

Show Cause & Exclusion

Show Cause

Have you been asked to 'Show Cause' to your School? Please read! This is important information.

What does this mean?

Students are asked to Show Cause after they have two unsatisfactory semesters in their program. A semester is usually considered unsatisfactory because half or more courses (subjects) were failed, or because a course was failed for a 2nd time (failing a placement course also makes a semester unsatisfactory).

What do you need to do now?

Your School will send you an email asking you to explain why they should not exclude* you from your program. It is in your best interest to respond to this invitation and explain your circumstances. These emails are sent to students at the end of Semesters, when classes have stopped. Even between semester, KEEP CHECKING YOUR STUDENT EMAIL ACCOUNT, you don't want to miss this opportunity to explain your circumstances.

If you do not respond to this email request from your School, in the time-frame given to you, your School will recommend your exclusion from your program.

What does 'exclusion' mean?

Exclusion means that your enrolment in your program is cancelled, you cannot study in your program for 12 months and you must reapply the following year to get back in- there is no guarantee that your school will accept you back into your program.

What is a 'Show Cause' letter and why do you need to write one?

You need to write a letter to your school which explains why you failed courses. There could be many reasons why you did not do well, or one particular reason. It is really important that you provide evidence with your story.

What happens if you don't respond to your School's email inviting you to make a timely 'Show Cause' submission?

As mentioned above, your school will refer the matter to another area of RMIT (the Academic Registrar's Group), recommending your exclusion.

You will now be expected to write a more thorough and stronger case, outlining specific appeal grounds, for why you should not be excluded from your program and, if RMIT is willing to consider your new application, you will need to sit in a University hearing and present your case to a panel.

You don't need to go through this alone

Exclusion

You will have received notification from RMIT's Academic Registrar's Office that you are being recommended for exclusion. You have TWENTY (20) WORKING DAYS to lodge appeal applications to the University Appeals Committee (UAC) after receiving the Exclusion letter. You are advised to contact a Student Rights Officer at the Student Union to assist you with this process.

1. Writing the appeal letter

Your letter should explain how your situation fits within one of the following grounds of appeal:

- There is evidence that the decision was made on the basis of personal bias or ill will; and/or
- There is evidence of a breach of this procedure or another relevant university statute, regulation, policy or procedure in the handling of the exclusion process (this includes evidence of procedural error in the handling of an appeal against assessment or evidence that the school failed to implement the academic progress intervention strategy); and/or
- There is evidence that the penalty of exclusion is unreasonable, excessive or inappropriate (this includes evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances);
- There is significant new, relevant evidence that was not available at the time the student was required to show cause why they should not be excluded.

You may appeal under more than one of the grounds.

2. Attach supporting documents

Lodge your appeal application, appeal letter and all supporting documentation with the Secretary of the University Appeals Committee. It is advisable to meet with a Student Rights Officer at the Student Union before handing in your appeal submission. They will be able to look it over and give you some advice.

Further advice on writing your application can be found at www.rmit.edu.au/help

Then what?

Initial review

The Academic Registrar will review the appeal submission to see if it addresses one or more of the grounds of appeal mentioned above. If your submission is found not to have addressed the grounds, you will be notified and the Academic Registrar (or nominee) will arrange the cancellation of your enrolment.

Where your submission is found to have addressed the grounds, you will be invited to a University Appeals Committee hearing.

Remember to check your student email regularly as RMIT will use your student email to notify you. **CONTINUES PAGE 2 ►**

► Preparing for your university appeal hearing

The Committee must give you at least five (5) working days notice of the venue, date and time of your hearing. Tell a Student Rights Officer as soon as you have these details.

Prepare a statement of how you will present your case. When preparing, keep in mind that the University Appeals Committee need to be convinced by you that you will be able to succeed in your studies if they uphold your appeal. Be prepared for questions about your study habits, workload outside of university, and number of hours you spend studying. It is highly advisable that you go to your own hearing and are not on holidays on the date of your appeal.

You have the right to be represented by another person such as a Student Rights Officer. You can also take witnesses or an interpreter if necessary. It is highly advisable that you seek the Student Union's support.

The role of the Student Rights Officer is to support you and empower you to win your own case. They can assist you to present your case if you do not feel confident or if there are breaches of policy that require complex interpretation.

Discussion about your case and decision making will happen 'in camera' meaning that you and the School representative won't be in the room when the Committee makes its decision about your appeal. If your appeal is unsuccessful, you can appeal to the Victorian Ombudsman.

If the University Appeals Committee dismisses your appeal against exclusion, the Secretary of the University Appeals Committee will inform you that you have 10 working days in which to seek a review of its decision externally by the Ombudsman of Victoria, (where Ombuds of Victoria jurisdiction applies).

If you do seek a review by the Ombuds, you must provide evidence to the Academic Registrar of your lodgement of the application within 10 working days if you wish to continue to be enrolled whilst that review is being conducted.

If no valid notice of application for review by the Ombuds of Victoria is lodged with the Academic Registrar at the expiry of 10 working days after the date the University Appeals Committee decision has been sent, the Academic Registrar will cancel your enrolment (and if you are an international student, will advise the Director, International Services to report you to the Department of immigration and citizenship as required by the ESOS Act and National Code).

Other relevant information

Re-enrolment

You must enrol for the next year if you intend to appeal against the exclusion recommendation. You have a right to re-enrol whilst waiting for your appeal outcome. If you do have problems on re-enrolment day, contact a Student Rights Officer, your Program Coordinator or Head of School immediately. If you do not re-enrol you may lose your place regardless of the outcome of your appeal.

Appealing your results

Did you fail any subject you believe you should have passed? You may be recommended for exclusion because you failed half or more of your course load, or you failed a subject for the second time. As well as appealing against a recommendation to exclude you, it might be possible to appeal against assessment results. If this is the case, you should first appeal to the College Appeal Committee. You have 20 working days after the official release of results in order to do this. For more information, see www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/appealsagainstassessment

What happens if I am excluded?

If you are excluded from a particular Program, you can apply for admission to other Programs at RMIT or the same program elsewhere.

You are only excluded from your Program for 12 months.

After 12 months you are not automatically readmitted. During your 'excluded' year you should make an appointment with your Head of Department (around August) to discuss readmission. They normally have the final say, but a Student Rights Officer may be able to assist you in this process.

International students

As we said above it is a condition of student visas that you maintain satisfactory progress so if you are excluded, the Department of Immigration will take this as proof that you have not met a visa condition. This can lead to the cancellation of your visa. We strongly recommend that if exclusion gets to the stage of being reported to the Department of Immigration, you seek expert advice from a migration agent and contact RMIT International. In many cases things do not have to get to this stage, and there are many excellent strategies available for resolving your problems within RMIT.

If you are an international student:

- Lodge an appeal so that you have a chance to resolve your problems within RMIT and
- Make sure that you see a Student Rights Officer for expert help and advice about your case and for appropriate referral where necessary

Vocational Education (TAFE) students

Due to changes in RMIT policy in 2007, there are now certain criteria that relate specifically to the exclusion of Vocational Education (TAFE) students. Vocational Education (TAFE) students are required to 'show cause', it is not mandatory that they be excluded; special circumstances may be taken into account. It is expected that the Program Assessment Board will exercise academic judgment, taking account of the student's overall performance in the program and any other relevant issues or special circumstances.

Students enrolled in Australian apprenticeships and traineeships The final stage does not apply to apprentices and trainees, who cannot be excluded for unsatisfactory progress during the period of their training contract. These students must be managed in accordance with the Skills Victoria Vocational Education (TAFE) Program Delivery Guidelines.

Useful notes

Before you see a Student Union Student Rights Officer, please do as much work on your appeal as possible as they have limited time available.

- If you have an ongoing or long-term illness, you may wish to apply for an Equitable Assessment Arrangement. You can get an application form from www.rmit.edu.au/students/forms. The form should be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to your assessment.
- RMIT Counselling Service is free for RMIT students. You may contact them on 9925 4365 between 9 and 5pm Mon to Fri. Their website is: www.rmit.edu.au/counselling

Relevant policies and procedures

Assessment: Academic progress

Coursework programs procedure