

# HOW TO WRITE YOUR SHOW CAUSE LETTER



Student Help  
on Campus

Education  
& Equity



# WHAT IS A SHOW CAUSE LETTER?

The university will issue a show cause notice if one of the following occurs:

- a) an academic warning was issued to you in the previous semester
- b) a show cause notice was issued to you in one of the two most recent semesters of your study

AND

- Your GPA fell below 3.5 this semester  
OR
  - You received a grade of less than 4 for 50 percent or more of your courses this semester
- The university will give you 20 working days from the date of the notification to submit a show cause response.

# WRITING YOUR SHOW CAUSE LETTER

A show cause application is an exercise in self-reflection and explanation. You need to think back on everything that impacted your performance over the last study semester, how you felt and the approach you took to your studies.

Then, explain what you have reflected upon to your faculty, showing them your capacity to learn from the past and make appropriate changes to help yourself improve in your studies.

The aim of a show cause letter is to:

- outline the reasons for your poor result
- explain how these impacted your ability to perform well
- describe your strategy to achieve better results in future
- provide evidence to support your claims

See the template over page and tables on page 3 below for further information:

# SHOW CAUSE LETTER TEMPLATE

Your postal address  
Your phone number  
Your student number

Date

NAME OF PROFESSOR (See Table 1)  
Associate Dean (Academic)  
Your Faculty/Faculties  
UQ St Lucia 4072

Dear Professor \_\_\_\_\_,

**Section 1: Introduce yourself**, what Program/s you are studying, the year you are in, and the reason you are writing.

**Section 2: Outline the reasons** for your poor results. Make specific reference to your most recent semester of study.

- List the circumstances which lead to your result.
- Explain how these circumstances directly impacted your studies.

**For e.g.** if you were sick, how did it affect your ability to study effectively. You should provide information about the severity and timing / duration of these circumstances and refer to any **attached supporting documentation**. (See Table 2)

**Section 3: State how you plan to address the issues** you faced last semester. What is your strategy for success? Describe the steps you take to address each of the issues/circumstances you have listed in Section 2.

Yours sincerely,

Your signature

**Tip 1:** Break your text down into short paragraphs. Stay away from long paragraphs.

**Tip 2:** Don't forget supporting documentation. See table 2 for details.

**Tip 3:** Your show cause letter should be one to one and a half pages in length.

**Address your letter to the Associate Dean (Academic) of your Faculty.**

<b>FACULTY</b>	<b>ASSOCIATE DEAN (ACADEMIC)</b>
Engineering, Architecture & Information Technology (EAIT)	Associate Professor Peter Sutton
Health & Behavioural Science (HBS)	Professor Sarah Robert-Thomson
Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (MABS)	Professor Nick Shaw
Business, Economics & Law (BEL)	Professor Polly Parker
Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS)	Professor Julie Duck
Science	Professor Michael Drinkwater

**You must have a strategy to deal with the reason/s for your poor result. Your strategy/ies must be supported by evidence.**

<b>REASON</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>SUPPORTING</b>
Personal/emotional/family reasons	Make an appointment with SHOC or UQ service  Seek counselling	Appointment emails, advice provided etc
Financial reasons	Make an appointment with a SHOC Welfare advocate for support with life skills  Make an appointment with a SHOC Job Preparation advocate so support with finding a PT/casual job	Appointment emails, advice provided etc  Job interviews, applications
Medical reasons	Seek support from your GP, or UQ Healthcare Centre  For ongoing issues, seek support from UQ Student Services for conditions related to disability, illness, injury or mental health	Medical certificates, with relevant dates and detailed information Appointment emails, advice provided etc

<b>REASON</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>SUPPORTING</b>
Work related reasons	<p>Discuss more suitable work arrangements with your employer</p> <p>Seek out other work, which offers better work/study balance</p>	Letter/email from boss/ manager stating that the student will not be working more than X hours a week Approved leave request to take the exam period off
Cultural adjustments           Difficulty dealing with complex academic language in lectures, tutorials and written work	<p>Make an appointment with a SHOC Welfare advocate / International Student Advocate for support and information</p> <p>Join up to one of UQU's Clubs &amp; Societies on campus</p> <p>Hire a language tutor, proof reader</p> <p>Join social groups to practice your English language skills</p>	Appointment emails, advice provided etc    Membership forms   Invoices/receipts
Academic or learning difficulties	<p>Make an appointment with a Learning Advisor at UQ Student Services</p> <p>Speak with an Academic Adviser within your Faculty Communicate more frequently with lecturers, tutors or course coordinators for more help and feedback</p> <p>Join a study group</p> <p>Hire a private tutor</p>	Appointment emails, advice provided etc
Problems managing your study load	<p>Be aware of UQ's Policies and Procedures Library (PPL) and use that knowledge for future semesters</p> <p>Withdraw from courses without academic penalty <u>before</u> census date.</p> <p>Seek extensions for progressive assessment</p> <p>Where possible, apply for a supplementary or deferred exam</p> <p>Voluntarily reduce your study load</p>	Cite knowledge of PPL       mySInet

# SHOWCAUSE LETTER CHECKLIST

## Before you submit:

- Does your cover letter address all necessary areas?
- Is your supporting documentation relevant to the reason / dates in your letter?
- Have you followed the instructions on myUQ?

## SUBMITTING YOUR SHOW CAUSE LETTER

All show cause letters and supporting documentation are to be submitted through mySI-net ("Required to Show Cause" tab).

If the "Required to Show Cause" tab is not available, email your response, by the deadline, to: [\*\*showcause@uq.edu.au\*\*](mailto:showcause@uq.edu.au)

*Need help to write this letter? Contact SHOC: [\*\*www.shocuqu.com.au\*\*](http://www.shocuqu.com.au)*