

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. SROs 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 final appeal submission completely before attending the hearing so you are familiar with all the content. 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 five minutes early. If you are 10-15 minutes late the chair will usually attempt to phone you, but it's best not to let it get to that stage. Plan ahead and map out your journey before the day of the hearing.
- 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)

- Remember that the hearing panel want to give you the opportunity to explain your case. No one likes excluding students. At the same time some Chairs ask more questions than others or want more supporting information, so it's important to prepare for any eventuality.
- In some cases 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 six hard copies with you to the hearing as well (one for each of the panel members and the secretary, one for any school representative and one 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.

Disclaimer:

The information in this leaflet is a general guide only. RMIT is a very complex environment, and there are often a number of different rules which apply.

For more student rights information visit our website: www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/studentrights

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

Call RUSU: **9925 1842**

or

email: student.rights@rmit.edu.au

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