

# TIP SHEET FOR WRITING A SHOW CAUSE SUBMISSION

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## QUESTION 1 - DESCRIBE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAVE AFFECTED YOUR STUDIES

### *Provide Reasons for Your Unsatisfactory Academic Performance*

#### **Personal**

1. Health (including mental health): supply medical certificates or letters from counsellors/psychologists as evidence.
2. Financial: provide any evidence to support this issue? e.g. Bank statements
3. Family issues, relationship issues: e.g. worried about a sick parent (require evidence – e.g. doctors letter) or relationship ending (counsellor letter).
4. Death in family/close friend: A certified copy of death certificate as evidence usually requested.
5. Victim of crime: A certified copy of Police Report as evidence.
6. Cultural issues: e.g. International students having problems adjusting.
7. Transition problems: Previously in TAFE? International student? Regional student? Returning to study after a long break?
8. Language difficulties
9. Work: Do you work as well as study? How many hours? What hours (i.e. – night shifts?). Timesheets/payslips and/or letters from employers should be used as evidence.
10. Living situation: Do you live with other students? Does your home have a good study environment? Have you had accommodation problems?
11. Study-life balance: Do you party too much? Spend too much time on other things? Perhaps you need *more* social interactions to balance out your studies?
12. Did you receive any Special Considerations for these or other circumstances? If so, for what and when? Do you know about Special Consideration?



## Academic

1. Are you in the right course?
2. What is your study routine like? Do you have a problem with time management? Find keeping motivated hard? Do ok in semester but get too stressed out at exams? How many hours per week per unit do you study (outside of class)?
3. What has your attendance been (%)? If low, explain why.
4. At Risk: Did you respond to your At Risk letter from last teaching period (ie attend seminar, workshops)?

## Administrative

1. Did you amend your study load? Any problems with your enrolment?
2. Do you find this course too difficult? Do you wish you had reduced your study load?
3. Leave of Absence? Do you need 6 months off to get your life back on track? (1<sup>st</sup> year and International students not eligible).
4. How long until you complete your program?

# QUESTION 2 - DESCRIBE ANYTHING YOU HAVE DONE TO OVERCOME THESE CIRCUMSTANCES

## *List Strategies to Overcome Your Circumstances*

Match these up with the relevant points from Question 1, as relevant to your situation

\*Note – these strategies are suggestions for circumstances which may or may apply to you. The suggestions may/may not be useful, however are highly recommended. Get to know what support services are available to you.

Are the circumstances still present and/or affecting your studies? If they are still present, when are they likely to lessen? What strategies do you have in mind/or have already implemented to decrease the impact of these circumstances?

## Personal

1. Health (including mental health): Continue to/or start to receive health support as necessary. Counselling service is free and appointments can be held over the phone <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/stuserv/counselling/index.html>  
If stress and motivation are problems, look at the Academic Success Program workshops <https://www.swinburne.edu.au/current-students/study-support/improve-skills/workshops/>  
For ongoing health issues – do you need to register with Disability Support? <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/stuserv/disability/>



2. Financial: Do you have any means of financial support? Have you thought about student loans (for books etc)? Finance support service can help you manage your money. Do you work? Are you eligible for government payments?  
<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/stuserv/finance/>
3. Family issues, Relationship breakdowns: Would counselling be beneficial for you?
4. Death in family/close friend: Would some counselling be beneficial for you?
5. Victim of crime: Would some counselling be beneficial for you?
6. Cultural adjustment issues: Perhaps look at joining some of the Swinburne Student Life clubs and societies <http://unione.swin.edu.au/clubs/search>
7. Transition problems: Perhaps look at joining some of the Swinburne Student Life clubs and societies. ex-TAFE: Speak to lecturers/tutors. Would some counselling be beneficial for you? International students: Have you planned a visit home? Or is family visiting you?
8. Language difficulties: Access Language and Academic Skills Support  
<https://www.swinburne.edu.au/current-students/study-support/improve-skills/english-skills/>  
Speak to your lecturer/tutor about it, study in a group.
9. Work: Can you reduce hours? More than 12-15hrs/week is considered too much when studying full time. Can you swap a night shift for an earlier shift? Can you get something in writing from your boss (on letter-headed paper) saying you have been doing X hours and now you are going to do Y hours?
10. Living situation: Is it possible to move to a quieter, more studious house? Otherwise can you come to some arrangement with your current house mates?  
Maybe it would be better to study in the library than at home?  
Accommodation problems – put signs up, check uni notice boards, speak to Housing Support service: <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/stuserv/housing/>
11. Home location: Are there possibilities for you to move closer to uni? If you catch public transport, try studying on the train/bus etc (or if you do already, mention it). Any possibility of getting a car if this is the solution?
12. Uni-life balance: Too much socializing/non-study activity; this can be easy to rectify. Just in acknowledging it, you can state that you have learnt this is not appropriate and will heavily reduce this lifestyle and focus on study. Discuss a study schedule and strategies to resist mates and other triggers.  
Not enough social/non-study activity: Perhaps look at joining some of the Swinburne Student Life clubs and societies, getting involved in Swinburne Student Life Activities, check out Student Life Monthly for What's On sections (International students especially)
13. Special Consideration: Explain why you didn't apply for Special Consideration (if relevant). Or what the circumstances were around your application i.e. For what subjects, which assignments and why.



## Academic

1. Are you in the right course? Discuss options with Careers & Employment, lecturers, industry professionals.  
International students - What options do you have to change course?
2. What is your study routine like? Do you have a problem with time management? Find keeping motivated hard? Do ok through semester but get too stressed out at exams? Treat your studies like a full-time job. Be more consistent with study (location, time etc). Attend workshops for time management, motivation, exam management: <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/stuserv/counselling/group.html>  
Register for these workshops NOW! This will look great in your submission e.g. "I recognise that these workshops can assist me and have registered for ..."
3. What has your attendance been (%)? If low attendance, what can you do about it?
4. At Risk – did you respond to your At Risk letter from last teaching period (i.e. attend seminar, workshops). If not why not? Provide your reason.

## Administrative

1. Amend your study load. If you had problems with enrolment, seek assistance from a Course Advice Specialist (try to do this as soon as possible, or at least state that you will be doing so). Do 3 units instead of 4. Go part time. Explain how these options will help your studies and performance. Have you thought about changing course? What to?  
It may be useful to speak with your faculty based advisor as part of your strategy. These advisors can assist you to create a detailed study plan or think about internal course/unit changes. They also have the resources to consistently engage with you throughout semester. Some faculties have a buddy system in place for at risk/show cause students where you can be linked up with a senior student to keep tracking your progress and seek guidance as needed.
2. Do you find this course too difficult? Speak to lecturers. Have you considered getting a private tutor? Seeking help from the Language and Academic Skills Program to improve your results?
3. Do you need to take a Leave of Absence? State clearly how this will be of benefit to your situation.  
For some students taking 6 months off study to work or get better from chronic illness is a very smart idea.
4. How long until you complete your program? If you only have a year or a semester to go, then state that you haven't got long and that you have come so far already.



## QUESTION 3 - PRIOR PROGRESS REVIEW OR CONDITIONS

If you have received a previous At Risk or Show Cause Notice you will need to outline what you did in the previous Teaching Periods to Address this.

Explain if you engaged with services like counselling, or an Academic Development Advisor. Were they helpful in assisting you in your studies?

## QUESTION 4 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT MAY ASSIST THE PROGRESS REVIEW PANEL

How do your studies contribute to your life goals and dreams?

Are you enjoying your studies?

How is this teaching period progressing? Have you submitted any assignments?

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (EVIDENCE)

Documents used for evidence must be either ORIGINALS or a CERTIFIED COPY of the original.

How do I get a copy of a document certified?

Make a photocopy of the original document, take the copy and the original to either a Police Station or to a pharmacist (at a Pharmacy/Chemist store) and ask that the photocopy be certified. What they will do is look at the photocopy and compare it to the original, stamp the copy and sign it to certify it as a genuine copy.

What if I can't get the supporting document before my submission is due?

That's ok. Organise for the document to be available as soon as possible. Write in your submission that the document has been requested and will be available on <insert> date. You will need to deliver that document to your faculty on the date you indicate in your submission. If the date changes, be sure to let your faculty know.

### **Types of evidence (most common):**

- Doctors Certificates – must be written and signed by your doctor. Doctor's bills are not acceptable as evidence of a health issue. For ongoing chronic illness, a letter from your doctor/specialist is appropriate. It is understood that letters from Specialists can take more than a week to get. This is ok, you just need to mention this in your submission and indicate what date the letter will be available.



- Letters from Counsellors – Swinburne Counsellors can write letters of support for students. Contact the counselling service to make an appointment (preferably with the counsellor you have previously seen) to arrange this. It is free.
- Death Certificates – for family members this is required. It can be a difficult document to get. Organise it as soon as possible and note expected date of availability in your submission.
- Police Reports – the station where you lodge the report will issue you a copy. This is considered certified.
- Bank statements – these may be useful to demonstrate financial hardship. (This claim must be clearly linked with academic performance however)
- Letters from employers – clarify the hours you have been doing and/or will change to.
- Work timesheets – used to demonstrate how many hours at work you have been doing.
- Statutory Declarations – these are written statements that are legally binding. You can get a blank Statutory Declaration form from a post-office, newsagency, online or police station. You are breaking the law if you write anything in a “Stat Dec” that isn’t true. Statutory Declarations are good if you only have someone else’s or your own word as evidence of an event or circumstance. If you require someone else to write a Stat Dec for you, be sure to organise it as soon as possible. See:  
<https://www.ag.gov.au/Publications/Statutory-declarations/Pages/default.aspx>

**Don’t forget to get one of our Advocates to check your submission before you lodge it. This is a free, confidential and independent service supplied by Swinburne Student Life (formerly the SSAA).**

**Contact us on 03 9214 5445 or [advocacy@swin.edu.au](mailto:advocacy@swin.edu.au) to make an appointment.**

