

Inherent requirements for Clinical Psychology Courses

To assist students to make informed choices about their study, we have identified and set out below the Inherent Requirements for coursework award courses in Clinical Psychology.

The University of Sydney welcomes and encourages applications from students with disabilities, and from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Where there are physical, intellectual, cultural, religious, or other factors that impact on a student's ability to meet the Inherent Requirements, the University will make reasonable adjustments to assist the student to meet the requirements.

To successfully complete their award course, students must meet the academic requirements set out in the Faculty and course resolutions – these are set out in the [Faculty handbook](#). In addition, students in all courses are required to comply with Australian laws and University rules and policies, including the [Student Charter 2020](#). The University of Sydney upholds the academic standards of each degree and discipline so that all students graduate with the skills and knowledge expected of a graduate of the award conferred.

With appropriate supports and reasonable accommodations, students must be able to carry out the list of inherent requirements described below, in order to successfully complete the clinical psychology course.

Communication tasks

1. Comprehend spoken English delivered at conversational speed (including in noisy environments, such as hospital wards and classrooms).
2. Understand and respond to verbal communications accurately, appropriately and in a timely manner.
3. Communicate clearly, audibly, and intelligibly in English.
4. Actively participate in group discussions.
E.g. participate in patient-based group discussion in class and clinic.
5. Read and comprehend information presented in a variety of standard formats.
E.g. you are able to understand hand written or electronic medical progress notes.
6. Record information accurately and make coherent notes.
E.g. write psychology reports, take notes while interviewing a patient.
7. Perceive non-verbal communication from others and respond appropriately (in context)
E.g. patient or client distress.
8. Communicate respectfully with people of different gender, sexuality and age, and from diverse cultural, religious, socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

Observation / Sensory tasks

1. Assess patient appearance, behaviour, posture, movement and speech.
2. Monitor the broader practice environment (including observing multiple patients and events simultaneously).
E.g. running a group therapy session.
3. Assess and interpret patient speech (including rate, volume and quantity of information, content of thought).

Physical tasks

1. Meet initial and ongoing immunisation requirements, including those introduced after commencement in the course or program. Detail is available at <https://www.sydney.edu.au/students/clinical-placement-checks/vaccinations.html>.
2. Independently carry and manipulate instruments, materials and equipment necessary for clinical care.
3. Attend clinical or practicum placements in a range of physical settings (e.g. urban, rural, hospitals, clinics) and for the required number of hours, within a reasonable period. Detail is available at <https://www.sydney.edu.au/students/clinical-placement-checks.html>.

Intellectual tasks

1. Gather, comprehend and organise information
2. Integrate theory and knowledge from various sources.
E.g. write treatment plans, reports and notes.

3. Develop options and assess and compare their respective merits.
E.g. read, understand and apply scientific research to the health problems of individuals.
4. Accurately recall information without reference.
E.g. provide a verbal report about a client's progress to another health practitioner
5. Engage in scientific and clinical reasoning.
E.g. write treatment plans, reports and notes.
6. Engage in rational and ethical reasoning.
7. Understand another person's perspective.
8. Complete clinical tasks in a safe and reasonable time frame

Interpersonal and social interactions

1. Control the expression of your own emotions.
2. Accept and fulfill responsibilities you are given for patient/client care.
E.g. arrive at clinic placement on time, ensure patient notes are written on time.
3. Manage your own physical and mental health effectively.
E.g. not attend clinic when ill.
4. Respect personal and professional boundaries.
5. Dress appropriately and safely for the clinical workplace.
6. Tolerate interpersonal conflict.
7. Ensure your own motives, attitudes and behaviours do not adversely affect patients/clients.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why have a list of Inherent Requirements for Psychology courses?

We think it's important for students to be aware of the inherent requirements they will need to meet in university subjects and courses. This information enables prospective students to make informed decisions about their subject and career choices. In the case of Clinical Psychology and other health professional degrees, many of the Inherent Requirements relate to patient contact. This contact increases with each year of the course and we believe it's important to be clear from the beginning about what is required to be able to successfully complete the course.

The Inherent Requirements are likely to be particularly helpful for students with disabilities. Many students successfully manage their disabilities with external support and opt not to notify the University. However, the University's Inclusion and Disability Services team assists hundreds of current students with a disability and provides prospective students with advice about the support services offered at the University. Where necessary, after confidential registration of a disability, Inclusion and Disability Services negotiates reasonable adjustments for students with the relevant Faculty. Adjustments to coursework and assessments may also be made for students with carer's responsibilities, or cultural or religious needs. These adjustments may include such things as building and timetabling modifications, recording teaching material and special examination provisions. For fieldwork placements, it may include negotiating with supervisors in advance of the placement for reasonable adjustments. Adjustments must be reasonable and cannot compromise the academic integrity of a course. Reasonable adjustments are provided to assist students to achieve the inherent requirements, not as a substitute for them.

How are lists of inherent requirements developed?

They are developed from the required learning outcomes of the courses. Course structure and content, including learning outcomes, are designed to ensure that the course meets required standards. In addition to meeting general higher education standards, the health professional courses are accredited (inspected and approved) by specialist groups. There are 14 health professions regulated by the Australian Health Practitioner Agency (AHPRA) and profession specific boards or councils are responsible for assessing programs of study and education providers against accreditation standards

In the case of many university subjects, the Inherent Requirements are purely cognitive. However, the health professional courses, in addition to teaching cognitive skills, train students to diagnose and treat clients and patients. Students' abilities to do this are assessed in structured examinations and students are required to perform supervised care of clients and patients satisfactorily when on placement. Patient and client safety must be ensured at all times and the healthcare institutions, the registered practitioners supervising, and the University have a duty of care to these patients and clients. Students are required to comply with relevant requirements for placement organisations (e.g. NSW health). The health placement requirements are detailed on the [current students' website](#).

Do I have to disclose any disability I believe I may have? Is there an assessment?

No, the information on Inherent Requirements is provided for your guidance. While registration with Inclusion and Disability Services is necessary for you to obtain reasonable adjustments, you are not otherwise required to disclose your disability to the University, unless it poses a risk to your health or safety or to that of others.

What should I do if I am worried about my ability to successfully undertake a listed inherent requirement?

You can make initial contact with Inclusion and Disability Services on +61 2 8627 8422 or disability.services@sydney.edu.au to discuss your specific issue. Liaison will occur, if necessary, with appropriate protection of your privacy.

What is an adjustment?

These are modifications or accommodations made by the University that have the effect of assisting a student with a disability to participate or access something on the same basis as someone without a disability. Common accommodations include aids to vision or hearing (which many people of course wear every day). Inclusion and Disability Services at the University of Sydney works to support students with disabilities, including negotiating reasonable adjustments for students. These adjustments are frequently related to assessment, e.g. extra time in examinations, allowing students to type instead of handwrite, or may relate to such issues as timetabling or access. Other assistance for fieldwork may include adjusting hours of work and the allocation of the type of placement may also be adjusted where needed to ensure the psychological safety of the student.

The University of Sydney has obligations under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#), the [Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 \(NSW\)](#) and the [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#) to ensure that reasonable adjustments are available. Adjustments must be reasonable and cannot compromise the academic integrity of a course. Reasonable adjustments are provided to assist students to achieve the Inherent Requirements, not as a substitute for them.

Can I enrol even if I am not sure I will be able to carry out some of the inherent requirements?

Yes. In fact, it will usually be unlawful for the University to restrict enrolment on the basis of disability, or to discriminate against students with a disability in other ways.

What happens if I do enrol and I am unable to carry out some of the inherent requirements?

Assessment is carried out with approved reasonable adjustments. The Faculty of Science is accountable to the external bodies that accredit its courses and must ensure that its graduates meet registration requirements. If, even with reasonable adjustments, you are unable to carry out some of the Inherent Requirements, you may fail an essential component of the course. In this event, you will be unable to graduate with a professional clinical psychology degree.