

Inherent Requirements for Education and Social Work

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 Social Work.

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 a coursework award course in Social Work.

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 [Code of Conduct for Students](#). 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.

Communication tasks

1. Comprehend spoken English delivered at conversational speed (including in noisy environments such as community meetings and hospital wards).
2. Understand and respond to verbal communications accurately, appropriately and in a timely manner.
3. Communicate clearly, audibly and intelligibly in Standard Australian English (i.e. the variety of spoken and written English language in Australia used in more formal settings such as for official or public purposes, and recorded in dictionaries, style guides and grammars. While it is always dynamic and evolving, it is recognised as the 'common language' of Australians.)
4. Read and comprehend information presented in a variety of standard formats.
e.g. understand hand written or electronic case notes and electronic policy documents
5. Record information accurately and make coherent notes.
e.g. write social work reports for a variety of audiences, take notes of meetings
6. Read the body language of others and respond appropriately (in context).
e.g. respond to clients who may be confrontational, or who may express feelings of anxiety, sadness etc
7. Communicate respectfully with people of different abilities, gender, sexuality and age, and from diverse cultural, religious, socio-economic and educational backgrounds.
e.g. Respond to someone from a different background to yourself with respect and openness

Observation / Sensory tasks

1. Observe client appearance, posture, movement and speech.
2. Monitor the broader environment (including observing multiple people and events simultaneously).
e.g. Conduct group work and facilitate meetings.

Physical tasks

1. Attend field education placements in a range of settings, in a range of geographical locations, and for the required number of hours/days within a reasonable timeframe. This will include continuous blocks of up to 80 days.
2. Meet ongoing immunisation requirements, including any requirements introduced after commencement in the course. Detail is available at the [Course-required placements page](#).

Intellectual tasks

1. Gather, comprehend and organise information
e.g. Establish what information is relevant for/from a client's file
2. Integrate theory and knowledge from various sources.
e.g. write policy submissions, case plans, and reports.
3. Develop options and assess and compare their respective merits.
e.g. read, understand and apply research to individuals, groups and communities.
4. Accurately recall information without reference.
e.g. be able to think on your feet, and answer questions from clients and other professionals; provide a verbal report about a client's progress to another professional
5. Engage in rational and ethical reasoning.

e.g. locate and present evidence from the literature to support a selected intervention; identify ethical issues and when to seek consultation in complex decisions

6. Understand another person's perspective.
e.g. be empathic to clients facing difficulties, or when their values are different to your own
7. Complete tasks in a safe and reasonable time frame
8. 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. not allowing your emotions to over-ride your immediate responsibilities to a client
2. Be able to work effectively in the face of uncertainty and adapt to changing environments
e.g. being flexible when last minute changes occur
3. Accept and fulfill responsibilities you are given within the workplace
e.g. arrive at placement on time; perform expected tasks in the workplace, and follow organisational rules such as those pertaining to mobile phone use.
4. Respond appropriately to constructive feedback from supervisors and peers.
5. Actively and appropriately participate in group discussions.
e.g. contribute a social work perspective in a multidisciplinary case conference;
6. Manage your own physical and mental health effectively.
e.g. identifying when you may not be able to undertake tasks and letting the appropriate person know and making arrangements to over your duties
7. Respect personal and professional boundaries.
e.g. recognising your role as a student in the organization
8. Dress appropriately and safely for the workplace.
9. Manage interpersonal conflict.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why have a list of Inherent Requirements for Social Work 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 Social Work, many of the Inherent Requirements relate to client 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, all social work professional qualifying courses are accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers which assesses programs of study against accreditation standards.

Students are required to comply with relevant requirements for placement organisations (e.g. NSW health). The health placement requirements are at: http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/enrolment/course_check.shtml

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 contact with the Social Work Program Director or with Disability Services to discuss your specific issue. Liaison will occur, if necessary, with appropriate protection of your privacy. The Faculty's initial contact person is Ms Maria McQuilty. She can be contacted at +61 2 9351 4301 or maria.mcquilty@sydney.edu.au. 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 social work degree.