Institutional Research Update – What’s New
July 2004

This is a bi-monthly update, which presents latest research and scans findings from the Institutional Research Consultancy Unit (IRCU). The May update and previous editions as well as IRCU’s newsletter ‘iresearch’ are available online. These updates and newsletters provide a highlight of significant developments in the arena of post-secondary education:

http://www2.rmit.edu.au/departments/planning/ircu/ircu_home.php

- **Industry Toolkit** – The IRCU has prepared a toolkit to provide guidance to people who require access to information on industries, occupations and employment outcomes when considering program renewals, development of new programs or profile issues. The information is presented as Frequently Asked Questions to direct users to the sites of most relevance. This industry toolkit complements the environmental scanning guide prepared by the IRCU last year.

  http://www2.rmit.edu.au/departments/planning/ircu/industry/industry.php

- **CEQuery: Qualitative Comments** - The IRCU has prepared reports on the analysis of the open-ended comments made by graduates about the best and worst aspects of their programs. This analysis was made possible by the development of a software package (CEQuery), which allows for the detailed and systematic analysis of the qualitative comments contained in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). This software has been made available, free of charge, to all Higher Education institutions by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA). The report (presented at portfolio level) and the software are available at


- **Student Progress** – The IRCU has undertaken an analysis of performance for higher education enrolled students by drawing a comparison of performance ratios between different student cohorts over the past three years. The generation of such analyses has largely been automated and will be easily replicated year after year. This analysis is the first stage of a more extensive research being undertaken which would enable comparative trend analysis of student performance. A summary report is available upon request.

- **VET Alignment** – Information about the research undertaken by the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) in relation to the development of a new strategy to establish strategic directions and priorities for VET in Victoria can be found at the IRCU website.


- **VTAC Analyser** – Work is currently underway to update the interactive web-based tool developed by the IRCU that enables analysis of university and TAFE applicants. Data for 2003/04 applicants was recently made available to institutions. The update will include information about secondary school last attended; program preference, ENTER score, fee type, category of selection and other useful variables. There are two components to the tool: specific information about RMIT programs and inter-institutional comparisons. Information and training sessions will be organised for late August.


- **International Student Survey** – The IRCU has taken up an invitation from Tufts University in Boston, USA to collaborate with several other institutions in the USA and Europe on a study of International Student Life. This study will provide feedback, which RMIT has not previously had available, from over fourteen hundred of our own international students from Higher Education, TAFE and Foundation Studies. Initial results from RMIT’s online survey of its international students, which is currently being conducted, should be available during September, with a fuller report later in the year.

- **ATN Statistical Profile** - In 2003, IRCU developed a series of institutional statistics of the five ATN institutions for the new ATN website. In addition these statistics provide a point of reference against the higher education sector as a whole. This year the IRCU is updating and expanding this work to include the latest statistics in an improved format. The wide-ranging statistics cover student enrolments and load split by key variables, program completions data,
Future Demand for Vocational Education and Training – This scan provides a summary of key issues, and areas of interest for RMIT, arising from a report prepared in 2004 by Access Economics for the Department of Education, Science and Training. The report has a forecasting model for VET demand. VET in Victoria is predicted to grow by 1.7% per annum for 2003 to 2010, somewhat lower than other states.


Inquiry into the Impact of the High Levels of Unmet Demand for Places in Higher Education Institutions on Victoria – The Victorian Parliament conducted the inquiry last year and the report was recently released. The IRCU’s scan presents the key findings and recommendations of the Inquiry and discusses possible implications for RMIT.


Qualification by Industry and Occupational Categories – In preparation is an analysis that highlights changes in the qualifications profile of employees in Australian industry and occupational categories in more recent years. The analysis is designed to indicate areas of the economy that are shifting their requirements for education and training.

Education and Training Needs of People Aged 45 and Over – In preparation is an environmental scan that identifies economic and demographic changes in Australia that will influence demand for VET training by the older workforce, which is growing rapidly and becoming more important in the labour market.

Backing Australia’s Ability II – In May 2004 the Federal Government released mark II of Backing Australia’s Ability II: Building our Future through Science and Innovation, which now extends out to 2010. The IRCU prepared a briefing note on the government’s statement and its likely implications for RMIT.


Reframing the Future – The IRCU received funds from Reframing the Future for a project on strategic management and change-management. Reframing the Future is a major initiative of the Australian National Training Authority. Its aim is to assist in building the capacity of the Australian VET sector to facilitate the achievement of a national training system. The goal of the sub-program, on strategic management and change management, is to enable VET managers to develop new skills in strategy making and strategy-implementation so that their organisations become high performing in responding to the needs of the national training system. More details of the IRCU’s project are forthcoming.

About the IRCU
The main function of the IRCU is to coordinate the collection, organisation and analysis of institutional data and other quantitative and qualitative information to support institutional management, operations, decision-making and planning functions of RMIT University.

The IRCU is also engaged in applied educational research, performance measurement, evaluation and assessment; and is proactive in the study and advancement of higher education. For more information contact us on 9925 9705, email ircu@rmit.edu.au, or visit the website:
http://www2.rmit.edu.au/departments/planning/ircu

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