

Thursday 25 November 2021

## **Message from the Interim Vice-Chancellor: Academic judgment casual payment dispute settled**

Hi everyone,

On 21 October, I provided an update on a dispute lodged by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) with RMIT about whether rates of pay were applied appropriately and consistently for a range of assessment tasks undertaken by RMIT's higher education casual academic staff since the commencement of the RMIT University Academic and Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2014 on 3 July 2014. In that communication I gave you my assurance that we would work as quickly as possible to resolve this matter.

Today, I'd like to update you on the status of this dispute and next steps.

I want to firstly reiterate that RMIT absolutely takes its obligations under its enterprise agreements very seriously and is committed to ensuring that employees have received their full entitlements.

Following discussions with the NTEU and RMIT's own investigations, it's clear that to verify that every payment of the "standard rate" has been correct in every instance would be an enormous and very time-consuming exercise requiring the review of tens of thousands of assessments and rubrics across thousands of courses and reconciliation of nearly 100,000 separate timesheet entries and associated pay records.

Such a review process would take several years and represent a source of ongoing uncertainty and potential distress for thousands of current and past RMIT casual academic employees. It would also impose considerable demands on RMIT's existing academic and professional workforce to assess each individual instance.

### **Agreed resolution**

On that basis, RMIT proposed to the NTEU that increasing payments to the academic judgement rate for all marking during this period (3 July 2014 – 1 November 2021) is the most appropriate option. This means that all marking, irrespective of the task performed, will be paid at the higher academic judgment rate.

We consider this the best outcome for our casual academic staff members, who will receive an additional payment without being required to establish any entitlement or wait for an extended period of time for their claim to be assessed.

The NTEU has agreed to this proposal.

We value the contributions our casual employees are making and we apologise unreservedly to any who may have felt undervalued, and for any confusion or distress they may have experienced in regard to this matter.

### **Next steps**

RMIT is confident we have identified every hour paid at standard marking rate for marking across this time period and will be establishing contact with each impacted current or former higher education academic casual staff member using our records.

These communications will provide further details of this matter and when impacted staff members will receive their payment (which will also include interest and superannuation). Payments to current employees are expected to be made by the end of this year and we will provide regular updates to the NTEU on our progress.

RMIT is committed to working with our staff across Schools to ensure a consistent understanding and application of RMIT policy relating to the payments for marking at academic judgment rates.

Further information on the dispute, resolution and next steps is available on the dedicated academic casuals payment dispute page on the [RMIT website](#).

If you have any queries in the interim, we've established a dedicated mailbox that academic casual employees can direct their questions to [academic.judgment.marking.dispute@rmit.edu.au](mailto:academic.judgment.marking.dispute@rmit.edu.au) or you can call 03 9925 5999.

Kind regards,

Dionne Higgins  
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**RMIT University**