

Inherent Requirements Development Guidelines

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) This document provides guidance for Southern Cross University staff to develop Inherent Requirements for courses.

Scope

(2) These Guidelines are applicable to all University award courses.

Section 2 - Definition

(3) Inherent requirements are the essential components of a course or unit that demonstrate the abilities, knowledge and skills to achieve the core learning outcomes of the course or unit. Students with a disability or chronic health condition may be able to have reasonable adjustments made to enable them to meet these requirements.

Section 3 - Rationale and Implications

Why does Southern Cross University need Inherent Requirements?

(4) Southern Cross University is committed to supporting and promoting the rights of people with disability.

(5) Inherent requirements enable applicants to make an informed choice before enrolment, about whether they possess the characteristics which are fundamentally necessary to complete a Southern Cross University course. They define the boundaries beyond which the University cannot make reasonable adjustments for a student to complete a University course. They provide an important catalyst for prospective students to engage in early communication with University staff such as Course Coordinators and Student Care and Support, about potential learning impacts, their eligibility for academic adjustments, and other related matters that may affect their ability to achieve the course learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

Relationship with Reasonable Adjustments

(6) In accordance with the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#) and the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#), the University will make reasonable adjustments for students with disability to allow them to participate in education on the same basis as students without a disability.

(7) However, because the University must protect the interests of all students by preserving the academic integrity of its learning, assessment and accreditation processes, it cannot make an adjustment for a student with a disability if, by making the adjustment, the academic integrity of the course will be detrimentally affected.

(8) In order to determine if an adjustment is reasonable and does not affect the academic integrity of the course, the University will determine what parts of the course are inherently required to demonstrate the appropriate knowledge,

experience and expertise implicit in the holding of a particular award. By doing so, the University will establish a clear framework for staff to draw on to effectively counsel current and prospective students about the adjustments that may be made to facilitate educational opportunities and course progression.

What is broadly required?

(9) Southern Cross University courses are being progressively analysed with reference to their constituent units and permitted course structures to determine the essential requirements of the overarching award (i.e. the inherent requirements). Courses which have compulsory work integrated learning components (clinical practicum, professional placement etc.) will be analysed first, and then those with elective work integrated learning components and/or external professional recognition or accreditation requirements second. Once the analysis for these courses is complete, the remaining courses of the University will be progressively examined for inherent requirements.

(10) Ultimately, the University must be able to demonstrate it has evaluated the inherent requirements for its courses and communicate publicly the inherent requirements for each course. The University must also be able to demonstrate that an authoritative body within the University formally approved their adoption, and that applicants had a reasonable opportunity to familiarise themselves with the requirements before they enrolled with the University.

(11) The following sections of these Guidelines provide detail on the process to be used when developing inherent requirements, and the process for their assessment, review and approval.

Section 4 - Drafting, Review and Approval

Step 1 - Identify who will make the assessment

(12) It is important to include a diverse range of skills and experience in the assessment team. Membership should include people with relevant clinical placement/field expertise and a curriculum expert. The relevant Course Coordinator must be included.

Step 2 - Review key concepts

(13) It is important to review the key concepts which underpin inherent requirements, such as reasonable adjustments. The [Summary of Rights and Requirements](#) under the Disability Standards for Education is a useful resource, with further information available from the University's Student Care and Support team and the [Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training](#) website.

Step 3 - Map professional body accreditation requirements

(14) If any mandatory external requirements apply to students within the course you should note these at the outset. If it is impossible for Southern Cross University to confer an award without a student meeting external requirements, including attending clinical or professional placements, then the nature of the external requirements must be considered

Step 4 - Map the curriculum with draft inherent requirements statements

(15) It is recommended to begin with one unit of a course, preferably one with clinical or field placement that allows you to establish some initial inherent requirements statements. Refer to the [Inherent Requirements](#) statements prepared by Western Sydney University as a starting point. These requirements may not necessarily be found to apply at Southern Cross University, they are provided as a reference point only.

(16) You must specifically test whether the following requirements are inherent to your course, because they have been found to apply to all Western Sydney University courses analysed thus far by that university:

- a. Behavioural Stability
- b. Communication
- c. Cognition
- d. Ethical Behaviour

(17) Use the statements developed for your first unit to test whether the same requirements apply to the other units of the course. Ultimately you will look at all the Units in your course and from this process you will infer the inherent requirements which apply across the award, i.e. what characteristics must be possessed and therefore cannot be adjusted for in order to satisfy the learning outcomes of the award. Any compulsory elements of a course progression structure should be given extra attention – bearing in mind just because a unit is compulsory doesn't mean reasonable adjustments can't be made in order for a person with disability to participate. It all depends on whether participating in a particular way is inherent to the knowledge or skills being assessed, and ultimately recognised via an award of the University.

(18) Use the Southern Cross University [Inherent Requirements Template](#) when drafting your final inherent requirements statements for the course. This structures your responses and ensures that end users can understand what the inherent requirements are, why they are considered inherent, what can be adjusted for, and real life examples to provide further guidance. Completing all parts of the template is required for each inherent requirement of the course.

Step 5 – Submit your draft inherent requirements statements for review

(19) When you have drafted your inherent requirements statements for the course, the Course Coordinator will email them to Student Care and Support for review who will liaise with the Course Coordinator to resolve any issues they may identify. If the Course Coordinator and Student Care and Support staff cannot agree on aspects of the inherent requirements statements, the relevant issues will be noted on any paperwork supplied to the Executive Dean, and any legal aspects referred to the University Legal Office for review.

Step 6 – Approval by the Executive Dean

(20) The Executive Dean will consider the inherent requirement statements and any other supporting documents and if satisfied, will approve in accordance with the [Course and Unit Approval Authorities](#).

Step 7 – Publication

(21) On confirmation of Executive Dean approval, the Student Care and Support team will publish the approved inherent requirements statements to the applicable part of their website as agreed with Marketing, Media and Communications, and the Course Implementation Team will facilitate the Course Requirements change being published in the relevant section of the course pages.

Section 5 - Acknowledgment

(22) Southern Cross University acknowledges these Guidelines draw significantly upon material provided by Western Sydney University's Inherent Requirements for Nursing Education (IRONE) Project. (Reference: Johnson, A., Allan, T., Phillips, K., Azzopardi, T., Dickson, C., Goldsmith, M & Hengstberger-Sims, C. (2011). Inherent Requirements of Nursing Education (IRONE), UWS School of Nursing & Midwifery and Student Equity & Disability Services.)

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