

Inherent Requirements for Courses in Medicine

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 Medicine.

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 medical course.

Communication tasks

1. Comprehend and communicate intelligibly in spoken English in normal and noisy or challenging environments.
2. Differentiate sound across a wide spectrum of tone, pitch and volume (including distinguishing speech, background noise, alarms and monitors), using a hearing aid if necessary.
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. Actively participate in group discussions.
e.g. tutorials, case conferences and informal discussions.
5. Read and comprehend information presented in a variety of standard formats.
e.g. handwritten clinical notes, small font writing, graphical formats such as charts, and computerised information.
6. Record information accurately and make coherent notes.
e.g. record information and make notes in medical records and charts – by hand and using a computer - that meet legal standards for the documentation of patient care.
7. Perceive non-verbal communication from others and respond appropriately (in context).
e.g. perceive that a person is in pain or distress; recognise that others may need to give priority to patient care and not give you their attention.
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 a patient appearance, behaviour, posture, movement and speech.
2. Monitor multiple items or events in the immediate environment.
e.g. observe the behaviour of two or more people simultaneously in an environment such as a hospital ward.

Physical tasks

1. Gather and interpret information through touch.
e.g. feel a lump on a person's body and assess by touch alone its size and texture.
2. Undertake physical examinations of people of both genders in a clinical context.
3. Provide physical assistance to people of both genders.
e.g. assist in moving a patient into position so that they can examine their respiratory system
4. Cleanse hands and forearms using disinfecting products.
This is an occupational health and safety and patient safety requirement.

5. Wear clothing and masks designed to minimise the spread of infection and protect the wearer from infection or other hazards.
This is an occupational health and safety and patient safety requirement.
6. Meet ongoing immunisation requirements.
Detail is available at <https://sydney.edu.au/students/clinical-placement-checks.html>
7. Independently and effectively manipulate instruments and carry materials and equipment necessary for clinical care.
e.g. hold and use small instruments such as forceps; carry items weighing a few kilograms.
8. Attend clinical or practicum placements in a range of physical settings (e.g. urban, rural, hospitals, clinics) and for the required amounts of time.

Intellectual tasks

1. Gather, comprehend and organise information.
2. Integrate theory and knowledge from various sources.
3. Develop options in caring for patients and assess and compare their respective merits.
e.g. learn how to identify treatment options and take multiple factors into account in deciding which treatment option is most suitable for an individual patient.
4. Accurately recall information without reference.
e.g. remember and be able to report a limited set of factual information about a patient.
5. Accurately undertake arithmetic calculations.
e.g. use formulae to calculate the dose of medicine for an individual, taking account of factors such as the person's age, gender and weight.
6. Engage in scientific and clinical reasoning.
e.g. learn the cognitive and intellectual processes that lead to a diagnosis and treatment plan for a patient.
7. Engage in rational and ethical reasoning.
e.g. learn how to apply ethical principles in decisions on patient care.
8. Understand another person's perspective.
e.g. recognise and accept that some people may think differently from you and have different types of ideas and priorities.
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.

Interpersonal and social interactions

1. Control the expression of your own emotions.
e.g. give priority to patient care regardless of your own feelings.
2. Work effectively in the face of uncertainty and adapt to changing environments.
e.g. learn to make and justify decisions based on the available information, which may be incomplete; recognise and keep up with the changes that constantly occur in the organisation and delivery of health care.
3. Accept responsibility that is given to you and be accountable for your actions, appropriate to your level of training.
4. Manage your own physical and mental health effectively.
This includes seeking help and/or notifying others if your physical and/or mental health is impaired.
5. Respect personal and professional boundaries.
e.g. avoid discussing your personal life with patients, and avoid touching people unnecessarily or inappropriately.
6. Dress appropriately and safely for the clinical workplace.
This is a professional expectation and, in many clinical situations, a work health and safety requirement.
7. Recognise interpersonal conflict and appropriately negotiate the difficulties that it may create.
8. Ensure that your own motives, attitudes and behaviours do not adversely affect patients.
e.g. avoid imposing your personal views and beliefs on others.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why have a list of Inherent Requirements for the Medical course?

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 Medicine 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. Where necessary, after confidential registration of a disability, reasonable adjustments are negotiated for the student 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 make a declaration? Is there an assessment?

No, the information on Inherent Requirements is provided for your guidance.

What should I do if I am worried about my ability to successfully undertake a listed Inherent 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 8627 8422 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 meet 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 meet 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 inherent component of the course and may be unable to graduate.