

Inherent Requirements for Dentistry 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 Dentistry.

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 ([Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate](#)). 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 dentistry courses.

Communication tasks

1. Comprehend spoken English delivered at conversational speed (including in noisy environments, such as hospital dental clinics).
2. Differentiate sound across a wide spectrum of tone, pitch and volume (including distinguishing speech, background noise, alarms and monitors).
3. Understand and respond to verbal communications accurately, appropriately and in a timely manner.
 - *E.g. respond appropriately to a care request in the clinical environment.*
4. Communicate clearly, audibly and intelligibly in English.
5. Actively participate in group discussions.
 - *E.g. PBL's, CBL's and case presentations concerning patient care.*
6. Read and comprehend information presented in a variety of standard formats.
 - *E.g. handwritten clinical notes, test results, student clinical rosters.*
7. Record information accurately and make coherent notes.
 - *E.g. patient notes, odontogram charts – these are required to meet legal standards for the documentation of care.*
8. Perceive non-verbal communication from others and respond appropriately (in context).
 - *E.g. patient in pain or distress.*
9. Communicate respectfully with people of all genders, 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).
3. Assess, diagnose and treat within the limitations of the oral cavity including discerning spatial relationships and using reflected vision tools (mirrors).
4. Judge the quality of images produced, having sufficient visual acuity to allow for distinction of optical contrast, low contrast and small image details.

Physical tasks

1. Gather and interpret information through touch.
 - *E.g. ability to distinguish changes in both hard and soft tissues.*
2. Physically examine people of all genders.
3. Assist with patient transfers and provide physical assistance to people of all genders.
 - *E.g. into and out of a dental chair/clinic.*

4. Provide basic life support.
 - *E.g. be able to demonstrate competence in delivering basic life support*
5. Cleanse hands and forearms using disinfecting products.
 - *This is a work health and safety and patient safety requirement.*
6. Wear clothing and masks designed to minimise the spread of infection and protect the wearer from infection or other hazards.
 - *This is a work health and safety and patient safety requirement.*
7. Meet ongoing immunisation requirements, including those introduced after commencement in the course or program.
 - *Detail is available at*
<https://sydney.edu.au/students/clinical-placement-checks.html>
8. Independently manipulate and carry instruments, materials and equipment necessary for clinical care.
 - *E.g. deliver local anaesthesia.*
9. Effectively manipulate small objects.
 - *E.g. have the manual dexterity to perform a range of skills during patient care and in a laboratory setting which include cutting, extending, pinching, pulling and twisting skills.*
10. Maintain a standing position while using both upper limbs to perform a task.
 - *E.g. performing exodontia.*
11. Effectively maneuver around equipment and in confined spaces.
 - *E.g. within a cubicle containing a dental chair and associated equipment.*
12. Work, including sitting, standing and walking for prolonged periods (e.g. 2-4 hours).
 - *E.g. providing patient care in the clinical setting.*
13. Attend clinical or practicum placements in a range of physical settings (e.g. urban, rural, hospitals, clinics) and for the required number of hours.
14. Safely perform exposure prone procedures. These include procedures during which blood borne viruses are significantly more likely to be transmitted.

Intellectual tasks

1. Gather, comprehend and organise information.
2. Integrate theory and knowledge from various sources.
3. Develop options and assess and compare their respective merits.
4. Accurately recall information without reference.
 - *E.g. patient observations, to provide a summary of clinical details for discussion with the supervising Clinical Educator.*
5. Accurately undertake arithmetic calculations.
 - *E.g. to determine working length for endodontic treatment, medication dosages.*
6. Engage in scientific and clinical reasoning.
7. Engage in rational and ethical reasoning.
8. Understand another person's perspective.
9. Complete clinical tasks in a safe and reasonable time frame.
10. Maintain a sufficient level of concentration to focus on an activity to completion.
 - *E.g. ability to complete a clinical procedure for a patient within a reasonable time-frame.*

Interpersonal and social interactions

1. Control the expression of your own emotions.
 - *Patients need continuous professional care including when students feel stressed or pressured. Workplace conflict creates an unsafe team environment.*
2. Be able to work effectively in the face of uncertainty and adapt to changing environments.
 - *Patient conditions and required care tasks can change rapidly. Many different clinical environments are encountered during training.*
3. Accept and fulfill responsibilities you are given for patient care.
 - *This is a patient safety requirement.*
4. Manage your own physical and mental health effectively.
 - *This is a student and patient safety requirement and includes seeking help and/or notifying others of fluctuations in physical and mental health, as*

- necessary.*
5. Respect personal and professional boundaries.
 - *As dental professionals, students must possess the ability to manage appropriate relationships with patients and colleagues.*
 6. Dress appropriately and safely for the clinical workplace.
 - *This is a work health and safety requirement.*
 7. Recognise interpersonal conflict and appropriately negotiate the difficulties that it may create.
 - *Students must be able to work within a team to deliver appropriate care for patients in a professional environment.*
 8. Ensure your own motives, attitudes and behaviours do not adversely affect patients/clients.
 - *Patient-focused treatment must be delivered by students for all patients assigned to their care.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why have a list of Inherent Requirements for Dentistry 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 Dentistry 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 Disability Services 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, 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 at: <https://sydney.edu.au/students/clinical-placement-checks.html>

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 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 essential requirement?

You can make initial contact with Disability Services to discuss your specific issue. Liaison will occur, if necessary, with appropriate protection of your privacy. The Disability Services Team can be contacted on +61 2 86278422 or disability.services@sydney.edu.au.

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). Disability Services at Sydney University 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.

Sydney University 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. 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 the health professional degree.