

Student Rights Officer (Higher Degree by Research)

Position No.

Organisational Unit Advocacy Welfare Team

Location Based at RMIT City Campus but will be required to travel to and work from other RMIT metropolitan Melbourne campuses as required.

Classification SUE 5

Salary \$91,173 Full time equivalent (\$ 72,938 for 0.8 FTE) + Superannuation

Superannuation UniSuper or other as indicated by Incumbent

Employment Type **Permanent Part time** - 0.8 FTE (56 hours per fortnight).

Other Benefits RMIT University Student Union employees are covered by an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

Current Occupant Vacant

Closing Date **9am, Tuesday March 9, 2021**

Contact Chris Sedgman email chris.sedgman@rmit.edu.au

Advice to Applicants Applicants **must include a letter specifically addressing the selection criteria** (as outlined on page 5 of this Position Description) and provide a detailed curriculum vitae with 2 professional referees by the closing date. **All applications should be sent via email to rusu.jobs@rmit.edu.au by the closing date 9am, Tuesday March 9, 2021.** Late applications will not be accepted.

About the RMIT University Student Union (RUSU)

The RMIT University Student Union (RUSU) is the representative body of around 75,000 RMIT University students and is an independent organisation from RMIT University. RUSU has an annual operating budget of over \$4 million and employs over 25 paid staff members and 20 student casuals. It is governed by 27 elected student office bearers, most of who receive an honorarium. RUSU's main offices are in the CBD; however, we operate offices and provide services on outlying campuses in Bundoora and Brunswick.

RUSU represents students' interests and undertakes a vast range of activities that enhance and foster an active and informed student life on campus. This is done through:

- The provision of student information and referral services.
- Undertaking campaigns, education and training programs, forums and workshops, including the promotion of student welfare, advocacy and student complaint resolution.
- Providing a diverse range of social and cultural activities and free food events
- Coordinating a wide range of student clubs
- Providing a professional volunteer program for RMIT students.
- Operating RUSU Realfoods – ethical, sustainable, plant-based cafes.
- Producing student publications, operating a TV production house and maintaining a website/social media presence.

All staff and student representative positions are required to operate within the parameters of the Student Union Constitution, Regulations, Policy and the staff Enterprise Agreement. All staff are supervised and directed by the annually elected student representatives.

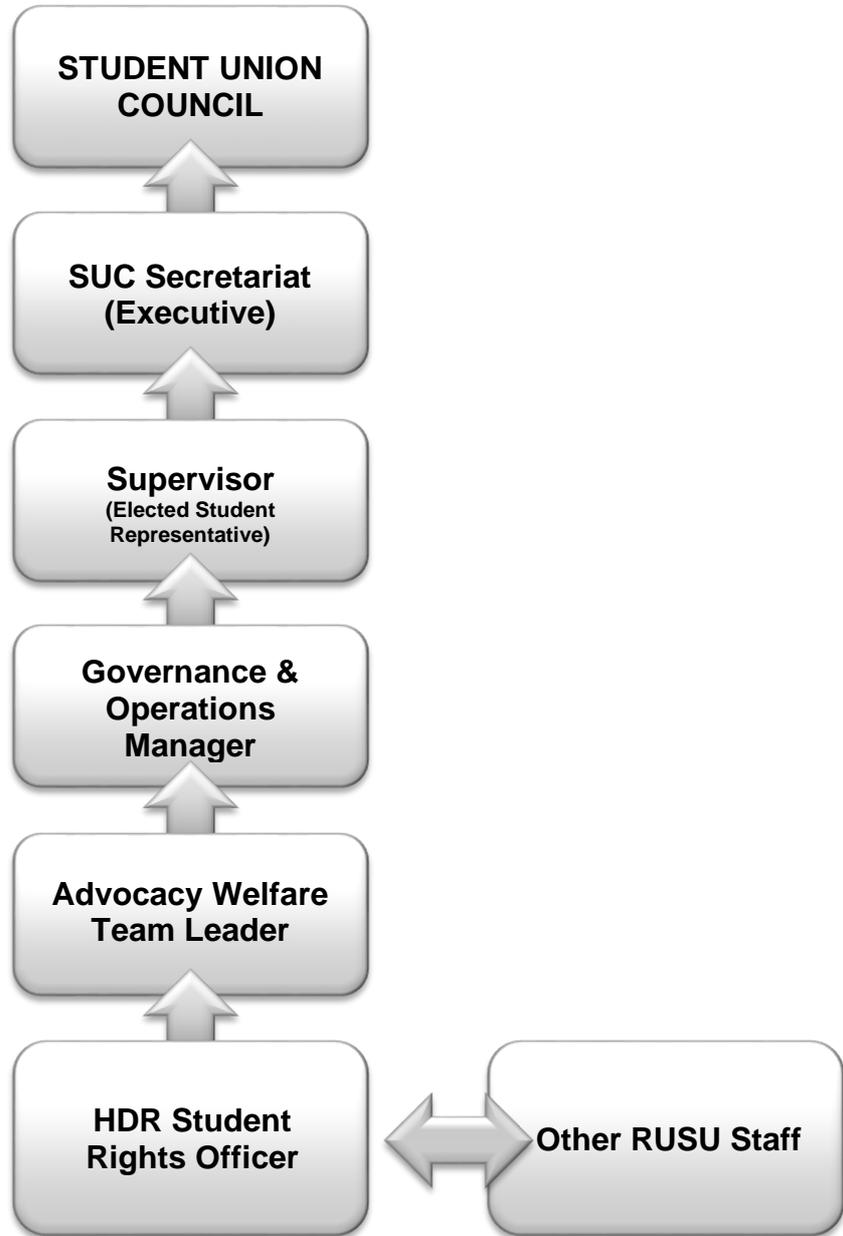
Working Environment / Important Personal Attributes

This position within RUSU offers a unique and rewarding working environment, whereby elected student representatives are the managers and supervisors. They are elected annually and change each year, hence the position is subject to serving a new Student Management team each year. The elected student representatives are supported by a range of permanent paid professional staff, including the RUSU Student Rights Officers and Advocacy Welfare Team Leader.

Whilst some of the students may lack previous experience, the majority are enthusiastic, keen to learn and be mentored during their term of office. They are not paid staff, but do receive a small honorarium and may need to work part time, in addition to their roles at RUSU and their tertiary studies.

Therefore RUSU staff must have excellent interpersonal skills and enjoy working with young adults in a dynamic, fun and at times busy environment. They must also possess a willingness to share their knowledge and experience to develop and support the students in their roles as student representatives.

Organisational Chart



Organisational Unit

The Advocacy Welfare Team covers the Student Rights Service and Compass Welfare Service. It is a cross campus department that includes the elected Education Officer and Welfare Officer, five Student Rights Officers (including the HDR specialist role), two Compass Coordinator staff members and the Advocacy/Welfare Team Leader.

The Student Rights Service provides information, resources, advocacy and casework services to assist RMIT students understand and exercise their rights within the University's rules. It also plays a crucial role in referring students to other RUSU and RMIT support and welfare services. The service is free, confidential and 100% independent from RMIT University.

The Compass Service includes a drop-in space at City, Bundoora and Brunswick campuses. Compass aims to provide relevant and easily accessible information about RMIT, community, welfare, legal and rights-based services available to RMIT students through referrals, information resources, organising forums and outreach events. The Compass and Student Rights staff all work collaboratively with the RUSU Campaigns Officer staff member and elected student representatives to advocate and campaign for services, programs, policies and procedures which will support students and improve the student experience at RMIT.

The Student Rights Officer (HDR) also works closely with the RUSU Postgraduate department and the elected Postgraduate Officer.

1. Position Summary

This is a specialist role within the RUSU Student Rights Service, focusing on postgraduate students. It has a strong emphasis on Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students and predominantly supports this cohort of students.

The position provides student rights advice, advocacy and support to postgraduate students and works with the elected RUSU Postgraduate Officer and Education Officer to advocate for and support postgraduate students at RMIT.

The focus of the role is on providing resources and support for postgraduate students when dealing with concerns related to educational and academic matters, as well as discipline, discrimination and equity issues within RMIT.

2. Key Responsibilities

Student Rights Casework and Advocacy

As part of the broader Student Rights Service, the Student Rights Officer (HDR) will contribute to the provision of casework, advocacy, advice and assistance to postgraduate students by:

- Delivering advocacy, advice and assistance to postgraduate students facing barriers resolving concerns with the university, including individual casework according to established casework procedures.
- Supporting and where required representing postgraduate students at formal hearings and appeals
- Referring students to appropriate support services as required.

- Maintaining up to date case records and complying with RUSU case management/ record keeping requirements.

Campaigns & Policy

- Contributing towards proactive strategies to improve the RMIT policy environment and student experience through input into university decision-making bodies, policies, procedures, reviews and initiatives that affect postgraduate students.
- Building strategic professional relationships with key University decision makers, departments and services working with postgraduate students, including the School of Graduate Research.
- Providing a reference point for RUSU student representatives and staff on current issues affecting postgraduate students including university and government policies.
- Contributing to the provision of information and resources to the student body and RMIT staff about student rights and postgraduate issues and events through the development of communication materials, campaigns and outreach activities.

Student Engagement

- Support and resource the elected RUSU student representatives (particularly the Postgraduate Officer, RUSU President, and Education Officer) through:
 - Providing advice and assistance in planning, initiating, coordinating and implementing postgraduate campaigns, outreach and events;
 - Assisting to translate collective concerns into tangible campaigns, campaign materials and communications strategies;
 - Assisting the Postgraduate Officer to develop an annual/semester plan for their activities and campaigns including; timelines, key dates, event plans and budget.
 - Contributing to the logistics and promotions to involve RMIT students in the Council of Australia Postgraduate Associations (CAPA)
 - Assisting with the preparation of proposals and motions for Postgraduate campaigns and events for Secretariat and SUC meetings
 - Working with relevant staff and office bearers to document and report on postgraduate department activities and achievements for funding, reporting and promotional purposes.
- Oversee the development and (where required) delivery of the annual program of Postgraduate social and networking events, workshops and forums in conjunction with the Postgraduate Officer and RUSU events and campaigns staff.
- Contribute to the development of a broad skills base in RUSU student representatives and volunteers by delivering campaign and committee briefings regarding postgraduate student rights issues.
- Contribute, collaboratively, towards the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Student Union.

3. Selection Criteria

3.1 Essential

- A relevant tertiary degree and at least **three** years prior relevant advocacy experience within the education or community sectors (or a combination of relevant experience and educational qualifications)
- Knowledge of the tertiary education sector legislation, policies, procedures and equity issues affecting students, particularly HDR students.
- Enthusiasm for working with and for students in the tertiary environment, and an understanding of and commitment to the principle of student control over student affairs.
- Demonstrated advocacy, negotiation, dispute resolution and conflict resolution skills.
- Experience in submission and report writing, and policy analysis
- Experience with the planning, delivery and evaluation of student/community based campaigns, programs, information resources, outreach and small –scale events.
- Experience working with and resourcing elected representatives, volunteers and/or working in student/community based organisations.
- Excellent interpersonal and written and verbal communication skills and the ability to effectively communicate with people from a range of organisations and backgrounds
- High-level attention to detail, exceptional administrative and organisational skills and ability to prioritise work commitments.
- Proven strong team working ability and the ability to use initiative where necessary and appropriate.
- Demonstrated computer literacy skills and proficiency in using Microsoft Office and other industry standard applications.

3.2 Desirable

- Working knowledge of RMIT University Student Union, or the RMIT environment.
- Experience making supported referrals to mental health services and/or working with mental health services
- Experience delivering trainings and workshops, and providing briefings for board/committee members
- Ability to speak a language other than English.

4. Special Requirements

The successful applicant will be required to hold a valid Working with Children Check. This position is subject to a 6-month probation period.

5. Job Complexity, Skills, Knowledge

Level of Supervision, Independence

The incumbent works under the general direction of a senior elected student representative (usually the Education Officer) and through them the Secretariat and the SUC. They report *through* and receive direction from management through the Advocacy/ Welfare Team Leader and where required the Governance & Operations Manager.

The duties of this position are conducted collaboratively with elected student representatives and RUSU staff. They work closely with the elected Postgraduate Officer, Education Officer, and President.

They work closely with the following staff; Student Rights Officers, Campaigns Officer, Compass Coordinators and the Student Liaison Officers.

This position is required to provide regular work reports to the Advocacy/ Welfare Team Leader and as required to the Governance & Operations Manager.

Problem Solving and Judgement

The incumbent provides advice to the Student Union by identifying issues affecting postgraduate students and possible outcomes in addressing these issues. This includes strategic analysis and the options for the future direction of the campaign and/or the policy of the Student Union.

Judgement and advice also focuses on the needs of student appellants and on the needs of the student constituency in general.

It is expected to have a high level of ability and experience in advocacy and dispute resolution.

Professional and Organisational Knowledge

The position requires professional knowledge, which comes from professional qualifications, experience in the tertiary education sector, in welfare and educational roles in student unions or community organisations. The position requires an ability to quickly develop extensive knowledge of the University and Student Union structures, processes and systems.

It is essential to have knowledge of relevant State and Federal education policies as well as of international trends which would impact on tertiary education sector students in Australia.

It is required to have knowledge of the student experience and equity issues.

Task Level

The position requires the development of specialist expertise to facilitate advice and where necessary advocacy support in issues affecting the tertiary education sector.

The incumbent shall also undertake project work and/or other duties as directed by RUSU management consistent with Key Responsibilities.

This position description is approved by:

Occupant..... Date: N/A

Supervising Body (Secretariat)..... Date: 27 January 2021

Staffing Committee..... Date: 27 January 2021