use of passages, copied verbatim (word for word) from textbooks, study guides or other printed sources, even of a few words or lines, is an example of plagiarism. It is also foolish, as the teaching staff is fully familiar with these sources.

'Proper acknowledgment' means that any passage copied verbatim from a printed document must have quotation marks and must be ended with a footnote number and footnote, either at the base of the page or at the end of the paper, indicating, in the proper academic manner, the source of the quotation.
Close paraphrases of a printed source should also be indicated by proper citation, that is a footnote or endnote reference to the sources.

In saying this, we do not mean to imply that you should not borrow ideas and perspective’s from your program (course) material or other printed sources. What we would like - and require - is that you provide proper citations for any such sources you use, and that the main argument of your essay will be in your own words.

Bear in mind why plagiarism is unacceptable; it is a form of intellectual dishonesty, it has little educational value, and it is unfair to students who do their own work properly.

**Examples of plagiarism from books and journals**

*What you should not do in an assignment or essay*

The following quotes are examples of what plagiarism may look like and sound like in student work. The examples given are not referenced to the original authors and do not have footnotes at the bottom of the page. *This is an example of what you should not do.* See the section on **THE USE OF QUOTATIONS** for examples of the correct usage of quoted works.

*Directly quoted plagiarism without reference to the original author*

He could not tell his exact position each day along that watery line from South Africa to the Australian coast.

*This is what the book actually said:*

"He could not tell his exact position each day along that watery line from South Africa to the Australian coast."¹

*Indirectly quoted plagiarism without reference to the original author*

Two of the murderers were allowed to live on the condition that they went to live on Australia's mainland.

*This is what the book actually said:*

"Two of the murderers, an 18 year old cabin servant and a 24 year old soldier, were reprieved from death on the condition that they allow themselves to be exiled on Australia's mainland some thirty miles away."²

Copying from another student's work is also plagiarism. You must be very careful about plagiarism when writing up group projects and assignments. Obtain clarification from your teacher about what is an

¹ ibid., Blainey, G., p 6.
² ibid., Blainey, G., p 6.
acceptable in-group assignment. You cannot let one member of the group write up the assignment while you hand in a copy of what the other student has written.

**Statement on collusion**

Collusion is the presentation by a student of an assignment as his or her own work which is in fact the result in whole or in part of an unauthorised collaboration with another person or persons.

Do not do any work on individual assignments with your friends or classmates unless you have obtained permission from your teacher to do so.

Collusion also occurs when you share work with other people, intentionally or accidentally. This means that if you are a party to (i.e. have participated in) collusion whether you mean to or not you will suffer the same penalties as those who have used your work.

This means you should not:

- allow others to copy your assignments, even old ones;
- give others copies of your assignments, even old ones;
- give others copies of your assignment on floppy disk, even old ones;
- leave your work where others might copy it, e.g. on a shared computer at home;
- allow partners or group members to put their name on group work when they have not participated in the preparation of the assignment;

To avoid collusion and plagiarism you should:

- always hand in assignments yourself and put them in the locked assignment box;
- password protect your assignments when you save them on a computer or floppy disk;
- tell the teacher, **Wendy Shih, Heather Bigelow or Loraine Lam**, if you suspect that someone is copying or has copied your work;
- tell the teacher if a group member or your partner is not doing their share of the assignment;
- tell the teacher, **Wendy Shih, Heather Bigelow or Loraine Lam**, if someone approaches you about sharing work or assignments when the teacher has not specifically approved working together;
- not give copies of old assignments to friends or relatives doing the same courses (subjects);
- not leave open files on the computer. Always close files if you leave the room even if you are only taking a short break;

Please notify **Wendy Shih, Heather Bigelow or Loraine Lam**, if you feel that you are being unfairly pressured by other students to ‘share’ your work.
Resources for students

To avoid being caught in plagiarism or collusion of your assessment, please check the resources available for you at: [http://mams.rmit.edu.au/3deyx4opgq2.pdf](http://mams.rmit.edu.au/3deyx4opgq2.pdf).

Penalties for Academic Misconduct

Any case in which a student has alleged to have been involved in plagiarism, collusion, cheating in tests or examinations is a very serious offence and may be academic misconduct. The following penalty could be carried out in such incidents:

- reprimand;
- record a failure for all or any part of any assessment;
- cancel the results of any assessment;
- suspension from your program
- suspend for a period not exceeding: 14 days, 6 months or 12 months;
- exclusion;
- impose other penalty as the Discipline Board may consider appropriate punishment;
- impose a combination of these above penalties.

We hope that the information we have provided has been useful in demonstrating to you what to do in your assignments and essays. If you are having difficulties with your work come in and see Wendy Shih, Heather Bigelow or Loraine Lam for help in finding the resources on campus to help you with your work. Remember that we cannot help you if you have left your work to the last minute or day before it is due for submission.

The organisation and documentation of essays

Class Participation

Types of classes in Australia

Lectures
Classes are divided into lectures, tutorials and practical laboratory sessions. Lectures are large classes that all students enrolled in a course (subject) attend. As many as 100 students may attend lectures. Lectures are designed for teachers to speak about a specific part of the curriculum from a set of notes that they have prepared in advance. In a lecture it is okay to ask a teacher/lecturer to speak up, slow down the speed at which they are speaking so you can keep up with them, or explain an unfamiliar word or concept. In lectures you should pay attention to the teacher and try to understand the concepts being spoken about. If you don’t understand be sure to ask the teacher either during the lecture or after the lecture has finished. You should not bring food and drink to lectures.

Tutorials
Tutorials are much smaller classes of about 15-25 students. To prepare for a tutorial you should read the texts that will be discussed in the class. This will help you prepare questions for the teacher about things you haven’t understood in the textbook or lecture ahead of time. The tutorial is a question and answer session where you are able to have anything you haven’t really understood clarified by the teacher. Some teachers may schedule activities and class problems for each tutorial. It is very important that you participate in these activities and complete the class work during the tutorial time. Tutorials are also used by teachers to have students make class presentations. If you are to make a class presentation it is important that you prepare for it well in advance and do not miss the presentation. If you need help with a class presentation, please attend the workshops provided by the staff at the Learning Skills Unit (LSU) (under RMIT Services section for more information).

Practical Laboratory or Computer Classes
Practical laboratory sessions are classes conducted in computer rooms or science laboratories. As Business students you will only encounter practical classes in computer rooms. When you attend computer classes you may not bring food or drink into the computer rooms. In practical computer classes you will be set tasks to complete during the class and for homework. It is very important that you try to complete as much work as possible during the class time as you have the teacher there and can ask questions about work you don’t understand.
Acceptable behaviour in class

Teachers in Australia expect students to pay attention in class, arrive on time and participate actively. Participating in class means having read and understood the assigned reading material before class starts, speaking up in class discussions to offer opinions and acknowledging the teachers by looking at them when they speak. Many students find this very difficult to do as it is very different from what is polite in their home country and may even be considered as being rude to the teacher.

Help! It’s hard to participate

Many international students find it very difficult to participate in the Australian style of teaching and class interaction. Students are expected to form their own opinions, act independently and even question the teacher.

Talking to your teacher is the first step. Letting the teacher know that you are having difficulties participating will be appreciated by the teacher. It will let the teacher know that you are interested in the class but find the class difficult.

When you are finding it difficult to participate because of lack of confidence in your English, either spoken, written or listening, you should visit the staff at LSU (under RMIT Services section for more information). If you find that you are having personal and study difficulties you should visit Wendy Shih, Heather Bigelow or Loraine Lam, who may refer you to the Student Counselling Service (under RMIT Services section for more information).

Help! I don’t understand the teacher

Many international students have problems understanding their teachers and classmates because of their Australian accents. Most international students who have not studied English in Australia are used to hearing British or American accented English. Australians use many “slang” words or colloquial words, particularly rhyming slang, that are very unique to Australia.

Many Australians do not realise that they are hard to understand for non-English speakers.

You can ask the teacher to explain unfamiliar words that they use. You can ask the teacher if you may tape record the lectures. The staff from the LSU will help you listen to the tape and explain any unfamiliar words (under RMIT Services section for more information).

When can I ask questions?

In a lecture it is okay to ask a teacher to speak up, slow down the speed at which they are speaking so you can keep up with them, or explain an unfamiliar word or concept.

In tutorials and computer classes it is okay to ask the teacher to clarify a point that the class is discussing or something that you have not understood in the assigned reading.
You can ask teachers questions directly after class, but don’t be surprised if the teacher asks you to come and visit them during consultation time rather than answering you on the spot. The teacher may have to go to another class or a meeting and is not being rude.

All teachers have to set aside student consultation hours during which they must be available to see students and answer students’ questions.

You should see teachers in consultation time to ask questions about assignments and problems with the assigned reading.

**How do I ask questions?**

If you can write all the questions down that you wish to ask the teacher. It helps you focus on the questions that you wish to ask, and it means that you won’t forget anything.

In class you may have to raise your hand to gain the teacher’s attention. In some classes you might have to make eye contact with the teacher and break in to the conversation of the class. You should never ask a question over the top of another person speaking and you should wait until the person answering your question has finished before you ask the next question.

Questions should always be asked in a polite manner, where you look at the person and ask the question in your normal tone of voice. You should not be sarcastic, rude or shout.