

## HINTS

- Use the preparation guide as a check list;
  - Do you have all your documentation?
  - Have you seen a Student Rights Officer?
  - Do you understand your case?
  - Have you practised what you will say in front of a friend/family member?

## In the weeks and days before your hearing

- In the days before the hearing it helps to rehearse what you are going to say out loud. The more times you have practised saying something out loud, the easier it will be to say it confidently during the hearing, which helps counteract the pressure of being in the hearing at the time. It's highly recommended that students present their own appeal rather than Students Rights Officers presenting their appeal. It looks much better.
- Have you spoken with a Student Rights Officer (SRO)? RMIT Policies and Procedures can be quite complex. SRO's are pros at preparing for hearings and can not only give you important information for the day but also may see something in your case that you have missed or weren't aware of in RMIT policy. Book an appointment today!
- Make sure you also have a hard copy of all of the meeting papers and documentary evidence. You should have these with you during your hearing so you can refer to them. Even papers you might not think you need could be relevant if someone else brings up something unexpected - and you want to be able to look at the paper they are referring to.
- Make sure you read your appeal completely before attending the hearing. Sometimes Student Rights Officers will make changes to the appeal letter that you need to be aware of. The hearing panel members WILL ask questions from the cover letter and other evidence provided.
- Make sure you've worked out where your hearing will be and know how to get there in advance. You don't want to miss it because you couldn't find the room.

## The day of your hearing

### - Preparation

- It helps to wear nice clothes that show you are treating the process with respect and taking your situation seriously.
- Make sure you allow enough time for things to go wrong on the way to the hearing to ensure you will still get there at least 5 minutes early, because hearings have been known to start without the student present even when the student is only 1 or 2 minutes late. If this happens make sure you enter the hearing room straight away when you get there –it's your hearing and you have a right to be there for it, even if you are late!
- It often helps to have a piece of paper listing the most important points in front of you during the hearing, you can tick these off as you make each point and make sure they are all made by the end of the hearing.

## During the hearing

- Most Hearing panels consist of three members, two academics and one student representative. One Academic will be the 'Chair' or run the hearing. Other people in the room will usually be: A secretary to take notes - only in the capacity of an advisor (providing advice to the panel members) - and a school

nominee to justify the school's decision in the case of an exclusion or appeal against assessment hearing.

- It is important that you present yourself in as calm and confident a manner as possible during the hearing. Take your time to make sure you say everything you need to, and if something is said that is not correct, make sure you correct the record.
- Remember that you have a right to be heard and present all information that is relevant to your case, and the committee is obliged to listen to you and give you enough time to do this. If you get upset and need a break to compose yourself, ask for one.

### **What to expect from the hearing panel (or Chairs)**

- Some Chairs can be reasonable but others can be quite harsh. So it is best to prepare for a harsh Chair, this way that the worst that can happen is you are pleasantly surprised. Overall though the hearing panel want to give you the opportunity to explain your case. No one likes excluding students.
- If you get a harsh Chair, you may need to provide evidence to support all of your statements in order to have them accepted. Even facts that you wouldn't normally think would be questioned may be, so provide as much evidence as possible to back up what you are saying, but don't refrain from something just because you don't have the evidence to prove it.
- Most Chairs will allow you to present new evidence at the hearing itself, though it is always best to email this to the secretary as much ahead of time as possible, and bring 6 hard copies with you to the hearing as well (1 for each of the panel members and the secretary, 1 for any school representative and 1 for you to refer to).
- Most Chairs will advise you that the committee has already read the papers you have submitted and therefore you do not need to go over the details in them again. However, sometimes it has been some time since they read the papers, and you have no way of knowing how fresh in the minds of each panel member your information is, so it is always best to go over the important points in your papers verbally during the hearing.

For more student rights information visit our website: [www.su.rmit.edu.au/student-rights](http://www.su.rmit.edu.au/student-rights)

For additional assistance drop into or call a Student Union Front Office to speak with a Student Liaison Officer;

City Higher Ed: Building 8, Level 3 .....ph: 03 9925 5004

Tivoli (Business): Building 108, Level 3 .....ph: 03 9925 5647

Carlton Campus: Building 57, Level 4 .....ph: 03 9925 4769

Brunswick: Building 514, Level 2 .....ph: 03 9925 9478

Bundoora: Building 204, Level 1 .....ph: 03 9925 7226

Or, send detailed information regarding your case to [student.rights@rmit.edu.au](mailto:student.rights@rmit.edu.au)

If required, an appointment will be made for you with a Student Rights Officer.

*This Student Rights Letter Template series is brought to you by the RMIT University Student Union (RUSU) Welfare and Education Departments and your Student Rights Officers.*