



Student-Staff Consultative Committee Representative Manual 2019

Students partnering with staff to shape academic
program improvements

ADVOCATE | COLLABORATE | ENHANCE



Acknowledgement of country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.



Contents

What is a Student–Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC)?	4
Summary of the SSCC terms of reference	4
Student feedback and surveys	5
How survey feedback is collected and used	6
Being an SSCC Representative	7
Advocate, Collaborate and Enhance	7
Benefits and challenges of being a representative	7
Meetings	8
Preparing for meetings	8
Taking part in meetings	8
Course guides	9
Know your course guide	9
Get connected	9
Publicise your involvement.	9
Collect feedback	9
Connect with other student representatives	9
Is it an SSCC issue or a complaint?	10
An SSCC issue	10
A complaint	10
RMIT official complaint process	11
Student rights and responsibilities	12
RMIT Student Charter	12
RMIT Student Union (RUSU)	12
Student Appeals	12
Student Conduct	12
Your Representative to-do list	12
Appendix 1 – Sample SSCC Meeting Agenda	13

What is a Student–Staff Consultative Committee?

If you have opened this manual, you have probably just been nominated as a student representative on your program’s Student–Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC). Welcome!

RMIT University is committed to working with students to improve the quality of the learning and teaching experience. We get feedback from students in various ways, including through the SSCCs.

The SSCCs empower students to give feedback and have real input on how their courses are taught and managed. This includes:

- reviewing whether the program plan has been implemented effectively
- contributing to the quality of the program
- ensuring that the learning environment is student focused and complete

SSCCs provide staff and students a discussion platform through which they can identify areas for future program improvement. They deal with program-related issues, including:

- Course and Program structure
- workload
- teaching methods
- access to resources and facilities
- Information technology
- timetabling
- classes
- administration

RMIT is committed to ensuring that as far as possible, staff ensure that volunteers comprise a representative sample: for example, a mix of genders, domestic and international students. To maximise the employability skills benefit for student representatives, staff participating in the meetings are encouraged to establish a mentoring relationship with student representatives, offering them constructive feedback on their participation in the meetings and performance in their role. Careers and Employability ensures that training for student representatives is provided, including face-to-face training at the start of each Melbourne semester.

IMPORTANT NOTE: SSCCs work with issues and recommendations. They **do not** deal with official complaints or grievances. **See page 10 below for more information.**

Summary SSCC terms of reference

How the SSCC operates

The committee:

- highlights examples of good practice
- monitors the delivery of the program against the program plan
- monitors the delivery of courses against course guides
- monitors the total student workload
- monitors the general satisfaction of students with the program
- considers suggestions for modification and improvement to the program
- considers and seeks to resolve problems that are of concern to students undertaking the program
- makes recommendations to appropriate managers on matters requiring action that the committee cannot resolve directly

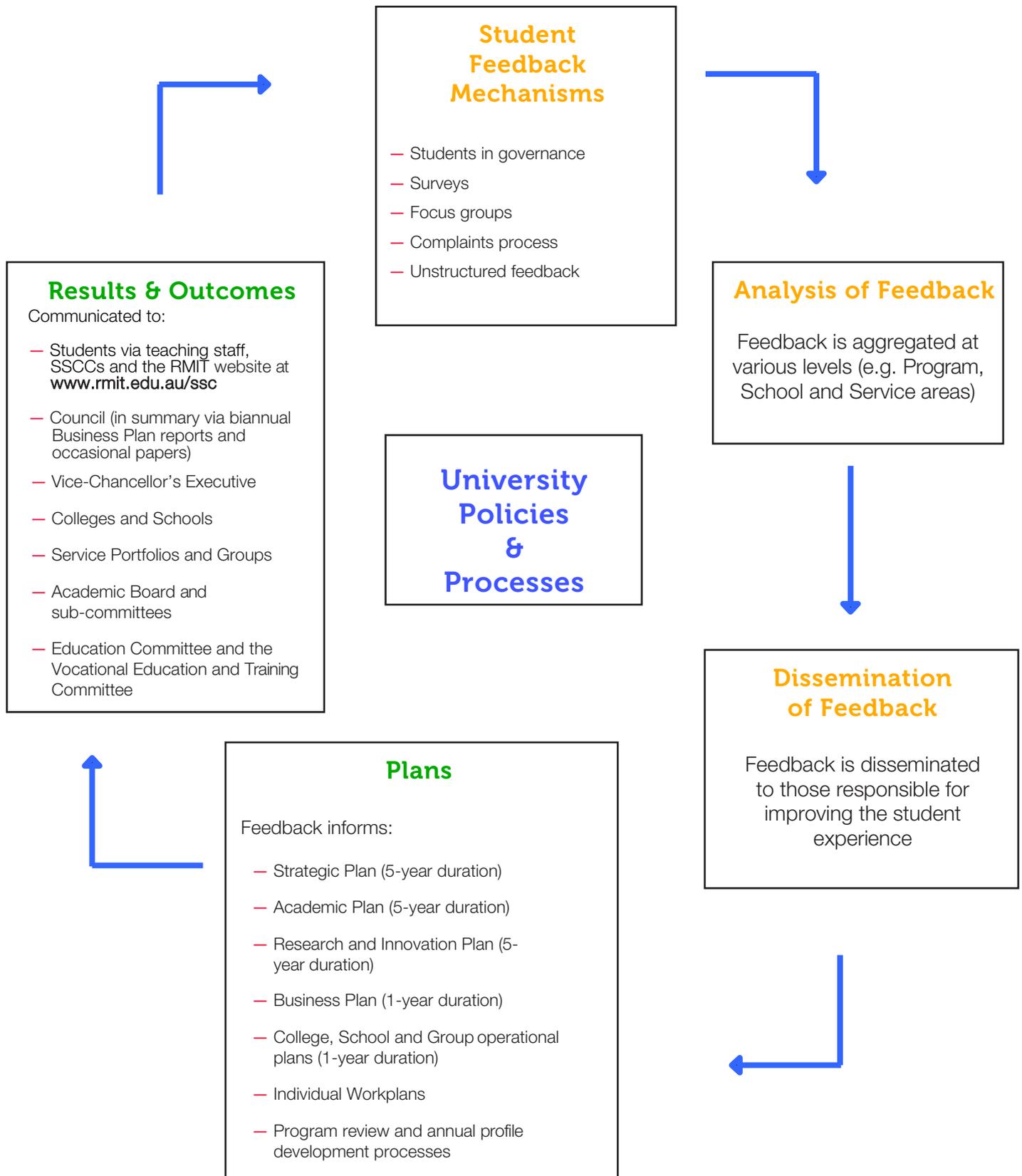
Other useful information

- Committee membership is for one calendar year
- The committee should meet at least twice each semester, with seven working days’ notice given to all members, including the time, place, agenda and papers for the meeting. If appropriate, you can ‘meet’ online in a forum instead of on campus
- Two members of academic/teaching staff and half of the student members are required for a meeting
- Issues raised by student representatives at the meeting are recorded in the SSCC issues/actions log template. The issues/actions log includes all issues raised in the SSCC to date and actions to resolve them. This enables the SSCC to be aware of issues. raised previously and progress with resolving them



Student feedback and surveys

The University has several mechanisms through which the students' views are sought; SSCCs, student representation on academic committees, student surveys and focus groups arranged to consult on specific issues. Together these allow the University to capture students' views about their courses, programs and the services offered on all campuses.



Student feedback improves the student experience

It informs:

- improvements to the design, quality, relevance and viability of programs and courses
- improvements in teaching practice supported by relevant professional development
- the University's approach to reward and recognition including the academic promotion process
- improvements to learning resources, learning technologies and student support services
- enhancements to campus environment and facilities

How survey feedback is collected and used

While studying at RMIT students will have the opportunity to complete a range of internally and externally administered surveys.

Course Experience Survey (CES)

The CES is the University-wide survey of students' views on their learning experience within individual courses. Student feedback through the CES helps the University understand the issues important to students arising from their day-to-day learning and teaching experiences. CES outcomes contribute to course improvement initiatives, as well as staff promotion and teaching award applications.

Student Experience Survey (SES)

The Quality Indicators for Learning and teaching (QILT) including the Student Experience Survey (SES) are administered by the Social Research Centre (SRC) under contract from the Federal Government. The QILT SES focuses on measurable aspects of students' higher education experiences linked to student support, learning resources, learner engagement, teaching and development outcomes.

Learner Questionnaire (LQ)

Quality indicator data is used by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to undertake continuous improvement and by national, state and territory registering bodies to inform the public. Each is measured through the annual Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) collection.

QILT Graduate Outcomes Survey (QILT GOS)

The GOS is a Federal-Government-mandated survey administered by the Social Research Centre that includes questions about students' university experiences and graduate destinations, such as further study or employment, and is administered to undergraduate and postgraduate onshore HE graduates who have completed the requirements of an HE-accredited qualification.

Student Outcomes Survey (SOS)

The SOS is administered by the National Council for Vocational and Educational Research (NCVER) four months after graduation. The SOS covers all VE programs and includes the GTS, the OSI and qualitative comments. Results are distributed to schools, colleges and central groups involved in improving teaching and the curriculum.



TIP: More information on the full suite of RMIT surveys and the survey reports are available via the Survey Services Centre website at www.rmit.edu.au/ssc

Being an SSCC representative

As an SSCC representative at RMIT you

Advocate: providing feedback on behalf of your fellow students to RMIT academic staff about the program you are studying.

Collaborate: with fellow representatives to identify best practice and issues. Work alongside staff to co-design solutions.

Enhance: your academic program by shaping improvements.

Benefits of being an SSCC representative

Being a student representative will help you develop:

- strong advocacy skills
- the ability to manage meetings
- effective collaboration skills
- leadership confidence
- conversational skills
- the ability to problem-solve with peers in a professional environment

It will also give you the opportunity to:

- undertake training
- network with staff
- celebrate your achievements with other representatives and academics in your school
- share your achievements with your classmates



Ready for Life and Work

As an SSCC Student Representative, you will be able to recognise your new skills through the RMIT Future Edge program and highlight these skills to potential employers via your resume and LinkedIn profiles. The experience and confidence you gain on an SSCC may also encourage you to nominate for scholarships and student representative positions on other RMIT committees and boards.

Challenges

There will be some challenges in your journey as an SSCC representative such as:

- connecting with and gathering feedback from your fellow students
- having difficult conversations in professional meetings
- balancing your commitments

The great news is that there's lots of training and support to help you overcome any challenge. Including induction training with fellow representatives, Leadership Summits hosted by RUSU and a variety of workshops through the Future Edge Program. www.rmit.edu.au/future-edge

TIP: Many student representatives have found it useful to undertake a range RMIT Micro-Credentials to support their professional development. www.rmit.edu.au/creds

"I became an SSCC rep to be more involved in my course. It was one of the most engaging experiences of my first year at RMIT.

It gave me the opportunity to network with my course leaders and academics where I presented solutions to improve my program.

SSCC helped me realise how important student voice is in a school or university. It also helped me develop skills and prepared me well to take on the role of RMIT Student Union - Women's Officer for 2019 where I can continue to make a difference for all students."

Beatrice - SSCC Rep 2018
Bachelor of Environmental Engineering

Meetings

One of the most important aspects of your role as an SSCC representative is taking an active part in meetings. The meeting follows formal meeting procedure as this supports development of students' employability skills by familiarising them with meeting procedure. The following basic principles will ensure that your meetings are efficient and effective.

Preparing for meetings

Meetings work better if all the participants are well prepared:

- confirm the time and location
- read the agenda
- follow up any items you are unsure of
- prepare comments and suggestions to raise at meetings
- proactively seek solutions and bring those to their SSCC meetings for consideration

TIP: Check in with the other student representatives on your committee to compare feedback and prepare for meetings.

Taking part in meetings

Regardless of whether a meeting is formal or informal, or what the subject matter is, there are three common features:

- agenda
- chair
- minutes and Actions

Agenda

Having the agenda before the meeting allows members to prepare what they would like to say or research an issue that will be raised. Agenda items may be forwarded to the secretary by members at any time. An agenda should be circulated to all students in the program at least three working days in advance of the meeting including access to the committee action log.

Chair

It is easy to lose direction and run out of time without reaching any decisions. Therefore, it is the role of the chairperson to maintain productive and meaningful discussion, and to make sure everyone has a fair say – but not to control or manipulate the discussion.

Opening the meeting

If you are chairing meetings at RMIT it is best practice to open the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country. The recommended text for the acknowledgement is located **on page 2** of this manual.

Covering all items on the agenda

The chairperson must keep an eye on the time, and summarise the discussion so that participants in the meeting are clear on items of agreement and items of debate. The chairperson should normally restrict their input to the discussion and concentrate on monitoring the state of the meeting. If time runs out, some items will be held over to the next meeting.

Negotiating differences of opinion

Differences of opinion need to be identified, talked about openly and discussed, and resolutions sought. If the participants have tried to find a resolution and still cannot reach an agreement, the chairperson should hold the item over, and move on to the next item of discussion.

Minutes and Actions

Formal meetings include the taking of minutes, which are a record of what's happened in the meeting, particularly the decisions and actions. It's useful to do this to ensure people who don't attend know what happened and are a good way to keep track of action items.

Agendas and minutes of the meeting, using the SSCCs minutes template and the issues/actions log will be made available to all students and teaching staff in the program via Google Drive or SharePoint. Publication of agendas, minutes and the updated action log should be announced to all students in the program, with the URL to the appropriate online location.

Some additional meeting features include:

- Motions are standard practice in some formal meetings, and you potentially will utilise this as an SSCC rep if your group is acting formally and the chairperson feels the need arises. See appendices for more information on motions
- Reports and discussion papers may be used as part of an agenda to help the discussion of certain topics

Being punctual and courteous

You and your fellow committee members are investing your own time into these meetings so here's a few tips on getting the most out of them:

- be on time as much as you are able, to speed up the process
- try and stay on topic and focused throughout the meeting
- if someone is speaking too quietly or you think you may be, just ask and ensure that everyone can hear and understand you
- consider using accessible typeface sizing in presentations or supporting documents
- listen to everyone's point of view, be respectful and inclusive.

TIP: For more information on SSCC procedures please refer to **page 17** of the 'RMIT - Program Review Process'.
www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/documents/about/policy/program-course/program-and-course-review-processes.pdf

Course guides

SSCCs monitor the delivery of courses against course guides. When course guide information is not adhered to, students should raise it with the Course Coordinator and bring the matter to the SSCC meeting if no initial resolution is achieved.

According to the University's course design procedure course guides must be published no later than the first day of the relevant teaching period. The information in the course guide may be supplemented by detailed information on course requirements provided via the RMIT University learning management system - CANVAS.

TIP: It is a good idea to become familiar with your program's course guides.

What should be in the guide?

The importance of a comprehensive Course Guide cannot be overstated. You must know from the first class exactly what will be expected of you. The course guide should contain:

- course title, code and learning outcomes
- total learning hours for the course
- prerequisites and co-requisites
- credit points or (in VE courses) student contact hours
- assessment requirements e.g. assessment task type, weighting allocated to task and due date
- grading system and requirements for the satisfactory completion of the course
- name and contact details of staff responsible for the course, their consultation time(s) and details of tutors /technicians where appropriate
- duration and mode of delivery e.g. online, face-to- face, on campus
- Work Integrated Learning information

Changes to assessment

Sections 2.7 and 2.8 of the Assessment and Assessment Flexibility Policy are outlined below:
2.7 Changes to assessment tasks after commencement of the teaching period can only be made following consultation with affected students and must be approved by the Dean/Head of School. Any such changes must be reflected in the Course Guide.

2.8 The Dean/Head of School may vary the assessment task where they are satisfied that the integrity of an assessment task has been undermined. For information about changes to assessment please refer to www.rmit.edu.au/about/governance-and-management/policies/assessment-policy

Get connected

Publicise your involvement

Let other students in your program know about your SSCC, its function and your role as their representative. Introduce yourself and your position on the SSCC via bulk emails, lecture talks, CANVAS discussion boards or social media.

Collect Student feedback

Collecting feedback from fellow students about your program is an important part of your role:

- Consider the most effective ways of obtaining feedback on an ongoing basis
- Use feedback when you get it
- Ensure that a significant number of students are experiencing an issue with the program before bringing it to the committee

Give feedback to students

Feedback to other students about what the SSCC has been achieved should occur regularly. To do this you may want to use the same channels you do for collecting feedback.

Connect with other student representatives

There are student representatives on SSCCs throughout your college www.rmit.edu.au/students/sscc other advisory and governance committees, and boards around the University, such as:

Academic Board and its committees are authorised by RMIT Council to recommend new programs, academic policies and procedures for VE & HE. See www.rmit.edu.au/about/governance-and-management/academic-board

Academic Club Leaders RMIT has a range of clubs aligned to academic disciplines. These clubs can be a useful network to reach students in your program. Clubs are listed at www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/clubs

College Boards are involved in the planning, monitoring and review of academic programs in the individual college. Check your college website for relevant committees and boards. See www.rmit.edu.au/students/life-and-work-opportunities/student-representation/rmit-committee-student-representatives-training

RUSU is run by students for students. RUSU aims to represent and safeguard student interests and rights in areas including, education and welfare. RUSU is available to support students on SSCCs. See the RUSU reps here www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/2019reps

TIP: Networking with other student representatives can be a way to gain ideas and information based on their experiences as fellow representatives. It can also help you develop solutions to issues within your own SSCC.

Is it an SSCC issue or a complaint?

RMIT recognise students right to raise concerns and complaints about academic, administrative and support services without fear of a negative outcome or reprisal.

However, before lodging a complaint, students should try, if possible, to resolve their concern informally. This may include speaking to a staff member, the Program Manager and/or the SSCC representative. By speaking to their SSCC representative, students may learn that they are not the only person experiencing the same issue or get advice how to proceed.

An SSCC issue

SSCC issues typically focus on program and course enhancements such as:

- Course and program structure
- workload
- teaching methods
- access to resources and facilities
- timetabling
- classes

TIP: An issue is an enquiry, request, feedback or general query in connection with any aspect of RMIT which you have not yet tried to resolve.

An SSCC representative should raise an issue at the SSCC when it has been brought up by several students and when its resolution results in a future improvement in the delivery and/or content of the academic program.

Example SSCC Issue:

A student comes to you, excited after reading a book related to their course. Trouble is, it isn't on part of the course material, but they are convinced it is an exciting new approach for the subject. They are less comfortable speaking with lectures but saw your introduction email and thought to reach out.

Your Action - Get more details, add to the agenda and discuss at the next SSCC meeting

A complaint

Before you lodge a complaint

RMIT acknowledges sometimes things can go wrong and you may be dissatisfied with:

- a decision, action or lack of either of these by RMIT
- the behavior of an RMIT student or staff member

Before lodging a complaint about this dissatisfaction, you should try to resolve your concern informally by contacting the most appropriate area or person within RMIT. This is often the quickest and most convenient way to resolve a concern. If you are unable to resolve your concern informally, you should then consider lodging a complaint.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The RMIT Student Complaints process is student driven. Students may withdraw their complaint at any time. They must take an active role in presenting their case and providing any documentary evidence that may assist with the resolution of their complaint. They can also seek advice from a Student Rights Officer in the RMIT Student Union or contact Student Complaints in the Academic Registrar's Group for advice.

See RMIT Complaints process information www.rmit.edu.au/students/student-essentials/rights-and-responsibilities/complaints

TIP: If a student is unsure where to seek resolution of a non-SSCC issue or where to direct a complaint, they can contact Student Complaints in the Academic Registrar's Group at complaintsadvic@rmit.edu.au or RUSU <https://www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/complaints> for advice and assistance.

Other serious incidents

If you or any student is feeling unsafe or unsure that to do about threatening or unwanted behavior, you can talk to the RMIT Safer Community Team about your concerns and options - even if the behavior happened off campus. safercommunity@rmit.edu.au or phone 03 9925 2396

Steps for dealing with an official complaint

1. Try to resolve your concern informally

Before lodging a complaint, students should try, if possible, to resolve your concern informally. Contacting the most appropriate area or staff member in RMIT will help your concern be resolved as quickly and as soon as possible.

2. Lodge a formal complaint online via RMIT Connect

If your attempt to resolve your complaint informally is not successful, or if you feel there is a compelling reason why it is not appropriate to attempt resolution informally, you can lodge a formal complaint www.rmit.service-now.com/connect/

3. Request an Internal Independent Review

If you are not satisfied with the complaint outcome or think the complaint outcome is unreasonable, you can request a review of the complaint outcome if you are able to show you meet one of the grounds for a review. These are that you have:

- a) evidence of an error in the investigation and outcome; or
- b) evidence that was not previously available and which would have been a significant factor in deciding the outcome of your complaint; or
- c) a compelling argument that the original complaint outcome is unreasonable.

4. Request an RMIT Ombuds Review

If the student has taken these steps, is unhappy with the decision, and is concerned about the process, the matter can be referred

to the RMIT Ombuds for review of the way the complaint has been handled:

The RMIT Ombuds will investigate whether policies and procedures have been properly followed, the complaint has been handled fairly and principles of natural justice have been followed.

The RMIT Ombuds cannot change a decision but, where errors of process are found, can make recommendations that RMIT review the previous decision.

www.rmit.edu.au/ombuds

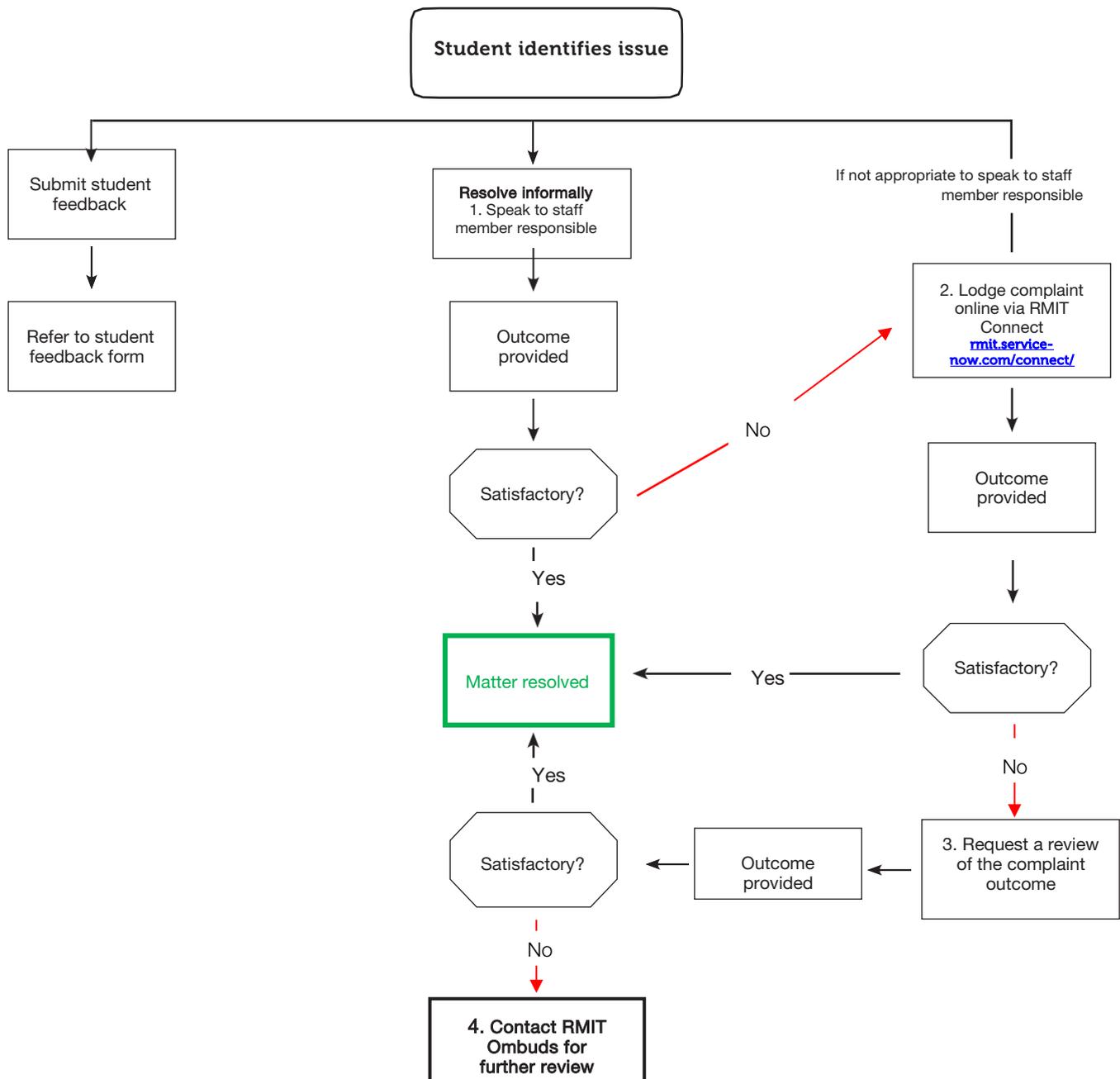
tel. +61 3 9925 2930.

5. Request an external review

If the student is still not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may take it to the Victorian Ombudsman for review www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

These steps are set out in the following flowchart:

Student Complaint Process Flow Chart



Student rights and responsibilities

RMIT Student Charter

The RMIT Student Charter sets out the responsibilities of students and the University and reflects RMIT's core values.

www.rmit.edu.au/students/student-essentials/rights-and-responsibilities/student-responsibilities/student-charter

Student Conduct

All members of the rich and diverse community that is RMIT University are expected to act in a way which ensures a safe and effective learning and working environment. The Student conduct regulations authorise 'senior officers' to take action when there is reasonable evidence that a student may have breached academic integrity or behaved contrary to the values of the University. Further information is available at: www.rmit.edu.au/students/student-essentials/rights-and-responsibilities/student-responsibilities/statement

Student Appeals

The University provides the opportunity for students to seek a review of decisions that impact upon their studies. Further information on College and University level appeal processes relating to final assessment results, termination or exclusion due to continued unsatisfactory academic progress, applications for credit, adjustments to assessment (special consideration, and equitable/alternative assessment arrangements), and College Appeal Committee decisions are available at:

www.rmit.edu.au/students/student-essentials/rights-and-responsibilities/appeals

RMIT Student Union (RUSU)

RUSU provides students with a free advisory service through group information sessions and individual consultations with our Student Rights Officers. Students experiencing difficulties with the University, in relation to their studies, can get information on student rights and access to assistance by visiting www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/studentrights Students can also direct their enquiries to student.rights@rmit.edu.au or phone (03) 9925 5004 to make an appointment with a Student Rights Officer.

As an active, student-controlled body, RUSU has a long history of serving the best interests of students across RMIT and the wider community. It empowers students through various areas, including:

- advocacy and campaigns
- professional development
- volunteering
- information, support and referrals
- campus life
- services for students

RUSU's departments and collectives work together in various public forums, support student representatives on boards and committees at RMIT, and help organise campaigns and social events to improve campus life through positive change. RUSU offices are located at all campuses. For more information, visit www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/contact

YOUR REP TO-DO LIST

- Introduce yourself to your Program Coordinator.
- Get the contact details of your SSCC's Secretary.
- Get the contact details of your SCLO.
- Introduce yourself to your School Student Feedback Coordinator and talk about the Course Experience Survey.
- Introduce yourself to a RUSU's Student Rights Officer.
- Write a short introduction to use share with students in lecture talks, emails or other electronic communications.



Appendix 1

College of Business

SSCC – School of Accounting

Agenda

Meeting

Date

Time

Location

-
- 1. Attendees and apologies**
 - 2. Approval of previous minutes**
 - 3. Actions arising from previous minutes**
 - 3.1. Item
 - 3.2. Item
 - 4. Standing items**
 - 4.1. Examples of good practice**
 - 4.2. Course and Program structure recommendations**
 - 4.2.1. Rationale
 - 4.2.2. Discussion
 - 4.3. Learning and Teaching recommendations**
 - 4.3.1. Content
 - 4.3.2. Delivery
 - 4.4. Assessment and workload review**
 - 4.4.1. Relevance to content and learning outcomes
 - 4.4.2. Rubrics and evaluation
 - 4.4.3. Timing
 - 4.5. Facilities and Technology**
 - 4.5.1. New opportunities
 - 4.5.2. Desired initiatives
 - 4.6. Student Engagement and Work Integrated Learning**
 - 4.6.1. Student satisfaction / Student association activities
 - 4.6.2. Industry visits and opportunities for collaboration
 - 5. Other Business**

Next Meeting

Date, time and location

www.rmit.edu.au

RMIT | Connect & Student Life
www.rmit.edu.au/students/sscc