



2023-2024 Annual Report

RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program

STEM College



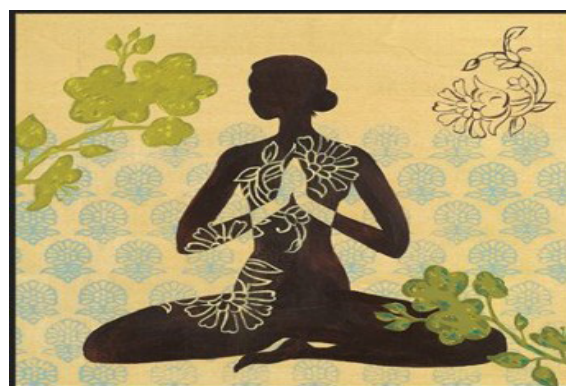


Acknowledgement of country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.



Artwork "Luwaytini" by Mark Cleaver, Palawa.





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Our Mission

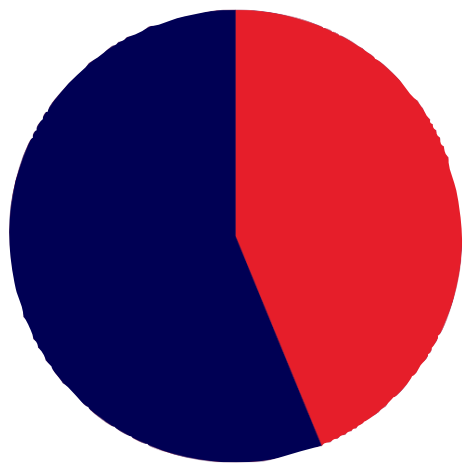
As we persist in our efforts to achieve a more globally connected student experience, our goal of enhancing the partnership between RMIT and India has provided us with the chance to elevate and shape the upcoming cohort of scientists and trailblazers.

The continuous expansion of the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program has resulted in 32 completions (as of August 2024), transitioning from their initial student status, to globally competitive, analytical thought leaders, equipped with practical expertise to initiate their journeys in academia, industry, and entrepreneurship.

Our numbers Our Values

Gender balance:

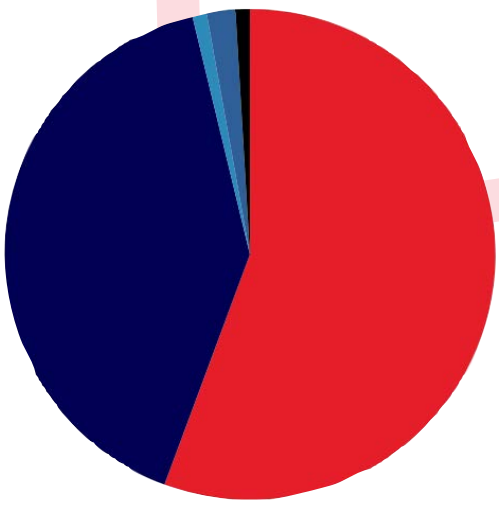
Almost even split of female and male RMIT-AcSIR candidates with 47 out of 106 students being female



Female 44%
Male 56%

Schools:

Majority of RMIT-AcSIR cohort sit within Schools of Engineering and Science (59 and 43 students respectively), with 2 candidates in the School of Health & Biomedical Sciences, 1 in the School of Computing Technologies, and 1 in the School of Property, Construction & Project Management (College of Design & Social Context)



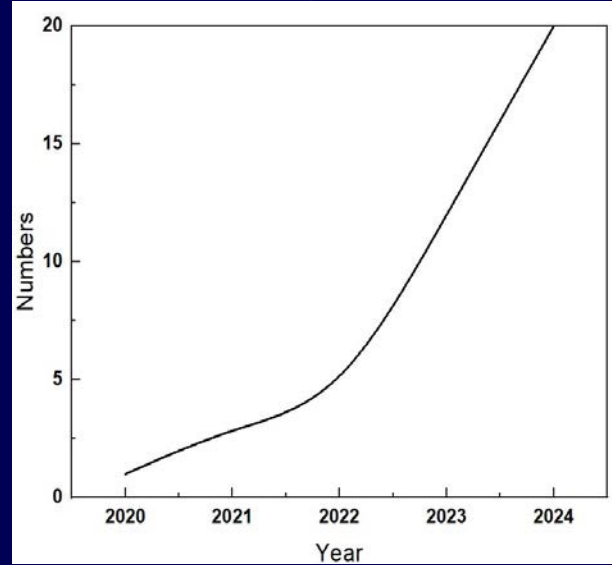
Engineering 56%
Science 41%
Health & Biomedical Sciences 2%
Property, Construction & Project Management 1%
Computing Technologies 1%

Student completion numbers

Student completion numbers have increased each year since the first graduating cohort in 2020, with an anticipated growth for 2024 by the end of the year



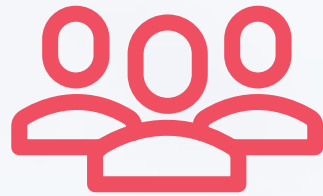
Number of PhD completions



Valuable Partnership making difference



>5 Patents



135 enrolments



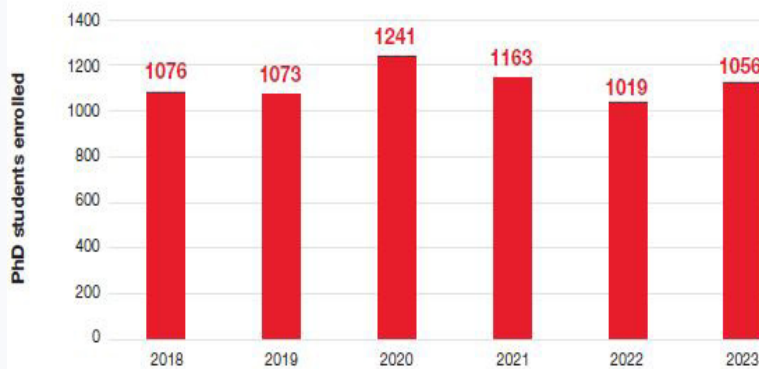
>1000 publications



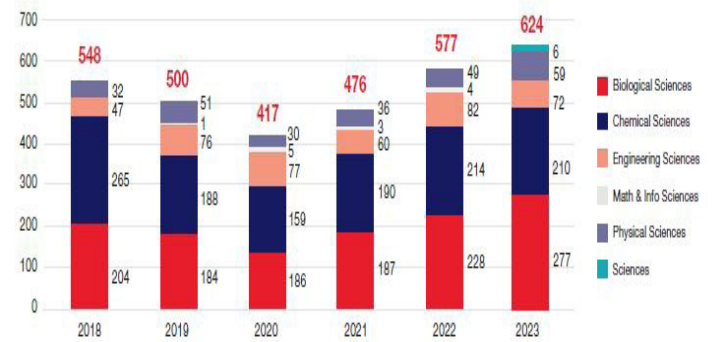
>20 Awards

2023

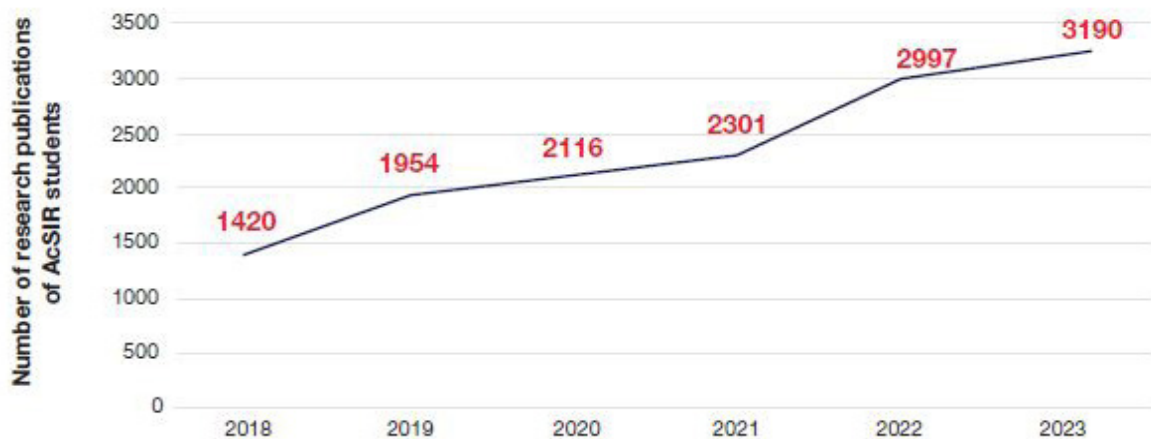
Currently AcSIR has the highest number of PhD students for PhD degree (>6000) among educational institutions in India



Calendar year-wise and faculty-wise number of PhD degrees awarded



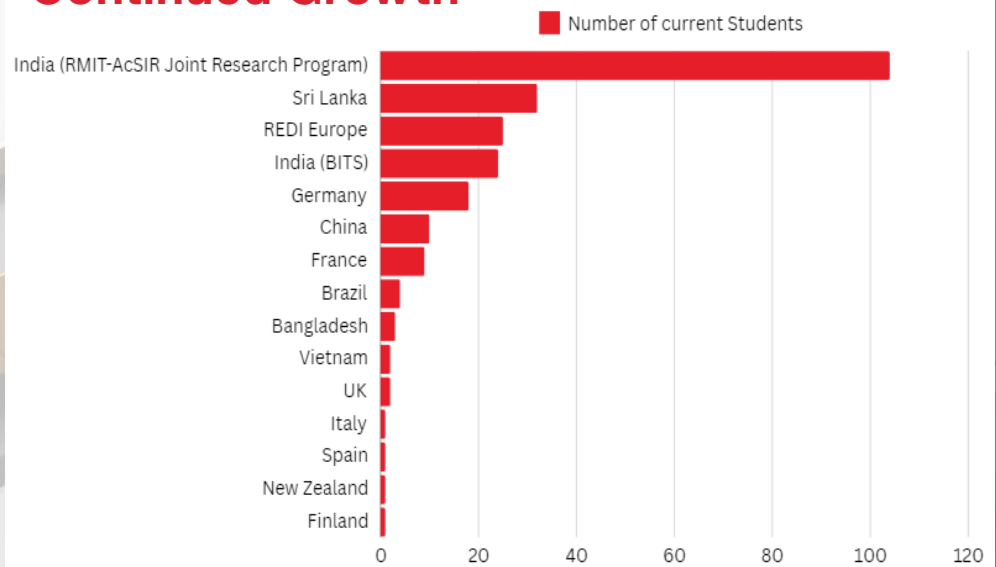
Year-wise AcSIR publications



Strategic Objectives



Continued Growth

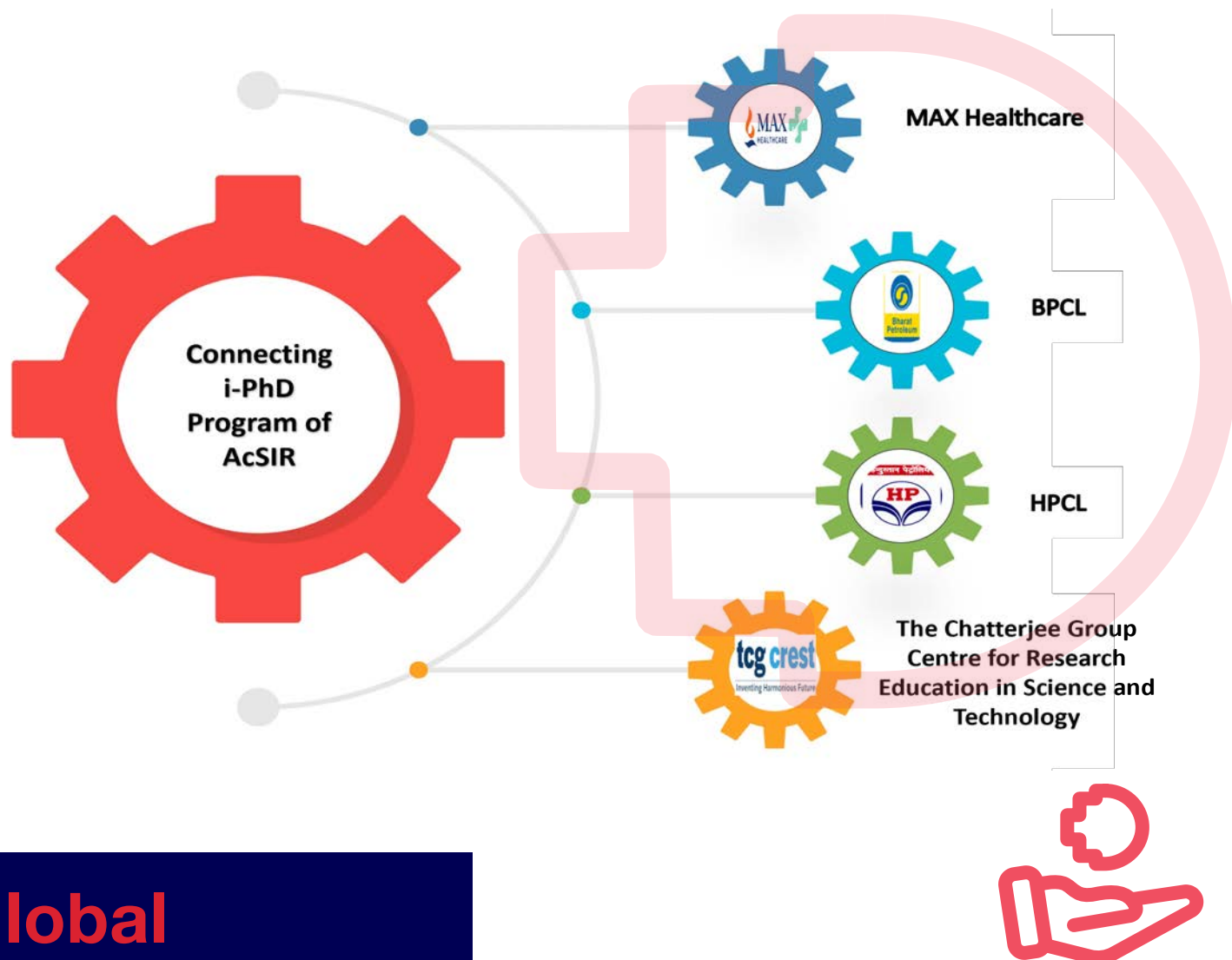


32 completions since the program started in 2018
33% Completion with 100% Employability

What's next

2024

Expanding more in India



Global Alliances in strategic research areas

- Hydrogen Energy
- Critical Minerals
- Metallodrugs for Cancer Therapy

RMIT Cares

The Distinguished Professors' Prizes for RMIT-AcSIR's PhD Students

We are excited to share a new opportunity to support resilient scholars in the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program. Since its establishment in 2017, our cotutelle PhD program has been a hub of academic excellence and resilience for some of India's best and brightest young scientists. Our students, coming from diverse backgrounds, often overcome significant challenges to pursue academic excellence. Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava AM established a fund in 2024 at RMIT University dedicated to recognising and rewarding the best and most resilient PhD students in the Program, to fuel the dreams of these deserving scholars, empowering them to carve their path to success and make significant contributions to their fields and communities. We aim to recognise these exceptional young scholars who embody perseverance and dedication with a \$1000 prize and the opportunity to receive a mentorship meeting with some of Australia and India's most respected scientists.

The three awards are:

Dr Megan Clark – Dr Lakshmi Kantam Award

Dr Alan Finkel – Dr RA Mashelkar Award

Professor Robin Batterham – Professor Govardhan Mehta Award

Find out more or donate here





AM+ Club @ RMIT



Mind to Market place

An exclusive mentoring session to transform your research into a commercially viable product.
Application of AM in solving interdisciplinary problems.
Brainstorming session on the industrial challenges in adopting AM technology.



Dist. Prof. Milan Brandt

Director, RMIT's Centre for Additive Manufacturing &
Technical Director, Advanced Manufacturing Precinct



Dist. Prof. Suresh Bhargava

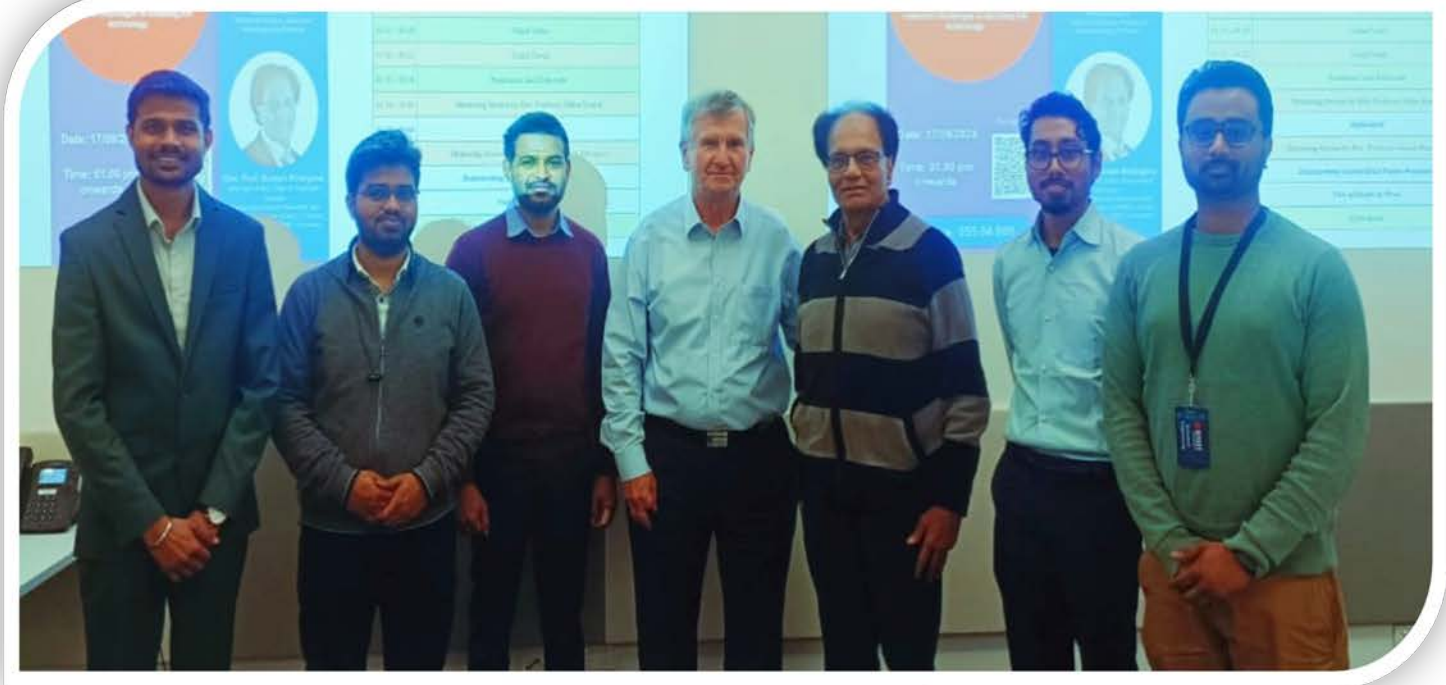
(Member of the Order of Australia)

Director

Centre for Advance Materials and Industrial Chemistry (CAMIC) Centre,
School of Science, RMIT University



RMIT Cares



Meet the Team



Prem
(NCL-RMIT)



Abhradeep
(AMPRI-RMIT)



Vishal
(AMPRI-RMIT)



Yoshit
(CMERI-RMIT)



Amrit Raj
(CMERI-RMIT)



Shashank
(AMPRI-RMIT)

Director RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program



Another successful year has been added to our remarkable journey of research partnership with India, strengthened by the trustworthy relationship we've built with AcSIR. As we step into the 8th year of the RMIT-AcSIR Joint PhD Research Program, I can't help but feel immense pride in witnessing the impressive achievements of our PhD cotutelle cohort. What started as a vision has now flourished into a program that exceeds 100 enrolments, with 32 successful completions.

This program is more than just numbers; it's a testament to the power of collaboration, the commitment to pushing boundaries, and the shared dream of fostering knowledge. The success of the RMIT-AcSIR PhD cotutelle program with India speaks volumes, and I truly believe it highlights the critical need for us to continue strengthening the bridge of research between India and Australia.

Our joint supervision, which allows PhD candidates to work under the expertise of both RMIT and AcSIR—spanning 37 CSIR labs—has been an immensely rewarding initiative. This collaboration has not only led to groundbreaking discoveries but has also fostered strong academic exchanges and built a global network of researchers who are driving innovation and progress.

The recent achievements of our PhD candidates are nothing short of inspiring. They've made significant strides in advancing research and creating high-impact

outcomes that enrich the academic world. This program has not only elevated our university's global reputation but has also reinforced our deep commitment to academic excellence and international collaboration.

Beyond the academic milestones, what truly moves me is the personal impact this program has had on our students. Their testimonials reflect the profound sense of belonging, support, and care that is at the heart of this initiative. The values of "RMIT Cares" resonate deeply here, and seeing these bright minds flourish motivates me to ensure this program continues to grow and succeed.

At its core, this program is about more than research—it's about creating global citizens who are not just equipped with the skills to excel but are also empowered by the knowledge that they are part of a supportive community, driving change for a better future. This is why I remain fully committed to its continuity and growth. Together, we are shaping the next generation of innovators and leaders.

Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava AM

Dean, Research & Innovation (India),
STEM College, RMIT University

Director, Centre for Advanced Materials
and Industrial Chemistry, RMIT University

Director, RMIT-AcSIR Partnership

A message from RMIT and AcSIR's executive team

Vice Chancellor



At RMIT, we recognise that our greatest achievements always occur when we partner with the communities we serve. As Australia's largest dual sector university, we are proud of our global community and partnerships across the region, and around the world.

It's wonderful to see the RMIT-AcSIR partnership continue to transform the lives of scientists from India, and ensures their ingenuity and talent is nurtured. It's also rewarding to see such positive outcomes including 32 successful PhD completions, 106 current enrolments, over 900 publications, 5 patents, and more than 20 awards.

Building on our longstanding strategic partnerships with Indian research institutions and laboratories, our relationship with India is now deeper than ever with the introduction of the BITS-RMIT Higher Education Academy. This is the first dual-degree initiative between Australia and India, aiming to provide high-quality transnational education for Indian students and enhance the already strong collaboration between our countries. In September, the Premier of Victoria met with our BITS-RMIT Higher Education Academy leadership team, and heard first-hand about its impact.

Being an applied institution, RMIT does not seek to pursue our academic purpose independently of the societal and economic context of our times. Instead, we see education and research as society's best investment to address current and future opportunities and challenges. This drives us to lean into a broad range of issues and make the most impactful contribution to

society, beyond the theoretical, that we possibly can. So putting knowledge into action through programs like this will continue to be a priority, providing ongoing benefits to the students, RMIT, AcSIR, BITS, and our wider communities.

At RMIT, we have friends of Indian heritage wherever we operate around the world, and we look forward to a shared future, in which we successfully address our collective challenges and embrace the myriad of opportunities ahead.

Professor Alec Cameron

Vice-Chancellor and President, RMIT University



Deputy Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation



It brings me great pleasure to see the wonderful outcomes and remarkable achievements of our students and graduates from the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program PhD cotutelle with India. Our collaborative efforts have reached new heights, and the success stories we are witnessing are truly worth celebrating.

To date, the program has supported 32 PhD graduates and facilitated 106 enrolments. The impact of this initiative is evident in the impressive outcomes our students and researchers have achieved. Our joint research endeavours have resulted in over 900 research publications, demonstrating the high calibre and breadth of the work being conducted. Additionally, our collaborative efforts have led to the submission of 5 patent applications, underscoring the innovative contributions emerging from this partnership. As DVC R&I, I can see the significant value this program brings to RMIT.

These achievements are a testament to the strength and effectiveness of our program, showcasing the immense value of international collaboration in research. The program not only enriches the academic experience for our students but also significantly enhances our university's global presence and research capabilities.

As we celebrate these accomplishments, it is clear that there is even greater potential to be realised. Strengthening and expanding

our research collaborations with India promises to open new avenues for innovation, resource sharing, and academic excellence.

I look forward to seeing more success stories as we continue this program into the future.

Professor Calum Drummond AO

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation and Vice-President, RMIT University



Director AcSIR



It is with immense pride and satisfaction that I reflect on the remarkable success of the AcSIR-RMIT University Joint PhD Program. Since its launch in 2017, this initiative has been a cornerstone of our academic collaboration, and the renewal of our agreement in 2022 has further strengthened our resolve to advance research and fostering academic excellence across borders.

Since its launch, the program has flourished, garnering exceptional feedback from our students. Participants consistently highlight the invaluable opportunities the program has provided for their academic and professional growth. The exposure to cutting-edge research and diverse scientific expertise from both India and Australia has been instrumental in shaping their career.

Beyond individual achievements, the program has provided students with the unique advantage of utilizing the advanced infrastructure and resources of both institutions, thereby enhancing the quality and impact of their research. This international collaboration has not only broadened their academic perspectives, but also deepened their understanding of the chosen field of research.

The bond between AcSIR and RMIT University has grown stronger through this partnership. Our faculty/scientists continue to engage with one another and also collaborate with alumni thereby supporting their professional journeys to newer horizons.

In conclusion, the success of the AcSIR-RMIT University Joint PhD Program is a testament to the effectiveness of international academic

partnerships. This program not only benefits our students but also enhances the research capabilities and global impact of both the institutions. We are happy to continue this successful collaboration and look forward to achieving even greater milestones in the future.

Professor Manoj Kumar Dhar

Vice-Chancellor, AcSIR (Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research)



Who is the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research?



Established in 2011 as an 'Institution of National Importance', the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) has adopted the mandate to create and train some of the best of tomorrow's science & technology leaders through a combination of innovative and novel curricula, pedagogy and evaluation. AcSIR's focus is on imparting instruction and providing research opportunities in such areas that are not routinely taught in regular academic universities in India.

AcSIR has been set-up based on a 'hub and spoke' model where the hub (AcSIR-HQ Ghaziabad) is responsible for centralised administrative functions. The spokes are located in the 38 institutes/units (AcSIR Academic Centres) and 15 non-CSIR Institutes (AcSIR Associate Academic Centres) spread along the length and breadth of India, which act as the academic campuses of AcSIR. In addition, AcSIR has collaborative academic programs with other national and international educational institutions.

Current academic programs are offered under 5 faculties of study:

1. Biological Sciences
2. Chemical Sciences
3. Engineering Sciences
4. Physical Sciences
5. Mathematical & Information Sciences.

In 2023, 1056 PhD students enrolled at AcSIR to embark on their postgraduate journey,

bolstering AcSIR as the largest institution of higher learning in India. In 2023, AcSIR awarded 624 PhD degrees in various areas of STEM, as well as publishing 3190 papers.

Rankings

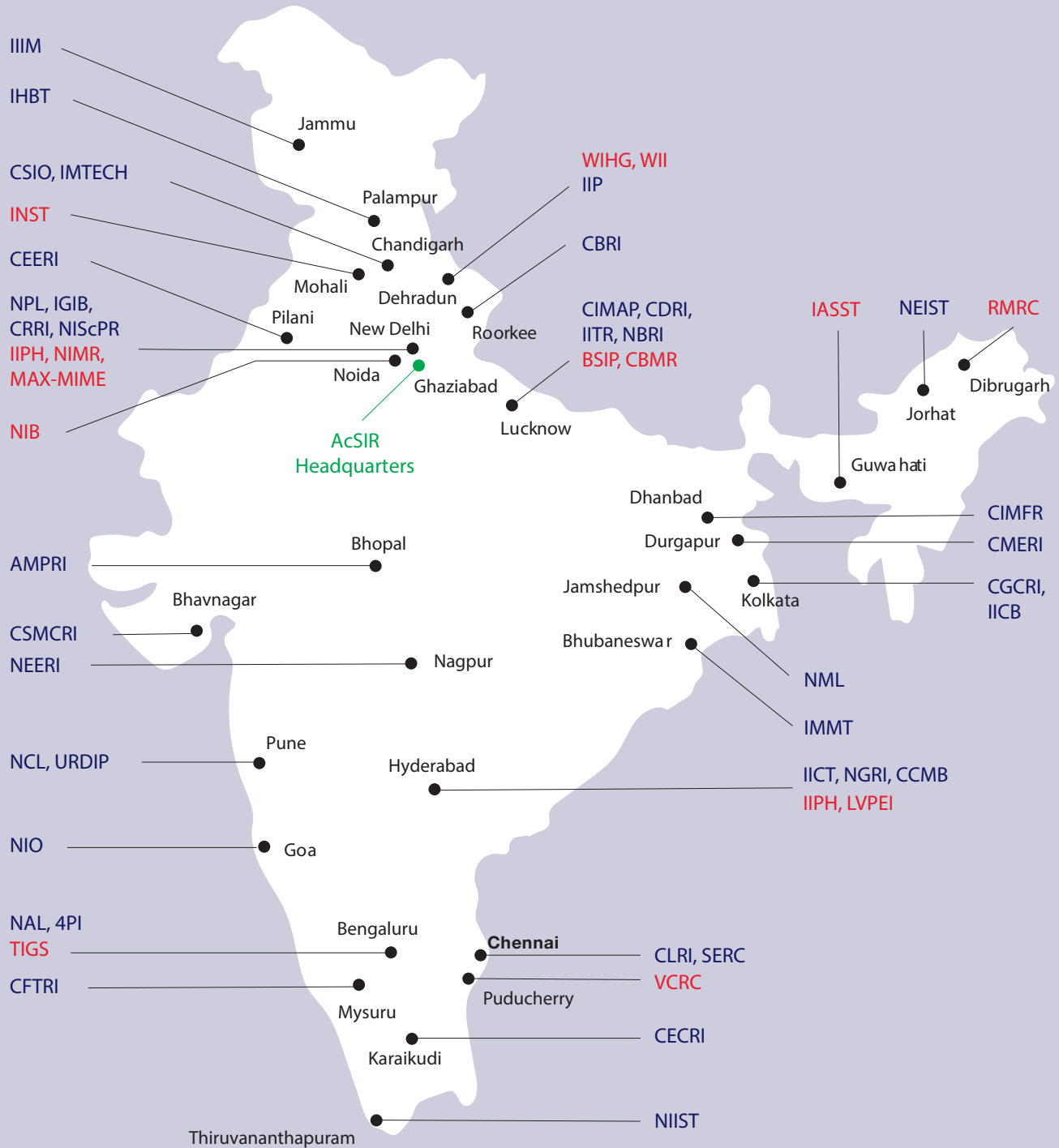
- Ranked 9th in India and globally by Scimago Institutions Ranking (2024)
- Ranked 12th in India by Nature Index (2024)
- Ranked 12th by NIRF (2024), Ministry of Education, Govt of India in the Research Category

Governance

- Board of Governors is the highest regulatory and decision making body of AcSIR
- Senate is the principal executive body of AcSIR and is responsible for key academic decisions



AcSIR has institutions all over India



AcSIR Affiliated Institutes (CSIR)
AcSIR Affiliated Institute (Non-CSIR)

About the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) was established in 1942, and has become renowned for its cutting edge R&D knowledge base in diverse Science & Technology areas. CSIR has a dynamic network of 37 national laboratories, 39 outreach centres, 1 Innovation Complex, and three units with a pan-India presence.

CSIR covers a wide spectrum of science and technology – from oceanography, geophysics, chemicals, drugs, genomics, biotechnology and nanotechnology to mining, aeronautics, instrumentation, environmental engineering and information technology. It provides significant technological intervention in many areas concerning societal efforts, which include the environment, health, drinking water, food, housing, energy, farm and non-farm sectors. CSIR's role in S&T human resource development is noteworthy.

CSIR's R&D expertise and experience are embodied in over 3,500 active scientists supported by over 4,100 technical and support personnel.

As a pioneer of India's intellectual property movement, CSIR today is strengthening its patent portfolio to carve out global niches for the country in select technology domains. CSIR filed around 229 Indian patents and 202 foreign patents during 2021-2022. CSIR has a patent portfolio of 1,132 unique patents in

force, out of which 140 patents have been commercialised. CSIR also has 2,587 in force patents granted abroad in multiple countries. Amongst its peers in publicly funded research organisations globally, CSIR is a leader in filing and securing patents worldwide.

CSIR has pursued cutting edge science and advanced knowledge frontiers. In 2022, CSIR published around 5800 papers in SCI Journals with an average impact factor per paper of 5.401.

CSIR has operationalised desired mechanisms to boost entrepreneurship, which could lead to enhanced creation and commercialisation of radical and disruptive innovations, underpinning the development of new economic sectors.

CSIR is ranked 57th among 1,870 government institutions worldwide, and is the only Indian organisation among the top 100 global government institutions (Scimago Institutions Rankings 2024). According to these rankings, CSIR leads India as the number one institute across all sectors (government, health, universities, and industry) and is in the top 100 across all of Asia.

Shri Narendra Modi Ji, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, is the President of CSIR, Dr Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State, Ministry of Science of Technology, is the Vice President while Dr Kalaiselvi.N is the Director General, CSIR.



RMIT-CSIR Partners



Geographically we are dispersed across the whole of India.

RMIT's partnership with CSIR allows access to all 39 CSIR laboratories across India, making the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program the most expansive joint Australian-

Indian program in Australia. Since the initiation of the RMIT-AcSIR agreement, RMIT has partnered with the following 27 CSIR laboratories:

CSIR - Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIO)



CSIO is a premier national laboratory dedicated to research, design and development of scientific and industrial instruments. It is a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional apex industrial research & development organisation. CSIO has been working in various areas of instrumentation and skill development programs by awarding diplomas through the Indo-Swiss Training Centre (ISTC) at Chandigarh and established centres at Chennai and Delhi to meet regional needs.

CSIR - Central ElectroChemical Research Institute (CECRI)



CECRI is one of the largest electrochemical laboratories in the world with extension centres in Chennai, Mandapam and Tuticorin. It focusses on fuel cells, marine corrosion and offshore corrosion testing. CECRI's activities are directed towards the development of new and improved products and processes, as well as novel innovations in electrochemical technology. A number of investigations are run in collaboration with laboratories from within and outside India.

CSIR - Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP)



IIP is a pioneer in the area of Petroleum & Hydrocarbon, and is presently engaged in the development of sophisticated green technologies to cater to the energy needs of the modern world and for reducing carbon foot prints. IIP has developed and transferred technologies to industries in the areas of petroleum refining, natural gas, petrochemicals, chemicals and utilisation of petroleum products, provided technical services and imparting world-class training to the human resource of the oil and refining industry.

CSIR - National Chemical Laboratory (NCL)

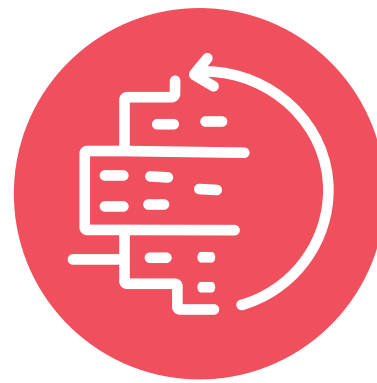


NCL is a science and knowledge-based research, development and consulting organisation. It is internationally known for its excellence in scientific research in chemistry and chemical engineering as well as for its outstanding track record of industrial research involving partnerships with industry from concept to commercialisation.

CSIR - National Physical Laboratory (NPL)



NPL is the premier research laboratory in India in the field of physical sciences. It has developed core competencies in standards, apex level calibration, engineering materials, electronic materials, materials characterisation, radio and space physics, global change and environmental studies, low temperature physics, and instrumentation. Its main activities are research and development, consultancy, sponsored and contract research, and calibration and testing.



CSIR - Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR)

IITR contributes towards cutting-edge research and innovation in toxicology. IITR has world class infrastructure and human resources in toxicology and provides a one-stop solution to address environmental and health issues. Innovations produced at IITR ensure the health and safety of communities in India. IITR has made an impact in addressing problems critical to human health & the environment as well as safety of chemicals and products.



CSIR - Structural Engineering Research Centre (SERC)

SERC has built up excellent facilities and expertise for the analysis, design and testing of structures and structural components. Services of SERC are being extensively used by the Central and State Governments and public and private sector. Scientists of SERC serve on many national and international committees and the Centre is recognised both at the national and international level as a leading research institution in the field of structural engineering.



CSIR - Central Building Research Institute (CBRI)

CBRI has been assisting the building construction and building material industries in finding timely, appropriate, and economical solutions to the problems of building materials, health monitoring and rehabilitation of structures, disaster mitigation, fire safety, and improving energy efficiency of rural and urban housing. The Institute is committed to serve the people through R&D in the development process and maintains linkages at both international and national levels.



CSIR - National Metallurgical Laboratory (NML)

NML focuses on research and development of minerals, metals, and materials. NML has a strong presence in magnetic materials, rapidly solidified alloys, surface coatings, metallic foams, among others. Advanced materials processing and post-processing carried out include mechanochemical activation, semi-solid processing, biomimicry, thermo-mechanical treatments, high-temperature synthesis, advanced joining, grain boundary engineering, high strain rate forming, and several other techniques.



CSIR - Advanced Materials and Processes Research Institute (AMPRI)

AMPRI carries out projects on the synthesis and characterisation of aluminum-graphite metal matrix composites and natural fibres. AMPRI is equipped with modern facilities for material synthesis, processing and property characterisation such as SEM, pressure die casting, semisolid processing, rolling, and Mg melting among others. FESEM, a cryomilling unit, and other facilities relating to nanoscale R&D are being established.



CSIR - Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT)

IICT conducts research into the areas of basic and applied chemistry, biochemistry, bioinformatics, and chemical engineering. The institute also provides science and technology inputs to the industrial and economic development of the country.

CSIR - Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI)



CMERI is the only national level research institute in the field of mechanical engineering in India. The institute is making R&D efforts in research areas such as robotics, mechatronics, microsystem, cybernetics, manufacturing, and precision agriculture, among others. The institute works towards different R&D-based mission mode programs of the country to provide suitable technological solutions for poverty alleviation, societal improvement, energy security, food security, aerospace, mining, automobile, and defense.

CSIR - North East Institute of Science And Technology (NEIST)



NEIST is working in areas of science such as agro-technologies, environmental studies, herbal formulations, bioremediation of hydrocarbon contaminated soil, earthquake seismology, geotechnical investigations, soil and building materials, nano and advanced materials, catalysts, synthetic molecules, coal & petroleum, oilfield chemicals, paper products and natural products and fibres.

CSIR - National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST)



NIIST conducts research and development activities in areas related to effective utilisation of resources of the region. Currently NIIST is engaged in R&D programmes in areas related to agro-processing and technology, chemical sciences and technology, materials science and technology, microbial processes & technology as well as environmental technology.

CSIR - Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT)



IMMT conducts research and technology oriented programs to address the R&D problems of mining, mineral, and metal industries to ensure their sustainable development. The main focus of R&D at CSIR-IMMT has been to empower Indian industries to meet the challenges of globalisation by providing advanced and zero waste process know-how and consultancy services for commercial exploitation of natural resources through the public-private-partnership (PPP) approach.

CSIR - Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP)



CIMAP is steering multidisciplinary high quality research in biological and chemical sciences and extending technologies and services to the farmers and entrepreneurs of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) with its research headquarters at Lucknow and research centres at Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pantnagar and Purara.

CSIR - Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI)



CFTRI pursues research and development in the areas of food science and technology. Research is in engineering sciences, technology development, translational research and food protection, as well as safety areas. With food technology being inter-disciplinary in nature, the mandate of the Institute is fulfilled through various R&D departments and support departments along with its resource centres at Hyderabad, Lucknow and Mumbai.

CSIR - The Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI)



CDRI is the premier drug research institute of India with a vision to strengthen and advance the field of drug research and development in India. The Institute has made significant accomplishments in the pursuit of its mission to New Drugs & Technologies for affordable healthcare for all, generation of knowledge base and nurturing future leaders for healthcare sector.



CSIR - Central Electronics Engineering Research Institute (CEERI)

CEERI advances R&D in the field of electronics, including areas of microwave tubes, plasma devices, MEMS and microsensors, optoelectronics devices, microelectronic processing and fabrication, VLSI Design, LTCC technology, nano structures, power electronics, industrial process control, agri-electronics, instrumentation and embedded systems.



CSIR - Fourth Paradigm Institute (4PI)

4PI promotes mathematical modelling and data-driven research. The 4PI institution played a pivotal role in shaping the computational research capability in CSIR over the past 30 years, and aims to solve problems of societal and strategic importance.



CSIR - Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute (CGCRI)

CGCRI provides scientific industrial research and development in the areas of glass, ceramics refractories, vitreous enamels, composites and allied materials. CGCRI provides technical advisory and infra-structural services like project engineering, testing & evaluation, training & education and dissemination of scientific information to the public domain.



CSIR - Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT)

IHBT is situated in the western Himalayas with a vision “to be a global leader on technologies for boosting bioeconomy through sustainable utilization of Himalayan bioresources”. The institute has a mission to discover, innovate, develop and disseminate the processes, products and technologies from Himalayan bioresources for society, industry, environment, and academia.



CSIR - Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI)

CLRI is the world’s largest leather research institute in terms of research papers and patents. The objective of the institute is to meet the needs of the leather and allied sectors through research, technology development and transfer, training and industrial support and formulation of policies and plan of action that ensures a technology based competitive advantage for Indian leather



CSIR - Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research (CIMFR)

CIMFR aims to provide R&D inputs for the entire coal-energy chain encompassing exploration, mining, and utilization. The laboratory also strives to develop mineral based industries to reach the targeted production for India’s energy security and growth.



CSIR - National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)

NIO’s principal focus of research is on observing and understanding special oceanographic characteristics of the Indian Ocean. The major research areas include the four traditional branches of oceanography: biological, chemical, geological/geophysical, and physical, as well as ocean engineering, marine instrumentation and marine archaeology.



CSIR - Central Salt & Marine Chemicals Research Institute (CSMCRI)

CSMCRI focuses on diverse and highly applied research areas such as salt and marine chemicals, water desalination and purification, membrane-based processes for separation & concentration, inorganic materials and catalysis, fine & speciality chemicals including sensing and diagnostics molecules, renewable energy, plant molecular biology & biotechnology with emphasis on seaweeds & salinity tolerance and waste management with a focus on value recovery and environmental impact assessment.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

AcSIR have now partnered with ICMR, connecting RMIT with 28 government-run medical research institutes in India.

AcSIR signed a Memorandum of Agreement with ICMR on 13 December 2023, an apex body in India for formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research under the Department of Health Research (DHR), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,

Government of India. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize the 28 ICMR institutes, one of the oldest medical research bodies in the world, as Research Institutes of AcSIR, by establishing a new faculty dedicated to Medical Research.



Indian Council of Medical Research Headquarters (ICMR HQ)

The ICMR aims to address the growing demands of scientific advances in biomedical research, and the need of finding practical solutions to the health problems of the country. The ICMR has come a long way from the days when it was known as the IRFA, but the Council is conscious of the fact that it still has miles to go in pursuit of scientific achievements as well as health targets.



National JALMA Institute of Leprosy & Other Mycobacterial Diseases (ICMR-NJIL&OMD)

The Institute is participating in and co-coordinating several multi-centric studies on Leprosy and Tuberculosis. The Institute has state of the art facilities like BSL-3 labs, DNA chip lab, Proteomics Lab, all well-equipped laboratories, modern hospital and well set Field Programmes at Ghatampur as well as Agra.



National Institute of Traditional Medicine (ICMR-NITM)

The only institute of ICMR dedicated to harnessing knowledge on traditional medicines. It's aim is to influence public health outcomes by facilitating the integration of traditional medicine practices with modern health system through research.



National Centre for Diseases Informatics and Research (ICMR-NCDIR)

The broad objective of the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR), Bengaluru, are to sustain and develop a national research data-base on cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (CVD), and stroke through recent advances in electronic information technology with a national collaborative network, so as to undertake aetiological, epidemiological, clinical and control research in these areas.



National Institute for Research in Environmental Health (ICMR-NIREH)

After the Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) gas/toxic gas disaster in December 1984, Bhopal set up a co-ordinating unit in 1985 and initiated several research programmes. This Coordinating unit was soon upgraded to Bhopal Gas Disaster Research Centre in 1986 to undertake long term epidemiological studies. ICMR-NIREH aims to become an institution of excellence for cross disciplinary research and innovation in environmental health.

National institution of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (ICMR-NICED)



The vision of the National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED), is to perform research and develop strategies for treatment, prevention and control of enteric infections and HIV/AIDS threatening the Nation's health. In 1980 the institute received the World Health Organization's recognition as "WHO Collaborative Centre for Research and Training on Diarrhoeal Diseases".

National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR-NIE)



The Institute aims to conduct epidemiological studies, development of human resources in epidemiology and bio-statistics, networking of the various ICMR and non-ICMR Institutes at the national level for epidemiological purposes, and consultancy. The Institute carries out a variety of research activities, which include areas such as interventional studies, health systems research, evaluation of health schemes and disease control programmes, statistical methodology, epidemiological investigations and outbreak science.

National Institute of Medical Statistics (ICMR-NIMS)



ICMR-National Institute for Research in Digital Health and Science/National Institute of Medical Statistics supports excellence in the development, application through the technical consultation and research, education, publications, dissemination and advocacy. Our members serve in government and academia, advancing research and promoting sound practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare.

Regional Medical Research Centre (ICMR-RMRCNE)



RMRCNE is responsible for carrying out Biomedical Research in the region with its current primary focus of research on (i) Mosquito borne diseases (ii) HIV and drug abuse (iii) Trematode infection (iv) Haemoglobinopathies. The secondary focus of research of the center is on (i) Cancer nasopharynx, oesophagus, stomach (ii) Cardiovascular diseases (iii) Medicinal plants of NE India (iv) Nutrition.

National Animal Resource Facility for Biomedical Research (ICMR-NARFBR)



The center is a state of the art Animal house and Animal sciences facility located near Turkapally, Shamirpet. The institute breeds specific pathogen-free large and small animals such as mice, rats, hamsters, rabbit, guinea pigs, mini pigs, canines, swine, equines, horses, sheep, and goats. Various species of non-human primates such as rhesus, bonnet monkey, cynomolgus monkey, pig tail monkey, owl monkey and squirrel monkey among others needed for research purpose.

National Institute of Research in Tribal Health (ICMR-NIRTH)



The NIRTH is the only publicly funded organization dedicated to research on health of tribes of the country. Biomedical scientists with diverse training and expertise not only diagnose and intervene different diseases prevalent in tribes, but also perform high-end biomedical research using modern tools to understand the mechanism of diseases and utilize the knowhow to devise novel methods of intervention and control.

National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (ICMR-NIRRCH)



The mandate of the Institute is to address the reproductive health issues of national and global relevance. The institute was established with an objective to develop novel and efficacious modalities for fertility regulation through research and thereby assist the government in its mission to stem the population boom.

Rajendra Memorial Research Institute of Medical Sciences (ICMR-RMRIMS)



RMRIMS' aim is research in different aspects of Visceral Leishmaniasis like Clinical, Vector biology and control, Immunological, Biochemical, Molecular biology, Pathological, Parasitological and Social. The institute is named after the memory of the first president of Republic of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad.



Vector Control Research Centre (ICMR-VCRC)

VCRC has been engaged in basic and applied research with the primary objective of finding newer methods and developing strategies of vector control for the control of vector borne diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the VCRC as a collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Lymphatic filariasis and Integrated Vector Management. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India in 2000 recognized the Centre as one of the Institutes of Excellence in India for Courses in Health Training.



National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV)

With the expertise in virological training and research and emphasis on self-reliance, the centre was well prepared to undertake full responsibility as a National Institute. The VRC acquired its status of national importance and was renamed as National Institute of Virology (NIV) in 1978.



National Institute of Occupational Health (ICMR-NIOH)

Occupational Health is a sustained activity aimed at promotion and maintenance of highest degree of physical, mental and social well being of workers in all occupations. The National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) has been established with the following objectives: (i) To promote intensive research to evaluate environmental stresses/factors at the workplace. (ii) To promote the highest quality of occupational health through fundamental and applied research. (iii) To develop control technologies and health programmes through basic and fundamental research and to generate human resources in the field.



Bhopal Memorial Hospital & Research Centre (ICMR-BMHRC)

“Caring is a way of life”. This is the motto at Bhopal Memorial Hospital and Research Centre, a multi-specialty tertiary care centre situated at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, which is the heart of India. The institute was started to provide advanced tertiary level super-specialty care to the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984) as well as to extend its services to the public at large.



Regional Medical Research Centre, Bhubaneswar (ICMR-RMRCBB)

The ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, Bhubaneswar conducts basic as well as applied research to understand and ultimately develop prevention strategy for diseases of regional importance like lymphatic filariasis, malaria, diarrhoeal disorders, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, emerging and reemerging bacterial/viral infections, haemoglobinopathies and allied disorders, hypertension, diabetes and health problems related to tribal populations.



National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (ICMR-NIRT)

ICMR-NIRT is an internationally recognized Institution for Tuberculosis (TB) research. It is a Supranational Reference Laboratory and a WHO Collaborating Centre for TB Research and Training. Recently, an International Centre for Excellence in Research (ICER) in collaboration with NIH was established at the Centre.



National Institute of Pathology (ICMR-NIP)

The Indian Registry of Pathology (IRP) was established in 1965 under the auspices of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in New Delhi, India as a Centre for collection and distribution of teaching material in pathology. The Registry was renamed in 1980 as the National Institute of Pathology (IOP) in view of its expanded scope and activities.



National Institute of Malaria Research (ICMR-NIMR)

CEERI advances R&D in the field of electronics, including areas of microwave tubes, plasma devices, MEMS and microsensors, optoelectronics devices, microelectronic processing and fabrication, VLSI Design, LTCC technology, nano structures, power electronics, industrial process control, agri-electronics, instrumentation and embedded systems.



Regional Medical Research Centre, Gorakhpur (ICMR-RMRC)

ICMR-RMRC is an apex body in India for formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research. It conducts, coordinates and implements medical research for the benefit of Society and aims to translate medical innovations into products/processes and introducing them in to the public health system.



National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN)

The NIN is an Indian public health, nutrition and translational research centre located in Hyderabad, India. The institute is one of the oldest research centres in India, and the largest centre, under the Indian Council of Medical Research, located in the vicinity of Osmania University. The institute has associated clinical and paediatric nutrition research wards at various hospitals such as the Niloufer Hospital for Women and Children, the Government Maternity Hospital, the Gandhi Hospital and the Osmania General Hospital in Hyderabad.



National Institute for Implementation Research on Non-Communicable Diseases (ICMR-NIIRNCD)

NIIRNCD in Non Communicable Diseases, Jodhpur came into existence in December 2019. The institute is located in Jodhpur and it replaces the erstwhile Desert Medicine Research Centre. The institute conducts basic laboratory based research in its microbiology, biochemistry and vector biology as well as Implementation research for improving health services and health systems.



National Institute of Immunohaematology (ICMR-NIIH)

The Council's research priorities coincide with National health priorities such as control and management of communicable diseases, fertility control, maternal and child health, control of nutritional disorders, developing alternative strategies for health care delivery, containment within safety limits of environmental and occupational health problems; research on major non-communicable diseases like cancer, cardiovascular diseases, blindness, diabetes and other metabolic and haematological disorders; mental health research and drug research (including traditional remedies).



National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (ICMR-NICPR)

NICPR is designated for research in Cancer prevention. The Institute was initially established as Cytology Research Centre (CRC) by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 1979, and was elevated to the level of an Institute in 1989. Its mandate was broadened to carry out research in cancer prevention and was renamed as National Institute in 2016.



Regional Medical Research Centre, Port Blair (ICMR-RMRCPB)

RMRCPB is one of the six Regional Centres of IMCR. The Centre was incepted in 1983 with the objectives of carrying out biomedical research on communicable and non-communicable diseases prevalent in Andaman and Nicobar Islands with a special emphasis on the health problems of the indigenous tribes and to develop technical manpower locally.



National AIDS Research Institute (ICMR-NARI)

ICMR-NARI has ably supported the National AIDS Control Programme, especially in the areas of surveillance, capacity building, laboratory services and drug resistance studies. ICMR-NARI derives strength from wide ranging National and International Collaborations.

Data as of August 2024

RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program



RMIT University and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) signed on to a joint PhD agreement during a formal ceremony in Melbourne on the 27th of July 2017.

Under the joint PhD program, students will be enrolled at both institutions, spending the majority of their program at the AcSIR host institute, and coming onshore to RMIT for up to 12 months at the latter stages of their program.

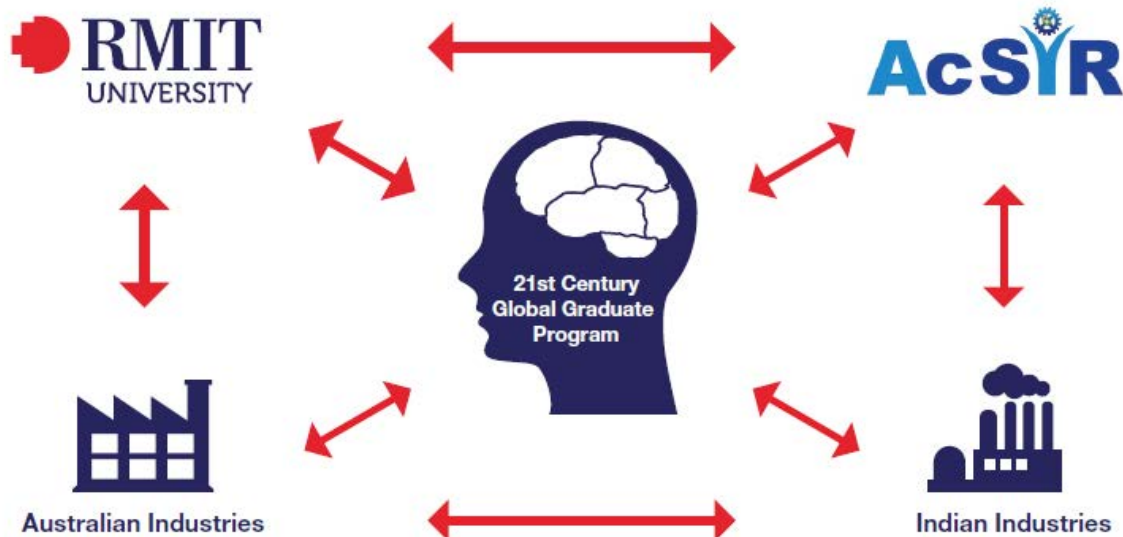
The first cohort of 17 candidates enrolled under the new joint program in August 2018. Now, we have over 100 enrolled students and are anticipating over 50 new candidates by next year.

This is unique and innovative program with new challenges that come with uncharted progress. The program will illuminate RMIT in India's education system and has the potential to have a significant impact on the lives of passionate, dedicated, students in India.

Students in the AcSIR programs are the top performing HDR candidates, producing

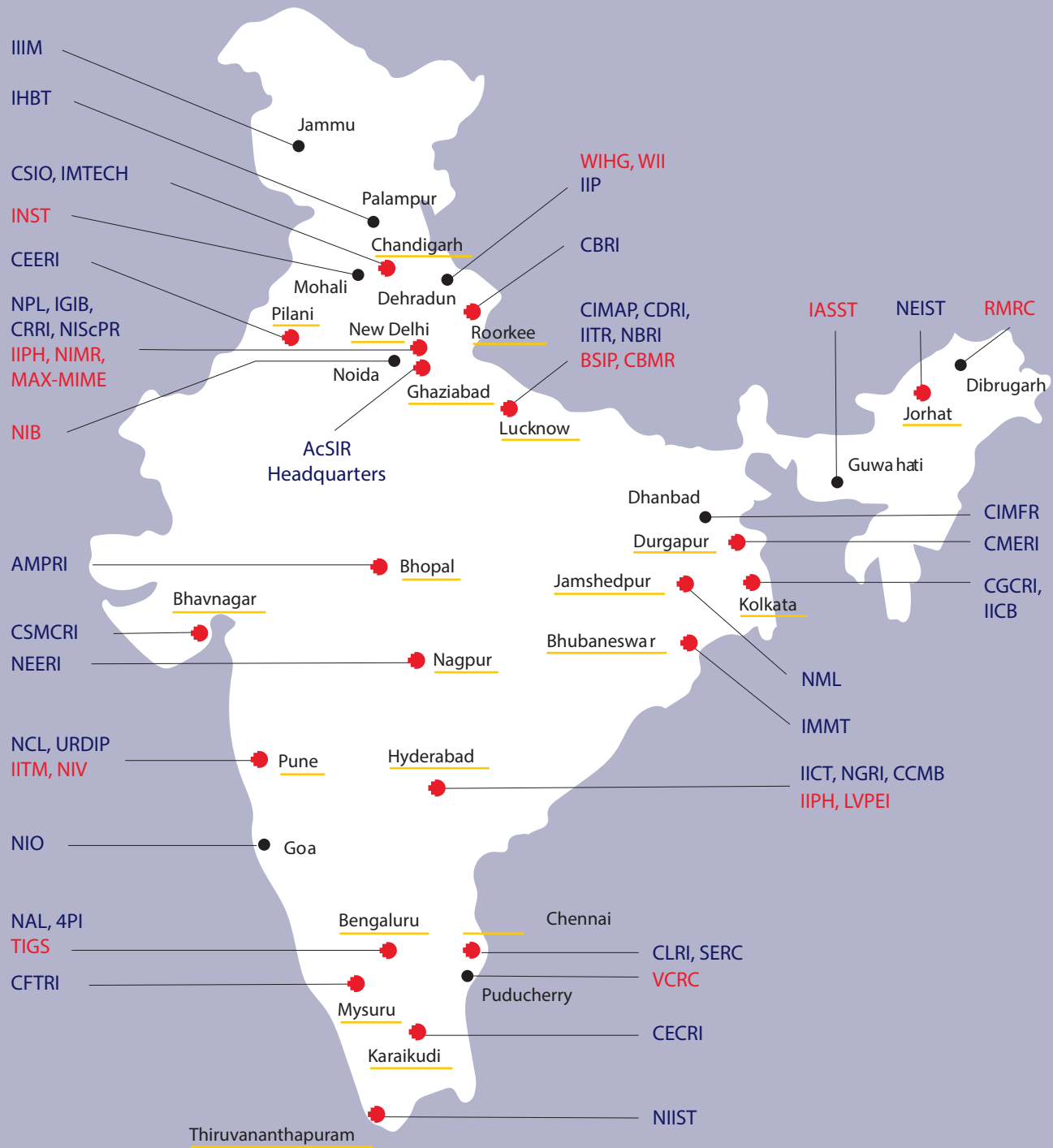
excellent publication rates, completion rates, and graduate outcomes. Admission to AcSIR is highly competitive, with a ~0.1% success rate; 500-600 candidates accepted from some 500,000 who sit the entrance exam each year. At the successful completion of their degrees, the students will be awarded PhDs from both RMIT University and AcSIR.

We now look to the future, and how to capture the next brilliant minds from India through research and innovation partnerships and strengthen the networks between these two countries.



RMIT-AcSIR relies on a four-pronged approach with industry collaborations across India and Australia.

RMIT-AcSIR partnerships



AcSIR Affiliated Institutes (CSIR)
AcSIR Affiliated Institute (Non-CSIR)
● RMIT-CSIR Partnership

The 7th AcSIR Convocation

Since the establishment of the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program in 2018, RMIT's reputation has grown internationally as a tertiary institution of choice within the AcSIR cohort, with >100 students having enrolled in the Program by the end of 2023.

The 7th annual convocation of AcSIR was held on 7th November 2023, with the address delivered by the Minister of State for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh. Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava was invited as the Guest of Honour to attend the event and deliver a speech to the 8000 graduating students of 2023.

The event was broadcast live across India and internationally, and senior executive members of AcSIR launched the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program 2021-2022 Annual Report in both English and Hindi. The front cover, with the Sydney Opera House illuminated with the flag of India, was on display, symbolic of Australia and India's alliance. 1000 copies of the Report were printed in India and distributed across all 37 CSIR labs.

The Professor Baldev Raj Memorial award was announced at the convocation - a joint award from both RMIT and AcSIR in memory of the former chancellor of AcSIR - for best performance in a PhD from a student enrolled in the RMIT-AcSIR Joint

Research Program. The recipients of the award for 2023 were Dr Sangita Kumari, Dr Shubhendra Kumar Jain, Dr Yogalakshmi N J, and Dr Shweta.



Dist. Prof Suresh Bhargava presenting Minister of Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh, with a gift from RMIT.



Presenting the Baldev Raj award to Dr Yogalakshmi N J.



Executive team of AcSIR with Special Guest, Prof Bhargava, at the 7th convocation of the AcSIR.



Dist. Prof Suresh Bhargava, Director General of CSIR Prof Nallathamby Kalaiselvi, and Director of AcSIR Prof Manoj Dhar.

**Prof. Kalaiselvi N.
Chancellor, AcSIR & DG, CSIR**

Visit from the RMIT-AcSIR executive team

RMIT's agreement with AcSIR has been extended to 2027, ensuring the continuation and growth of the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program. In February 2024, AcSIR's Director - Prof Manoj Dhar, and Associate Director - Prof Ajay Dhar (equivalent to Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor) visited RMIT University to further strengthen the bonds between the two institutions and meet with key members involved in the Program.

The AcSIR executive team visit had the key objective of sustaining the partnership with RMIT and streamlining the admissions process. The AcSIR delegation met with core RMIT staff directly involved with the program to discuss ways to better align the program with AcSIR objectives. The visit involved meeting the RMIT executive team, AcSIR students, HDR supervisors, and getting a guided tour of RMIT's laboratories and campuses.

The three-day visit to RMIT gave the AcSIR executive team the opportunity and insight to learn more about the AcSIR student experience at the university and how to better support students in the Program. The visit concluded with a VIP dinner with RMIT's Vice Chancellor, Professor Alec Cameron, RMIT DVCs R&I, International & Engagement, as well as the High Commissioner of India, My Gopal Baglay, and the Consul General of India, Dr Sushil Kumar, among other RMIT executive members.



Director Manoj Dhar and Associate Director Ajay Dhar at RMIT's Bundoora campus with Professor Catherine Itsiopoulos, ADVC and Head of Bundoora Health Precinct and Dean of School of Health & Biomedical Science, Associate Deans Professor Ross Vlahos, Professor Doa-El Ansary, and Professor Jonathan McQualter, and RMIT-AcSIR students.



Dinner at the Melbourne Marriott Hotel with the RMIT executive team: (left to right) Prof Ajay Dhar (Associate Director, AcSIR), Saskia Loer Hansen (DVC International & Engagement), Prof Catherine Itsiopoulos (ADVC and Head of Bundoora Health Precinct), Distinguished Prof Suresh Bhargava AM (Founder of RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program), His Excellency Mr Gopal Baglay (High Commissioner of India, Canberra), Prof Alec Cameron (Vice-Chancellor, RMIT), Prof Manoj Kumar Dhar (Director, AcSIR), Prof Calum Drummond (DVC R&I), Dr Sushil Kumar (Consul General of India, Melbourne), Prof Denise Cuthbert (ADVC Research Training and Development), Distinguished Prof Sujeeva Setunge (ADVC R&I).

RMIT cares

Graduate feedback

I am truly grateful for the support and opportunities provided by RMIT and the AcSIR Joint Research Program.

Completing my Ph.D. has been a rewarding experience, and I am proud to have been part of such a prestigious program.

I am excited to share the news that I have started a new position as a counsellor at the Confederation of Indian Industry headquarters in New Delhi.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisors from AcSIR and RMIT. Their guidance has been invaluable, making this journey truly fulfilling.

- Digambar Chavan, July 2024

I will always be grateful for the opportunity and support that I've received from RMIT and AcSIR. I am not able to find the words to express my happiness and gratitude.

Thank you once again for your kind words and for believing in me. I am dedicated to maximizing this opportunity and representing RMIT and AcSIR with excellence.

- Neelam, March 2024

My time at RMIT has been enriching, and I am grateful for the opportunities and resources provided by the university throughout my research journey. I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and am committed to making meaningful contributions to my field.

I have had a positive experience overall. The collaborative nature of this joint P.h.D program has provided valuable opportunities for interdisciplinary research and networking.

- Prashant Kumar, February 2024



RMIT-AcSIR student experiences

Students share experiences of their research, travels, and life in Australia

Amrit Raj Paul

CSIR Laboratory:
Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI)

RMIT School:
School of Engineering

RMIT Senior Supervisor:
Dr Dong Qiu

AcSIR Supervisor:
Dr Manidipto Mukherjee

“My time in Melbourne was not only professionally rewarding but also personally fulfilling.”



My research focuses on advancing stainless steel-aluminum bimetallic structures through metal additive manufacturing processes. Managing iron aluminide intermetallics at the bimetallic interface presents unique challenges in this field. Through the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program, I gained access to world-class additive manufacturing and material characterisation facilities, which were essential for understanding these complex structures and their diverse industrial applications.

A highlight of the program was the opportunity to train with cutting-edge equipment in various labs at RMIT. My senior supervisor, Dr Dong Qiu, provided invaluable support, guiding me in mastering the intricacies of additive manufacturing for bimetallic structures. I am deeply grateful to Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava for facilitating this enriching learning experience in materials science and manufacturing.

My time in Melbourne was not only professionally rewarding but also personally fulfilling. I maintained a healthy work-life balance, explored Melbourne’s stunning flora and fauna, and created lasting memories. The supportive staff at RMIT further enhanced my experience, always being available to assist me both professionally and personally.



Feeding a kangaroo at Ballarat Wildlife Park



Attending a conference at University of Queensland, Brisbane



Lunch with Prof Mark Easton - Director of Advanced Manufacturing Precinct - and his research group

Chitra

CSIR Laboratory:

National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL)

RMIT School:

School of Property Construction and Project Management

RMIT Senior Supervisors:

Associate Professor Rebecca Yang and Professor Tayyab Maqsood

AcSIR Supervisor:

Dr Parveen Saini

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Suresh Bhargava, the visionary behind the RMIT-AcSIR program, whose inspiring words and guidance have been instrumental in shaping my journey toward excellence. **Being selected for this program has been a truly life changing experience for me.**

The Program stands as a transformative milestone in my life. Beyond offering a global perspective during my PhD journey, it has become the gateway to remarkable opportunities, enriching my narrative with experiences that transcend the boundaries of traditional academia. From industry visits to hands-on practice with sophisticated instruments, my skills have been honed and expanded. Participating in the 3MT competition, attending workshops, and joining an international conference in Japan have contributed significantly to my academic and personal growth. Exploring diverse places such as Mount Buller, Eureka Sky Deck, Puffing Billy, and beautiful beaches have added a memorable dimension to my

experience.

During my time at RMIT, I have felt a sense of belonging through various celebrations like Independence Day, Teacher's Day, and Diwali. This institution has become a second home, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment.

Originating from the CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in New Delhi, I embarked on my research journey in Chemical Science under the guidance of Dr. Sushil Kumar and Dr Parveen Saini. Their continuous support has been a driving force in my research and personal development.

Embracing the concept that science knows no boundaries, my academic journey took a turn when I enrolled in the Built Environment at RMIT under the supervision of Associate Professor Rebecca Yang and Professor Tayyab Maqsood at the School of Property Construction and Project Management (PCPM). Though distinct from my original field, this transition provided an opportunity to excel in simulation-based work, thereby enhancing skills critical for shaping my future career. My sincere gratitude goes to Associate Professor Rebecca Yang and Professor Tayyab Maqsood for their unwavering support.

Special appreciation is extended to Mr Tae Kim for his consistent availability and assistance whenever needed. I am profoundly indebted to RMIT University and pledge to contribute to its legacy by serving whenever an opportunity arises.



Visiting Japan's rich heritage sites during Material Ocenia 2023 Conference, hosted by Nagoya University



Celebrating Diwali on a Cruise with RMIT-AcSIR friends



Meeting delegates at the Asia-Pacific Solar Research Conference: Prof Martin Green (UNSW, Sydney), Prof Richard Corkish (UNSW, Sydney), and Prof Vasilis Fthenakis (Columbia University, UK)

Billu Abraham

CSIR Laboratory:

National Institute of Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST)

RMIT School:

School of Science

RMIT Senior Supervisor:

Professor Benu Adhikari

AcSIR Supervisor:

Dr Nisha P

I was fortunate to spend a year at RMIT University in Melbourne, one of the most liveable cities in the world; and this journey was made possible by the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program.

Although I was well prepared before arriving, I felt a bit nervous upon reaching Melbourne. However, Tae Kim, the Offshore Program Support Senior Officer, helped me settle in smoothly. After meeting Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava, my confidence grew, and I was able to commence my research and coursework with assurance at RMIT.

I would like to express my gratitude to my AcSIR supervisor, Dr Nisha, who has been the guiding light of my research journey and a supportive mentor. My final chapter focused on active packaging films, and I was fortunate to join Professor Benu Adhikari's group at RMIT. My RMIT senior supervisor, Professor Adhikari is an expert in the field, and his caring and approachable nature made this a proud moment for me. I am also grateful to my associate supervisors, Professor Nitin Mantri and Professor Charles Brennan.

RMIT provided me the opportunity to interact with a diverse community of students and professionals, gaining valuable experience in food labs with advanced instruments. The online library service further enriched my academic journey.

A particularly fascinating experience was visiting Oliver Farm in New South Wales with Professor Adhikari. I observed the cultivation machinery and storage methods for potatoes, beetroots, onions, and garlic, and had the opportunity to interact with the engineers.

The peak of my journey in Australia was attending the Australasian American Oil Chemical Society (AAOCS) 2023 Conference in Newcastle. I presented during the conference and received a travel grant as a runner-up prize. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet experts and industry professionals. Another great memory is the Diwali celebration organised by the STEM College at RMIT, where I had a wonderful time volunteering for the event.

RMIT has not only expanded my academic knowledge but also transformed me personally. Learning new cooking skills and exploring different places in Australia has shaped me into a global citizen, contributing to a more peaceful world.



Exploring Oliver Farm in New South Wales



AAOCS 2023 Conference in Newcastle



RMIT's Diwali celebration with the Indian student community

Smrati Purwar

CSIR Laboratory:

CSIR Fourth Paradigm Institute (CSIR-4PI)

RMIT School:

School of Science

RMIT Senior Supervisors:

Prof SueLynn Choy and Associate Prof Chayn Sun

AcSIR Supervisors:

Dr GN Mohapatra and Dr V Rakesh

Embarking on the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program marked an unexpected and incredible chapter in my academic journey. As the first and only candidate from CSIR-4PI to be chosen for this Program, I found myself unsure about what lay ahead. Although I encountered some challenges during the visa application process, the moment I arrived in Melbourne in February 2023, I knew it was worth the wait.

One of the most significant advantages of the Program is the international exposure it offers. By immersing myself in a new academic environment, I had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with outstanding researchers and professionals in my field. **The Program provided me with a platform to exchange ideas, learn from experts, and broaden my perspective.** Interacting with like-minded individuals who share my passion for research has been incredibly inspiring and has further fueled my motivation to excel.

I am immensely grateful to my RMIT supervisors who have been instrumental in my academic journey. Their unwavering support, guidance, and feedback have been invaluable in shaping my research direction and enhancing the quality of my work. Additionally, I am thankful to my

AcSIR supervisor, who has been a constant source of motivation and support. Distinguished Prof Suresh Bhargava, a pillar of support, has been akin to a distant parent in Melbourne, providing guidance through every situation. Mr Tae Kim's regular check-ins ensured my well-being beyond just academic concerns.

Celebrating Diwali in a foreign land was a particularly memorable experience. I had the opportunity to celebrate this auspicious festival at the RMIT city campus with my newfound friends. It was a joyous occasion filled with laughter, delicious food, and the warmth of shared traditions. This celebration reminded me of the importance of cultural connections and the strength that comes from celebrating together, even when far away from home.

I also had the privilege of attending the 2023 Annual Research and Development Workshop organized by the Bureau of Meteorology. This event provided me with the chance to meet experts working in my field, inspiring me to push the boundaries of my research and strive for excellence. The workshop served as a reminder of the vast potential that lies within the academic community and the importance of collaboration in driving scientific advancements.

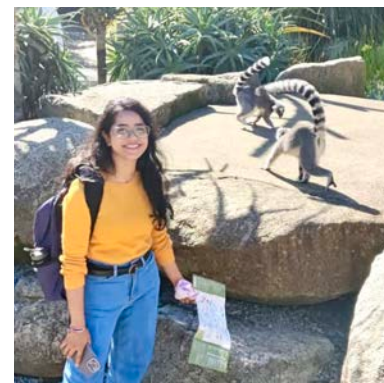
As I bring my Australian journey to a close, I cannot help but feel immense gratitude for the experiences I have had and the people I have met along the way. Australia has given me a wealth of knowledge, a deeper appreciation for different cultures, and a profound connection with nature. To everyone who played a part in making this journey possible, I offer my sincerest thanks. This experience has shaped me in ways I never could have imagined, and I will forever cherish the memories and lessons gained during my time in Australia.



Enjoying Melbourne's sites and visiting the State Library of Victoria



Attending the Bureau of Meteorology Annual meeting 2023



Exploring Melbourne Zoo

Premkumar Anil Kothavade

CSIR Laboratory:

National Chemical Laboratory (NCL)

RMIT School:

School of Engineering

RMIT Senior Supervisor:

Professor Stuart Bateman

AcSIR Supervisor:

Dr Kadhiraavan Shanmuganathan

Being chosen for the esteemed RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program has truly been a delightful experience for me. **One of the most advantageous aspects of this program is receiving guidance from two supervisors throughout the duration of the PhD.** I feel fortunate - as a polymer materials researcher - to have the opportunity to work in the field of aerospace engineering, all thanks to this program.

At RMIT, I had the chance to present my work at the AMTECH'23 conference in Sydney, organized by Materials Australia. This platform played a crucial role in facilitating connections with global researchers in the field and providing me with the opportunity to present my work before them. I was shortlisted for the 3MT presentation competition and had the honour of receiving the People's Choice Award. Engaging in extracurricular activities such as ice hockey, RUSU events, visiting The

Great Ocean Road and Mount Buller, exploring various zoos and the aquarium significantly contributed to maintaining a healthy work-life balance for me. Going through all of these experiences truly felt like a dream come true.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my AcSIR research supervisor, Dr Kadhiraavan Shanmuganathan, and my RMIT research supervisor, Prof Stuart Bateman. Their exceptional support, positive outlook, and guidance were pivotal to my success. Under Prof Bateman's supervision, I not only learned the importance of patience and composure in navigating challenging situations, but also gained valuable insights into effective communication. I am equally appreciative of my associate supervisor, Dr Abdullah Kafi, whose creative vision and unwavering support significantly contributed to both my academic development and provided essential stability during my initial days at RMIT. Special thanks are due to Dist. Prof Suresh Bhargava for giving me this opportunity and Mr Tae Kim for all the administrative support.



Visiting the iconic Sydney Opera House during the AMTECH'23 conference



Playing Dhol during Ganesh utsav at Williamston townhall



With friends at Puffing Billy



Nethravathy Malachira Uthaiyah

CSIR Laboratory:

Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI)

RMIT School:

School of Science

RMIT Senior Supervisors:

Professor Harsharn Gill

AcSIR Supervisors:

Dr Sreedhar R V

I am delighted to share my incredible academic journey as a doctoral candidate in the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program. One of the hallmarks of the Program has been the organic development of collaborative initiatives. Working in tandem with researchers across continents has added a layer of richness to my work that transcends geographical boundaries. From showcasing my research at global conferences to engaging in collaborations with distinguished professors at RMIT, each achievement has marked a significant milestone in my academic journey. These experiences have not only fortified my expertise but have also reinforced the conviction that collaborative research is the cornerstone of innovation.

Beyond the academic sphere, the Program has been a catalyst for profound personal growth. Melbourne, being a culturally rich city,

has greatly influenced my academic pursuits, offering a unique blend of scholarly rigour and cultural exploration. The city's vibrant art and cultural scene has been an integral part of my journey. Living in Melbourne has been a transformative experience of personal growth. Adapting to the city's pace, navigating its diverse communities, and embracing the Australian way of life, have all contributed to my holistic development as a scholar and an individual.

As I look towards the future, lessons learned and experiences gained in Melbourne will undoubtedly shape my professional path. I am eager to carry the essence of this dynamic city into the next phase of my career and beyond. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Prof Suresh Bhargava, my mentors, and colleagues at both AcSIR and RMIT, whose unwavering support has been integral to my academic journey.

"Living in Melbourne has been a transformative experience of personal growth."



Meeting fellow RMIT-AcSIR students at a coffee catch-up organised by Dist. Prof Suresh Bhargava



Diwali Celebration 2023 at RMIT



Visiting the Twelve Apostles on the Great Ocean Road



Neelam

CSIR Laboratory:

National Physical Laboratory (NPL)

RMIT School:

School of Engineering

RMIT Senior Supervisors:

Professor Kandeepan Sithamparanathan

AcSIR Supervisors:

Dr Subhasis Panja

Selection to the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program and having the opportunity to live and study abroad, especially in Melbourne - Australia's most liveable city - was a dream come true. I am grateful to Distinguished Prof. Suresh Bhargava for starting this collaboration between RMIT and AcSIR and giving students like me the chance to fulfil their dream of studying internationally.

Due to visa outcome delays of over one year, I got my visa after completing my Pre-Thesis Open Colloquium (PTOC) at AcSIR and 3rd milestone at RMIT. I am immensely thankful to Prof Kandeepan Sithamparanathan for providing guidance, scheduling weekly meetings, and giving feedback and suggestions throughout the RMIT candidature, even while I was offshore. His immense support allowed me to finish my research and complete the milestone within the given timeframe. I am also thankful to my AcSIR supervisor, Dr Subhasis Panja, for allowing me to join RMIT even after completing PTOC.

Apart from providing world-class research facilities, RMIT organised several workshops

over the year, including resume and coverletter writing, interview preparation, and academic writing skills (research articles, thesis writing, etc). In addition, library research assistant staff provided individual assistance on academic writing. These workshops were a boon for me when I was writing my thesis and applying for postdocs.

Following the guidance of my supervisors and using tips that I learned in these workshops, I started applying for postdocs positions, and was successful for a postdoc in SYRTE-Observatoire de Paris (France). Getting a post-doc was also a dream come true experience for me. **I am thankful to my supervisors as well as to RMIT for providing research facilities, and organising soft skills enhancing workshops, which helped me in preparing for interviews, and improving my resume and cover letters.**

I extend my sincere thanks to Mr Tae Kim (Senior Officer - Offshore HDR Program Support) for his help and support and for providing necessary information throughout the PhD candidature at RMIT. I also thank the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program students at RMIT for their support while moving overseas from India to Melbourne.



Neelam (Centre) with RMIT-AcSIR students Nethra and Smriti enjoying a visit to the Twelve Apostles



Enjoying the view of Melbourne from the Eureka Skydeck



Neelam's RMIT supervisor Prof Kandeepan Sithamparanathan, Neelam, and lab mates

Prashant Kumar

CSIR Laboratory:

CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL)

RMIT School:

School of Science

RMIT Senior Supervisor:

Professor James Patridge and Professor Lan Wang

AcSIR Supervisor:

Dr RP Pant (Emeritus Professor)

In June 2022, I embarked on a transformative journey at RMIT Melbourne. The initial three months were dedicated to comprehensive induction training and administrative tasks, setting the stage for the start of my fellowship. The administrative team and supervisors displayed unwavering support, creating an environment conducive to academic growth.

The heart of my academic venture lies in research, and RMIT provided a solid foundation for this pursuit. The first milestone was completing an online induction, which equipped me with the fundamental knowledge of various instruments as well as the RMMF Clean room. Following this, I had the privilege of operating cutting-edge, sophisticated instruments. The training for instrument operation was an empowering experience, as I successfully conducted experiments on my samples, a task I had never undertaken before.

Beyond the academic realm, the cultural milieu at RMIT has played a pivotal role in easing my feelings of homesickness. The

RMIT-AcSIR student community actively celebrates festivals, and the Diwali festivities were a testament to the warmth and inclusivity of this community. These celebrations not only provided a sense of cultural connection, but also fostered a supportive and communal atmosphere.

In terms of mentorship, Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava has been a constant pillar of support. His guidance has been invaluable, offering unwavering support in every meeting and diligently monitoring the progress of RMIT-AcSIR students. The mentorship has not only enriched my academic journey but has also contributed significantly to my personal and professional development.

I am grateful to my AcSIR supervisor, Dr RP Pant, an accomplished and dedicated researcher at CSIR-NPL, New Delhi. Their expertise in ferrofluids has been instrumental in shaping my doctoral journey. Their mentorship and commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge have been pivotal in preparing me for this Program. I am privileged to work under their guidance, and I look forward to contributing to cutting-edge research under their esteemed supervision.

I'm truly grateful for the support I've received from all RMIT-AcSIR supervisors, AcSIR coordinator, Mr Tae Kim, friends, and family throughout my research journey. This teamwork has made the environment nurturing, helping me overcome challenges and do well in my studies.



Enjoying the sights while visiting Sydney



Diwali celebration at RMIT with friends



Conducting a HRTEM sample measurement at RMMF

Prashant Kumar

CSIR Laboratory:

Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP)

RMIT School:

School of Engineering

RMIT Senior Supervisor:

Dr Ylias Sabri

AcSIR Supervisor:

Dr Prasanta Kumar Rout

Being the first student selected from CSIR-CIMAP, I feel fortunate to be selected for the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program. Undergoing this global journey has been a transformative experience during my PhD tenure.

I am eager to inspire and motivate fellow students from my institute to seize this invaluable opportunity, as participation in this Program undoubtedly contributed to my professional growth. Upon arrival, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that we could independently operate sophisticated instruments without external assistance. **My hands-on experience with advanced tools such as XRD, SA, DSC, SEM-EDAX, and TEM significantly enriched my technical skills.**

During my PhD journey at RMIT, I had the privilege of attending an international conference in Japan, where I was honored

with Best Student Presentation Award.

This recognition significantly boosted my confidence and serves as a motivating factor for me to excel in my research. Embracing the multicultural atmosphere at RMIT, I actively participated in and experienced various Indian festivals, including Independence Day, Teachers' Day, and Diwali celebrations. These cultural events provided a sense of home, which is crucial when living far away from my homeland.

In addition to my academic life, my time at RMIT allowed me to explore and appreciate various local attractions such as Puffing Billy, the Eureka Sky Deck, Mount Buller, Sea Life, and numerous beautiful beaches.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava, the visionary behind this program and my supervisor, whose motivational speeches, guidance, and support have been instrumental in empowering me to excel. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to my Indian supervisor, Dr Prasanta Rout, and RMIT supervisors: Dr Ylias Sabri, Dr Selvakannan Periasamy, and Dr Paramita Koley for their continuous encouragement and support throughout this remarkable journey. Lastly, I am grateful to Mr Tae Kim who has played a pivotal role in my transformative experience at RMIT.



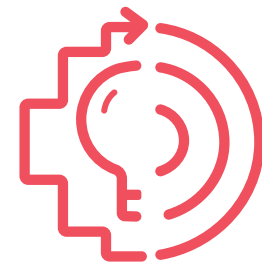
Visiting the MIRAI Electric Tower in Japan.



Interacting with researchers at the Material Oceania International Conference held at Nagoya University, Japan



Teacher's Day celebration with Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava, Dr Selvakannan Periasamy, and RMIT-AcSIR student Chitra, and Indian PhD student Shailiza.



Rajagopal Venkatachalam

CSIR Laboratory:

Central Electrochemical Research Institute
(CSIR-CECRI)

RMIT School:

School of Science

RMIT Senior Supervisors:

Associate Professor Lathe Jones

AcSIR Supervisor:

Dr V Suryanarayanan

As a project assistant in India, I was incredibly surprised and honoured to be accepted into the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program. Being the first person from my family and Thumbathulipatti village, in Salem, Tamil Nadu, to embark on this prestigious journey filled me with immense pride and a sense of responsibility.

Moving to Melbourne for my PhD was a significant and daunting step. I was overwhelmed with anxiety and uncertainty. Thankfully, Mr Tae Kim was there to guide me through every step of the process.

At RMIT, I was fortunate to have the support of my senior supervisor, Associate Professor Lathe Jones, and from India, Dr V Suryanarayanan who played a pivotal role in my academic journey. Their mentorship and encouragement were instrumental in helping me adapt to the new environment.

Distinguished Professor Suresh K Bhargava also provided tremendous support during challenging times and working closely with him for several months was inspiring and particularly beneficial for my research.

An unforgettable moment during my time in Melbourne was the Diwali celebration, where everyone wore traditional attire and enjoyed a joyful, culturally rich event. I will never forget the impact this Program had on my life.

Attending a conference at Griffith University on the Gold Coast was a highlight, where I gained valuable insights.

In Melbourne, I visited the Great Ocean Road, Sea Life Aquarium, the Museum, and celebrated New Year's Eve on Flinders Street, experiences which enhanced my stay.

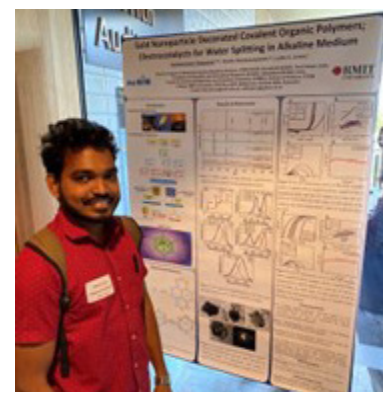
Overall, the Program has been a life-changing experience, and I will always recommend students to grab such opportunities. **This journey has set a strong foundation for my future, and I am excited to continue striving for excellence and making a positive impact in my field.**



Wearing traditional South Indian attire for Diwali 2023 at RMIT University



In the lab at RMIT



Presenting at Griffith University at a conference



Outstanding student achievement



Dr Sangita Kumari

Graduated from RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program in 2022

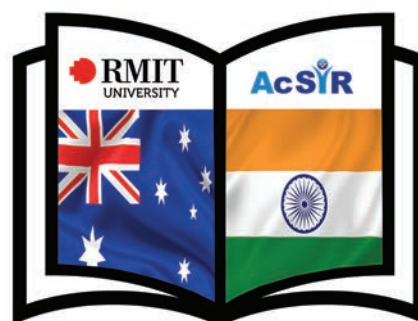
Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, Allahabad University, India

The RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program gave me the opportunity to pursue dual doctoral degrees: one from AcSIR and one from RMIT.

This program enhanced my career with opportunities of employment and postdoctoral experience both in my home country and abroad. While completing my PhD through the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program, I got a chance to expand my connections to a global network of researchers outside my institution and India.

I extend my vivid thanks to RMIT supervisors (Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava and Professor Sumeet Walia) and my AcSIR supervisors (Dr Om P Khatri and Dr S S Ray). They supported me throughout my PhD journey and enlightened my path with their guidance and time. During COVID-19 they continued to provide discussion, ideas and enthusiastic support through online sessions.

My sincere thanks to Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava, Director of the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program, RMIT and Dr Anjan Ray, the Director of CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum, for considering my candidature and providing me with the excellent opportunity to be part of this Program.



I am now working as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, India. This is an excellent opportunity for me to teach and provide research and technical skills training to the younger generation.



Dr Sangeeta Kumari receiving the Baldev Raj Award at the 7th AcSIR convocation in November 2023 with Director General of CSIR Prof N Kalaiselvi

A word from our Graduates

Stories of our ambassadors from across the globe

Dr Shiva Guddehalli Chandrappa

NSF - Postdoctoral Fellow
University of Puerto Rico, USA



I completed my PhD in 2022 through the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program in the field of electrode materials for rechargeable batteries. I am grateful for the opportunity the Program provided which allowed me to pursue a PhD from two world-class universities. This Program has enhanced my career prospects by offering opportunities for employment and postdoctoral experience. It also enabled me to develop key international collaborations, which have broadened my research skills and allowed me to work with global researchers. The research training and supervision I received from my supervisors (Professor Rachel Caruso and Professor Suresh Bhargava, as well as my AcSIR supervisor, Professor A S Prakash, CSIR-Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CECRI)) helped me excel in my research, resulting in the publication of more than 5 first-author research articles in reputed journals.

Soon after graduating, I became a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Helmholtz Institute Ulm (HIU) in Germany where I was involved in various research projects. My research focused on investigating the effects of electrolyte additives on Mg battery performance (Mg²⁺ and Mg-S systems) within the PostLithiumStorage (POLiS) excellence cluster project.

I have recently moved to the University of Puerto Rico, USA for my second postdoc. Currently, my research focuses on the development of electrode materials for rechargeable Li/Na-ion and metal-sulfur (Li and Na) battery applications in an NSF-project.

Dr Shweta

Postdoctoral Researcher
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Saudi Arabia



My journey at RMIT University began in April 2019. RMIT has a high-standard work culture and a great environment. I was surprised by the generosity of my supervisor, Prof John Andrews, who helped me learn the research more critically, and his support and guidance during my time in Melbourne were immensely beneficial to my journey.

During my time at RMIT, COVID-19 shattered the world, and Victoria witnessed the longest lockdown globally. Even though we were not allowed to attend campus for seven months, the university provided support. I am grateful to my supervisor, who regularly checked on my wellbeing.

I got the opportunity to perform research on hydrogen technology at two great, but different platforms. At CSIR-NPL, I contributed to the PEM fuel cell field, which extended to its advanced version, i.e. PROTON BATTERY, at RMIT. I was associated with the "Proton Flow Reactor Project" funded by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA). It was a pleasure to receive the prestigious Prof Baldev Raj Memorial Award for best PhD performance in the RMIT-AcSIR cohort, presented by the Hon'ble Science and Technology Minister of India.

Since graduating, I was employed as an Assistant Professor of Physics at Maharshi Dayanand University, India, and I have now accepted a position as a Postdoctoral Researcher at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Saudi Arabia.

My time at RMIT broadened my perspective and increased my confidence too. I will always cherish and remember my RMIT journey.



Dr Saurabh Pathak

**Assistant Professor
Seoul National University, South Korea**



I graduated in July 2020 with a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from RMIT, where I had the privilege of engaging in pioneering research in renewable energy systems. This specific project focused on developing sustainable energy solutions, and it played a pivotal role in shaping my academic and professional trajectory.

During my time at RMIT, I immersed myself in a variety of innovative and interdisciplinary projects that enriched my expertise and prepared me for future challenges. The collaborative environment fostered by RMIT allowed me to establish strong professional relationships that have been crucial in my ongoing career. After completing my PhD, I was offered a postdoctoral position at the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Melbourne.

Following my postdoctoral tenure, I received the opportunity to join Seoul National University as an Assistant Professor. This role has allowed me to continue my research in renewable energy while also expanding my academic and professional network. My time at RMIT was instrumental in this journey, providing me with the tools and connections needed to succeed.

I am deeply grateful to RMIT for providing this opportunity, and particularly to Professor Suresh Bhargava, who envisioned this program and provided opportunities for students like me. The collaborations I established during my time at RMIT continue to be key to my ongoing success and growth. I encourage current and future students to take full advantage of the opportunities at RMIT, as they can be the foundation of a successful and fulfilling career.

Dr Poonam Yadav

**Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellow
Max Planck Institute for Sustainable
Materials, Germany**



My experience during my time at RMIT was very pleasant and fruitful. Research facilities and the work culture was amazing. I learned a lot from people from diverse scientific backgrounds and cultures.

Research experience gained at RMIT helped me to secure my current postdoctoral position as a Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Sustainable Materials, which I received in 2022.

During my time at RMIT, scientifically, I improved my skills in using characterizations techniques. Personally, I improved my communication skills and ability to network. My mentors were very active and encouraging and I would like to incorporate these qualities as I continue my research journey and if I should ever have my own research team.

My advice to future students is to utilize your time at RMIT in the best possible way to learn how to network and develop expertise in one research area or instrument.



Dr Minal Chaturvedi

Postdoctoral Research Fellow
University of Sydney, Australia



I graduated in July 2024 from the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program. My research was focused on Parkinson's Disease, contributing to our understanding of neurodegenerative disorders.

My time at RMIT was filled with transformative and memorable experiences. Being part of a vibrant academic community allowed me to attend workshops like SAS2022 in Sydney and present at significant conferences such as ASB 2022 in Tasmania. Winning the Best Poster Prize at the RACI-CHEM MPG conference in Melbourne was a standout moment, reflecting the quality and impact of my work. These experiences, alongside the invaluable mentorship I received from my PhD supervisors at AcSIR and RMIT University, were instrumental in shaping my research and personal growth.

In April 2024, I became a postdoctoral researcher at the Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney. The knowledge, skills, and confidence I gained during my time at RMIT University were pivotal in securing this position so soon after submitting my PhD thesis and have since driven my contributions to cutting-edge research in neurodegenerative diseases. My career has progressed rapidly, with my experience in the Program serving as the foundation for my success.

My journey at RMIT was not only about academic achievements but also about personal growth. The multicultural environment broadened my horizons, and the friendships and networks I formed have been invaluable. Celebrating Indian festivals in Melbourne, such as Diwali, India Independence Day, and Holi, allowed me to stay connected to my cultural roots while embracing a global community.

I would strongly advise the current and future students of this joint PhD program to embrace this opportunity. The experiences you gain and the connections you make will shape your future in ways you might not realise. Stay curious, be open to learning from diverse perspectives, and never underestimate the power of perseverance.

Dr Ekansh Agarwal

Postdoctoral Research Associate
Texas A&M University, USA



In December 2023, I completed my PhD in Civil Engineering from RMIT University through the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research program. This Program provided me with unparalleled global exposure, including participation in various competitions, global leadership experiences, forums, and conferences. The dual supervision significantly enhanced my research, earning me the HDR 2022 Engineering Prize, the 3MT award from the School of Engineering, and research papers in high-impact, international, peer-reviewed journals.

I embraced the opportunity to experience diverse research cultures and refine my academic writing skills. My time at RMIT was marked by memorable achievements and learnings from various workshops and boot camps. RMIT continued its support while I was at Purdue University, USA, as a visiting doctoral fellow, helping me interact in events and receive online supervision. The supportive responses from Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava and Mr Tae Kim were especially motivating.

The Program offered access to world-class resources, including an extensive library, sophisticated software, and a global platform for academic competitions. The networking opportunities and professional contacts I developed during this time have been instrumental in my career progression.

The academic and professional growth fostered by RMIT played a crucial role in securing my current position as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the reputed Texas A&M University.

I wholeheartedly recommend this Program for the exceptional advantages and opportunities it provides PhD students, especially those from Indian national CSIR labs. For current and future students, I encourage you to seize this golden opportunity and make the most of it, as it will undoubtedly contribute to your career growth.

Celebrating special days



77th year of Indian Independence

On the 15th of August 2024, RMIT University celebrated the 77th year of India's Independence, organised by the RMIT Indian student club. There were vibrant colours of saris, traditional dancing, modern Hindi music, and a flag raising ceremony on Bowen St.

As the Dean, Research & Innovation (India), and the founder of the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program, Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava was invited to give a formal address to the crowd of over 1000 attendees.

RMIT's Indian student demographic make up the largest international student cohort at the university. Prof Bhargava said in his address:

"It brings me great joy to see the spirit of our

people resonate through Bowen Street as we march toward the Ormond statue, singing the Indian national anthem as we hoist the Indian flag, one of the only universities Australia-wide to do so on this commemorative day.

Empowering bright, young minds across India is having real impact in both academia and industry as our graduates emerge with job-ready skills. Together, we stand as a living testament to the transformative potential of a united community, harmoniously working towards a shared vision that promises to create real-world impact."



Students and staff celebrating at RMIT city campus.



Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava AM giving a speech at the India Independence day celebration at RMIT.



The flag of India hoisted at RMIT's city campus in honour of the the 77th anniversary of India's Independence Day on 15 August 2024



RMIT UNIVERSITY
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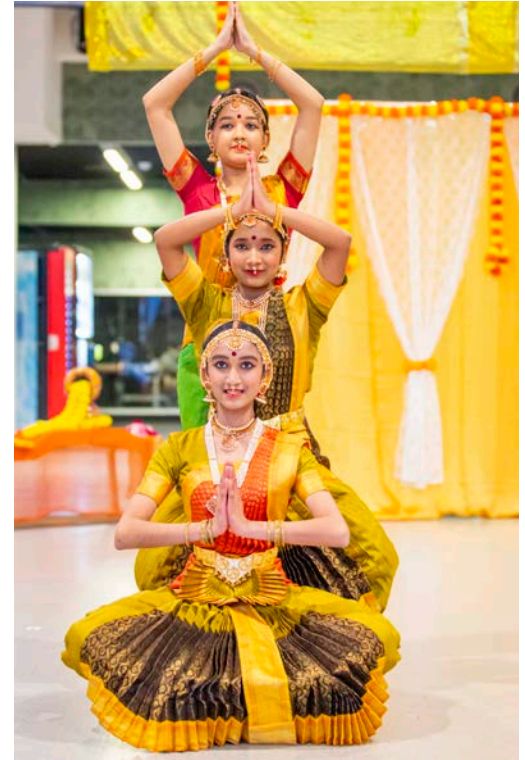
STEM College celebrates Diwali

RMIT's STEM College, with significant support and coordination from Dr Ruchika Ojha from CAMIC, as well as the RMIT Indian student community, put on a spectacular celebration for Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights.

This holiday symbolises the spiritual "Victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance", with the latter aligning with the key purpose of a university.

The event was held in November 2023 at the RMIT Media Portal and included activities such as the lighting of the lamps, several dance performances, Hindi music, yoga, traditional Indian food, and a raffle.

The event garnered >100 attendees and received positive feedback from students and staff, with several RMIT-AcSIR students expressing how the cultural celebration and pride in their heritage made them feel included, acknowledged, and part of a community.



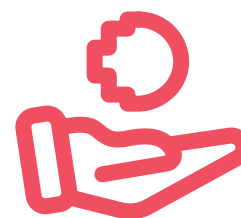
RMIT-AcSIR students and international PhD students from India enjoying the STEM Diwali celebration at the RMIT Media Portal.



DVC R&I Prof Calum Drummond AO, Dist. Prof Suresh Bhargava AM, and DVC STEM, Prof Ian Burnett.



Supervisor comments



Professor Charlotte Conn
Biophysical Chemist

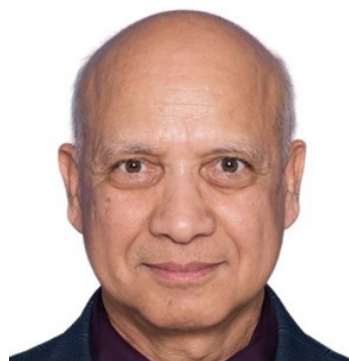
School of Science
RMIT University

It was a privilege for me to host three RMIT-AcSIR joint students, to date, within my research team. The calibre of these students was extremely high, and it has been great to see that they were all awarded the PhD degree within the past year.

These students not only published numerous high impact-factor papers in their respective fields, but were also all highly valued team-members who contributed to a range of projects within the research team.

These joint PhD projects offer a great opportunity for Australian researchers to build their networks with excellent Indian researchers, who bring unique and complementary skills and capabilities to what we have here at RMIT. I plan to visit India in the near future to meet many of these collaborators in person and build on our strong research collaborations.

I'm happy that I have another AcSIR student joining my lab next year from CSIR-NIIST in Kerala and look forward to a successful PhD project and an equally productive collaboration!



Professor Benu Adhikari
Food Technology HDR Manager

School of Science
RMIT University

I am supervising three RMIT-AcSIR cotutelle PhD candidates. These PhD projects are unique due to their diverse nature. The first project focusses on extracting valuable compounds (nanocellulose and lignin) from waste generated by the Ayurvedic industry. The second project focusses on developing highly effective, yet in-soil, degradable delivery shell material whereby both growth stimulating compounds and insect-repellents are encapsulated. The third project focusses on developing hybrid packaging materials in which extracts from onion peels are used as indicators and oxygen transfer regulators.

My experience as supervisor of the AcSIR candidates is that they bring unique capabilities. They are highly motivated and highly skilled. My role in their work here at RMIT is to provide timely input and help them navigate RMIT's system. They are motivated to submit their theses in time.

These projects have already produced outputs such as papers in Q1 journals and a couple of papers are in peer revision stage. I believe they're an asset to RMIT University and am happy to contribute and be a part of this Program.

RMIT cares

**From the Office of Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava AM,
Director of the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program**



RMIT-AcSIR students celebrating Holi at RMIT.



Senior Officer of Offshore HDR Program in STEM, Mr Tae Kim, catching up with RMIT-AcSIR students at a monthly meeting.



RMIT's festivities on Bowen St for the 77th India Independence Day in 2023.

As campus life made a return to how it was pre-COVID lockdowns, we made the most of 2023 and 2024 by creating opportunities for students to gather together again and bring back the vibrancy and spirit of what student life is all about: building community.

Through organising and supporting a diverse array of events and activities that celebrate and pay tribute to India's rich culture and heritage such as Diwali, Holi, and India's Independence Day, we aimed to foster a diverse, inclusive, and fun campus environment that would enrich each student's experience during their year in Melbourne, as well as promoting engagement with the RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program.

These events - along with monthly meetings with the RMIT-AcSIR student cohort in Melbourne, representatives from the School of Graduate Research, PhD supervisors, and Mr Tae Kim, Senior Officer of the Offshore HDR Program in the STEM College - served to reinforce a strong sense of community amongst our Indian student cohort and let them know that they are seen, valued, and welcome here at RMIT.

Though the challenges of lockdowns may be over, we faced new challenges that needed to be overcome, such as visa issues, issuance of CoE delays, as well as the general anxiety and nerves of settling into a new country and being met with different cultures, customs, and cuisines. However, it was wonderful to see the testimonials from our resilient RMIT-AcSIR students (pg30) pour in expressing their gratitude for the Program and the support they received, and the memories and experiences they'll carry with them as they continue their PhD journey and go out into the world as more globally connected researchers.

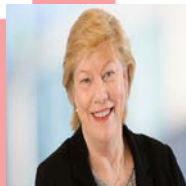
How Leaders Perceive the Program's Impact



Prof. the Honourable Margaret Gardner (AC)
Governor of Victoria

“The RMIT-AcSIR Joint Research Program is emblematic of the importance of Victoria’s relationship with India – a partnership in which there are increasing opportunities for us to learn from one another and share in the benefits of knowledge exchange.”

October 2, 2024



Prof. Dr Megan Clark (AC)
Chancellor Monash University

“As Australia and India look to form deeper ties the successful partnership of RMIT and AcSIR plays an important role in bringing together the very best people to strengthen our research partnership, build enduring friendships and tackle some of the most difficult challenges. Congratulations on your continuing success.”

October 4, 2024



Prof. Robin Batterham (AO)
FEng, FAA, FTSE
Former Chief scientist of Australia
Former president of ATSE,
President of Institute of Chemical Engineers
(2004)

“In an increasingly fragmented world, research training that is collaborative and crosses continents is vital. The RMIT-AcSIR program continues to be a shining example.”

October 1, 2024



Prof. Alan Simon Finkel (AC)
FAA, FTSE, Former Chief scientist of Australia
Former Chacellor of Monash University,
Australia, Former President of ATSE

“Tomorrow will be shaped by the leading graduates of today. The graduates from the RMIT-AcSIR joint research program have been challenged by prominent academics to solve global problems, to build countryspanning bridges to carry the technological solutions of the future, and to build life-long bonds of friendship between Australia and India.”

October 1, 2024



How Leaders Perceive the Program's Impact

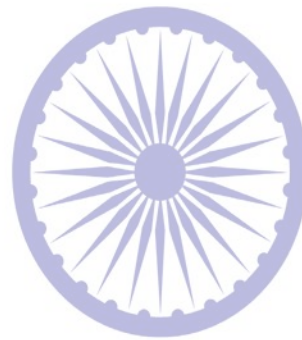


**Dr Raghunath Anant Mashelkar
(Padambhusan)**

FTWAS, FNA, FASc, FRS, FREng, FRSC
Former Director General, Council of
Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
Founder chancellor of AcSIR

“Having been associated with this unique academic partnership from its very inception, I feel very proud to see the way it has shown how research and innovation can be transformed across borders, while setting new benchmarks. This partnership is a magnificent example of what visionary leadership with purpose, perseverance and passion can achieve.”

September 30, 2024



Prof. Ajay K. Sood

FNA, FASc, FNASc, FRS, FTWAS
Principal Scientific Adviser to the
Government of India

“ Innovation’s impact extends beyond individuals in shaping society, transforming lives, and defining our future. The successful journey of AcSIR and its partnership with RMIT is commendable and exemplary in training global leaders in Science and Technology.”

September 30, 2024





*When the student is ready,
the teacher will appear
- The Buddha*

Contact us

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