

Research & Innovation/Research Strategies & Services/Continuous Improvement & Systems

HR Excellence in Research Award

RMIT Action Plan 2026-9

June 2026

The following Action Plan was submitted as part of RMIT's request for the renewal of the HR Excellence in Research Award. The Action Plan lists initiatives that RMIT has completed, is continuing, and has begun.

Action 4 – Leadership development program

Item 4	Creation of a University wide framework for the researcher lifecycle covering career opportunities and development opportunities at each career stage including research leadership and mentoring training for senior staff to enhance the capability in this area.
Owner	Sam Baillie
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETED
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Career development Supervision and managerial duties
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Framework developed Target Q4 2020

RMIT have developed and launched the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for RMIT University. The design process included input from research-focused academics, and one of the pillars defining the EVP reflects RMIT's commitment to career pathways and development opportunities for our staff.

The RMIT Leadership Model provides a principled framework guiding staff development, leadership initiatives, succession planning and hiring practices. Leadership programs are deliberately aligned to career stage, ensuring tailored support that develops capability, fosters mentorship, and strengthens succession planning.

Leadership Essentials is a development program designed for both leaders and aspiring leaders, is themed around four critical adaptive competencies: ensuring accountability, promoting vision and purpose, instilling trust, and communicating effectively. These were identified through consultation with RMIT leaders and the Research and Innovation portfolio. As of mid-2025, 776 participants have completed the program. In program evaluation, 100% of participants say that they would recommend the program to other leaders.

RMIT Leader Program is a three-day immersive program to enhance leadership skills and strategies, and foster a broad network for mid- to senior leaders at RMIT. The program is designed to assist leaders to develop awareness of their own values and leadership approach, to adapt to

empower their teams, and to harness their depth of expertise and knowledge to respond to increasing uncertainty. They develop their understanding of how to drive vision and purpose, ensure accountability and develop capacity in others. As of mid-2025, 419 participants have completed the program. Evaluation feedback indicates that 100% of participants would recommend the program to other leaders, and 100% in 2025 said that they would apply their learning from the program in their day-to-day work.

The Leader as Coach program equips managers in coaching-centred leadership skills. There are five key outcomes for participants and those who report to them: enhanced leadership skills; improved coaching and feedback skills; increased psychological safety; adaptability and a growth mindset, supporting personal and professional growth; skills in peer coaching and accountability. In evaluation feedback, 92% of participants rated the program as effective or highly effective.

Career Development Coaching (Coach HUB) offers six months of personalised coaching for leaders to support professional and personal development. By mid-2025, 120 participants completed over 500 coaching sessions. Participants drive their personal and professional development with the support of a business coach of their choice. The format provides personal and confidential support that is flexible in pace, time and location. This has been found to benefit academics who are time poor due to teaching, research and management commitments.

The Deans' Leadership Program is co-designed by the leadership development team and the Deans themselves. It is continuously evaluated and improved, and has four key goals: enhanced leadership capabilities; improved decision-making; broadened perspectives; and sustained network support.

The Leadership Model and the leadership development programs were developed through extensive consultation across colleges and campuses, including Vietnam. Workshops and a consultation group identified key leadership competencies that guide program priorities and support researchers' career development at all stages.

In addition, RMIT's Professional Staff Mentoring Program was relaunched in May 2025. The program plays a key role in fostering a culture of connection, collaboration and life-long learning. In 2026 this program will expand to all RMIT staff, enabling expanded opportunity for researchers to engage in mentoring. Boost for Academic Promotion remains an integral and ongoing mentoring program designed to support people applying for academic promotion at RMIT.

The action item was completed within the expected timeframe. Initiatives began rolling out in late 2022, with significant activity throughout 2024, culminating in the official launch of the Leadership Model in August 2025. These initiatives collectively operationalise the researcher lifecycle framework established through the EVP, providing structured career pathways, leadership development, and mentoring opportunities at every stage of a researcher's career. This includes dedicated leadership and mentoring capability development for senior research leaders, strengthening succession planning, enhancing research leadership capability, and supporting sustainable research career progression across RMIT.

Action 5 – Athena Swan

Item 5	Implementation of the Athena SWAN Action Plan 2019 – 2023.
Owner	Kay Latham
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETED
Associated principle(s) of the	Gender equality; Embracing diversity; Recruitment; Career progression

2023 European Charter for Researchers	
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Targets/Indicators as outlined in the Athena Swan Action Plan

Changes to the Athena Swan accreditation process, overseen by the external body SAGE (Science in Australia Gender Equity), necessitated RMIT moving from the implementation of the Athena Swan Action Plan 2019-2023 to implementing actions across five Athena Swan “Cygnet” action plans: Recruiting women and gender-diverse staff in STEMM fields, Barriers to participation and career fulfilment for parents and carers, Supporting LGBTIQ+ staff and students, Enabling Accessibility and Respectful Cultures & Behaviours.

In relation to our first Cygnet (women and gender-diverse staff in STEMM fields), four STEMM-field Schools have achieved an overall 40:40:20 gender distribution of academic staff (PCPM, AISSC, SHBS and Science). The School of Property, Construction and Project Management (PCPM) now has equal representation of women, even at the highest academic level (level E). Achieving gender balance in senior academic and research roles brings significant benefits to individuals and institutions alike. When women and men are equally represented in leadership, it enriches the diversity of perspectives shaping research agendas, leading to more innovative, inclusive, and impactful outcomes. It also creates fairer pathways for career progression, with visible role models and mentors helping to retain and support emerging talent. Gender-diverse leadership teams tend to foster more collaborative and supportive cultures, strengthening team dynamics and morale. For institutions, this translates to enhanced credibility, greater global competitiveness, and stronger connections with the communities their research is intended to serve.

In relation to our second Cygnet (parents and carers), we have met a range of our enterprise-wide Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) targets related to parents and carers, including:

- maintain and improve the rate of return from primary carers leave;
- maintain success rates for academic promotion of applicants identifying as parents/carers on par with overall success rates of non-carers; and
- improve the formal flex rate utilisation of managers who are women above Australian average of 6.1%.

Access to high-quality support for parents and carers—such as flexible work arrangements, equitable parental leave, and caregiving support—is essential for a thriving academic workforce. It enables researchers to manage family responsibilities without sacrificing career progression, improving retention and reducing burnout. This support plays a critical role in levelling the playing field, especially for women and primary carers who often face disproportionate barriers. When institutions actively support carers, they create a more inclusive and resilient research culture—one where all researchers can perform at their best and contribute fully to the academic mission.

Our third, fourth and fifth Cygnets were awarded in 2025 and are currently in implementation.

The Athena Swan Implementation Group drives progress of this action item. The group comprises representatives from RMIT’s People team (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access; Leadership and Capability; Organisational Development and Employee Experience; Talent Acquisition; People Partnering; and Employer Branding), Student Equity, Women in STEMM project teams, Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Safer Community teams. The work is overseen by the Athena Swan Steering Committee, which is co-chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation and ADVC Gender Equity, and includes ADVCS and Directors from across the University as members.

Academic staff were consulted towards our Cygnet action plans via our Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group, which meets every 6-weeks and includes academics from across the University’s four Colleges.

We are marking this Action Item as 'Complete' as, having been awarded all five Cygnet Awards, we are now moving towards achievement of the Athena Swan Silver Award, per SAGE's maturity model. This new award will involve the implementation of a new set of action plans. Our new Action Item 23 will involve the attainment and implementation of the Silver Award.

Action 9 – Research leave guidelines

Item 9	Establishment of Enterprise-wide Research Leave Guidelines and procedures
Owner	Swee Mak, Gaynor Witts; Jago Dodson, Karien Dekker
UEC-endorsed status	IN PROGRESS
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Recognition of mobility experience
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Guidelines developed Target Q2 2022

The target has been partially met and remains in progress with completion expected by the end of Horizon 2 of the Knowledge with Action Strategy (2028).

In mid-2024 a Working Group was formed between the RMIT Research and Innovation Portfolio and the RMIT People team (human resources) to investigate and consult on the development of options for an enterprise-wide Academic Career Development Program (ACDP).

The ACDP builds on an earlier Research Leave initiative and aims to provide a consistent, transparent, and accessible framework for academic staff to undertake research, teaching and learning, scholarship, and industry engagement activities. The Working Group identified the need for extensive consultation across RMIT, engaging schools, colleges, central portfolios, and senior research leaders. To inform these discussions, a project team developed a comprehensive suite of background and benchmarking materials, including:

Analysis of current ACDP-related programs at RMIT

National and international benchmarking of comparable academic development programs

A summary report and discussion paper for internal consultation

A dedicated SharePoint site was established to host these materials and facilitate open engagement with the university community. Between January and May 2025, the Research and Innovation Portfolio led a university-wide consultation process, including presentations to College and School Executives, research community forums, and targeted discussions with key academic leaders. The ACDP was overwhelmingly supported.

Following this consultation phase, a submission was presented to the University Executive Committee (UEC) in June 2025. The UEC endorsed the proposal in principle and requested a detailed implementation plan for the ACDP.

In response, an ACDP Options Working Group has been convened to examine administrative and funding models and develop a comprehensive implementation plan for presentation to the UEC in 2026. This presentation will propose a 2027 implementation (pending budget approval). This next phase will finalise the enterprise-wide framework, ensuring consistent practice, equitable access, and alignment with broader academic development and performance initiatives.

Action 12 – VC Fellows’ career plans

Item 12	Creation of Career development plans for VC research fellows to transition beyond the term of their current appointment
Owner	Swee Mak
UEC-endorsed status	EXTENDED
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Stability and permanence of employment
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Career Plans developed for all VC Research Fellows by Q2 2021. Career Plan Templates implemented

The RMIT Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowships (VCRF) Program is RMIT’s flagship talent attraction and retention program, bringing together the world’s best and brightest researchers to undertake transdisciplinary applied research that creates positive impact for society, the economy and the environment. It supports researchers to conduct high-quality, impact-focused research aligned with specific strategic research priority areas. The program offers three- and four-year Fellowships across academic levels A–D with generous research support. As of 2025, there are 62 active Fellows, with many alumni now holding senior research leadership roles at RMIT.

In the past, however, there was a lack of a consistent process by which VCRF were required to demonstrate how they met the objectives of the VCRF Scheme. The objectives of the scheme are also not well known by some line-managers of VCR Fellows or their School Leadership team. This lack of awareness has made the process of transitioning to continuing employment challenging for some of the VC Fellow cohort, with inconsistencies in engagement and communication between stakeholders.

To address this, the Research and Innovation Portfolio, in consultation with research leaders through the VCRF Advisory Group, developed a VCRF Planning and Performance Framework to:

- Improve communication, understanding of and commitment to Scheme objectives by all stakeholders.
- Enhance data available for evaluation of the Scheme and fellow performance.
- Enable Fellows to identify and pursue activity, and achievements that will:
- Meet the objectives of the Scheme
- Deliver benefit to the host School and wider University
- Align to career ambitions.

The Framework was developed through consultation with current and former Fellows, research leaders, and HR systems teams, supported by both written submissions and in-person workshops. Feedback was incorporated into the final process and supporting templates.

The action item was implemented through the creation of a draft framework and process, followed by extensive consultation with research leaders, current and former Vice-Chancellor’s Research Fellows, and HR systems development teams, both in person and via written submissions. Feedback from these consultations was incorporated into the final framework and process, and implementation commenced with the development of supporting templates.

Next steps include finalising the templates, automating the process to align with key milestones during each fellowship, and refining the process further with input from Fellows and their line managers.

Implementation has been delayed due to resourcing constraints and system limitations that make it difficult to identify and track Fellows consistently across their fellowship lifecycle. Individual start dates, secondments, and career breaks (e.g., parental leave) further complicated automation. In 2025, dedicated professional staff were assigned to the project, and HR system configuration is underway to enable automated processes and milestone tracking. Once complete, the Framework will be embedded within RMIT's annual work planning cycle, with evaluation expected 12–48 months post-implementation.

In parallel, RMIT has launched Pixel (Pioneers in Innovation, Excellent Research, Engagement and Leadership), a structured career and leadership development program designed for Fellows and emerging research leaders. The first cohort commenced in July 2025, with evaluation scheduled for mid-2026. Future iterations will align program delivery with the start dates of new Fellows to ensure consistency and timely participation.

Action 13 – Respectful Research Training

Item 13	Respectful research training – phase 2
Owner	Robyn Barnacle
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETE
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Gender equality; Supervision and mentoring
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Content developed and piloted by Q4 2023

The goal of implementing Phase 2 of the Respectful Research Training program is complete, with the training being embedded as part of BAU. All commencing HDR candidates complete the module, approximately 220 annually. For supervisors, 6 workshops are offered annually, with approximately 145 attendees. Workshop evaluation data shows a 97% overall satisfaction rate among attendees. We will continue our program as routine training for HDR candidates and supervisors, using feedback to continually improve our offerings.

Two components of the program have been developed and trialed, and the extended timeframe will allow for a more ambitious approach, including partnerships with external organisations to co-develop and deliver training. This means expanding the program's objectives to include enhancing the capability of supervisors and researchers to support gender equality, diversity and inclusion principles and practices and the prevention of gender-based harm. Recognising the critical role of leaders in driving cultural change, the programs targets research leaders, with anticipated benefits cascading across the wider research community at RMIT. This goes beyond the initial program focusing HDR candidates and supervisors.

The two new training programs will be included as two separate Action Items within our Action Plan:

SAGE pilot (new Action Item #24): RMIT will be taking part in supporting research leaders to participate in a new program, co-designed and delivered by Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE):. 'What leaders need to know to take effective action on gender equity, diversity and inclusion.'

Working Together with Men (WTWM) (new Action Item #25): Participant evaluation will guide further development.

Action 14 – Research integrity review

Item 14	Implementing the Research Integrity Review Management Action Plan to strengthen the culture and environment of research integrity at RMIT
Owner	Anita Arndt, Daniel Barr
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETED
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Good practice in research
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Implementation of initiatives in the Research Integrity Review Management Action Plan

Following the 2021 external review of research integrity at RMIT, which identified no compliance issues but recommended initiatives to strengthen culture and practice, the Research Integrity Review Management Action Plan (RIR-MAP) was developed, endorsed by the DVC Research & Innovation, Academic Board, and Audit & Risk Management Committee, and completed on 1 April 2025. Progress was reported annually to governance bodies, including the Research Committee and Academic Board.

This worked aimed to improve:

1. Infrastructure and processes to support research integrity, including improvements to systems, reporting, and advisory services.
2. Communication and engagement with RMIT's research community about research integrity and support services.
3. Education and training in authorship and research data management.

RMIT implemented new or improved services to further strengthen research integrity across the institution. Outcomes and benefits to researchers that have been delivered include:

- Increased resourcing for research administration and the research integrity advisor network to support researchers.
- Installation of a new system for the management of research integrity complaints to improve the management of alleged breaches and reporting.
- Publication of a new website and online resources, including integration with the complaints management system and improved visibility for researchers to report suspected breaches of research integrity.
- Revised policy and procedures to support researchers in meeting requirements for authorship, publication, and the responsible use of generative AI.
- New guidance for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities to help ensure respectful and responsible research.
- Enhanced program of training in the responsible conduct of research, which, in the last three years of reporting, was attended by approximately 4,244 researchers at more than 70 workshops, seminars, and invited presentations. New content included case studies in authorship and the responsible use of AI in writing, publication and research data management. The continuous improvement of the program was recognised by an RMIT Research Service Award in 2023.

- An online research integrity community in RMIT's virtual learning environment 'Canvas' was established for HDR Candidates (Masters by Research and PhD) to provide training and guidance. All HDR candidates at RMIT are automatically enrolled in this online community.
- Raised the profile of the Research Integrity Advisors to improve their accessibility to researchers. Advisors also received additional training and recognition, and were supported with any conflicts of interest that may arise in their work.
- Increased reporting to academic departments to raise awareness of research integrity issues.

RMIT's Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance team, in collaboration with academic staff, HDR candidates, professional staff, librarians, and external experts (including the World Conferences on Research Integrity Foundation), oversaw the implementation of RIR-MAP. Specific recommendations were supported by the Research Integrity Advisor Network (active 2021–2025) and the Research Authorship and Communication Working Group (active May 2022–Nov 2023).

This Action Item was completed as planned, with all initiatives implemented and evaluated, and with measurable impact across the research community.

Action 15 – Mental wellbeing improvement

Item 15	Focusing on well-being and psycho-social safety in research
Owner	Olivia Formica
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETED
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Good practice in research
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Year on year improvement in the RMIT annual mental wellbeing survey, including a measure of psychosocial safety climate

Guided by the Mental Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025, RMIT implemented a suite of initiatives to support the mental wellbeing of the research community and strengthen psychosocial safety in the workplace. Key outcomes include:

- **Establishment of the RMIT Sudden Death Response Team (SDRT)** – a multidisciplinary team, and sub-set of the CIMT - providing a coordinated institutional response, in the unfortunate event of a death in the RMIT community. The SDRT was developed in alignment to best practice suicide prevention and postvention practices, providing tailored guidance and support for researchers that may be impacted.
- **Introduction of 'Ways of Wellbeing'** – An adapted health promotion model underpinned by best-practice. Outlines simple and effective practices for researchers to support their own positive mental wellbeing.
- **Staff Wellbeing Expo** – a staff event to connect the researcher community to the importance of mental wellbeing. The Staff Wellbeing Expo has run for the past 3 years – showcasing an array of wellbeing offerings, staff benefits, interactive stalls and activities, professional development sessions, free massages, giveaways, skin and health checks, and an opportunity to come together and connect as a research community.
- **RMIT Peer Support Program** – A staff program piloted through 2024 and launched Enterprise-wide (Aus) in 2025. The Peer Support Program offers the researcher community

with a more informal support avenue – to connect with a trained colleague – for support navigating work and life challenges.

- **Integrated Staff Survey** – In 2025 RMIT integrated both the Mental Wellbeing Survey and Staff Engagement Survey into a single annual survey – embedding mental wellbeing and psychosocial safety as an ongoing priority for the research community.
- **Capability building** – Delivery of a varied suite of professional development offerings to enable the research community to enhance knowledge and skills to support their own and others wellbeing.
- **Appointment of new EAP Provider (Converge International)** – offering an expanded range of professional support services, advice helplines and evidence-based resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of researchers.

Implementation was initially led by RMIT's Mental Wellbeing Initiatives (MWI) team (from 2020-2023) in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing function. In 2023, the MWI team merged with the Staff Wellbeing team, to establish the Wellbeing & Psychosocial Safety (WPS) team. Now within the People and Culture Portfolio, the WPS team has continued to implement the suite of initiatives.

Researchers were consulted throughout strategic initiatives through a Research & Practice Advisory Group (RPAG) - meeting quarterly to provide input and guide implementation. Engagement campaigns were delivered continuously to promote services, reduce stigma, encourage help-seeking, enhance self-care practices, and foster social connection.

This action item was completed as planned. Minor delays occurred due to staff turnover and organisational restructure, but these had minimal impact. Initiatives remain a continuing priority to ensure sustained wellbeing and psychosocial safety for RMIT's research community.

Action 16 – Safe research design

Item 16	Embedding safe design of research into our research practice and ensuring safe conduct of research through project lifecycles
Owner	Shah Abdul-Rahman
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETE
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Working conditions, funding & salaries; Contractual and legal obligations
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	20% increase of research activities with quality risk assessments from baseline in 2020.10% reduction in HSW incidents associated with research projects

RMIT's Safe Research program, integrates safer design into research practice and promotes the safe conduct of research across the full project lifecycle. The program is underpinned by seven core principles: clear responsibility and accountability; embedding safe design; systematic risk management; capability building; information sharing; safety assurance; and enhancement of the research experience.

Target 1: 20% increase in research activities with quality risk assessments (baseline 2020)

Research specific risk assessments are currently embedded within local College risk assessment processes. Colleges incorporate research hazards and controls into activity based or project-based risk assessments that reflect the scale, complexity and nature of individual research programs. Research leaders and supervisors are accountable for ensuring that risks associated with

laboratory work, field activities, human participation, hazardous substances, equipment and emerging methods are assessed as part of routine operational risk management.

This approach integrated research risk management into day-to-day planning rather than treating it as a standalone process. While RMIT implemented the SafetyNow OHS system in 2024, an enterprise wide configuration for research specific risk assessments has not yet been enabled and is slated as part of *RMIT's Laboratory Management Project* through the course of 2026 and 2027.

A central OHS assurance program, led by the Central Health and Safety team, commenced in December 2024 and operated throughout 2025. The program included the completion of 5 audits reviewing the effectiveness of RMIT's OHS management system across RMIT's STEM College which included a qualitative review of a sample of research based risk assessments. The 5 audits completed included:

- The Advanced Manufacturing Precinct
- School of Health and Biomedical Science – Applied Health - Pharmacy
- School of Health and Biomedical Sciences – Medical Radiations
- School of Science – Applied Chemistry and Environmental Science
- School of Engineering – Mechanical Materials and Mechatronics Engineering

While a definitive percentage increase in research risk assessments cannot be reported, audit outcomes demonstrated strong compliance levels.

Target 2: 10% reduction in HSW incidents associated with research projects

In January 2024, RMIT launched SafetyNow, an enhanced OHS incident reporting and management system. The system enables real-time escalation, investigation and tracking of corrective actions, and supports data analysis for preventive intervention. There were 13 research related incidents reported in 2024 and 12 in 2025, representing an 8% reduction. Given the low volume of incidents, the minor shortfall against the 10% target is considered immaterial and does not indicate increased research risk.

Action 17 – University of choice: Diversity and inclusion

Item 17	Enhance our environment as a University of Choice for equity diversity and Inclusion. Develop a Diversity and Inclusion Framework towards 2030.
Owner	Mat Lewis
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETE
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Non discrimination
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Primary indicator will be the development of RMIT 2030 D&I Framework by March 2023. Continued evaluations and Annual Plans delivered 2023-2030. Implementation and progression of RMIT's Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025. Review 2025

RMIT's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework (IDEA) ensures that planning, resourcing and governance are inclusive by design. The framework is embedded within local-level operations, supported by enterprise-wide oversight and evaluation, ensuring that equity, diversity and accessibility principles inform all aspects of RMIT's work.

Since January 2024, RMIT has employed a Workplace Adjustment Officer, and expanded its Workplace Adjustment Program, with a dedicated budget. The program supports workplace adjustments to support staff with disability, neurodiversity or mental illness. Requests for workplace adjustments increased from 10 to 100 since 2024, demonstrating strong engagement and need. The program is under ongoing review to monitor impact and ensure sustainability.

In recognition of the IDEA Framework and the Workplace Adjustment Program, RMIT received the 2025 Workplace Culture Excellence Award from the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association for sector leadership in inclusive practice.

The Gender Equity Action Plan 2022-25 acknowledges that gender-based inequality may intersect with other factors, such as disability and cultural identity. It sets out clear actions to advance equity in recruitment, academic promotion, leadership, communications, governance and reporting, and complaints processes. RMIT has demonstrated measurable progress across the seven gender equality indicators in the mid-way progress report submitted to the Victorian Gender Equality Commission in 2023. A final progress report is due in May 2026.

The Sustainability and Equality Evaluation (SEE) Tool, implemented in 2024, is a framework for evaluating policies, projects and services that affect staff and students, ensuring holistic impacts across Sustainability, IDEA and Responsible Practice. Evaluations have been completed on 91% of new and renewed policies. Additional reviews were voluntarily conducted on a range of other initiatives, including the ITS Strategy. This work received a highly commended Green Gown Award.

The RMIT Staff Survey was enhanced in 2025 to include optional demographic questions about gender identity, sexuality, disability and neurodiversity. While not all staff choose to respond to demographic questions or the survey, participation continues to grow, providing valuable insights that help RMIT plan budgets, services, and communications that better support diverse staff communities. Including these questions also helps normalise diversity, increase visibility, and enable targeted actions to support marginalised groups.

The 2025 Staff Survey achieved a 78% participation rate, with updated questions offering richer insights into staff experiences. A key addition was a question on neurodivergence, allowing staff to identify as neurodivergent, disabled, or both—reflecting community feedback and promoting authentic representation. The data collected will inform the design of tailored workshops and initiatives for neurodivergent staff and their managers, further strengthening an inclusive and supportive workplace culture.

RMIT also hosts the LGBTIQ+ Research Impact Network, set up in mid-2025, an interdisciplinary initiative that funds pilot research projects and connects researchers with the Australasian Queer Research Network, strengthening visibility and impact in this area.

The academic community was deeply engaged in the development of RMIT's IDEA Framework, Gender Equity Action Plan and SEE Tool through focus groups, and consultation with stakeholder groups such as the Women's Research Network.

Note on status: Completed within the expected timeframe, with continued implementation and refinement through 2026–2030 to sustain inclusive excellence across the RMIT community.

Action 18 – IP policy review

Item 18	Enhancing management of IP Intellectual Property Policy: review to refine and simplify wording and structure to improve clarity for RMIT staff, HDR candidates and partners.
Owner	Mohan Sridhar
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETE
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Intellectual Property rights
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Policy to be revised and republished by Q4, 2024

The RMIT Intellectual Property (IP) Policy and related Procedures were updated and republished on 1 November 2023 following a comprehensive review process.

The updated IP policy has since been embedded in the IP & Commercialisation team's education programs throughout 2024 and 2025, ensuring that researchers and HDR candidates are informed of their obligations regarding IP disclosure and management. While it is difficult to directly attribute the policy update to changes in disclosure activity, increased awareness of the revised policy is likely to have contributed to a rise in IP disclosures—from 70 in 2023 to 82 in 2024 (a 17% increase).

Higher disclosure rates by researchers builds RMIT's research translation pipeline, enabling the Research Partnerships & Translation (RP&T) team to assess and advance more opportunities for commercialisation.

The review was undertaken in accordance with RMIT's Policy Governance Procedure and aimed to:

- Align IP ownership/management and standard employment practice.
- Ensure consistency in the management of all IP created through RMIT's activities (research, teaching, professional support services)
- Clarify provisions related to holding and distributing equity in spin-out ventures, ensuring alignment with the Benefit Sharing Policy and Controlled/Non-Controlled Entities Policy.

The process of the review was set by the Policy Governance Procedure. Key steps included:

- Formation of IP policy review committee
- Landscape review comparing IP policies across the higher education sector
- Committee membership was broadened at the request of Academic Board
- University Executive received notification of the review 9 August 2023
- Consultation process was conducted with targeted list of researchers engaged for feedback via curated questions followed by an online university-wide consultation process, completed late September 2023.
- Revised policy and procedures were approved by Academic Board, 23 October 2023.
- Revised policy and procedures were published 1 November 2023.

With RMIT's models of research translation now expanding to include taking equity in spin-out and start-up ventures—either through investment (e.g. the RMIT Pre-Seed Fund) or as part of an IP commercialisation deal structure—the IP Policy will likely require further review to ensure these models are captured at a high level. Additional guidelines and procedures for managing spin-out and start-up activities will also be developed.

Action 19 – Scaled up industry engagement

Item 19	Scaled up industry engagement for HDR candidates as part of their candidature
Owner	Kelly Wade-Johnson
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETE
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Value of mobility
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Policy to be revised and republished by Q4, 2024

RMIT has significantly expanded industry engagement for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates, embedding collaboration with external partners as a core component of its research training. This initiative supports RMIT's strategic focus on impact-led research, enhancing the employability, skills, and career readiness of HDR candidates while strengthening connections with industry. Coordinated efforts between the School of Graduate Research, Global and Industry Engagement, and Research Contracts and Legal Counsel have streamlined processes, simplified agreements, and improved visibility of engagement activity. As a result, HDR candidates now benefit from faster, clearer, and more accessible pathways for industry collaboration, with measurable growth in participation and positive outcomes for HDR candidates, supervisors, and the wider research community.

The target of increasing industry placements for HDR candidates has been met and exceeded:

- 97 candidates in 2023
- 151 candidates in 2024
- 166 active candidates currently engaged in 2025.

Benefits to HDR candidates and their supervisors include:

- Timely, accessible industry engagement supports their skill development, employability, and career readiness.
- Faster, simpler processes for formalising industry partnerships.
- Reduced administrative burden for supervisors, freeing them to focus on mentoring and research quality.
- Accurate reporting of industry engagement. Over time, this can expand RMIT's funding for research infrastructure, supporting more HDR scholarships.
- Educating researchers on the broad definition of industry engagement promotes new and existing partnerships, creating further opportunities for collaboration and funding.

The initiative was co-designed by RMIT's School of Graduate Research (SGR) Global and Industry Engagement Team, in partnership with Research Contracts and Legal Counsel.

Process improvements:

- Developed a short form agreement template and decision tree for low-risk engagements (no financial obligations, no IP issues).
- Created a single triage form to guide researchers to the correct team and agreement type.

Researcher engagement and consultation:

- Feedback from supervisors highlighted that existing processes were overly complex and time-consuming for already low-risk partnerships.

- HDR administrators and supervisors were engaged early to test drafts and provide feedback, which shaped the final tools.
- Roadshows, meetings with HDR administrators, and drop-in sessions for HDR candidates were used to build awareness and gather input.

Outcomes:

- The tools balance compliance and usability, satisfying the university's legal requirements, and prioritising a researcher-friendly design.
- Researchers now have clearer guidance and faster turnaround for industry agreements, while SGR has greater visibility of upcoming partnerships, which supports compliance reporting

Timing:

- Development of the short-form agreement and decision tree took approximately 18 months. This was longer than anticipated because of the high workloads of all contributing teams.
- The single triage form was developed within 3 months.

Future work:

- SGR continues to promote the new workflow, educating researchers on the process and benefits of recording industry engagement.
- The next phase will explore capturing applied research engagement that involves industry partners, ensuring a broader range of collaborations are recorded and recognised.

Overall, the action item has been successfully completed and is now embedded into RMIT's HDR engagement processes, with ongoing improvements planned. The team who lead this work was recognised for its achievement at RMIT, receiving a Research Service Award in 2025.

Action 20 – Global mobility: AU & VN

Item 20	Development and implementation of global mobility strategy between Australia and Vietnam
Owner	Swati Gupta, Carla Caminal
UEC-endorsed status	COMPLETE
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Free circulation of researchers; Career progression; Valuing diverse research careers
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Global mobility strategy developed by Q4, 2025

In June 2025, RMIT launched the Global Mobility Program to facilitate global career pathways for RMIT employees. This service supports staff making an internal, international career move, whether temporary or ongoing. Principally this supports staff who move between Vietnam and Australia; however, it also supports staff who travel to work in our smaller hubs in Spain, China and Singapore. The Program provides practical guidance and support with international relocation issues such as employee welfare, visas and immigration compliance, social security and taxation.

The Global Mobility Program was developed in consultation with academic departments, and feedback from RMIT academics who had contributed to teaching programs in China. The consultation recommended a centralised, funded mobility program at RMIT to ensure the delivery of the support services became equitable across the enterprise. The Program employs dedicated teams in both Australia and Vietnam, and outsources some functions to specialist relocation services. It also works closely with recruitment services, to assist with international relocation for

new employees. There are plans to establish a feedback loop so that the experience of participants will inform further development.

RMIT has enlarged and strengthened Research & Innovation services in Vietnam. In 2023, as part of the RMIT Vietnam Country Commitment, funding was allocated to the Office for Research and Innovation to recruit and upskill research management and administration staff to ensure a 'one RMIT' research service culture. This resulted in four new research support teams in Vietnam: Higher Degrees by Research; Research Capability Development; Research Engagement; and Reporting and Research Grants and Partnerships; which all work directly with their counterparts in R&I in Australia. Their focus includes:

- Facilitating international research collaboration
- Facilitating the use of RMIT Vietnam for researchers based at RMIT Australia to develop research networks and collaborations and industry partnerships, and conduct fieldwork in Southeast Asia
- Supporting RMIT Vietnam researchers to apply for funding for international research projects
- Administering research funding contracts for researchers based in Vietnam.

As a result, RMIT Vietnam has received AU\$1,210,508 in research funding from numerous international funding bodies. This provides opportunities for researchers to engage in international research consortiums in Europe, Asia, and Australia.

In 2025, further opportunities have been established to create global pathways for RMIT researchers, including:

- Expanding RMIT's Enabling Impact Networks to Vietnam to connect researchers with experts in Australia.
- RMIT Vietnam committing to invest AU\$25 million supporting HDR candidates to pursue an Australian PhD in Vietnam with co-supervision.
- The STEM College committing \$200,000 to connect STEM PhD candidates and academics internationally, and provide opportunities for Vietnamese researchers and PhD candidates to spend time on the Melbourne campus.
- STEM College funding an annual program for a research team in Vietnam to collaborate with researchers in Australia

The Global Mobility Program will continue to develop and produce strong results, with regular reviews now embedded as standard procedure. Horizon 2 of our Knowledge with Action Strategy includes RMIT being a leading university of impact in the Asia Pacific as a one of four key goals. This means that strengthening researcher and knowledge mobility across our Australian and Asian campuses is an enterprise-wide priority. We will look to expand this mobility with our campus in RMIT Europe, which will now form new Action Item 27.

Action 21 – Impact in academic promotions

Item 21	Refresh Academic Promotion to Emphasise Impact
Owner	Jane Holt
UEC-endorsed status	EXTENDED
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European	Researchers' assessment; Career progression; Valuing diverse research careers

Charter for Researchers	
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Promotion criteria revised to recognise research impact

In 2025 the Academic Promotion Policy suite was completely reviewed and revised. The review clarified our high-level principles for flexible and inclusive academic promotion pathways that consider the three domains of academic activity: research, education and engagement. This new policy suite is in the final stages of executive consultation, and will be implemented in 2026.

The next step in this development, which will take place in 2026, is to review the academic promotion framework, and the supporting guidelines for researchers who are applying for promotion. These documents articulate the university's expectations for research performance in three areas:

- Research Value Creation – assessed against quantitative benchmarks for research outputs and research income, along with quality indicators for research outputs.
- Research Translation – applicants provide their own verified data to support their claims of translation and impact.
- Research Training – HDR completion data and supplementary HDR tables provide a broad range of data points for applicants to use in addressing the qualitative supervision benchmarks for this criterion.

The Research Translation category will be reviewed and updated to recognise both demonstrated research impact, and researchers' efforts in establishing pathways to impact through engagement, codesign and dissemination of research findings with partners in the business, government and community sectors.

To prepare researchers' ability to track their impact, we have implemented the ability to add engagement and impact measures in RMIT Elements, our research management system. This tool is the beginning of collecting data related to impact and we are working towards including relevant metrics in Academic Promotion when researchers become more familiar with the system and process, and data are richer.

The research standards articulated in the Research Domain of academic promotions requires a review and refresh. Having been in place since 2019, it is timely to ensure they are relevant, equitable, and fit for purpose across disciplines and career pathways.

The objectives of this Research Domain review are to:

- Improve clarity of research expectations at each academic level,
- Ensure equity and inclusivity, recognising disciplinary diversity and varied research contributions, and other intersections,
- Enhance consistency in application across Colleges and promotion panels,
- Maintain alignment with RMIT's Research Strategy, Academic Promotions Policy, and research achievements and impacts that are informed by national and global comparisons, and
- Build shared ownership through genuine College and OIERE partnership and co-design.

We will engage the research community to identify key issues and design principles, and facilitate workshops with academic representatives to test and refine research standards and descriptors.

Action 22 – Impact literacy

Item 22	Boosting researchers' impact literacy
Owner	Swee Mak
Status	COMPLETE
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Career development and advice; Continuous professional development
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Between 2023-2025: year-on-year increase in engagement with impact focused capability development opportunities Between 2023-2025: increase in number of researchers advancing their capability

RMIT is committed to deepening its impact culture and capabilities by boosting researchers' impact literacy. As an applied University with close ties to the sectors beyond academia, the development of impact culture and capability aims to:

- support effective translation and adoption of the research RMIT generates, and to
- equip researchers to interact with those other sectors where translation can occur.

These interactions may take place through employment, secondment, contractual partnerships or informal engagement.

This overall aim needs to begin with the uplift of basic impact literacy across the researcher community. Without this foundational work, further progress will be limited.

The target to increase engagement with impact-focused capability has been met. The increase achieved in 2025 is as a result of moving towards delivering workshops on-demand with specific groups, sponsored by local leaders, from a largely centralized approach in the preceding years.

By August 2025, 172 researchers attended impact-related capability development sessions run by the Research Capability Development team, more than double from all of 2024. The increased engagement suggests a change in culture, where researchers are increasingly more aware of, and interested in, that benefiting society is a key objective of their projects. Many other workshops and information sessions are provided by colleagues across the University but the information is not shared, and therefore we are unable to report.

Progress in detail:

- The Knowledge with Action Strategy and Decadal Aspirations for RMIT's research and innovation clearly identify the development of impact culture and capabilities as a key priority. This firmly places impact literacy as a central aim for the University's research and innovation system.
- 'Joined-up research' is a one-day event for the RMIT researcher community to come together, network, share and develop impact practice. Registrations have consistently been in excess of 200 since 2023. The event has helped us identify what researchers see is holding them back from collaborating and what RMIT can do to help, such as supporting networking at RMIT, providing shared workspaces for collaboration, and simplifying the splitting of funding between Schools.
- We have witnessed increased ad hoc demand from Research Centres, Schools and Groups for translation and impact related professional development awareness about the strategic importance of impact.

Benefits to researchers

RMIT will better prepare researchers for career paths in both higher education and other sector, equipping them with:

- Better understanding of how academic research can contribute to societal and other impacts.
- Closer ties with other sectors - offering wider range of options for both academic and non-academic careers, and enhancement of collaborative research practice.
- Opportunity to demonstrate meaningful contribution and achievements through optimising research and its translation for impact.
- Leadership development that aligns to RMIT's vision as an impact-drive institution.

Implementation of the Action Item:

Our first challenge was to create demand for impact related capabilities through: a) introductory offerings, inclusion of the goal in the University's Knowledge With Action strategy, standing up Joined-up research - a one day event to bring the community together to share and develop impact-related practice.

Second, we have developed a suite of offerings designed to create a basic common understanding of research impact across RMIT - how to define it, how to design for it, how to plan for it, how to inspire and draw the attention of potential collaborators, both within and beyond academia, how to do it, how to track and evidence it.

From there we will aim to strengthen practical capabilities through - providing just-in-time development to individuals and teams seeking early translation support through our internal initiatives, including funding programs. The Research & Innovation Portfolio currently offers the following impact related suite of schemes, with uptake growing year-on-year (nearly 250 applications in 2024, with there being two funding rounds in the same year, and 175 applications by August 2025):

- Strategic Impact Fund (SIF)
- Translation Investment Fund (TIF)
- Innovation Proof of Concept Fund (IPoC)
- Research Translation Fellowship (RTF) Program (new initiative from 2024)

By providing development alongside financial and services support, we hope to incentivise adoption of impact culture and capabilities. In late 2025, a review of internal schemes to support early-stage translation was commenced. This review aims to constructively align culture and capability outcomes with support provided.

These actions have all been developed following consultation and engagement with researchers. They also compliment other training at RMIT, including research integrity training. Some of this training is mandatory, while there are a number that are optional but recommended. Together with impact-related capability development, we aim for societal benefit and integrity to become embedded within RMIT's research culture.

To that end RMIT has established foundational programs to deepen impact culture and capabilities and boost researchers' impact literacy and these programs will continue to be scaled-up.

Action 23 – Athena Swan SILVER Award

Item 23	Achievement and implementation of the Athena Swan Silver Award and associated action plans
Owner	Kay Latham

Timing	Silver Award achievement: 2026 Silver Award implementation: 2026-2032
Status	NEW
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Gender equity Valuing diverse research careers
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Attainment of range of targets set out in the Athena Swan Silver Award action plans

Athena Swan is a globally recognised accreditation and improvement framework that supports universities and research organisations to identify and address systemic gender equity barriers. In Australia, it is administered by SAGE, which oversees the national awards program and supports institutions to drive sustainable cultural and structural change.

RMIT's Athena Swan Silver Award action plans are a coordinated program of evidence-based initiatives designed to address the structural and cultural barriers identified through the University's self-assessment process. The action plans focus on improving career progression for women and gender-diverse academics, strengthening support for parents and carers, creating fairer and more transparent academic workload activities and management, enhancing accessibility and fostering respectful, inclusive cultures. They aim to translate the findings of the Silver Award application into measurable institutional change by embedding equitable policies, practices and accountability across the research environment. For the research community, these actions will help create clearer and fairer pathways to progression, improve retention and participation of diverse talent, support researchers to balance work and caring responsibilities and build a safer, more inclusive culture in which all staff can contribute and thrive.

Action 24 – SAGE GEDI Collaboration

Item 24	SAGE GEDI Collaboration
Owner	Kay Latham / Robyn Barnacle
Timing	Q4 2028/Q1 2029
Status	NEW
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Gender equity Valuing diverse research careers Alignment with old 40 principles: - Gender balance - Career development
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	- Program design, development and delivery: achievement of learning outcomes based on participant satisfaction - Evaluating the impact of GEDI capability training on leaders' ability to effectively lead change: measurable increase in research leaders' GEDI commitment, knowledge and know-how.

SAGE GEDI collaboration (new Action Item #24): RMIT is collaborating with Science Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) on developing, delivering and assessing a training program for higher education and research leaders on promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion (GEDI). Called 'What leaders need to know to take effective action on gender equity, diversity and inclusion,' the project builds on a pilot of the program that was offered in mid-2024.

The program aim is to support leaders seeking to elevate their gender equity, diversity and inclusion capabilities to more effectively lead change. This includes overcoming stubbornly persistent problems such as gender segregation, everyday sexism and racism, subtle bias and discrimination; recognising and addressing covert and overt resistance to equity, diversity and inclusion measures, and; supporting leaders to identify strengths and opportunities for further learning and development.

A research project will take place alongside the training program development and delivery to examine its effectiveness. Project milestone timeliness and participant feedback will be used to measure the success of each phase of the project.

It is anticipated that the research community will benefit through the enhanced capability of research leaders to create more equitable, inclusive and diverse work and learning places.

Action 25 – Working Together with Men

Item 25	Working Together with Men
Owner	Kay Latham
Timing	Q3 2028
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Gender equity Embracing diversity Working conditions, funding and salaries Valuing diverse research careers Continuous professional development Supervision and mentoring Alignment with old 40 principles: - Gender balance - Career development - Value of mobility
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Outcome 1 - Design and implement - a customised gender-based violence prevention initiative for higher education specifically designed to engage male senior leaders <u>Key Measure</u> – 3-year program is designed and completed Outcome 2 – Engaging men senior leaders – themes and data to inform other future senior leader prevention of gender-based violence initiatives Data to be collected · Target numbers for each recruitment – minimum of 10 · Number of sign-ups to the initiative · Number of onboarding interviews · Number that commences program · Data associated with representation across colleges and portfolios, level of seniority and reasons for withdrawal or dis-engagement.

	<u>Key Measure</u> – sharing of data and themes to assist wider gender-based violence initiatives at RMIT <u>Outcome 3 Retention</u> - <u>Key Measure</u> - Retention of the majority of the cohort that commenced each offering <u>Outcome 4 Increase participation</u> - <u>Key Measure</u> – Increased numbers of men commencing the initiative at each offer offering <u>Outcome 5 completion</u> - <u>Key Measure</u> – Majority of men completing the initiative feel more confident to take action for the prevention of gender-based violence in their portfolio at RMIT <u>Outcome 6 Understanding for action</u> – <u>Key measure</u> – Majority of men completing the initiative have a better understanding of actions they can take within their role, as a senior leader to challenge gender-based violence in higher education. <u>Outcome 7 Engaging other men</u> -<u>Key Measure</u> – majority of men completing the initiative report feeling more comfortable to engage other men at RMIT to help make higher education a safer and more inclusive workplace for everyone. <u>Outcome 8 Implementing ideas</u> -<u>Key Measure</u> - Implementation of prevention of gender-based violence improvement ideas – At least 1/4 of completing participants commence implementation of an idea
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Research and the environments where it occurs are complex human spaces. Evidence continues to highlight that there are unique risks, behaviours and challenges associated with gender-based harms and violence in the research setting in higher education.

Considering this complexity, a co-developed 12-month pilot between the Research & Innovation (R&I) Portfolio and RMIT's Prevention and Respect team (Operations – Health, Safety & Risk) commenced in August 2024. The pilot applied The Working Together with Men (WTWM) model, using its unique and evidence-based approach to engage men and their communities to co-create change. Adapting it for the higher education and research context, this pilot attempt was successful and has resulted in a 3.5-year commitment to continue the initiative across RMIT, as a professional development opportunity for male senior leaders (Associate Professor and above) being led from R&I (August 2025 to December 2028).

The WTWM approach and initiative aims to strengthen male senior leaders' capacity for active allyship in the research and teaching environments to support gender equity and prevent gender-based violence and harm.

WTWM is both an internal practice and research project, where senior male leaders are supported through an intensive customised program designed for the higher education and research context. Male senior leaders complete nine immersive workshops that guide them to co-design an "improvement idea" and action plan for them to apply in their immediate work environment. This improvement idea must apply national gender-based violence, gender equity and inclusion frameworks and focus on embedding the idea across their sphere of influence, gathering others and collaborating for change. A key co-design aspect of the WTWM model is the requirement for the ideas to be shared and pitched to an Accountability Panel that consists of women identifying senior leaders across the University and industry subject matter experts. These panellists provide guidance and lived experience expertise to further develop and strengthen the idea for implementation across the research and education setting.

Recruitment occurs yearly, from October through to May, with improvement ideas to commence from second semester of the aligned year they complete the program.

Including the pilot and the current cohort undertaking the initiative, 32 male senior leaders, representing all portfolios here at RMIT have completed and commenced the program between

October 2024 and April 2026. The representation of roles include: DVC, ADVCS, Deans, Deputy Dean's Professors/Associate Professors, Research Hub and Platform Directors.

The initiative recruitment cycle is from August 2025 to August 2028, which will provide three rounds of program in total. Each round gathering a new cohort of men.

- Target recruitment over 3 years – 50-60 senior male leaders recruited to the program
- As per the model, provide 9 immersive workshops per round – a total of 27 workshops
- As per the model, provide intensive one on one mentoring to support senior leaders who are men, to co-design a prevention of violence improvement idea for their area or within their sphere of influence
- 3 key summary reports that capture yearly and overall findings and learnings
- A publication plan associated with the research stream of this initiative on senior leaders who are men, experiences in higher education of allyship and action

Current improvement ideas being implemented and planned for range from lab based professional behaviour quizzes and training, and cross institutional working groups to design and implement gender-based violence prevention decision trees for recruitment of senior research leaders in STEM.

RMIT was approached by University of Melbourne to support and evaluate their adaptation of the WTWM model, which commenced this year (2026). There is significant interest for RMIT to both lead and grow the evidence in this space and guide other higher education institutions to do and learn how to approach this work.

Further reading:

- [WTWM Pilot Summary Report](#)
- [Read original WTWM model resources](#)

Action 26 – Lab Management System

Item 26	Lab Management System: Strengthening RMIT preventive safety culture through leading health and safety indicators:
Owner	Operations: Project Sponsor and Executive Director – Health, Safety and Risk, supported by College and Portfolio's
Timing	Q4 2027
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Ethics and Research Integrity Working Conditions Research Environment Well-being and Safety
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	Strengthening RMIT preventive safety culture through leading health and safety indicators: - % of demonstrated coverage of completed risk assessments for all commissioned research projects - % Laboratory equipment used in commissioned research projects are inspected with evidence of service and calibration to schedule - Actual vs scheduled risk-based laboratory inspections findings are completed on time and corrective actions are escalated and

	resolved through RMIT's health and safety technology – SafetyNow. - >90% completion rate of training and induction records for researchers utilising laboratory space and equipment.
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The Laboratory Management Project is an enterprise-wide initiative that strengthens the existing college governance, safety and assurance framework for laboratory safety by establishing an enterprise-wide approach for laboratory inspection, equipment asset management, training and induction. These measures will improve enterprise-wide visibility of laboratory risks, strengthen safety leadership and assurance, and support safer, sustainable and higher-quality research environments that meet legislative and governance expectations.

The Action Item focuses on elevating how laboratories across the university are managed to ensure they are safe, serviced and reliant, well-governed and consistently monitored. The project also aims to standardise and strengthen the frameworks in place to ensure all personnel involved in working within laboratory spaces and utilising laboratory equipment are appropriately trained, inducted and competent.

This will extend to ensuring that there are clear arrangements in place so that laboratory risks are identified and managed in a consistent way, responsibilities for safety are clearly understood, and regular inspections and assurance activities are undertaken to provide confidence that controls are working effectively.

By doing this, the Action Item supports safer day-to-day research practice, improves oversight of laboratory environments, and reduces the likelihood of preventable incidents.

For the research community, this means safer and more reliable laboratories, clearer guidance and accountability for researchers and supervisors, improved wellbeing, and research environments that better support high-quality, sustainable research outcomes.

Action 27 – Global mobility: AU & EU

Item 27	Increasing the mobility of our researchers by developing a global mobility strategy between Australia and Europe
Owner	Swati Gupta, Marta Fernandes
Timing	Q4 2027
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Free circulation of researchers Career progression Valuing diverse research careers
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	- Easing mobility pathways between Europe and Australia, - Leveraging mobility and collaboration opportunities between Vietnam, Europe and Australia - Enabling mobility linked to strategic partnerships and research clusters - Providing a framework through which to access global career development opportunities - Offering mobility opportunities for researchers at different career

	stages
	- Fostering international research communities

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In June 2025, RMIT launched the Global Mobility Program to facilitate global career pathways for RMIT employees. This service supports staff making an internal, international career move, whether temporary or ongoing. Principally this supports staff who move between Vietnam and Australia; however, it also supports staff who travel to work in our smaller hubs in Spain, China and Singapore. The Program provides practical guidance and support with international relocation issues such as employee welfare, visas and immigration compliance, social security and taxation.

During 2025, RMIT Europe also increased mobility opportunities such as Research Director secondments, academic visiting fellowships, participation in European mobility programs and co-funding schemes, and short-term assignments for RMIT AU staff.

The announcement in March 2026 that negotiations had concluded for the Australia-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) presents further future opportunities to ease mobility pathways under this strategic alliance. As RMIT's European hub in Barcelona, Spain, RMIT Europe is the gateway for European research, industry, government and enterprise to innovation and talent in Australia and Asia. It is therefore well placed to leverage mobility opportunities made possible under the FTA.

Building on these foundations, this work will review and evaluate existing and emerging mobility pathways across researcher, academic leadership and professional staff programs spanning RMIT Australia, Europe and Vietnam. It will also involve consultation with relevant Colleges, R&I, Global Mobility and RMIT Europe stakeholders to inform the development of a coordinated, future-focused approach.

We plan to identify fit for purpose initiatives for mobility between RMIT AU and RMIT Europe by building on the strong foundations of staff mobility already established (as outlined below) and by accommodating the researcher mobility opportunities made possible when the FTA comes into place. This will include developing a phased implementation roadmap that addresses governance, funding, compliance and operational considerations, alongside an assessment of current global mobility frameworks to identify impacts, gaps and opportunities arising from RMIT Foundations and the FTA.

We aim to develop an implementation roadmap that addresses the following strategic objectives to benefit RMIT researchers:

- Consolidate and strengthen doctoral cohort and connections to support research translation and engagement with strategic partners.
- Secure academic leadership across clusters to drive research capacity growth and impactful partnerships.
- Enable access to European research infrastructure to support RMIT researchers based in or collaborating within Europe.
- Facilitate structured secondments from Melbourne and Vietnam to support and deliver partnerships while engaging the local research cohort.
- Revise current global mobility frameworks in recognition of opportunities resulting from the establishment of RMIT Foundations and the FTA when these come into place.

Staff mobility across RMIT hubs: Beyond academic roles, RMIT fosters fly-in-fly-out international assignments for professional and support staff across its global hubs. For example, in early 2026, a Melbourne-based staff member temporarily joining the RMIT Europe research support team, reinforcing cross-hub collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Action 28 – Digital research infrastructure

Item 28	Digital Research Infrastructure Platform establishment
Owner	Mark Easton
Timing	Q4 2029
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Sustainability of Research Contractual and legal obligations Working conditions, funding and salaries
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	How will the Action Item be measured? 1. Develop an operating model 2. Increase in number of users of the DRI Platform (from ~1000 to >2000) 3. Reduction in time for compute provision (from > 6 months to 4 weeks) 4. Clear availability and access to software including reduction in procurement time (from > 6 months to 4 weeks) 5. 10% increase in HDR graduates using DRI 6. Increase in total number of publications using the DRI

Limitations in Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) particularly data management, access to high-performance computing, emerging technologies, collaboration, and researcher support have been identified. Given the national and global shift toward digital-first research environments, and the strategic priorities outlined in RMIT's Knowledge with Action Strategy and Research and Innovation Decadal Aspirations, now is a critical time for RMIT to invest in unified, fit-for-purpose digital infrastructure. In 2024 a digital infrastructure roadmap was developed through extensive consultation with the RMIT research community, which was endorsed by University Executive in February 2025. This initiative aims to directly address sector-wide compliance obligations under the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and unlock research productivity, innovation, and collaboration through a coordinated DRI uplift. This investment addresses the aim by:

- 1 Enabling high-impact research through fast, reliable access to modern compute and storage resources, including on-premise and cloud hybrid systems.
- 2 Supporting compliance with national and international research data standards (e.g., FAIR, CARE, Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research).
- 3 Reducing time-to-insight for researchers by streamlining access to tools, infrastructure, and expert support.
- 4 Increasing research funding competitiveness by offering infrastructure that supports ARC/NHMRC grant compliance, in-kind contributions, and faster outcomes.
- 5 Improving researcher experience and retention, especially for HDRs and early-career researchers, through equitable access to computing resources and training.

Action 29 – Career development & sustained performance

Item 29	Refresh the University-wide performance process based on a philosophy of sustainable career performance and enhance alignment between workload, performance, career, embedding a wellbeing lens.
Owner	Tara Waller
Timing	Q4 2028
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Career progression Career development & advice Continuous professional development
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	- All activities identified in this Action Item are designed, approved and implemented by Q4 2028. - Enhanced support for Academic Supervisors/Line Managers. - Enhanced understanding of RMIT's performance process and academic career pathways. - Measurable increase in Staff Engagement for Academic staff (engagement of 68% and <11% disengagement in 2028 survey results)

The Sustainable Career Performance project (the Project) is a key deliverable of a broader project that seeks to enhance the experiences of academic staff at RMIT. The Project seeks to enhance job quality for all RMIT staff, including researchers, by aligning workload, performance and career, embedding a wellbeing lens to promote long-term sustainability.

Several concurrent activities have informed the Action Item:

- A review of the peer-reviewed academic research was conducted on i) academic workload and ii) sustainable performance to better understand the culture and practices to support sustainable academic workload and performance. The review identified that alignment between workload and performance is important, workload being the inputs of academic work that guides the activities undertaken and performance being the process that measures the outputs or outcomes of the work activities. For performance to be sustainable, staff need to know how to avoid burn-out.
- A qualitative analysis of academic staff feedback in the RMIT Staff Survey 2025 was undertaken regarding the themes of 'workload' and 'performance and career'. It was identified that alignment between performance and career is important to minimise workload associated with applying for academic promotion and to empower academic staff in planning their careers.
- An existing project to enhance the University-wide performance process was paused, presenting an opportunity to review the scope of the project.

The Project will include:

1. Development of a Good Practice Guide for Academic Supervisors/Line Managers to inform academic workload allocation.
2. Review of the Achievement Relative to Opportunity Guidelines.
3. Implement enhancements to the annual performance process cycle and associated change management.
4. Development of an Academic Supervisor/Line Manager Induction and Handbook.
5. Where relevant and appropriate, capability development to support the aims of the Project.

6. Publication of a RMIT Academic Employee Vision, including a cohesive narrative about Academic contributions and career pathways at RMIT.

Action 30 – Uplifting AI capability

Item 30	Uplifting RMIT researchers' AI capability through coordinated training, support and communities of practice
Owner	Mark Easton, Robert Shen
Timing	Q4 2028
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	1. Research culture 2. Career development and advice 3. Continuing professional development 4. Supervision and mentoring
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	1. Establish an institution-wide AI capability uplift offering for researchers, aligned to the Digital Research Infrastructure Roadmap Capability and Emerging Technologies pillars. 2. Develop and publish a coordinated training catalogue that includes: a. foundational digital research skills relevant to AI-enabled research b. discipline-oriented AI training where relevant c. pathways to external partner training and vendor-supported learning. 3. Introduce baseline AI-related capability support for researchers, including guidance on: a. selecting appropriate AI LLMs/tools b. responsible and secure use c. experimentation in sandbox environments d. interoperability between AI tools, cloud, software and data services. 4. Support communities of practice and local champions to strengthen peer learning and diffusion of good practice across colleges and schools. 5. Track engagement and uptake through a defined evaluation framework.

RMIT will implement a coordinated program to build AI capability across the research community, in line with the Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) Roadmap's Capability and Emerging Technologies pillars. The action item will make AI capability development more visible, practical and connected across the University, so researchers can more easily identify appropriate learning pathways, support and tools for their needs. It will bring together existing institutional capability-building initiatives with targeted support for AI-enabled research, including an institution-wide training catalogue, foundational and tailored learning opportunities, advisory support, and communities of practice and local champions. It will also draw on existing capability offered through national and industry partners, including AWS and Microsoft training resources, so that RMIT researchers can access high-quality, contemporary learning opportunities alongside internal support.

A key feature of this approach is that it links training with practical, hands-on access to digital research infrastructure. In particular, RMIT can leverage the RMIT Advanced Computing Ecosystem (RACE Hub), which provides AWS- and Microsoft Azure-oriented cloud and AI services, as a sandbox environment for learning, experimentation and early-stage research use. This will allow researchers not only to learn about AI tools and methods, but also to test them in a supported environment. The program is intended to support researchers at different career stages, from PhD and new users needing introductory pathways, to established researchers exploring discipline-specific or cross-disciplinary applications. It will benefit the research community by reducing fragmentation in training and support, improving visibility of available pathways, encouraging peer learning and collaboration, and broadening access to AI capability development across disciplines and career stages. Over time, this will strengthen RMIT's research environment by enabling more confident and informed use of AI in research, and by helping the University make better use of both its own infrastructure and the training capability available through trusted external partners.

Action 31 – Risk literacy in research

Item 31	Establishing the Global Resilience Office (GRO) and strengthening research security and risk literacy at RMIT
Owner	Philipp Ivanov
Timing	Q4 2027
Associated principle(s) of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers	Ethics and research integrity Freedom of scientific research Open science Continuous professional development
Target(s) / Indicator(s)	- RMIT Research security framework and risk assessment methodology developed, and approved by the University executive by Q4 2026 - Specialised position of Manager, Research Security created and incumbent recruited by Q3 2026 - Global risk and research security literacy content embedded in the existing induction and training programs for researchers and research management staff, and a specialised Research Security Induction program developed and rolled out - At least 20 specialised research security briefings delivered and 40% of researchers cohort reached by GRO - Measurable increase in researcher awareness of research security and broader global risks

RMIT's Global Resilience Office (GRO) was established in early 2026 to help the University manage complex global risks, including research security risks. A core part of the GRO's mission is building the knowledge, skills and confidence of RMIT's researchers and research support staff to recognise, assess, and manage these risks appropriately in their day-to-day activities. This action item commits RMIT to delivering a sustained, institution-wide program of uplifting global risk literacy and providing specialist advisory support for the research community. The program includes: risk advisory and due diligence support to researchers on international collaborators and partners; research security and risk awareness training for priority cohorts (high-citation researchers, HDR supervisors, and research administrators); and communication activities, such as establishing a Global Risk Knowledge Hub; targeted online learning modules, and a network of global resilience ambassadors embedded across colleges and portfolios.