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**Subject:** Fw: File No: C/14/14986 Attn: Jasmin Motowylczyk

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**From:** Kent Madin (rett139@yahoo.com)

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**To:** rett139@yahoo.com;

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**Date:** Friday, November 21, 2014 9:27 AM

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On Thursday, November 13, 2014 7:09 AM, Kent Madin <rett139@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Ms. Motowylczyk,

You characterized my complaint as: "the university may be involved in covering up fraudulent conduct of a doctoral student." I would add to that characterization "and their own shoddy admissions procedures". If I may paraphrase your response, with due respect, it seems to be "We asked RMIT if they covered up and they said no. Case closed".

So, with that in mind, I'd like to ask the following questions, for the record.

1. Where you able to confirm that the annotated CV of Mr. de Blonville which I provided to your office is the same CV upon which RMIT based its confirmation that "the student had met the academic standards for entry into the doctoral program and that it followed its selection and admissions policy and applied its eligibility and entry criteria appropriately." I ask this because if you did not delve into the specifics in the documents I provided, then it's hard to see the point of providing any documents with a complaint.
2. Were you able to determine whether Mr. de Blonville is still a graduate student at RMIT, something he persists, *as of today*, in claiming? (would direct your attention to the attached correspondence between de Blonville, Cuthbert, Shaw and Tzamouranis that appears to indicate Mr. de Blonville was "kicked out").
3. Please see the highlighted section below in my correspondence with RB Grants. Can you confirm that RMIT did in fact conduct an investigation (see attached)? If an investigation was conducted, as suggested by at least one faculty member, are the details of that investigation provided to your office?
4. Is the correspondence between the Ombudsman and RMIT on this issue,

like other correspondence, subject to an FOI request?

5. In RMIT's online application instructions it says "if you have authored, exhibited or produced works relevant to your application please provide full details of the publication or exhibition including level of authorship, extent of involvement and whether the work was refereed, assessed or judged." Were you able to determine whether the RMIT admissions committee knew that Mr. de Blonville's book, 'Seventh Journey' was self-published with no independent review of the contents prior to publication?

<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=xtgkazza5ibo1>

6. Both the application to School of Graduate Research and the application for the APA require the applicant to affirm with a signature the veracity of the contents of the applications. Did you review the content of those applications yourself?

In short, I am trying to understand if the Ombudsman policy for responding to a complaint involves actual investigation of details or just involves passing the complaint to RMIT and then reporting the response from RMIT.

Sincerely,

Kent Madin  
Bozeman, Montana  
+1-406-595-2310

*RB Grants*

*To*

*me*

*CC RB Grants Aug 12, 2013*

*Dear Mr Madin*

*The Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2012 provides the legislative basis for all universities to administer the APA. While the guidelines mandate that universities must run a competitive merit-based process to select APA candidates, the guidelines purposely gives universities considerable autonomy to decide which students should receive an APA. In this way, the Department recognises that universities are best placed to determine which students are best qualified to receive an APA under their own selection policies. General information should be available about individual university's selection policies from each institution.*

*While the Department provides funding to universities for the APA scheme, it is universities that manage the awards for individual students. Any investigations into false or misleading information, or failure to divulge information relating to a student's APA application is conducted with due process by the individual university concerned.*

*Regards*

*RBGrants*

In

On Sunday, November 9, 2014 3:43 PM, "ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au"  
<ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au> wrote:

10 November 2014	File No: C/14/14986
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Mr Kent Madin  
14543 Kelly Canyon Road  
Bozeman, Montana 59715  
USA

Via email: [rett139@yahoo.com](mailto:rett139@yahoo.com)

Dear Mr Madin

Your complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman

Thank you for your complaint to the Ombudsman concerning RMIT University. Specifically, you raised concerns that the university may be involved in covering up fraudulent conduct of a doctoral student.

You state various concerns but in particular, that the student gained entry into the university's doctorate program despite not holding a tertiary qualification. You also allege that the university approved an Australian Postgraduate Award to the value of \$50,000. You suggest that the student obtained these positions by providing false and misleading information to the university and that the university failed to conduct due diligence in its application and waived the normal application requirements.

Your complaint was initially referred by this office to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission as a potential protected disclosure complaint on 5 August 2014. The matter was assessed by IBAC and was determined not to be a protected disclosure complaint and returned to this office under cover of letter dated 25 August 2014. Consequently, this office decided to make enquiries with the university in relation to the concerns that you raised.

As previously advised, the purpose of making enquiries with the university is to ascertain whether the university followed its policies and procedures in relation to the handling of your complaint and whether it made decisions that were open to it to make.

My enquiries of the university have now concluded. I have had the opportunity to review both the information provided by you and the university and to consider the reasonableness of the university's response to your concerns.

In response to my enquiries the university stated that upon receiving your complaint, it:

- reviewed and assessed the student application file and supporting documentation
- interviewed senior members of the university who were on the admissions panel, and
- conducted internet searches in relation to the student.

The university also stated that it is allowable under the university's admission policy that a candidate may be accepted without prior tertiary qualification.

On this basis, the university confirmed its position that the student had met the academic standards for entry into the doctoral program and that it followed its selection and admissions policy and applied its eligibility and entry criteria appropriately.

Having reviewed all relevant documents, the actions of the university appear to be consistent with the university's Selection and Admission policy. Specifically, this policy provides three sections that are relevant to this matter:

Section 7 of the university's Selection and admission procedure states:

Applicants must satisfy the relevant academic entry requirement or equivalent, or training requirement, for the level of program or course to which they are applying.

Section 21 states that applicants for Professional Doctorate Research programs must have:

21.1 qualified for an appropriate honours degree or Masters Degree of RMIT in the core discipline areas of the proposed doctoral program; or

21.2 qualified for another award deemed to be equivalent in standard to an appropriate honours degree or Masters degree of RMIT in the core discipline areas of the proposed doctoral program; and

21.3 the appropriate level of advanced professional/industrial experience relevant to the discipline area.

Section 22 states that applicants for Doctor of Philosophy programs must have completed one of the following:

22.1; 22.2; 22.3 Masters or Bachelor degrees...; or

22.4 another award deemed to be equivalent in character and standard

to the above degrees; or  
22.5 have such other qualifications or experience as the College Pro  
Vice-chancellor or nominee considers appropriate.

In relation to the Australian Postgraduate Award, the university stated that these awards are commonwealth government funded scholarships and are not funded by the university. Given this is a commonwealth government matter and not a Victorian matter (within the jurisdiction of this office), you may wish to make independent enquiries with the commonwealth government's Department of Education. The link to the department's website can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.education.gov.au/contact-department>

On the basis of the information obtained through my enquiries, I am satisfied that the university has followed its policies and procedures in relation to the handling of your complaint.

This now concludes my consideration of your complaint. I'm sorry I am unable to assist you further in this matter.

If you have any queries you are welcome to contact me on +61 3 9613 6222 or via email [ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au](mailto:ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au). Please quote reference number C/14/14986.

Yours sincerely

Jasmin Motowylczyk  
Senior Investigation Officer

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