

Inherent Requirements Guide

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Inherent requirements are the fundamental tasks of a program that require students to demonstrate non-academic abilities, during professional experience placement and on-campus learning activities.

Inherent requirements are not additional ethical, legal or health requirements such as Working with Children Checks and immunisations, which require compliance due to the program's relationship to professional registration organisations.

Background

RMIT is committed to supporting diversity and inclusion. Educational institutions have a responsibility to ensure that students with a disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers. This is mandated under the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) (enacted under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992)

Importantly inherent requirements are not entry requirements. They are to be considered in relation to **reasonable adjustments** as a means by which RMIT can support students to participate fully and are individualised to the person's particular circumstances and their program of study.

What RMIT programs publish inherent requirement statements?

For some programs of study some students may not be able to successfully participate despite the implementation of reasonable adjustments, due to an intrinsic conflict between the requirements of the program and the nature of the student's disability or medical condition. Programs where this situation might arise are most likely to be those that have a **compulsory professional experience placement activity in a community setting such as health, medical and education programs, or programs with a significant practical or laboratory component, where the safety of students and staff is a priority.**

Benefits of defining inherent requirements:

Academic and teaching staff

Clearly defined program inherent requirements can improve student outcomes and retention by providing a consistent reference point from which program staff can have informed and meaningful discussions with students regarding reasonable adjustments. It also provides an opportunity for staff to examine and develop a more inclusive curriculum.

Students

It provides students with a greater understanding of the tasks they are expected to undertake, the non-academic abilities required to undertake those tasks and an opportunity to consider and plan for reasonable adjustments. It gives the student an opportunity to make informed decisions as to whether the program is suitable at this time given their personal circumstances, disability, long-term illness and/or mental health condition to then make an informed decision about their studies.

How to use the Inherent Requirements Guide

The following sections include a series of prompts for you to consider whether an inherent requirement statement is necessary for your program, and if so, how to develop a robust inherent requirement statement or review an existing statement.

Available Resources:

To access comprehensive information on program inherent requirements, including program examples, case studies, what is and what is not an Inherent requirement and FAQ's please visit <https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/developing-quality-programs/program-management/inherent-requirements>

To access the full list of RMIT program inherent requirement statements visit: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/study-with-us/applying-to-rmit/local-student-applications/entry-requirements/inherent-requirements>

Determining the need for an inherent requirement statement:

In determining the need for program inherent requirement statement, consider the following:

** RMIT offshore programs are exempt from developing inherent requirement statements because the legal context does not apply*

1.	<p>Does the Program have a compulsory professional experience placement or a significant practical or laboratory component?</p> <p>Given the expanded set of tasks that students are required to undertake safely during professional experience placement and in teaching laboratories, it is more likely that a student's disability, long term illness or mental health condition may have an impact.</p>
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2.	<p>Tasks of the program including learning tasks, assessment tasks, professional placement tasks require students to demonstrate any of the following non-academic abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication – verbal expression and comprehension, social communication (non-verbal)• Reading, Writing and Number Skills• Concentration, Memory and Problem Solving• Mental Wellness and Behavioural Stability• Vision, Hearing, Touch and Smell• Physical Skills – gross motor and fine motor skills.• Physical and Mental Endurance <p>Reasonable adjustments will be considered in each of these functional areas to support students who may have challenges in order to meet the inherent requirements of a program</p>
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Refer to the Inherent requirements reference table [page 6]

3.	<p>Consider key learning objectives and how students will demonstrate achievement of these learning objectives</p> <p>The following questions may assist in identifying the inherent requirements of your program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the pedagogical purpose behind a particular requirement, how does it achieve that purpose and are there other ways of achieving this? • Are there alternative ways that students could demonstrate that they meet the learning outcomes? • Would the learning outcomes be substantially changed if a particular requirement were removed or substituted? • If a task involves a particular skill, is it the actual skill that is required or is it the application of knowledge to the task? e.g. Is it necessary for an engineering student to use fine motor skills to solder an electronic circuit, rather than have the knowledge to instruct another person to do so?
4.	<p>Describe specific tasks in the program that require students to demonstrate non - academic abilities.</p> <p>Consider the tasks, define the tasks that can be altered or adjusted, decide on tasks that are essential or inherent and provide examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft <u>3 specific program examples</u> that relate to actual <u>program tasks</u>, rather than generic examples or copies of examples from other statements • Consider what functional areas apply, remember this is a tool of inclusivity, not exclusion – so we are trying to look at it through that lens. A good indicator is, if you are finding it difficult to come up with examples for an area, this may mean it is not inherent to your program
<p><i>If on completing this section 1-4 you have determined the need for an inherent requirement statement then document all details in the Inherent requirement statement template</i></p>	

What is considered to be an inherent requirement?

Are the following considered to be inherent requirements?

Examinations

No. Examinations are a means of assessing learning; they do not constitute inherent requirements. Alternative assessment arrangements can be implemented in lieu of exams in some circumstances.

English language requirements (e.g. EAL)

No. These are prerequisites or entry requirements and cannot be accommodated via reasonable adjustments.

Working with Children / National Police Record Check

No. These requirements are non-negotiable and do not provide any scope for reasonable adjustments. They are prerequisites for professional experience placements. As such, they are not the same as inherent requirements – but, like inherent requirements should be made clear to prospective students prior to application. Further, as a student's status can change, consideration should be given to ensuring that enrolled student's status in relation to legal requirements is confirmed each year.

Similarly, programs that have professional registration should ensure that students are made aware of the Practice Standards and Codes of Conduct for the Board prior to undertaking professional experience placements.

Group Work

No. Group work is a learning activity. Functionally, a student may require verbal and social communication skills to participate in group work. However, reasonable adjustments or alternative assessment arrangements can be implemented to support students who may have difficulty participating in group work.

Full time professional experience placements

No. Professional experience placement activities may be a compulsory part of a program, particularly in Health, Medical and Education areas due to professional registration requirements. However, most registration bodies can accommodate students undertaking part time placements. The logistics of part time professional experience placements however do need to be considered when such arrangements are put into place.

Review process for existing Inherent requirement statements

In determining the need for a review of the program inherent requirement statement, consider the following:

1.	Program content changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there new or changed tasks in the program?• What functional areas (non-academic abilities) could this impact?• Are there changes to existing examples required?• Are there new examples needed?• Are there any additional functional areas required?• Are there functional areas that are redundant?
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2.	Technology/equipment changes Have changes to technology or the introduction of new equipment made a previous requirement redundant? For example: Is the capacity to physically lift a patient no longer required by nurses as lifting aids have become available? How might this impact the inherent requirement statement?
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3.	Changed context /environment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has the professional experience placement component changed?• Has the professional experience placement changed from compulsory to optional or simulated?• If there are changes, does the inherent requirement statement reflect this?
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4.	Are there new Reasonable Adjustments to be considered? The Manager of the Equitable Learning Services will review the updated statement as a member of the Program Quality Advisory Panel and will make changes that could be applied to Reasonable Adjustments
<i>If on completing this section 1-4 you have determined the need to update the inherent requirement statement, then rewrite the statement based on program changes using the template document</i>	

Inherent requirements reference table

Functional area	Definition	Relevance to tasks	Reasonable Adjustment
Communication	The extent to which a person can use and understand verbal communication	Use, understand and respond to verbal communication during on-campus learning activities and during professional experience placement E.g., providing clear verbal instructions to school students in a classroom setting	Additional time allowances for comprehension and expression may be provided within the academic setting. However, the circumstances of professional experience placement tasks often require timely communication and this should be considered prior to commencement
Social Communication	The capacity to understand and use appropriate non-verbal communication such as: eye contact, gestures, facial expression, speaking volume, tone of voice, proximity and verbal turn taking	Use, recognise and respond appropriately to non-verbal cues from peers and staff during on-campus learning activities and professional experience placement E.g., interpreting clients' non-verbal communication in a clinical placement setting, such as identifying that a client is uncomfortable or in pain from their facial expression or body posture	Consideration is given to the use of nonverbal communication behaviours appropriate to the student's disability or condition. If the student has a vision or hearing impairment, they may be more reliant upon either auditory or visual communication behaviours
Reading	The extent to which a person demonstrates effective reading and comprehension that is appropriate to both on-campus learning and professional experience placement settings	Read and understand a range of written material in differing forms from a variety of sources such as: on screen material, reference material and /or handwritten notes. E.g., reading and comprehending written documents, such as induction processes, supervisors' instructions, policies and occupational health and safety guidelines	Students may use specialised software to support their literacy for on-campus learning activities. The appropriateness and practicality of using such software during clinical placements may vary between placements and should be discussed with the student prior to commencing placement.
Writing	The extent to which a person produces coherent written communication that is appropriate to both on-campus learning and professional experience placement settings.	Produce coherent written communication content appropriate to both on-campus and professional experience placement setting	Students may use specialised software to support their literacy for on-campus learning activities. The appropriateness and practicality of using such

	N.B. This refers not to the physical act of writing but rather to the written content.	E.g., recording of laboratory results in a log book using scientific terms and abbreviations for example: FBE (full blood examination) in a clear, concise, accurate and time efficient manner	software during professional experience placements may vary between placements and should be discussed with the student prior to commencing placement.
Number skills	The ability to understand and work with numbers. Basic numeracy skills consist of comprehending fundamental mathematics like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.	Interpret and correctly apply numerical data, measurements and formulae in a time-efficient manner in on-campus learning and placement settings E.g., recording accurate measurements and numerical data when conducting environmental testing of water or soil	Students may use specialised software to support their numeracy for on-campus learning activities. The appropriateness and practicality of using such software during professional experience placements may vary between placements and should be discussed with the student prior to commencing placement.
Concentration, Memory and Problem Solving	The ability to undertake tasks that encompass cognitive capacities for a period of time in the following areas: concentration, memory, planning and organisation, information processing (speed) and reasoning or problem solving skills.	Correctly use and apply knowledge of theory, research, and practice gained from on-campus learning and during professional experience placement E.g., conceptualising and using knowledge of academic material when completing assessments and laboratory tasks such as making a solution of specified concentration within a specified time frame	Students may use assistive technology and strategies such as rest breaks to support their memory, planning and organisation in the on-campus learning environment. The use of these strategies during placement should be discussed with the student prior to commencing placement.
Mental Wellness and Behavioural Stability	A state of well-being in which an individual can realise their own abilities or potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life and can work productively and fruitfully. Behavioural stability refers to an individual's ability to moderate their own behaviour.	Exposure to complex and unpredictable human situations will require students to be mentally robust and demonstrate behavioural stability in order to manage these events competently and professionally E.g., managing personal emotions and behaviour effectively when dealing with peers, staff and clients in on-campus and professional experience placement settings	Students may be supported to take time off from their studies if they become unwell or have difficulties with behavioural stability. The professional experience placements may also be deferred, where possible until the student is ready to recommence.

Vision	Visual acuity refers to the extent to which a person can see or interpret visual information. This may also include colour vision.	Sufficient visual acuity to undertake on- campus learning and professional experience placement tasks E.g., observation of a client’s appearance, posture, movement and speech while on clinical placement E.g., read the colour code and value on electronic components such as resistors and capacitors	The use of assistive technology to enhance vision will be considered. And its use during placement should be discussed with the student and the ELS prior to commencing placement. Glasses and other visual aids can be used during on-campus learning activities and professional experience placement.
Hearing	The sense of hearing, and the extent that a person can be responsive to aural cues, and differentiate vocal and other sounds and tone.	E.g., Communicating with a patient to determine their health needs E.g., listening to nuances in breath and heart sounds during consultations in the academic simulation environment and professional experience placement setting	The use of augmentation such as lip reading and / or assistive technology to enhance hearing will be considered. It is recommended that students discuss this with the ELS and Placement Coordinator prior to commencing placement.
Tactile ability	Tactile abilities refer to the sense of touch, and the extent to which a person can distinguish tactile differences and detect tactile changes	In the patient care environment, tasks which require the sense of touch include: e.g., feeling and detecting changes in the surface temperature of the patient’s skin to determine fever, inflammation or injury	Adjustments will be considered in relation to the student’s individual circumstances and physical capacities. Any adjustments considered should not compromise safety of the student and others.
Smell	The sense of smell refers to olfactory acuity, and the extent to which a person can distinguish the differences and changes in smell	E.g., smelling the difference between similar looking herbs to accurately dispense Chinese herbal medicines	<i>The use of other senses to compensate for a deficient sense of smell may be considered.</i> However applicability to the professional experience placement setting will need to be examined and discussed with the student prior to implementation.

Gross Motor Skills	The use of large muscle groups that coordinate body movements for tasks involving lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, standing, twisting and bending	E.g., manual handling i.e. safely physically assisting babies, toddlers and young children with varying physical capacities to move from lying or sitting to a standing position	Adjustments will be considered in relation to the student's individual circumstances and physical capacities. Any adjustments considered should not compromise the safety of the student and others.
Fine Motor Skills	Refers to the ability to undertake precise coordinated movements of the hands.	<p>Coordination of movements of the hands such as: pushing, pressing, turning, pinching, grasping, shaking and manipulating</p> <p>E.g., adjusting and turning the dials and small buttons on the oscilloscope and measuring equipment to take readings of electrical voltage and current.</p>	Adjustments will be considered in relation to the student's individual circumstances and physical capacities. Any adjustments considered should not compromise the safety of the student and others.
Physical and Mental Endurance	Refers to the ability to undertake a task/s over a predetermined period of time. This could include physical performance such as standing for a period of time or cognitive (mental) performance such as concentrating for a particular length of time.	<p>E.g., managing the planning and teaching for your final professional experience placement over a substantial and sustained period relevant to an authentic early childhood educational environment e.g. over a period of a week</p> <p>E.g., maintaining a high level of concentration in order to complete accurate assessment and nursing care of up to four patients throughout a shift</p>	Adjustments will be considered in relation to the circumstances and the students' physical capacities. The student may use strategies such as rest breaks to support their performance for on-campus learning activities. The use of these strategies during placement should be discussed with the student prior to commencing placement.