Inherent requirements for Veterinary 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 Veterinary 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.

The Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) at the University of Sydney is a four-year postgraduate award course. Graduates are eligible for professional registration with the Veterinary Practitioners Board in each state and territory in Australia. The course is also recognised in selected jurisdictions globally as outlined on the accredited programs page. Students seeking to practise overseas should consult the local registration authority.

For this accredited DVM degree, it is incumbent upon all students that they demonstrate the inherent requirements in full, including the intellectual, observational, physical, and communication skills set out below, to progress through the curriculum, and ultimately qualify for the degree. These inherent requirements are fundamental to a graduate's ability to demonstrate the Day One Competencies required by accrediting bodies, and to the ability of a registered veterinary practitioner to meet community expectations and the needs of animals without compromising human or animal welfare.

Reasonable accommodations are provided to students to assist them to fulfil the inherent requirements, not as a substitute for those requirements. If a student cannot demonstrate the inherent requirements necessary to satisfactorily complete all aspects of the DVM curriculum with reasonable adjustments, this will preclude their completion of the DVM course.

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

Communication tasks

1. Comprehend spoken English delivered at conversational speed (including in noisy environments, such as veterinary clinics and classrooms).
2. Differentiate sound across a wide spectrum of tone, pitch and volume (including distinguishing speech, background noise, alarms and monitors).
   E.g. perform cardiac auscultation.
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.
   E.g. conduct a field interview.
5. Actively participate in group discussions.
   E.g. case discussions.
6. Read and comprehend information presented in a variety of standard formats.
   E.g., handwritten clinical notes, test results, graphical formats such as charts, journal articles and digital information.
7. Record information accurately and make coherent notes.
   E.g. patient notes, case reports, laboratory and/or field data collection
8. Perceive non-verbal communication from others (peers, patients, and their owners) and respond appropriately (in context).
   E.g., patient in pain or distress, owner in distress.

9. Communicate respectfully with people of different genders, sexuality, and age, and from diverse cultural, religious, socio-economic and educational backgrounds.
   Veterinary Medicine students treat and provide preventative care for animals owned by people across the lifespan and from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Students must be able to understand and appreciate the wide range of cultural perspectives on animal ownership and use.

Observation/sensory tasks

1. Assess patient appearance, behaviour, posture, and movement.
   E.g. observe and recognise behavioural signals of stress, perform an assessment of the way an animal moves.
2. Monitor the broader practice environment (including observing multiple patients, co-workers, and events simultaneously).
3. Judge the quality of images produced, having sufficient visual acuity to allow for distinction of optical contrast, low contrast, and small image details.
   E.g. interpret radiographs and digital medical images.
4. Have sufficient visual acuity to identify and interpret results of many diagnostic tests, via direct observation and microscopic examination.
   E.g. examine tissue sections and smears via light microscope.

Physical tasks

1. Gather and interpret information through touch.
   E.g., distinguish changes in both hard and soft tissue, perform cattle pregnancy diagnosis via rectal examination.
2. Physically restrain and examine a wide variety of species including large and small animals. This includes cats, dogs, guinea pigs, rabbits, ferrets, rodents, cattle, sheep, horses, poultry, pigs, aviary birds, exotic pets, Australian native wildlife, etc.
   E.g. put a halter on a horse and lead for examination, lift a small to medium sized dog onto an examination table, capture and restrain a chicken for examination, herd pigs from one pen or area to another.
3. Cleanse hands and forearms using disinfecting products.
   This is a work health and safety and patient safety requirement.
4. 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.
5. Meet initial and ongoing immunisation requirements, including those introduced after commencement in the course or program
   E.g immunisation requirements set by placement providers (such as COVID-19 immunisations).
   It is compulsory for students to be immunised for Q fever before entering the course and to maintain a current tetanus immunisation. Further information on immunisations is available on the DVM course page https://www.sydney.edu.au/courses/courses/pc/doctor- of-veterinary-medicine.html.
6. Independently manipulate and carry instruments, materials, and equipment necessary forclinical care.
   E.g deliver local anaesthesia
7. Effectively manipulate small objects. 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.
   E.g. insert and secure an intravenous catheter.
8. Maintain a standing position while using both upper limbs to perform a task.
   E.g. physical examination of a large animal species such as a cow
9. Effectively maneuver around equipment and in confined spaces.
   E.g. within a box stall containing a horse and other veterinary and technical staff to administer general anaesthetic, or when examining an animal held within a cattle crush
10. Work, including sitting, standing and walking for prolonged periods (e.g. 3-4 hours).
    E.g. providing patient care in the clinical setting, while scrubbed in for surgery, providing patient care on-farm.
11. Attend clinical or practicum placements in a range of physical settings, including clinics, farms and abattoirs, in a range of geographical locations (e.g. urban, rural, interstate) and for the required

number of hours.

E.g., Attend University farms in Camden on a weekly basis. (Camden is about 60km south-west of Sydney and the location of all large animal teaching facilities.) Additional information on practicum and clinical placements is available at https://www.sydney.edu.au/courses/courses/pc/doctor-of-veterinary-medicine.html.

Participation in both intramural and extramural placements on farms, clinics and abattoirs is an accreditation requirement. Students may work outdoors, be exposed to a variety of weather conditions and work in areas with uneven ground or uncertain footing. Students may be required to undertake regular shift and weekend work.

Intellectual tasks

1. Gather, comprehend, and organize 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. determine medication dosages.
6. Engage in scientific and clinical reasoning.
7. Engage in rational and ethical reasoning.

   E.g. give consideration to owner preferences and financial constraints alongside animal welfare in developing treatment plans.
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. conduct a consultation of up to one hour involving conversation with an animal owner to obtain history and clinical examination, participate in a surgery for up to two hours without opportunity for a rest break.

Interpersonal and social interactions

1. Participate in compulsory procedures, including those that you may have personal or ethical objections to, or that you find confronting.

   E.g.
   - *participating in farm management and animal husbandry procedures across the major and emerging animal industries, including procedures such as tail docking of lambs;*
   - *observing, assisting, or performing humane animal slaughter, both religious and conventional, in accordance with local laws and customs;*
   - *speying and neutering animals;*
   - *observing, assisting, and performing reproductive procedures including pregnancy diagnosis, semen collection, artificial insemination, embryo manipulation, mating and assisting with birth;*
   - *observing, assisting, or performing humane euthanasia of animals; and*
   - *interacting with animal cadavers and cadaveric specimens, including anatomy dissections, post-mortem examinations and as part of surgical training.*
2. Control the expression of your own emotions.

   E.g. give priority to patient care regardless of your own feelings.
3. 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 organization and delivery of animal health care.
4. Accept responsibility that is given to you and be accountable for your actions, appropriate to your level of training.
5. 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.
6. Respect personal and professional boundaries and respect for staff and students

   As veterinary professionals, students must possess the ability to manage appropriate

relationships with clients and colleagues.

7. Dress appropriately and safely for the clinical workplace, farm, and other professional environments.
   This is a professional expectation and a work health and safety requirement.
8. 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.
9. Ensure that your own motives, attitudes, and behaviors do not adversely affect patients/clients/fellow students/staff.
   Patient-focused treatment must be delivered by students for all patients assigned to their care. Students must be able to effectively communicate the full range of treatment options with owners of animals under their care.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why have a list of Inherent Requirements for Veterinary 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 Veterinary Medicine and other veterinary and animal science degrees, many of the inherent requirements relate to client and 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.

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 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine course is accredited (inspected and approved) by specialist groups. 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 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine course, in addition to teaching cognitive skills, trains students to manage clients and to diagnose and treat patients. Students' abilities to do this are assessed in structured examinations and students are required to perform supervised care for clients and patients under supervision satisfactorily when on placement. Patient and client safety must be always ensured and students are required to comply with relevant requirements for placement organisations.

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.

Whilst 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 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 veterinary graduates meet registration requirements. 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. In this event, you will be unable to graduate with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM).