

RUSU

Student Rights

FEE REMISSION

YOUR GUIDE TO MAKING
A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

RMIT University Student Union Inc. acknowledges the the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. We respectfully acknowledge their Ancestors and Elders, past and present and emerging.

CONTACT THE RUSU STUDENT RIGHTS TEAM

RUSU strongly encourages you to **make an appointment with a Student Rights Officer before you lodge your application.** To make an appointment, email: **student.rights@rmit.edu.au**

Or, you can book an appointment at one of RUSU's info counters:

- **City Campus:**
Building 12, Level 4
Tuesday to Thursday, 9.00am – 4.00pm
- **Carlton Campus:**
Building 57, Level 4
Tuesday to Thursday, 9.00am – 4.00pm
- **Brunswick Campus:**
Building 514, Level 1
- **Bundoora Campus:**
Building 202, Level 2
Tuesday to Thursday, 9.00am – 4.00pm

Please note that Bundoora and Brunswick are closed during the summer.

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In this booklet, we give tips and advice for making a successful fee remission application. The process can be difficult to understand, and being successful is about more than simply telling your story. **You must be able to prove that you meet the criteria for the process or your application will be declined**, no matter what the circumstances were that caused you to fail.

INTRODUCTION

What is fee remission?

Fee remission means asking for a full or partial refund of your course fees on failed courses.

If you are on a HELP loan, you have the right to apply for fee remission under RMIT Policy and Government legislation. RMIT also allows international students to use this process.

Fee remission may be granted for courses you have failed because of problems that were beyond your control.

Things you should know

Applying for fee remission is a highly complex process. The evidence you provide must meet strict criteria.

An explanation is not enough. Without clear supporting evidence, your application will fail.

RMIT will assess whether the fail could have been avoided had you taken steps such as reducing your study load before the census, or applying for extensions.

Your application needs to clearly show RMIT that the issue leading to a fail grade was beyond your control.

About this guide

The information in this guide is here to help you have the best chance of success.

This guide covers the most common areas where students have difficulties with their application. Ensure you read each section, as there are many helpful tips.

There is a specific section for mental health problems, as these are an extremely common issue, but they can be more difficult to explain, because they can affect study in complex ways.

This information has been provided as a general guide to help student understand how decisions are made about fee remission. Individual circumstances, the level of quality and availability of evidence differs from student to student, and final decisions are made by the university. RUSU cannot guarantee that following this advice will lead to a successful application.

Making an application

Applications need to be made by filling out the correct form, which is available on RMIT's website. Follow the QR code link below to access the form:



Aside from sections for administrative details, the form has two important parts:

1. **An Impact Assessment Statement**, which should be filled out by a relevant professional for medical and psychological conditions.
2. **A Special Circumstances Statement**, where you are asked to explain your circumstances.

The Special Circumstances Statement should be written as a separate document, and sent in alongside your application form. This will give you more room to explain your circumstances, and makes it easier for RUSU Student Rights to give feedback and advice before submission.

For the best chance of success, make an appointment with a Student Rights Officer, who will check your application before you submit it.

When your application is complete and it has been checked by a Student Rights Officer, email it to the address on the form, along with your special circumstances statement, and copies of your supporting evidence.

Criteria for fee remission

The fee remission process refunds fees for courses which you could not pass because you had health or other personal problems.

Fee remission is a formal process, and uses rules set by the Australian Government under the HELP scheme. Fee paying students are also permitted to apply.

There are three **essential criteria** used to decide if remission can be granted. You must show evidence that your situation meets **all three** criteria:

- 1. The circumstances were beyond your control.**
The reason for the fail grade cannot be because of a mistake you made or something you did not do correctly.
- 2. The circumstances happened after the census date.** The reason for the fail grade must have happened after the census date, or their full effect only became clear after the census date.
- 3. The circumstances made it impossible to pass the course.** The reason for the fail grade must have made it impossible for you to pass the course. Note, the legislation uses the word impracticable, rather than impossible, but for the purpose of your application the meaning is the same.

RMIT will only assess whether your application and supporting evidence meets the three criteria above. They will not consider any other circumstances or excuses.

IMPORTANT APPLICATION INFORMATION:

RUSU strongly encourages you to **make an appointment with a Student Rights Officer before you lodge your application.**

For the best chance of success, complete the following tasks in the order they are listed:

1. Prepare your application and evidence using the information in this guide.
2. Make an appointment with a RUSU Student Rights Officer to check your application before you submit it.
3. To make a Student Rights appointment, email student.rights@rmit.edu.au
4. Bring all evidence and documentation to your appointment.
5. When your application has been checked, you can submit your application.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Evidence is everything!

The Fee Remission process does not allow for compassionate decision making, and the scale and seriousness of how your problem affected you personally does not come into account. The impact on your academic situation is the only consideration.

The Fee Remission judgement is only about whether your circumstance meets **all three threshold criteria**, as set by the government legislation (described above).

Do not be misled by terms like **special circumstances** or **compassionate circumstances**. Regardless of the seriousness of your situation, your application will be rejected if:

- Your issue began early in the semester (before the census date), unless you can prove continued impact.
- Your issue could have been stopped if you had done something about it at the time.
- You do not submit evidence to show how things developed into an academic disaster that was beyond your control later in the semester.

Evidence to use

Fee Remission applications are only as strong as the supporting evidence you supply. Evidence is only useful if it shows how your circumstances meet the threshold criteria.

Your application for fee remission will be rejected if the evidence you supply is weak. The most common issues with evidence are:

- The evidence is too general, and does not clearly demonstrate why the circumstance led to failure.
- The evidence is not specific with timing, or shows that the circumstances full impact was before the census date.
- The evidence describes the circumstance correctly, but it does not demonstrate how and it ignores the threshold criteria altogether.

Standard of proof

RMIT decision makers need to be “reasonably satisfied” that the **essential threshold criteria** have been met. “Reasonably satisfied” means that:

- The evidence needs to give a clear picture of the situation.
- It is a lower standard of proof than would be needed for a strict legal document, such as proof of identity.
- The evidence is of a standard that a reasonable person would accept as convincing.
- This can be built up out of many smaller, less formal pieces, of evidence.

High level evidence

RMIT tells students to provide **high level official documents** as evidence. For example, when someone has passed away, the website tells you to get a formal Death Certificate. If you can provide these, you should definitely do so, as RMIT prefers formal professional evidence. Examples of high level evidence are listed on the RMIT website.

High level evidence is not the only way to prove that you had a problem. You should know that RMIT can accept other kinds of evidence.

Low level evidence

Many things are evidence if they are a record which helps show what happened when you had problems. You need to show that there is a relationship between these smaller problems and your academic performance.

You can use lower-level evidence in your application to show this, but you will need to be able to give more pieces of evidence to prove the connection. Many things will help to show that there has been a problem, for example:

Electronic records like emails, social media posts and phone records are very useful because they have time and date stamps.

If you are using these as evidence, please give RMIT a copy of the original because screen shots which don't have the original time and date are useless.

These sorts of record may not prove what the problem was, but they can be very helpful to show an impact on your life and sometimes study. You need to put these smaller pieces of evidence together to build an understandable and convincing picture of what happened.

Academic work as evidence

Your academic work is another possible kind of evidence. Look at things like:

- Patterns and changes in your grades across the semester and in different types of assessment.
- Other evidence from your study, for example; from study groups, your attendance, use of Canvas and other electronic systems.
- Any errors or issues in your work caused by the underlying problem.

Put this picture together before you talk with any professionals. It will remind you of what happened to your studies and may help them understand how serious your problem was.

TIMING & DATES

Dates are important

When universities look at claims for remission, they start by looking at dates. They must check:

- When does the evidence say a problem began: before or after the census date?
- When were assessments due?
- Was work before the census date handed in, and was it of a reasonable standard?
- When does the evidence say problems were sorted out, and would this have given time to catch up with study?

Duration of impact is important

Applications which show a short duration of impact are unlikely to be accepted:

- RMIT assumes that short disruptions can be solved with extensions and special consideration.
- RMIT assumes that short disruptions mean you still had enough time to catch up on study and complete assessments after your problem ended.

If a problem was short lived, it is important to explain – with evidence – why this problem had a much larger level of academic impact. For example, did you miss essential classes, or miss out on lab results you needed for a major assessment.

Whatever happened, make sure you clearly link the impact of the problem to fundamental reasons why it was not possible to pass.

WRITING YOUR STATEMENT

What you need to show

What you need to show is not: ‘What happened in my life?’ You must show:

- **What happened to my studies, because of what happened in my life.**

This small difference to how you think about what happened makes a huge difference to the chances of your application being accepted.

What to include in your statement?

Explain everything! Remember that your statement is not considered as evidence by the university. It is there to explain what your evidence means, but does not replace it or to fill in the gaps.

Your statement is the place where you draw together the different evidence you are relying on into a clear overall picture of why your application meets the threshold criteria. It’s where you answer the most important question: what does all the evidence show?

Make sure that your statement is clear and uses specific details to illustrate how your study was impacted. Clearly define why you were unable to meet RMIT’s requirements.

If your situation is different to other students (particularly for cultural, religious, caring or disability related reasons) please make sure that this is described in detail.

You must explain precisely what happened. RMIT won’t try to guess what went wrong if you do not make it completely clear. Simple statements like “in my culture it is important for family members to...” are helpful for decision makers.

Don’t leave them guessing – explain everything!

IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENT (IAS)

Who completes the IAS?

For medical and psychological conditions, RMIT expects that students provide a completed Impact Assessment Statement (IAS) form. If you are able to provide one, do so.

The IAS needs to be completed by your doctor or health practitioner, who is familiar with your case, and it must clearly show the dates and the reasons that you were unable to complete your course.

The IAS form may not be the only medical or specialist evidence you need.

Alternatives to the IAS

Supporting letters or statements can also be provided by other professionals. Supporting letters can be in addition to, or instead of the IAS, depending on the nature of your claims:

- For medical or psychological issues, an IAS must be completed by your treating health practitioner.
- For family or personal issues, you may provide a formal letter from a doctor or counsellor who is familiar with your circumstances.
- For employment-related issues, you may provide a formal letter from your employer.
- For course-related issues, you may provide supporting documentation from your RMIT school or college.

Limitations of the IAS

The IAS form is useful because it asks for an assessment of the impact of your problems across date ranges. It can also cause problems for your application if the effects of your condition were more complicated:

- Your problem was worse in specific situations so some courses were failed but you could pass others (frequently occurs with mood disorders which can affect us more in different environments).
- The problem looks small on paper, starts before the census or only affected some courses.
- Your Doctor describes the overall level of impact as starting before the census date, rather than detailing how the problem became worse over time.

You either need to ask your doctor to review what they have written on the form or provide additional evidence to demonstrate how the actual impact of the problem became worse after the census date.

Doctors sometimes misunderstand the form, and complete it based on the overall severity of your condition, but this is not what the form is about. What you need is an **assessment of the impact of your condition on your ability to study successfully** which can be very different to how long you have been sick or how sick you are.

If there are complicated reasons why only some courses were affected, it is important to get an additional letter to explain any more complicated issues about your problem.

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Mental health conditions are a **very common reason** that students apply for fee remission.

Respect and confidentiality

RMIT considers mental health conditions to be beyond student's control and treats them in the same way it does any other medical problem. It's important to understand that:

- You won't be treated badly for telling RMIT about a mental health problem.
- Your mental health will remain confidential.
- RMIT won't tell employers, your family or sponsor about it.
- You can't be expelled, or have your visa taken away just for being sick.

RMIT has a positive obligation to consider evidence of how your condition affected your studies and relationship with the university. Diagnosed mental health conditions are recognised as disabilities in Australia, and your rights are legally protected.

Being unable to manage your studies because of a mental health problem is a common effect of these illnesses, and problems can't always be solved through options such as special consideration.

If your evidence shows that your condition affected your ability to manage your studies or enrolment in some other way RMIT must consider it.

Mental health conditions are grounds for fee remission

Mental health conditions are very common amongst university students, and they are the most common serious medical problem among students:

- Around one quarter of undergraduate students experience mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.
- Mental health conditions are not something to be ashamed of or a sign of weakness.
- Having mental health problems isn't your fault.
- Mental health conditions shouldn't be ignored, and they won't just go away on their own.
- They can affect motivation, concentration, memory, and information processing.
- Mental health conditions often have a huge impact on academic performance.
- They may diminish your ability to follow standard RMIT administrative processes, such as managing enrolment, or requesting extensions.

RMIT takes the impact of mental health conditions seriously and they are a normal reason for a remission application.

Impact of mental health issues

The **essential threshold criteria** rely on expectations about what an ‘ordinary student’ would be able to do. For instance, expecting you to apply for special consideration rests itself on expectations that you could:

- Understand how much distress you were in.
- Recognise that this distress was because of your psychological state rather than ‘just stress’ or a ‘natural’ reaction to your other problems.
- Work out that you need help and where to get it.
- Find out or know that special consideration is available for psychological distress.

Then, on top of that:

- Book a (timely) appointment with a doctor or counsellor.
- Disclose your distress.
- Talk to a staff member or find information on RMIT’s website about the process.
- Access a computer and log on to the myRMIT portal.
- Complete a complicated multi page online form.
- Monitor your email for an outcome.
- Follow up further instructions from special consideration and course staff.

So, it’s completely understandable that a mental health condition may affect your ability to meet RMIT’s expectations!

If your evidence shows there has been a deep impact of a mental health condition, it becomes much easier to show the connection between your illness, and why you could not do the things RMIT was expecting you to do.

Undiagnosed mental health conditions

Difficulty seeking treatment and help is a common effect of many mental health conditions. Feeling worthless, undeserving, judged and scared is completely normal, and often a symptom of the underlying condition.

Remission applications can be difficult when the key problem has been a mental health condition that was not diagnosed, or that no-one else knew about. If this happened to you, **don’t panic**, you can still:

- Go to a psychologist outside of RMIT, and work with them so that they understand how your condition developed over time and can explain this to RMIT.
- Look for other evidence which helps show how your condition was affecting you at the time you were struggling with your studies, such as big changes in behaviour.
- Make sure that your medical evidence comments on the difficulties you had seeking support and how this is related to your condition.
- A qualified professional (doctor, psychiatrist, etc) can write a letter of opinion to state that you were likely ill at that time, but you had not yet received a formal diagnosis.
- Any such letters will be taken seriously as evidence.

Evidence remains the key. RMIT decision makers can only make a fee remission decision based on the evidence you submit – they will not assume or guess any facts that aren’t listed.

RMIT'S EXPECTATIONS

RMIT assumes...

RMIT requires students to responsibly manage their study. In order for your Fee Remission to be considered, they expect you to have done things like:

- Drop courses or take leave of absence before the census date if you are not performing well.
- Allow enough time for assessments and private study.
- Get treatment for medical problems, including mental health issues (see Mental Health, above).
- Use special consideration and other university supports to help manage the impact of problems.

Applications have been rejected because students did not do these things. But there are other steps you can take to explain your situation. These are outlined in the following section.

Statement of student responsibilities

RMIT students all agree to abide by the university's Statement of Student Responsibilities when they enrol. The agreement stipulates that you, the student, are responsible for:

- Checking your email regularly.
- Following RMIT's rules.
- Arranging your enrolment, studies, and communication with the university.
- Finding out about university processes and services which could have helped you.

RMIT's rules can be hard to follow when you are in a crisis. If you were unable to meet one of these responsibilities, it is important to clearly explain why in your statement, and to show solid evidence. **RMIT will not accept the excuse that you didn't know about your responsibilities.**

Special consideration

The first **essential threshold criteria** for fee remission is:

- **The circumstances were beyond your control.**
The reason for the fail grade cannot be because of a mistake you made or something you did not do correctly.

Failing to:

- apply for special consideration;
- use your Equitable Learning Plan; or
- ask for extensions;

can affect your claim, because there were things you could have done to lessen the impact of your problem. Failure to use special consideration is more likely to be an issue where your evidence shows that your problem had a relatively short impact.

RMIT will not accept the excuse that you didn't know about special consideration.

If you were unable to apply for special consideration, it is important to clearly explain why. It could be that you were unable to find or follow information because you were in crisis.

If you have passed some courses

If you passed some courses and not others, RMIT may judge that your problem was not serious enough to warrant fee remission. You need to prove otherwise.

Each course is different, and factors such as due dates, types of learning or coursework, or weighting of final assessments, mean that some courses may be more affected than others.

Be specific about the exact factors that caused you to fail, and make sure that your professional evidence and supporting statements emphasise your reasoning.

Problems that began before the census date

The second **essential threshold criteria** for fee remission is:

- **The circumstances happened after the census date.** The reason for the fail grade must have happened after the census date, or their full effect only became clear after the census date.

If your problem began before the census date, you can still claim remission, but you must demonstrate that the problem became worse after the census date. There are two main things you must explain and give evidence for:

- Why you reasonably felt that you would still be able to pass based on the information and resources you had available at the census date?
- What happened to make your problems get worse over time and caused you to fail?

Explain why continuing with the course seemed realistic. This could include things like:

- The weighting of early assessments and what results you had to build on for later in semester.
- Whether you could still expect to pass based on performance in later assessments.
- Whether you had extensions, special consideration, or an equitable learning plan which you expected would let you to catch up.
- Any other academically relevant actions you undertook, such as joining a new study group.

You have to show that you had a realistic and achievable study plan at the time of the census date, and why this plan could not be achieved.

If it is clear that – even at the census date – you could not have passed, it's unlikely that you will be eligible for fee remission. Read the FAQs on **backdated withdrawals in exceptional circumstances**, as you may be able to apply for this instead.

Issues that developed over time

Sometimes it is not clear that a problem that happened before the census date will later lead to academic failure. If that's the case for you, you must make it very clear that your initial problem led to continued issues that you could not fix.

For example, you may lose your job, but cannot predict that this will end up causing you to slide into depression in the weeks after. In this example, the depression is the biggest issue affecting your study, and what caused the failure, not the job loss.

Documenting how multiple problems reinforced each other in your evidence can add a lot of strength to your application.

RMIT WILL FACT CHECK...

Your participation

Including online, in-person, and your engagement with assessments. If the evidence you provide shows that your participation dropped off before the census date, or outside of the dates you specify, you need to explain this.

Your submissions & results

You must show that failure was due to circumstances which were both beyond your control, and happened after the census date. Indicators that suggest otherwise, such as poor grades prior to the census date, tell RMIT that you should have realised that you were failing and taken action.

If you are in this situation, please read through the following sections on pre-existing problems and realistic study plans.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Timeline

To apply for fee remission, you have one year from the day of your final result for the specific course, OR one year from your withdrawal date. Late applications will not be accepted by the university.

In extremely rare cases, late applications may be accepted, provided you are able to show evidence that you could not apply within the timeframe due to reasons beyond your control.

APPEALING A DECISION

Your rights

Students whose remission application is rejected have the right to a full review of this decision. Requests for review must be made within 45 days, during which time you should strengthen your case and seek advice from a RUSU Student Rights Officer.

How to appeal

You will have been emailed a detailed letter explaining why your application did not meet the threshold criteria. You must carefully analyse these reasons, and work through your application and the evidence you supplied to understand what went wrong.

We strongly advise you to consult with a RUSU Student Rights Officer before you request any review.

When not to appeal

Don't ask for a review in the hope that it will be looked at by a more sympathetic decision maker. It won't be. This is not how the process works. The threshold criteria will be applied again, in the same way, with the same result.

NEED HELP?

If you need help

RUSU has professional advocacy staff, Student Rights Officers, who can help you with your case.

You can make an appointment with us by sending an email to student.rights@rmit.edu.au

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will problems caused by RMIT be considered?

University errors and problems with the delivery of courses and its IT systems can be reasons for remission.

These sorts of problems are meant to be dealt with through formal **appeals against assessment** or **special consideration**. Where the problem has been bad enough to make it impossible to pass remission could be possible.

Problems caused by the university are likely to be unexpected and beyond your control. You will need to show evidence that the problem was very significant, not something which you could have worked around or successfully contacted the university about.

What you need to show is that there was a failure to maintain a suitable minimum standard of quality despite you taking steps to raise and resolve the issue with the right part of RMIT.

Applications for this sort of reason are not simple to make. They usually require a detailed knowledge of the rules governing universities to be able to satisfy a decision maker, so it is wise to speak to a RUSU Student Rights Officer first.

Are group work problems a special circumstance?

Groupwork can be great but there are many things which can go wrong.

The behaviour of other group members can be a direct cause of failure in group courses and in other units when the impact of groupwork problems ended up compromising your chances of succeeding.

To be grounds for remission you need to show that:

- Other group member's behaviour was the cause of failure, and
- Their behaviour was outside of acceptable standards, for instance because of such factors as bullying or misconduct by taking unfair advantage of other group members, and
- That you took (or why you were unable to take) steps to let course staff know that there was a problem and asked for their help.

Should I apply for special consideration first?

The general answer is yes! Special consideration is not the same as remissions but decisions about it work in a similar way.

An outcome from special consideration can give you useful feedback about whether your remission case is likely to meet the threshold criteria in RMIT's eyes.

Special consideration is only about grading, so it does not address fee liability and so you must still **apply for fee remission separately**.

Remissions decision makers will look at your special consideration applications in the course. It is important to make sure that your explanation and evidence for both applications do not contradict each other.

If you are applying for remission for courses you are currently enrolled in you must withdraw from the course using enrolment online first. Remission cannot be considered until there is a final grade in the course.

Can work pressures be special circumstances?

Work pressures can be grounds for remission, but can be difficult to explain. Students are expected to take reasonable steps to manage their studies. This includes ensuring work and study do not conflict with each other.

What is important is to demonstrate that the demands of your workplace were genuinely unforeseen and were out of your control. Employees have the right to take leave, refuse shifts or even resign. If you were unable to do those things, you should have reduced your academic load.

You will need to show evidence from your workplace to confirm what happened and why it was out of your control. It is also sensible to provide further evidence to explain why you were forced to take on additional work, or were unable to take leave.

Serious issues at work, such as redundancy, bullying, harassment or injury may meet the threshold for remission, but you must be able to show these specific incidents had a negative effect on your studies, such as by causing a psychological issue. These secondary effects should be the focus in your evidence.

Can family holidays be special circumstances?

NO! A holiday will not be considered to have been unexpected or beyond your control.

There are some circumstances where the need to travel with family is unexpected and beyond your control, such as unexpected caring or cultural obligations, funerals, or similar.

You must show clear evidence of why you needed to travel, and you may need to show that you had a realistic academic plan to help manage disruption to your studies and why your plan was unexpectedly unsuccessful.

Is RMIT able to be sympathetic about my circumstances?

No. The university must be satisfied that all three of the essential threshold criteria have been met.

Remissions decisions are made under an Act of the Australian Parliament and guidelines from the Department of Education. Universities can be audited by the government to make sure they have followed the rules.

The decision maker can only consider whether you had **special or compassionate or compelling circumstances** after the threshold criteria have been met.

What are compelling or compassionate circumstances?

Remission decisions are made based **only** on the three threshold criteria. How 'serious' your circumstances sound does not matter if the threshold criteria are not met. **RMIT's website says that:**

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel that has impacted on the student's studies; or

a traumatic experience which could include:

- involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
- witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime that has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports).

The above lists do not cover all circumstances which may be eligible for remission, but do clearly demonstrate the level of difficulty a problem needs to cause to be taken seriously by the university.

Will my application and evidence be confidential?

Information you give to RMIT as part of a remission claim should be managed in accordance with the University's Privacy Policy.

Personal, health and family information you give as part of your application will only be seen and used by the staff in university administration who are responsible for processing or reviewing your application.

The only times when your information can be given to anyone in RMIT outside of the remissions team is:

- If there is an immediate risk to your or someone else's safety, or
- If RMIT believes that you have committed misconduct, such as by giving remissions fraudulent medical certificates.

The information with your application will not be available to teaching staff or people in your School. It will never be disclosed to members of the public outside of the university such as employers, family members or your sponsor.

Is there anything I can do if my problem was obvious before the census date?

It may have been clear that your problem was going to be a major issue before the census date. If that's the case, remissions are not the only pathway, and they are often not the best pathway for you to take. There are still things you can ask RMIT to do.

RMIT expects that students will be active managers of their enrolment, and only continue when they have a reasonable chance of academic success. But there are some situations where withdrawing before the census date is not a reasonable expectation.

RMIT's Enrolment Policy gives the Academic Registrar the power to backdate a withdrawal to before the census date in 'exceptional circumstances'.

This is separate to remissions and must be raised directly with the Registrar.

You must show clear evidence of how seriously you were affected, and why you could not manage your enrolment. You must explain why you could not withdraw at the census date. Claiming you did not know about the census date is not good enough.

Inability to manage your own enrolment could be because of mental distress or shock that meant you were unable to quickly deal with a problem.

Mental distress can also mean that you became so anxious or depressed that you are unable to act even though you knew that you should.

How do I explain circumstances I want to keep secret?

You do not always need to tell the university the exact nature or cause of any problem you have experienced.

It can be helpful to let the university know what the full situation is, but what they really need to know is the how, when, and why of the **impact** of your problem, not what the problem itself was.

Your professional evidence may refer to your problem without saying exactly what the cause was, as long as it is clear what the actual impact of the problem was.

Evidence which contains statements like **this student has a health condition which has affected their memory, concentration, and ability to attend classes from October through to end of November** are often as effective as giving the exact medical diagnosis.

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www.rusu.rmit.edu.au