Show Good Cause for coursework students

It is important to the University that students make satisfactory progress in their degree. The University also expects you to understand the requirements of your course. These requirements are outlined in the University of Sydney Coursework Policy 2014 and in your faculty’s policies and rules on progression located in the faculty handbook or on your faculty website.

The academic progression register

If you fail to meet the academic progression requirements for your course, you will be sent an email notification. You will be placed on the academic progression register if, for any semester, you:

- fail to complete more than 50% of your enrolled credit points
- do not achieve an average semester mark of 50% or more
- fail a compulsory unit
- fail a unit for the second time
- have an unsatisfactory attendance record
- can’t complete your course in the maximum time while enrolled in a normal study load.

If you are placed on the academic progression register, the University will contact you. There are 3 stages of the academic progression register, which are outlined below.

If you meet progression requirements for two consecutive semesters you will be removed from the academic progression register.

Stage 1
(Warning)

All students who fail to meet academic progression requirements for the first time are sent a notice. The notice requires participation in Staying on Track program activities that are designed to help you improve results. These activities might include consulting with an adviser, attending a seminar, or referral to an appropriate support service. **We recommend you take this notice seriously and participate in Staying on Track.**
Stage 2
(Warning)

If you are listed on the academic progression register for a second time, what happens next will depend on your course:

- **If you are enrolled in an award course of two years or less** (full time) and are listed on the faculty’s academic progression register for the second time, you will skip Stage 2 and proceed to Stage 3 and be asked to Show Good Cause (see Stage 3 below).
- **If you are enrolled in an award course of more than two years** (full time), you will be sent a notice requiring you to participate in Staying on Track activities.

Stage 3
(Show Good Cause notice)

If you appear on the academic progression register for a third time (or a second time in the case of degrees of two years or less) you will be asked to show good cause as to why you should be allowed to re-enrol.

You will be asked to show good cause if you:

- fail to complete more than 50% of the credit points in which you enrolled in any semester
- do not achieve a semester average mark of 50 or more
- do not complete a compulsory unit
- fail a unit for the second time
- have an unsatisfactory attendance record
- can’t complete your course within the maximum time while enrolled in a normal study load.

It is extremely important you **read all faculty notifications** in a timely manner. If you don’t understand a notification, you should contact your faculty directly using the contact details in the notification letter or [contact us](#) for advice. Your response to a Show Good Cause notice has a strict deadline. If you cannot submit your response in time, **request an extension** by contacting your faculty or [ask us for assistance](#).

Being asked to Show Good Cause does not mean you are automatically excluded. You **remain enrolled** in your degree until after you submit your
response and an outcome is provided, or until all appeal options are exhausted.

What does ‘good cause’ mean?

To ‘show good cause’ means to give a reason or explanation for not meeting your progress requirements. This often includes circumstances beyond your reasonable control such as serious ill health issues or injury, pressure of employment due to financial hardship or carer responsibilities, housing instability and other serious welfare issues.

Showing good cause also includes demonstrating reasonable prospects of meeting your progression requirements in the next semester. The University may take into account your previous student record and study at other institutions to demonstrate you are capable of meeting your progress requirements.

What should I write in my Show Good Cause response?

5 steps to showing good cause

Coursework students can use our template letter to start drafting your response.

Step 1

Read the Show Cause notice very carefully. The notice contains information you will need to prepare your response. It should give you lists of websites where you can get more information, a list of support services at the University, and inform you of your right to consult with and receive assistance from SUPRA. Faculty and course-specific requirements are available in the resolutions in your handbook. Talk to your faculty to help you to work out if there is anything you need to know about course-specific requirements.

Take note of the date your response is due. If you cannot submit by the due date, contact your faculty immediately to ask for an extension, or ask us for assistance. Faculty contact details will be in your notice.
Step 2

Think about reasons to explain why you have not made sufficient progress. **You need to focus on the semester you failed.** Examples may include: poor physical health; mental health difficulties; financial hardship; carer responsibilities; relationship and family problems; housing issues; harassment and discrimination issues; language and study difficulties; or pregnancy.

Make notes about each issue that impacted your academic progress.

Step 3

Once you have identified different factors that impacted your study, **think about how you might be able to overcome these issues** in the coming semesters so you can meet your progress requirements.

Look for different services that might help you to achieve your plan. For example, if you had difficulties in writing essays, consider enrolling in a course at the Learning Hub and submit evidence of enrolment with your Show Cause letter. This will demonstrate to the faculty that you have identified what was impacting your academic progress and you have taken necessary steps to address the issues.

If you have actively participated in Stage 1 activities such as going to the workshops or meeting an academic adviser, you should also mention this in your response.

Step 4

**Gather documentation to support your points in your letter.** Supporting documents may include letters from medical practitioners, counsellors or your employer. When you reference your supporting documents in your Show Cause letter, you need to clearly explain the relevance of the document. If you don’t have any support documents to submit, you may consider completing a statutory declaration.

Step 5

**Write your Show Cause response using our template as a guide.** If you feel confident in your letter, you can submit your finalised letter along with any additional support documents. If you want confidential assistance from a professional caseworker to review your draft, **contact us.** Send a copy of your Show Cause notice, your draft Show Cause letter saved as a Word
document, and all supporting documents you may have to help@supra.usyd.edu.au.

Once you have submitted your Show Cause response, make sure to keep a copy of it. A result will be provided generally within 2–3 weeks. It is important to remember that until the faculty makes a decision on your response, you remain an enrolled student. You must continue attending classes and studying as normal.

What if I don’t think I have valid reasons to show cause?

Some students fail to meet their progress requirements because they struggled to manage their study load or did not perform well in exams, and don’t believe these are good reasons to show cause.

Our advice is to explain in detail the academic issues that affected you throughout the semester. Discuss any strategies you used to deal with your issues through the semester, such as attending workshops, talking to tutors and professors. The second half of your letter should demonstrate how you will overcome these issues. You could include here an academic plan, health plan, lifestyle changes, and workshops at the Learning Hub.

If I don’t want to re-enrol, should I still attempt to show cause?

Yes, you should respond and attempt to show cause even if you do not want to continue in your current course. Failure to respond to a Show Cause letter will lead to exclusion from the course, which might affect your chances of gaining entry back into the University of Sydney or other universities in future. In Australia when you apply for entry to a university course you will usually be required to declare whether you have been previously excluded from a course of study.

What if I’m an international student?

If you’re an international student on a student visa, be sure to check and understand the visa implications of failing to show good cause. If you are not successful in showing good cause the University is required to contact the Department of Home Affairs, and this will lead to cancellation of student visas.

If you need visa advice you can contact us, our Legal Service can help.
If you only need information you can consult with the University’s international student compliance officers by emailing student.compliance@sydney.edu.au or calling 1800 SYD UNI (1800 793 864).

What happens next?

After you submit your Show Cause letter, your faculty will inform you of the outcome. One of the three following outcomes are possible:

1. You have shown good cause and are permitted to continue in your course.
2. You have not shown good cause but are permitted to re-enrol with conditions. This means you are allowed to continue your studies but will need to follow specific conditions, which may include meeting with an academic advisor or reducing your study load. Conditions are different for each student.
3. You have not shown good cause and are excluded from your course.

Can I appeal?

Yes, you have a right to appeal against being placed on the academic progression register, any conditions placed on your re-enrolment, or against exclusion for not showing good cause.

What if I improve in the future?

In many cases your next semester will be trouble free and you will pass all your units. If you pass 2 consecutive semesters, you will be removed from the academic progression register.

Assistance and advice

If you need assistance with your Show Good Cause letter or need assistance to appeal against exclusion, contact us. If you would like feedback on your draft letter, our caseworkers will be happy to assist. Please contact us as soon as possible, and attach the following:

- your Show Good Cause notifications
- your draft letter
- any supporting documents
- any relevant correspondence with your faculty.
Templates

- Template Show Good Cause letter
- Template academic appeal letter against a faculty decision
- Template appeal to the Student Appeals Body

Policy

- University of Sydney Coursework Policy 2014

Parts 15 and 16 include University-wide provisions setting out the academic progression support and warning system, and the powers to ask students to show good cause and exclude in cases where good cause is not shown.

- University of Sydney (Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006 (As Amended)

This Rule sets out procedures for appealing against academic decisions of faculties including the decision to exclude a student from candidature. The University provides information about how it works.

- Faculty handbooks

Some postgraduate programs have further progress rules in faculty handbooks and in the course resolutions.