

Inherent Requirements for UNSW Master of Psychology (Clinical) Program

Introduction

The UNSW School of Psychology supports the right of all people to pursue the Master of Psychology (Clinical) program. The School is committed to making reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning, assessment, clinical practice and other activities to address the impact of students' disabilities so that they are able to participate in their program.

To support potential and current students' decision making, a series of inherent requirement statements have been developed. These statements specify the requirements of the Master of Psychology (Clinical) program for student admission and progression. The statements are clustered under eight domains consisting of ethical behaviour, behavioural stability, legal, communication, cognition, relational skills, reflective skills and sustainable performance. Many of the activities associated with the professional practice of a registered psychologist are time sensitive, where the capacity to perform certain activities within specified time limits is required to reduce or avoid risks to patient safety and wellbeing. The safety and wellbeing of you and others is always of paramount importance.

Students are required to undertake placement activities in mixed gender environments which reflect the Australian health care context.

Successfully completing the Master of psychology (Clinical) program at UNSW enables you to apply for registration as a registered psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA), which is a partner board of the Australian Health Practitioners Registration Authority (AHPRA). The inherent requirements outlined below provide a guide for students and staff when deciding whether you are able to meet these requirements and the type of reasonable adjustments that could be put in place to allow you to complete the program without compromising the academic integrity of the program.

How to read the inherent requirement statements

If you are intending to enrol in the Master of Psychology (Clinical) program in the UNSW School of Psychology, you should look at these inherent requirement statements and think about whether you may experience challenges in meeting these requirements.

If you think you may experience challenges related to your disability, chronic health condition or any other reason, you should discuss your concerns with the [UNSW Equitable Learning Services](#) in conjunction with the UNSW School of Psychology staff, such as the Program Director. These staff can work collaboratively with you to determine reasonable adjustments to assist you to meet the Inherent Requirements. In the case where it is determined that Inherent Requirements cannot be met with reasonable adjustments, the University staff can provide guidance regarding other study options.

These inherent requirements should be read in conjunction with program and course information, the [Psychology Board of Australia Code of Conduct, guidelines and policies](#) and the [Australian Psychology Accreditation Council Standards](#).

Each inherent requirement is made up of the following five levels:

- Level 1 - introduction to the inherent requirement
- Level 2 - description of what the inherent requirement is
- Level 3 - explanation of why this is an inherent requirement of the program
- Level 4 - the nature of any adjustments that may be made to allow you to meet the requirement
- Level 5 - examples of things you must be able to do to show you've met the requirement

There are eight domains of inherent requirements in the Master of Psychology (Clinical) program. Some domains have a number of sub-domains.

- Ethical behaviour
- Behavioural stability
- Legal
- Communication
- Cognition
- Relational skills
- Reflective skills
- Sustainable performance

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Clinical psychology is a profession governed by the Code of Conduct, guidelines and policies of the Psychology Board of Australia where clinical psychologists are accountable and responsible for ensuring professional behaviour in all contexts. Students should demonstrate knowledge of, and engage in ethical behaviour in practice. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates knowledge of, and engages in ethical behaviour in practice. |
| | Justification of inherent requirement: |
| 3 | » Compliance with the codes, guidelines and policies facilitates safe, competent interactions and relationships for students and/or the people they engage with. This ensures the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the individual is not placed at risk |
| 4 | Adjustments must not compromise the codes, guidelines and policies of the Psychology Board of Australia or result in unethical behaviour. |
| | Exemplars: |
| 5 | » Complying with conduct required to maintain provisional registration as a psychologist |



BEHAVIOURAL STABILITY

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Behavioural stability is required to function and adapt effectively and sensitively in a demanding role. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates behavioural stability to work constructively in a diverse and changing academic and clinical environment, which may at times be challenging and unpredictable. |
| | Justification of inherent requirement: |
| 3 | » Behavioural stability is required to work individually and in teams in diverse and changing environments. Students will be exposed to situations which are challenging and unpredictable, and will be required to have the behavioural stability to manage these objectively and professionally |
| 4 | Adjustments must support stable, effective and professional behaviour in both academic and clinical settings. |
| | Exemplars: |
| 5 | » Being receptive and responding appropriately to constructive feedback » Managing own emotional state in order to be able to develop and maintain an appropriate relationship with a diverse range of clients |

LEGAL

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Clinical psychology practice is mandated by specific legislation to enable the safe delivery of care. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates knowledge of, and compliance with relevant laws and professional regulations. |
| | Justification of inherent requirement: |
| 3 | » Knowledge, understanding and compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements are necessary pre-requisites to placements in order to reduce the risk of harm to self and others » Compliance with these regulations and the law ensures that students are both responsible and accountable for their practice |
| 4 | Adjustments must be consistent with legal and regulatory requirements. |
| | Exemplars: |
| 5 | » Complying with legal requirements regarding all aspects of practice » Complying with the requirement for student registration with the Australian Health Professional Registration Authority (AHPRA) |



COMMUNICATION

The Master of Psychology (Clinical) program requires effective, verbal, non-verbal and written communication.

Verbal

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Effective and efficient verbal communication, in English, is an essential requirement to provide safe delivery of clinical psychology care. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» The ability to understand and respond to verbal communication accurately, appropriately and in a timely manner» The ability to provide clear instructions in the context of the situation» Timely clear feedback and reporting» The ability to communicate in group settings |
| 3 | Justification of inherent requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» The practice of clinical psychology depends on effective verbal communication with clients and members of the professional team» Speed and accuracy of communication may be critical for individual safety or treatment |
| 4 | Adjustments for impaired verbal communication must address effectiveness, timeliness, clarity and accuracy issues to ensure safety. |
| 5 | Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Collecting information from clients by asking questions during assessments» Explaining a treatment plan to a client» Discussing the client's progress with other professionals» Participating in group projects and collaborations with other students |

Non-verbal

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Effective non-verbal communication is fundamental to clinical psychology and needs to be respectful, clear, attentive, empathic, honest and non-judgemental. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» The capacity to recognise, interpret and respond appropriately to behavioural cues» Consistent and appropriate awareness of own behaviours» Sensitivity to individual and cultural differences |
| 3 | Justification of inherent requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» The ability to observe and understand non-verbal cues assists with building rapport with people and gaining their trust and respect in academic and professional relationships» Displaying consistent and appropriate facial expressions, eye contact, being mindful of space, time boundaries and body movements and gestures promotes trust in academic and professional relationships» Being sensitive to individual and cultural differences demonstrates respect and empathy, and permits the development of trusting relationships required to work with clients during placements |



| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|---|
| | » The ability to observe and understand non-verbal cues is essential for safe and effective observation of clients' symptoms and reactions as part of their assessment and treatment |
| 4 | Adjustments for non-verbal communication impairments must enable the recognition, interpretation and appropriate response to non-verbal cues as well as initiation of effective non-verbal communication in a timely and appropriate manner. |
| | Exemplars: |
| 5 | » Recognising and responding to non-verbal cues indicating a change in the emotional state of a client during placements » Recognising and responding to non-verbal cues in classroom situations |

Written

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Effective written communication is a fundamental clinical psychology responsibility with professional and legal ramifications. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates capacity to construct coherent written communication appropriate to the circumstances which are completed in a timely manner. |
| | Justification of inherent requirement: |
| 3 | » Construction of written text-based assessment tasks to reflect the required academic standards are necessary to convey knowledge and understanding of relevant subject matter for professional practice » Accurate written communication for a range of purposes and audiences is vital to provide consistent and safe patient care |
| 4 | Adjustments for written communication impairments must not compromise the necessary standards of clarity, accuracy, efficiency and accessibility to ensure effective recording and transmission of information in both academic and clinical settings. |
| | Exemplars: |
| 5 | » Constructing an essay to required academic standards including appropriate referencing of sources » Preparing clinical reports which are appropriate to the purpose and audience, and completed in a timely manner |

COGNITION

The Master of Psychology (Clinical) program requires knowledge of theory and the skills of cognition, literacy and numeracy.

Knowledge and cognitive skills

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Consistent and effective knowledge and cognitive skills must be demonstrated to undertake safe and competent clinical psychology practice. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» The capacity to locate appropriate and relevant information» The ability to process information relevant to practice» The ability to integrate and implement knowledge in practice |
| 3 | Justification of inherent requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Satisfactory performance on placements requires identifying and accurately extracting and understanding information from a range of sources, which must also be applied appropriately |
| 4 | Adjustments for knowledge or cognitive skills impairments must not compromise or impede student's ability to demonstrate the minimum acceptable level of knowledge and cognitive skill required to practice safely. |
| 5 | Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Ability to apply academic knowledge to practice during placements, for example through developing and testing hypotheses, developing treatment plans and then conducting individual sessions for clients based upon this |

Literacy (language)

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Competent literacy skills are essential to permit safe and effective practice of clinical psychology during placements. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» The ability to accurately acquire information and convey appropriate, effective messages» The ability to read and comprehend a range of literature and information» The capacity to understand and implement academic conventions to construct written text in a scholarly manner |
| 3 | Justification of inherent requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» The ability to acquire information and to accurately convey messages is fundamental to ensure safe and effective assessment, treatment and delivery of care» The ability to read, decode, interpret and comprehend multiple sources of information is fundamental for safe and effective conduct during placements |
| 4 | Adjustments to address literacy issues must not compromise the student's ability to demonstrate the minimum acceptable capacity to effectively acquire, comprehend, apply and communicate accurate information. |



| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|--|
| | Exemplars: |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conveying a spoken message accurately and effectively in a clinical setting during placements » Paraphrasing, summarising and referencing in accordance with the <u>American Psychological Association Publication Manual</u> conventions » Producing accurate, concise and clear documentation while on placement in the clinical setting which meets legal and professional requirements |

Numeracy

| | Inherent requirement statements |
|---|---|
| 1 | Competent and accurate numeracy skills are essential to provide safe and effective demonstration of clinical psychology practice skills. |
| 2 | <p>Student demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » the ability to interpret and correctly apply numerical data, measurement and numerical criteria in the execution of clinical psychology practice while on placement. |
| | Justification of inherent requirement: |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » As clinical psychology practice relies in part on collecting data in a numerical form, for example psychometric assessments, students must be able to accurately record and manage numerical data and to interpret their findings |
| 4 | Adjustments to address numeracy issues must not compromise the student's ability to demonstrate the minimum acceptable capacity to manage and interpret numerical data. |
| | Exemplars: |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Accurately scoring and interpreting psychological test data while on placement |

RELATIONAL SKILLS

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Clinical psychology practice requires the ability to make and maintain strong relationships with a wide range of clients, often under stressful circumstances. |
| 2 | <p>Student demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The ability to make and maintain rapport with clients » The ability to engage in effective counselling skills » Accurate empathy |
| | Justification of inherent requirement: |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Highly developed relational skills are a cornerstone of effective therapeutic relationships that permit effective assessment and intervention |



| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|--|
| 4 | Adjustments for relational skills impairment must not compromise the student's ability to demonstrate minimal acceptable level of effective relational skills across the range of tasks and clinical populations required to successfully complete their studies. |
| 5 | Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Rapidly building rapport with a client in order to engage them in a clinical assessment while on placement » Effectively managing difficulties arising in the therapeutic relationship while on placement |

REFLECTIVE SKILLS

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Clinical psychology practice requires self-awareness and a capacity for reflectivity in order to consider the effect of one's own issues, actions, values and behaviours on practice. |
| 2 | Student demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The ability to accurately reflect on their professional performance » The ability to accept feedback on their professional practice and respond constructively |
| 3 | Justification of inherent requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Participation in supervision is a key teaching strategy in clinical psychology training which requires adequate understanding oneself in order to appropriately engage in this activity » Working with clients while on placement and understanding and responding to them requires adequate understanding of oneself and the ability to effectively manage one's reactions to situations that may arise |
| 4 | Adjustments for reflective skills impairments must not compromise the student's ability to demonstrate an acceptable minimum level of capacity in this area. |
| 5 | Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identifying when a clinical issue is outside one's scope or expertise, or when one's practice may be affected by an impairment. |

SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE

| Level | Inherent requirement statements |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Clinical psychology practice requires both physical and mental performance at a consistent and sustained level to meet individual needs over time. |
| 2 | <p>Student demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Consistent and sustained level of physical energy to complete a specific task in a timely manner and over time» The ability to perform repetitive activities with a level of concentration that ensures a capacity to focus on the activity until it is completed appropriately» The capacity to maintain consistency and quality of performance throughout the designated period of duty |
| 3 | <p>Justification of inherent requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Sufficient physical and mental endurance is an essential requirement needed to perform multiple tasks in an assigned period to provide safe and effective care |
| 4 | <p>Adjustments must ensure that performance is consistent and sustained over a given period.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Participating in tutorials, lectures throughout the day» Remaining focussed and providing consistent responses over a negotiated time frame during placement |

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(https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ir/inherent_requirements/inherent_requirements_for_master_of_psychology_clinical_psychology).



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