



RUSU QUEER DEPARTMENT SAFER SPACES AGREEMENT

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**RUSU**  
RMIT UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION



# **RUSU Queer Department Safer Spaces Agreement**

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

The RUSU Queer Department acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the 'Woi wurrung' and 'Boon wurrung' language groups whose land RUSU Queer Lounges reside on. We also show respect to their elders of the past, present and emerging leaders. With extended acknowledgements to the Queer identities and spirits amongst them, that have been present throughout Indigenous history.

The RUSU Queer Department also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

## **Purpose**

People come to RMIT from many different backgrounds and not everyone has had access to spaces where they can be themselves and feel safe.

The purpose of this Agreement is to create a community space which is as safe and supportive as possible for all people who identify as queer, LGBTQIA+ or questioning. This is a collaborative effort, requiring a commitment from everyone.

## **Definitions**

This Agreement applies to 'RUSU Queer Spaces'. These include the RUSU Queer Lounges at all campuses, RUSU Queer Department Events, RUSU Queer Collective meetings and online spaces hosted by the RUSU Queer Department (e.g. RUSU Queer Facebook Group)

## **Aims**

1. To help provide a safer space for queer, LGBTQIA+ identifying and questioning students in which to generate self-esteem, awareness and acceptance of queer and questioning students on campus
2. To remind individuals that creating a safer space is people's own responsibility, as well as the responsibility of the people around you with the help of the Queer Officers
3. To remind individuals that words, body language, actions, and behaviours affect other people and make them feel hurt, excluded, disempowered or invalidated
4. To ensure that the space remains accessible and inclusive to all those who identify as queer, LGBTQIA+ or are questioning
5. To remind individuals to be respectful of other people's personal boundaries; and
6. To work preventively to try and make sure that everyone is able to enjoy the space and community as much as possible.

## Safer Spaces Agreement

By using RUSU Queer Spaces, you acknowledge that:

- The RUSU Queer Lounge across all campuses is an alcohol and drug-free space
- You will make sure RUSU Queer spaces are comfortable for everyone. This includes being mindful of noise levels, keeping the space clean and using respectful language.
- Contribute to a culture of respect and use respectful language when talking about other people using the space.
- You will always seek consent before engaging in any physical touch, starting potentially emotional conversations or filming or photographing people in the space.
- The RUSU Queer Lounge is a public space and any sexual activities are prohibited in this space.
- You will not 'out' people without their permission.
- You will respect people's identities, experiences, beliefs, religions and cultures. You will not engage in behaviour that is racist, sexist, ableist, transphobic, biphobic, acephobic, lesbophobic, homophobic, body-shaming, classist, anti-sexwork, anti-refugee or otherwise perpetuates oppression. Many students encounter ideas they had never considered before in this space, and it is important to consider these respectfully and with an open mind, even if you don't understand something.
- Try not to assume or invalidate people's identities. For example, you will not assume someone is a particular gender because of the way they look, or what gendered words or pronouns they are comfortable using. Always ask if you don't know, but respect that not everyone will always want to answer.
- You will respond with active listening if someone calls out your behaviour. Even if you don't always agree, it's important to check, ask and listen when someone else tells you that you've done something oppressive or crossed a boundary. We're all here to learn, rather than argue.
- You will participate in grievance procedures as necessary should they arise. We can only create a safe space if everybody takes responsibility for their words, actions and behaviours. At times, this might mean being involved in mediated discussions to help resolve a dispute.

## Grievance Policy

- RUSU Queer Department strives to be, first and foremost, a safer space with a focus on learning. As such, our goal is for grievances to be handled in a compassionate, understanding way with a focus on education and mediation.
- This grievance procedure aims to help clarify how you can seek support to resolve a situation or a concern about people's adherence to the Safer Spaces Policy.

## Procedure

- Should you feel that someone is in breach of the Safer Spaces Agreement, please contact a RUSU Queer Officer. If you do not wish to contact a RUSU Queer Officer, or should you feel there is a conflict of interest, for example, if the grievance relates to the RUSU Queer Officer, please contact a RUSU Student Liaison Officer.
- Every attempt will be made to ensure your anonymity. However, there are limited examples when RUSU may not be able to keep a complaint anonymous. For example, legal responsibilities with regards to underage students or criminal behaviour are exempt from anonymity. Safety will be placed first and foremost.
- If an individual disregards the Safer Spaces Agreement, they may be issued with a warning. Should any individual disregard a warning, they will be regarded as making the space less inclusive for others and appropriate action will be taken. This may include mediation and/or involvement of the RMIT Safer Community team. The RUSU Queer Officers in consultation with the President and General Secretary are empowered to exclude individuals who repeatedly refuse to comply with this Agreement.
- RUSU Queer Department has a zero tolerance policy regarding physical threats, sexual assault, sexual harassment and all forms of abuse. If you perpetrate any of these behaviours, you will be excluded from the space without exception. This is inclusive of the associated online spaces and events. We may be required to report behaviour to relevant bodies such as RMIT Student Conduct or to the police in certain circumstances.
- If there is a sufficiently severe incident the warning phase may be skipped, and may instantly lead to mediation or expulsion from safer spaces.
- **If at any point you feel unsafe in any RUSU Queer spaces, please contact the Safer Community Team [safercommunity@rmit.edu.au](mailto:safercommunity@rmit.edu.au) (9am – 5pm service) or Campus Security. If there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be called 000**

## RUSU Info Counter Contact

### RUSU City Campus

RMIT Building 12, Level 4  
Monday to Thursday, 9.00am – 4.00pm

### RUSU Bundoora West Campus

RMIT Building 202, Level 2  
Tuesday to Thursday, 9.00am – 4.00pm

### RUSU Carlton Campus

RMIT Building 57, Level 4  
Monday to Thursday, 9.00am – 4.00pm

### RUSU Brunswick Campus

RMIT Building 514, Level 1  
Monday to Wednesday, 9.00am – 4.00pm