Frequently Asked Questions
Counselling & Disability Services Triage

Q.1 What is a Statutory Declaration?

A statutory declaration is a written statement that allows a person to declare something to be true. When made in the presence of an authorised witness, the statement then becomes a legal document.

*When you make a statutory declaration, you are declaring that the statements in it are true. If you intentionally make a false statement in a declaration, you can be charged with an offence. The penalty for making a false statement in a statutory declaration is a maximum of four years imprisonment (Australian Government, Attorney-General Department, 2013).*

Q2. What needs to be included in a Statutory Declaration for the triage counsellor to make an assessment of my circumstances?

When requesting a support letter, key information which can assist the triage counsellor make an assessment of your situation is:

I. Details of the problem(s) which clearly summarises the central issues impacting on your functioning at the time.
II. Specific details about when the issues started and how long they lasted, including dates.
III. Details regarding how these circumstances affected you and your studies.
IV. Whom you sought help or assistance from during these times.
V. If you did not seek assistance or advice, your reasons for not doing so.

The statutory declaration form allows space for a small paragraph on the first page to explain your situation. However it is common this is not enough space to accurately address the above points. Therefore we recommend you consider writing your statement on a separate piece of paper and attach this to the form to be presented to the authorised witness and signed by you in their presence. *A statutory declaration is not complete unless it has been signed by both parties.*

Q3. Does the witness have to read my documents to sign the statutory declaration as I’m concerned about my privacy?

No. The authorised witness’s role is *only* to ensure the applicant is comfortable to swear an oath that the documents contents are true and correct and understand the consequences of making a false declaration.
Q4. **I have been asked to provide independent documentation/verification of my situation in order to be assessed for a support letter. What if a statutory declaration is considered insufficient by the triage counsellor?**

If independent documentation of your situation is not possible, the triage counsellor may ask to you to provide 3rd party verification in other ways including contacting key family members or friends who are prepared to confirm your situation over the phone or in writing. The triage counsellor will advise you if this is relevant to your situation.

Q5. **What happens to my personal documents once I give them to the triage counsellor?**

Any documents shown in triage are generally scanned into your Counselling & Disability student file. This file is highly confidential and stored separately from your academic records. Due to the confidential nature of Counselling & Disability records including documents, only the relevant Counselling staff member will have access to these records for use in their contact with you. Your documents are not shared with anyone else within Curtin University without your permission. Except under the strict conditions set out in the confidentiality statement. These are: (i) if there exists a clear danger to the client or others or (ii) there exists a legal obligation to disclose such as a search warrant or subpoena.