

TOP PROFESSIONAL VOICES IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



Graduate Development Program Lead RMIT University

Stephanie Parma is a driven higher education professional passionate about shaping future talent through innovative learning and career programs. Currently leading RMIT University's inaugural Graduate Development Program, she brings over eight years of experience in student employability, learning and development strategy, and industry engagement. Stephanie thrives at the intersection of education and workforce development, creating impactful programs that empower the next generation of professionals.



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“STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ISN'T JUST ABOUT CAREER READINESS — IT'S ABOUT SHAPING LEADERS WHO CARE DEEPLY ABOUT THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.”

How did your personal and professional journey lead you to your current role in student engagement?

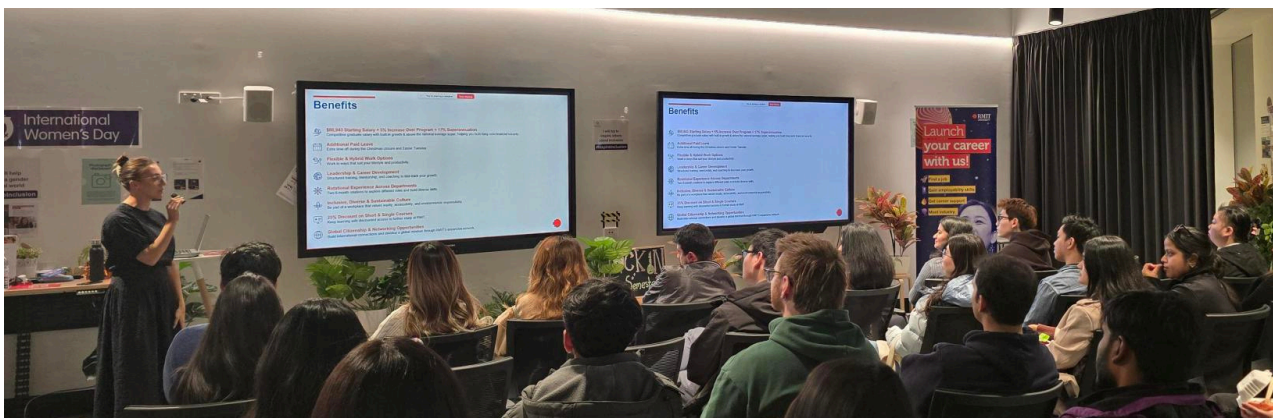
My journey into student engagement has always been guided by a passion for empowering young people to unlock their potential. With a background spanning marketing and engagement, business development, education, and talent development, I've spent more than a decade working in roles that intersect learning, leadership, and career readiness.

Today, I lead the Graduate Development Program at RMIT University, where I have the privilege of designing and delivering RMIT's first-ever Graduate Program — supporting graduates as they transition confidently into the workforce. I've seen firsthand how education and work can transform lives, and being part of a university that invests in that transformation every day is incredibly rewarding.

What achievement in your role related to student engagement and retention are you most proud of, and why does it stand out to you?

One of the achievements I'm most proud of is the transition from promoting external graduate opportunities to actually designing a program tailored to our own graduates' needs. In my previous role, I worked closely with industry partners to connect students with employment pathways, and through those conversations, I gained deep insight into the gaps students were facing; what they truly valued in a role, and what was missing from many graduate experiences.

Now, leading the RMIT Graduate Development Program, I've been able to build a program that directly responds to those insights. It's designed to meet graduates where they are, offering clarity, structure, and support from the moment they apply through to their final rotation. We ensure graduates are well-informed, empowered, and equipped with the details they need to make confident decisions about their future. Seeing that shift from identifying the challenges to actively solving them has been incredibly rewarding.



Stephanie presenting a session about RMIT's Graduate Program in front of a group of students.

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A Note from the Founder

Watching Steph's career grow has been inspiring. From our first workshops together delivering 'Goal Setting' to students, Steph has always been the warm, welcoming smile, and now she's the strategic powerhouse behind a first-in-industry grad program. Steph's one to watch!



What motivates you to continue working in student engagement?

What keeps me motivated is seeing the real impact our work has on students' lives. Whether it's watching a graduate step into a leadership role or hearing how a rotation helped someone discover their passion, those moments of transformation are incredibly rewarding.

I'm also inspired by the energy and fresh ideas that students bring. **Working in this space means constantly learning, adapting, and evolving — and I feel fortunate to be part of such a dynamic, purpose-driven environment.**



Stephanie standing at the RMIT stand at a Graduate Careers Fair.

What are the key responsibilities and goals in your role for boosting student engagement and retention at your university?

As Graduate Development Program Lead at RMIT, my role spans both recruitment and program design — ensuring graduates are not only drawn to the opportunity but supported to thrive once they're here. I lead the promotion and delivery of a 12-month rotational program that offers hands-on experience across diverse business areas, complemented by coaching, mentoring, leadership development, and tailored professional learning.

A key part of our recruitment strategy is assessing for both capability and values alignment — looking beyond academic achievement to recognise transferable skills and lived experiences that reflect RMIT's culture and mission. The aim is to offer graduates a program that speaks directly to what they want in their first professional role: purpose, growth, and community.

Ultimately, **my goal is to help graduates feel connected, capable, and confident** — while building a strong, values-aligned talent pipeline for RMIT. I work closely with internal stakeholders to ensure the program reflects strategic priorities like inclusion, sustainability, and innovation, and I embed continuous feedback loops so the experience keeps evolving in line with graduate needs and aspirations.

To learn more about the work Steph does with the RMIT Graduate Program, visit the [Early Talent website](#).