

Flexible learning

Library and information education now is all about learning and less about teaching. The content is directly influenced by what industry says is essential, what information workers say they need to know in the workplace and what research shows will be needed in the future for sustainability of the profession. The Information Team at RMIT University are gearing up for flexible learning from a brand new building.

“IT’S ALL ABOUT LEARNING AND LESS ABOUT TEACHING.”

At RMIT University, our Masters of Information Management program is located in the College of Business but in July 2012 the College will move from the 1970s refurbished office building it now occupies to a purpose-built, educationally innovative and environmentally advanced building rapidly nearing completion across the road from the main RMIT campus. The new Swanston Academic Building is just a few steps up the road but academics and students will be stepping into a whole new world of possibilities.

For face-to-face students the rows of fixed benches with PCs wired in and a teacher’s station front and centre are to be replaced by a variety of learning spaces designed to accommodate new experiences for students, now and into the future. Mobile and wireless technology will make every space a learning

space, encouraging socialised learning in a variety of settings including project-based rooms, conversational areas for small group learning, discursive theatres for discussion and debate, lectorial rooms where instructors will lead collaborative learning, large lecture theatres, and interactive theatres and tutorial rooms. The spaces are flexible in their arrangement to promote flexible teaching and learning and wireless access will help students continue their learning in the breakout spaces, cafes, parks and spaces in and around the building.

The new building is all about connecting people – students, academics, researchers and practitioners – and students learning online, remote from the physical campus, will also benefit from the new learning possibilities. Already social media allows online students to interact directly with students on campus both in real time and asynchronously; the lecturers also relate to the online students directly through the recording of each lecture delivered on campus where both student cohorts – present and remote – can be personally addressed. This approach will be enormously enhanced and progressed by the promise of the new building.

So, if you think you know how universities work these days, and you are thinking about returning to study, think again. And consider the possibilities for your learning into the future in the academic world of today.

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I am the author of my own story

“I started my working career as a teacher, but it never felt like the right job for me. I travelled a lot and found myself outside the Vancouver Public Library, thinking that’s what I want to do with my life. I want to work in a place like that! So, I decided to go back to study.

The Master of Information Management provided me with the skills I needed to be both a traditional librarian and a new-generation information professional.

The best part about studying at RMIT is the industry connections. Career days and guest speakers gave me opportunities to meet people, while the work placement really helped to get my foot in the door.

Networking is important for a great career, and RMIT provides you with a perfect place to start.

You might think you can’t change your career, but thanks to RMIT... I am.”

Romany Manuel, Information Services Librarian, Holmesglen (Waverley Learning Commons)

> To learn more about the Master of Information Management phone 03 9925 2260 or email study@rmit.edu.au

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