

RMIT Diversity and Inclusion

CULTURAL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Introduction

RMIT University's mission is to create transformative experiences for students, getting them ready for life and work, and to help shape the world with research, innovation, teaching and engagement.

*(Ready for Life and Work:
RMIT's Strategic Plan to 2020)*

In this Strategic Plan, RMIT affirms its ongoing commitment to 'inclusion' as one of its key values:

RMIT creates life-changing opportunities for all, welcomes students and staff from diverse backgrounds, honours the identity and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, and is an accessible and open institution dedicated to serving the needs of the whole community.

In considering the characteristics of our students, staff, and the communities we serve, Cultural Inclusion is a broad concept that encompasses differences between people such as language, birthplace, ancestry, ethnicity, cultural traditions, societal structures, and religion.

For RMIT to be inclusive of cultural and linguistic diversity, we need to ensure our policies, practices and behaviour support inclusion and equality, and do not perpetuate systemic discrimination or exclusion due to unconscious bias, stereotypes, or other inappropriate assumptions.

Our staff and students

In the most recent RMIT staff survey conducted in 2015, 33 per cent of staff identified as born outside of Australia, which is representative of the Australian population, and 23 per cent of Executive level roles identified as born outside Australia, in line with the University population. The Staff Survey did not identify any major risk with experience of staff born overseas and the staff experience is at par or better than those who were born in Australia.

Of RMIT's 82,000 students, 15 per cent are international students in Australia and 23 per cent are international students outside Australia including at RMIT Vietnam. In the most recently-published data on domestic higher education students, with 7 per cent of students identifying they are from a non-English-speaking background, RMIT exceeds both the state and national average participation rates. 10 per cent of RMIT's vocational education students come from a non-English-speaking background.

RMIT has an explicitly global outlook with a particular focus on Asia, with students, staff, digital networks, facilities and partnerships spread across key urban centres around the world. Through our research, RMIT aims to help to solve complex local, national and global problems, and in relation to our students, we aim to equip them for life and work in a diverse global environment.

A staff and student community that is well equipped to communicate and collaborate effectively with individuals with diverse circumstances and backgrounds supports the achievement of this vision.

Our commitments

Accordingly, this Plan sets out the actions we will take to promote cultural inclusion across the University, and to improve the experience and outcomes of staff and students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The RMIT Reconciliation Action Plan sets out a comprehensive agenda for improving our inclusion of Indigenous staff and students so they are not included in this Action Plan for Cultural Inclusion.

Summary

Key focus areas	Consultation and participation	Organisational culture and leadership	Staff recruitment, retention, development and progression	Student recruitment, support, retention, and outcomes
<p>Actions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve systems and processes to monitor, analyse and report on relevant data, to identify performance and issues, and inform evidence-based Interventions • Consult with CALD staff and students • Facilitate participation of CALD staff and students within decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and promote this Plan and its activities and outcomes. • Communicate our values of cultural inclusion and respect. • Celebrate cultural diversity, including days of cultural significance and events. • Ensure University communications and events (such as conferences) reflect the representation and achievements of diverse staff and students. • Review and if necessary enhance the facilities for religious and cultural observance. • Provide ongoing professional development to build awareness and skills of staff in relation to cross-cultural competence and in eliminating unconscious bias. • Provide appropriate complaints processes, and analyse complaints data to identify issues and further strategies. • Promote RMIT's participation in the Australian Human Rights campaign, <i>Racism. It Stops with Me.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop targets to increase CALD representation at Level C, Level D, Level E, HEW 10 and Executive staff. • Review and where required update staff processes and factsheets to reflect CALD provisions including cultural/ religious leave. • Analyse academic promotion application and success rates (proportionally) by CALD identification and level and develop strategies to improve application and success rates where required. • Leadership and people management practice to demonstrate cultural competence and CALD awareness. • Conduct a comprehensive analysis of University recruitment data by CALD identification with a priority focus on RMIT Vietnam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access pathways to the breadth of RMIT programs. • Increase the value and number of equity scholarships for disadvantaged students of CALD backgrounds. • Provide pre-entry programs to facilitate admission, improve English, gain core knowledge in a new subject area or refresh skills. • Develop staff skills in inclusive teaching and learning, responsive to and reflective of cultural and linguistic diversity. • Provide reasonable adjustments to accommodate individual student circumstances where appropriate. • Enhance academic support services. • Provide a range of non-academic support services and programs to support inclusion and participation in the University community.

Action Area 1: Consultation and Participation

RMIT aims to identify and address issues relating to cultural inclusion for staff and students.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Undertake data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources¹ DVC Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve systems and processes to monitor, analyse and report on relevant data, to identify performance and issues, and inform evidence-based interventions. Collect and analyse CALD data in the 2018 Staff Survey and annual Pulse Survey to inform actions. 	Oct 2016, ongoing
2. Consult staff and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Consult with CALD staff and students to identify issues and to plan, implement and evaluate initiatives.	Oct 2016, ongoing
3. Engage in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Facilitate participation of CALD staff and students within decision making.	Feb 2017, ongoing

¹ If position titles change, these responsibilities will be updated accordingly.

Action Area 2: Organisational Culture and Leadership

RMIT University will promote cultural diversity and inclusion.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Promote a culture of inclusion and valuing diversity, through leadership actions, and communications, events and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Launch and promote this Plan and its activities and outcomes.	Oct 2016, ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education 	Celebrate cultural diversity, including on days of cultural significance and events.	Oct 2016, ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources DVC Education Executive Director, Marketing 	Publish resources to promote inclusive communications, events and positive representations of people from CALD backgrounds.	Oct 2016, ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Property Services 	Review and if necessary enhance the facilities for religious and cultural observance.	Dec 2016, ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources 	Provide ongoing professional development to build awareness and skills of staff in relation to cross-cultural competence and in eliminating unconscious bias.	Feb 2017, ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director, Human Resources, Academic Registrar 	Provide appropriate complaints processes, and analyse complaints data to identify issues and further strategies.	April 2017, ongoing

Action Area 3: Staff Recruitment, Retention, Development and Progression

RMIT University supports the recruitment, retention and progression of CALD staff.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Establish staff targets	Executive Director, Human Resources	Develop University-wide and College/ Portfolio targets for CALD representation at Level C, Level D, Level E, HEW 10 and Executive staff.	Oct 2016, ongoing
		Identify key areas of underrepresentation and implement strategies to increase.	Oct 2016, ongoing
2. Provide appropriate work conditions	Executive Director, Human Resources	Review and where required update staff processes and factsheets to reflect CALD provisions including cultural/ religious leave.	Oct 2016
3. Provide academic promotion processes	Executive Director, Human Resources	Analyse academic promotion application and success rates (proportionally) by CALD identification and level and develop strategies to improve application and success rates where required.	Feb 2017
		Ensure Academic Promotion selection panels are culturally competent, with training and composition to include CALD representation where possible, particularly for Executive level roles.	March 2017, ongoing
4. Build leadership and management skills and expectations	Executive Director, Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed cross-cultural management practices and leadership responsibilities throughout the University. CALD cultural competence and awareness to be connected into the RMIT Leadership Strategy. 	Feb 2017, ongoing
5. Recruit for diversity	Executive Director, Human Resources	Conduct a comprehensive analysis of University recruitment data by CALD identification including number of applications, number shortlisted and number appointed. Analysis to include College and Portfolio data with a priority focus on RMIT Vietnam.	Oct 2016, ongoing

Action Area 4: Student Recruitment, Support, Retention, and Outcomes

RMIT University aims to improve access, and provide an equitable and inclusive experience for students of CALD backgrounds.

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timeline
1. Provide access pathways to the breadth of RMIT programs	DVC Education	Improve recognition of prior learning, including the provision of guidelines and resources for applicants and staff assessing applications.	Dec 2017
		Expand access pathways from vocational education to higher education.	Dec 2017
2. Provide pre-entry programs to support successful transition	Head, School of Education	Maintain pre-entry programs to facilitate admission, improve English, gain core knowledge in a new subject area or refresh skills, with a focus on refugees and new migrants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian Certificate of Education • English language programs • Tertiary preparation programs. 	Nov 2016, ongoing
3. Improve recruitment and retention through the provision of financial and other assistance	DVC Education	Obtain funding to increase number and value of scholarships for students of refugee and/or new migrant backgrounds providing financial and other assistance at commencement and during studies.	Aug 2017
4. Provide inclusive program structure, curriculum design and pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVC Education • Executive Director, Vocational Education 	Provide professional development for teaching staff to enhance awareness and practice in relation to inclusive teaching and the first-year curriculum.	Dec 2016, ongoing
5. Provide reasonable adjustments for individual students in teaching, learning, and assessment	Academic Registrar	Review policy and procedures in relation to special consideration, academic progress, and appeals, concerning faith-based and cultural adjustments.	Dec 2017
6. Support academic and non-academic participation, inclusion and outcomes	DVC Education	Provide a range of academic and non-academic support services and programs to support cultural inclusion and participation in the University community.	Dec 2016, ongoing