

ACCESS TO ADOBE

A Call to Re-align Education with Industry Standards

Introduction:

Certain Faculties in the university have recently switched from Adobe Suite to Affinity Software, and this has had an adverse effect on students education and employability. This was a very recent change and there has been a general outcry from students from these faculties against it. To address and understand the issue further, we met up with the Design Students Society (DES) where they expressed deep dissatisfaction with this change. In the past, Unimelb offered Adobe Suite to students at the subsidized price of \$80-90/year, but they have now moved to use Affinity which is a free software. While that works for the university, according to DES, Adobe is the leading Industry Standard for Design, Architecture and Planning in Australia and Worldwide. Design Softwares are highly individualized and learning one is not the same as learning all of them and Adobe is “*essential for designing professionally*” . This gravely affects the employability options of graduates of Unimelb and restricts them to learning a software which is not very widely or primarily used outside education. Most students, if they are looking for work, will now have to learn Adobe themselves and pay the student rate of Adobe which is around \$24 a month which is considerably more than what students paid before when it was offered by the university.

Student Feedback:

Some subjects, especially in Graphic Design and Architecture, still list Adobe as a subject requirement and require students to get Adobe for their projects on their own account. This highlights the fact that the subject coordinators feel it is important for students to learn to work in Adobe Suite but they are not being supported by the University for it.

One student said -

“Unimelb has taken away our adobe subscriptions from last year, offering "affinity" as an alternative. yet every graphic design class REQUIRES adobe software, nor is affinity an appropriate replacement for much of graphic design as a career.”

Another Student mentioned that they are highly distraught by the fact that *they have lost their access to Adobe and because there is no way they can afford it, they would be forced to illegally pirate Adobe and work on a version which will be buggy and glitchy while also risking unstable software and ethical implications—because the university no longer provides an accessible option.*

UMSU Education did a collective in Southbank in week 8 which was attended by closely 60-70 people, and one of the major feedbacks to come out was dissatisfaction with removing Adobe Support. Students at Southbank are disproportionately affected by this change and chose to express this in quotes- “*No one wants Affinity*”, “*Please Free Adobe*” and “*BRING BACK ADOBE!!!*”. These quotes were met with enthusiastic agreement by most people at the collective.

One of the startling factors was that several students felt very dissatisfied with the infrastructure and support provided to them in order to be industry-ready after graduating and compared it to other universities like RMIT, Monash and Swinburne all of whom have Adobe Suite for their students. Several students said that even though they had gotten an offer from the uni to do their masters here, they weren’t willing to and are considering other options like RMIT or USyd as they believed that they would have more support there.

RMIT Model:

- All RMIT students and staff have free access to Adobe Express (Premium). Staff and students, who need more technical programs in the Adobe Creative Cloud suite for their studies, research, teaching, or to carry out their role also have access to additional programs.
- This was a change from all students having access to Adobe Creative Cloud Suite earlier.

While this model is very different from Unimelb it offers a cohesive incorporation of relevant industry software into the education system and students benefit greatly from this. We are asking that the University of Melbourne go back to their previous model of offering Adobe Access at a discounted rate of \$90 dollars for all ABP and Design subjects to match the industry standard.

Conclusion:

Why Adobe Matters:

1. As of 2025, Adobe products command over 80% of the global graphic design software market
2. Many internships and job postings explicitly require Adobe proficiency
3. Creative workflows taught on Affinity don’t always translate to Adobe

Call to Action:

1. Reinstate the previous subsidised Adobe Creative Cloud access for ABP and Design students at ~\$90/year
2. Ensure this option is available in all courses where it is listed as a requirement
3. Consult students before making future software changes

Most students have had to buy Adobe themselves because in their tutorials and classes, they are strongly encouraged to use Adobe over Affinity as using Adobe is crucial to their education as graphic designers and architects. Students learn Adobe in school, and use it for their work after graduation but in university which is supposed to be the stepping stone towards working, they do not have access to this crucial tool which is offered to students graduating from other universities.

We believe that the decision to move to Affinity was not made without consideration. According to our current understanding, Adobe has increased prices and was offering Unimelb a higher rate than what was expected. However, University of Melbourne's claims to be the #1 University in Australia and #8 for graduate employability with students at its heart, but we feel that this move gravely disaligns from the university's priorities. Preparing students for a world where they can find work after graduation is a primary motive for higher education providers. Considering the amount of money students pay for their education at the University of Melbourne, we think it is entirely reasonable to expect that they will be taught according to their best interests and that the university takes initiative to invest back in its student body.