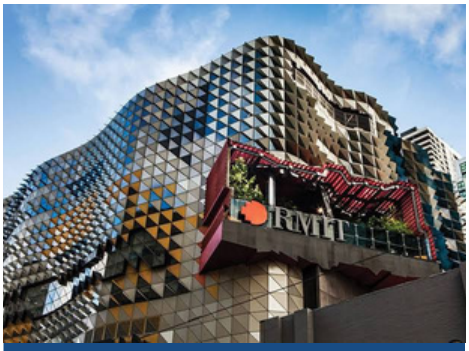
TERRADOTTA

RMIT UNIVERSITY



HOW RMIT UNIVERSITY IS MODERNIZING GLOBAL PROGRAM OPERATIONS



Summary

NAME:
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)

LOCATION:
Melbourne, Australia

 # OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

- 104,000+ students across Australia and Vietnam
- 20% of international students from 194 nationalities

RMIT University operates on an extraordinary global canvas. Headquartered in Melbourne, Australia, the dual-sector institution serves more than 104,000 students across four academic colleges, 16 academic schools, and international branch campuses in Vietnam. Its global learning portfolio reflects this vast footprint, encompassing traditional bilateral exchanges, faculty-led study tours, and complex cross-campus mobility pathways connecting Melbourne with RMIT Vietnam. To support such an intricate ecosystem, RMIT relies on one of the most sophisticated system architectures in the Asia-Pacific region.

The university has been a dedicated Terra Dotta client since 2015. For nearly a decade, the platform provided a steadfast, reliable operational foundation. Over time, the office's administrative workflows became anchored to legacy habits. The classic interface functioned reliably, which unintentionally fostered deep institutional muscle memory.

When Philippa Scott, Manager of Global Learning, took over responsibility for RMIT's Terra Dotta environment in 2024, the timing was right to unlock new opportunities. With support from the Dottan Desk team, RMIT began modernizing its workflows while preserving the institutional knowledge and processes that had served it well.

Set & forget

application triggers replacing term-by-term reminder rebuilds

Self-service

program search by major and destination, so students start with real options

Tailored

staff permissions give academic colleagues direct access to relevant student information



To turn big-picture goals into practical progress, RMIT worked with Terra Dotta's Enablement team through Dottan Desk, a dedicated consultative service.

Opportunities

200+
exchange partners across Europe, Asia, and North America

100+
academic programs

100+
clubs, societies and collectives

16
academic schools

4
academic colleges

Finding momentum through structured enablement

Shifting long-standing administrative habits while managing active student mobility cycles can be daunting for any higher education office. To turn big-picture goals into practical progress, RMIT worked with Terra Dotta's Enablement team through Dottan Desk, a dedicated consultative service. A standing one-hour weekly meeting gave Scott and her team the protected time, accountability, and technical support they needed to modernize their environment. Instead of trying to change everything at once, the Dottan Desk team helped RMIT build a phased roadmap, set realistic agendas, and steadily remove operational bottlenecks.

Working alongside Terra Dotta's specialists, Scott described the change process in a way that made it feel familiar and real. She often compared the transition to switching from a Japanese car to a European car: the windshield wipers and turn signals are on opposite sides, and the first few times behind the wheel, a driver instinctively reaches for the wrong lever. Breaking years of muscle memory takes patience, but once the brain adapts, the modern vehicle delivers a much better ride.

Empowering students through intuitive discovery

The first milestone was simple: make it easier for prospective travelers to find what they need. Before, RMIT's legacy student view forced applicants to dig through nested links to find requirements and submit materials, while Program Discovery sat unused.

That meant students often came to staff with broad questions about which of the university's 200+ partner institutions fit their degree. Advising teams spent too much time on basic questions instead of deeper coaching.

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With Terra Dotta's support, RMIT launched a modern student portal and turned on Program Discovery. Now applicants can see a clear checklist of what is done and what still needs to be submitted. They can also search programs by major, country, and term, so they arrive at advising appointments with a short list of options and staff can focus on readiness, preparation, and personal growth.



Transitioning to automated, status-driven engagement

Behind the scenes, Scott wanted to free her team from the tedious upkeep of term-by-term communication rules. Working with Dottan Desk, RMIT retired its fragile query watches in favor of Terra Dotta's automated Application Triggers.

Application Triggers link messages directly to real-time status changes. Instead of staff manually building queries each term to follow up with applicants, the system sends helpful guidance as soon as an application moves to a new stage.

"**It is set and forget, which is such a big win for the team and their workload,**" says Scott.

The result is a more reliable administrative safety net. Important messages, application alerts, and next-step instructions now move through automatically, with less manual oversight. The workflows help keep communication consistent across cohorts and reduce the risk of students slipping through the cracks during busy application periods.

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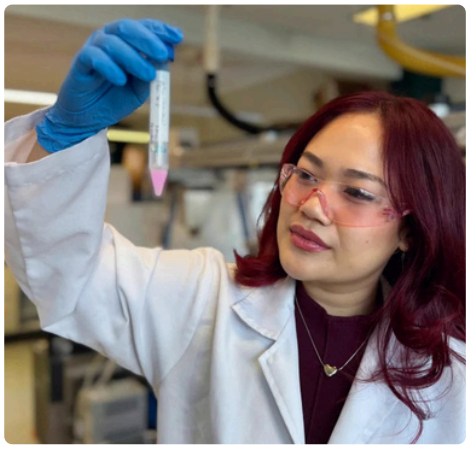
Breaking down institutional silos with role-based access

One of RMIT's most effective improvements was extending Terra Dotta beyond the Global Learning Office, enabling academic faculties to work with it more easily.

Before that, academic administrators had little visibility into the system and often had to contact the global office to check where a student was in the approval process. RMIT addressed this by creating a search-only staff role in Application Finder and running training for faculty administrators.

Now, academic staff can look up applicants, review documents, and check past transcripts on their own. That extra visibility has made the study abroad process clearer, faster, and easier to navigate across campus.

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Paving the path for data-driven retention

With modern front-end navigation, automated communications, and cross-campus staff permissions fully embedded, RMIT is preparing for its next operational evolutionary step: turning on Terra Dotta's Deployment Rules. These rules will automate complex condition-based workflows across future application cycles, systematically assigning requirements and retiring spreadsheets from daily office routines once and for all.

Looking beyond operational efficiency, the team is channeling its newly reclaimed capacity toward strategic student outcomes. Like many large global education operations, RMIT navigates a drop-off, losing roughly 60% of students who initially express interest in semester-long exchange programs between application initiation and departure. "A view for the future is that we will have a better way to survey the students we lose, and why," Scott notes.

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Historically, tracking why candidates stepped back was based largely on informed intuition, whether prompted by academic eligibility hurdles, destination preferences, or the financial realities of international living costs. By combining automated withdrawal triggers with targeted feedback surveys, RMIT intends to capture precise data on why students withdraw.

These insights will empower the Global Learning team and their colleagues across the Engagement Portfolio to develop targeted interventions, offer clearer financial guidance early in the search process, and support more students through to departure.

For institutions managing international education at scale, RMIT University illustrates the transformative power of modernizing established systems. By replacing manual routines with automated workflows and operational silos with shared access, RMIT has built an agile, student-centered global mobility framework built to thrive for years to come.



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