EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the face of dynamic changes in the research landscape, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University used SciVal® to continuously innovate its research policies. The Australian university has since gained a better understanding of its research performance and is today, directing its efforts with more clarity whilst encouraging collaboration.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Situated in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RMIT is a global university of technology, design and enterprise. RMIT is one of Australia’s original educational institutions and most internationalized institution. It has garnered an excellent international reputation in professional and vocational education, as well as in the fields of applied research and engagement with industrial and community needs. To overcome changes in the research landscape and internal reforms, RMIT used SciVal for the insights it required to chart out effective policies for the future.

Mr. Angel Calderon, Principal Advisor, Planning and Research, RMIT, used the solution to:
- Benchmark RMIT’s research standards accurately against institutions worldwide
- Gain actionable insights to craft and execute research policies for the future
- Potentially improve RMIT’s standing by promoting global research collaborations

BACKGROUND

RMIT is an Australian public university of technology, design, and enterprise based in Melbourne. It specializes in applied research as well as outcome-related research and consultancy services.

Its areas of focus include design, technology, health, globalization and sustainability. These efforts are spearheaded by RMIT’s large pool of research resources, consisting of nearly 30 research centers within its colleges and schools, and a number of smaller research groups. To ensure that its curriculum and research are relevant to today’s issues, RMIT partners extensively with the Australian government and the wider industry both nationally and internationally.

RMIT is ranked 273th globally by QS World University Rankings. It is also ranked 16th in the world for Art and Design, 36th in Architecture / Built Environment and is in the top 100 universities globally in: Engineering - Civil and Structural Electrical and Electronic, Mechanical; Business and Management studies and Accounting and Finance.
RMIT had to uphold its international reputation in the midst of massive changes, both internal and external.

**CHALLENGE**

The globalization of education has made the research landscape more competitive. Universities today are expected to have higher standards of internationalization in order to secure a better place in the communities and jurisdictions they serve. “In the face of intense competition, there is an urgent need to differentiate our research capabilities from other institutes. Gone are the days of research departments working in isolation on a single topic. Instead, the attractiveness of a research endeavor or researcher is now heavily determined by levels of collaboration and cross-referencing,” Mr. Angel Calderon, Principal Advisor, Planning and Research, RMIT, explained.

RMIT also went through several institutional reforms, which made the task of tracking and coordinating research initiatives more complex. “We have become one of the largest and most internationalized institutions in the world. RMIT has physical sites in cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, as well as Barcelona in Spain. On top of that, RMIT’s curriculum covers not only higher education, but also the professional education sector. The wide-ranging dynamics of these different schools and programs present an excessive number of moving parts for our research planning and assessments,” Mr. Calderon said.

**SOLUTION**

“Elsevier provided a complete and deeper picture of what is happening on both an international and local level. The solution helped analyze research activities from different countries and environments to give us insights that led to better policies.”

- MR. ANGEL CALDERON, Principal Advisor, Planning and Research, RMIT

In light of the situation, RMIT required a solution that allowed it to understand and respond to the changing dynamics in the research landscape. The university implemented SciVal to meet these needs. The solution offers the university access to the research performance of 7,500 institutions and 220 nations worldwide. It allows Mr. Calderon and his team to:

- Assess all areas of research performance for the university
- Analyze trend data to compare institutional performance, on a discipline basis
- Benchmark against a number of peers as well as competitor institutions
- Gain visibility into academic staff productivity by analyzing publications and citations data with external data
- Assess the performance of researchers relative to peers and conduct scenario modelling for recruitment and retention
- Integrate SciVal research metrics such as citation count and scholarly output, with data from other sources such as enrolment – to make better, informed decisions

Elsevier Research Intelligence
With SciVal, RMIT is equipped with the tools to direct its global research efforts optimally.

The use of the solution has helped the university develop targeted strategies for improvement. For its various colleges and schools, the tool has been a useful asset for identifying gaps to fill in terms of research publications. SciVal has also raised awareness of opportunities for future collaborations with other institutions across disciplines and geographies.

Mr. Calderon explains that the solution has been integrated seamlessly with the existing Scopus® database to provide a broader panorama of the research landscape. And by combining external data and SciVal, there is now the opportunity to undertake more detailed analyses and to better cross-reference against other institutional indicators, like research outcome, total income and doctorate completion.

Ultimately, SciVal further boosts RMIT’s opportunities in improving its reputation. It has assisted Mr. Calderon in initiating cross-institutional discussions to elicit strategies in improving research performance, a critical factor in global and regional university rankings.

“The solution has empowered me with the necessary information to facilitate collaboration with peers from other countries. For instance, I incorporated data such as discipline strengths from various institutions, researchers and national systems in Latin America for various conferences in the region. I was able to speak on their own terms and discuss opportunities and internationalization strategies with other researchers,” Mr. Calderon said.

“SciVal allows us to bridge the gap between planning and reality. It is an invaluable advisor for correcting any misperceptions we might have about our own research, in order to adopt a consistent, evidence-based approach to planning and executing institutional policies.”

- MR. ANGEL CALDERON, Principal Advisor, Planning and Research, RMIT
Mr. Calderon created a custom group of Latin American countries in SciVal and used it to analyze their areas of collaboration. Identifying areas of mutual benefit to strengthen can have spill-over effects beyond education and research, such as increased flows of trade between both countries in terms of merchandise and services.

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- MR. ANGEL CALDERON, Principal Advisor, Planning and Research, RMIT
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