

Inherent Requirements for Occupational Therapy

College of Health and Human Sciences





Acknowledgement

We value and respect the place, history and culture of Indigenous Australians.

We're deeply engaged with—and informed by—the Indigenous people of Australia and we operate on the lands of many strong Indigenous nations. Our main campus is in Darwin, on the lands of the Larrakia people, and we acknowledge and pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

Our other campuses have a footprint or activities on Indigenous nations as well, and to them we also pay our respects: the Arrernte of Alice Springs; the Jawoyn, Wardaman and Dagomon of Katherine; the Waramungu of Tennant Creek; the Kungarany of Batchelor and Adelaide River; the Yolngu of north-east Arnhem Land; the Tunuvivi of the Tiwi Islands; and the Gadigal of the Eora Nation of Sydney.

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Introduction

The Charles Darwin University College of Health and Human Sciences strongly supports the right of all people to pursue a course in Occupational Therapy to achieve their potential and career objectives. The College is committed to making reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning, assessment, practice experiences and other activities to address the impact of students' disabilities so that they are able to participate in their course

Every occupation, including occupational therapy has certain characteristics that are integral to their profession. Providing occupational therapy care and services can be emotionally challenging as well as physically strenuous. The safety and wellbeing of students and others is always of paramount importance. Students are required to undertake placement activities in culturally diverse environments which reflect the Australian health care context. Successfully completing the course enables you to apply for registration as a registered Occupational Therapist with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (OTBA) which is a partner board of the Australian Health Practitioners Registration Authority (AHPRA).

To support potential and current students' decision making a series of inherent requirement statements have been developed. These statements specify the course requirements of the Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Occupational Therapy and Master of Occupational Therapy for student admission and progression. The statements are clustered under eight domains consisting of ethical behaviour, behavioural stability, legal, communication, cognition, sensory abilities, strength and mobility and sustainable performance.

Inherent Requirement Statements

Occupational Therapy



How to read the inherent requirement statements

If you are intending to enrol in occupational therapy courses at the College of Health and Human Sciences 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 a campus Disability Service or the staff, such as the Course Coordinator. 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 other course information and OTBA publications such as [Guidelines for Mandatory Notifications](#), [Code of Conduct for registered health practitioners](#) and [National Competency Standards for the Registered Occupational Therapist](#).

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 course;
- 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 Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Occupational Therapy and the Master of Occupational Therapy courses. Some domains have a number of sub-domains.

1. Ethical behaviour
2. Behavioural stability
3. Legal
4. Communication
5. Cognition
6. Sensory ability
7. Strength & mobility
8. Sustainable performance

Inherent requirement statements

Ethical behaviour

Inherent requirement statements

1. Occupational therapy is a profession governed by competency standards, code of ethics, and code of conduct where Occupational Therapists are both accountable and responsible for ensuring professional behaviour in all contexts.
2. **Student demonstrates** knowledge of and engages in ethical behaviour in practice.
3. **Justification of Inherent requirement:**
 - Compliance with the codes, guidelines and standards 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 codes of conduct or result in unethical behaviour.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Complying with medico-legal requirements relating to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality with client information in academic and clinical settings.
 - Demonstrating ability to reflect on ethical dilemmas and issues and takes responsibility for ensuring awareness of ethical behaviour.

Behavioural stability

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 practice environment.
3. **Justification of Inherent requirement:**
 - Behavioural stability is required to work individually and in teams in changing and unpredictable environments. Occupational Therapy students will be exposed to a health care and disability contexts in which they will encounter human suffering and will be required to have behavioural stability to manage these events objectively and professionally.
4. **Adjustments** must support stable, effective and professional behaviour in both academic and practice settings.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Being receptive and responding appropriately to constructive feedback.
 - Coping effectively with own emotions and behaviour when working with individuals and other stakeholders in service settings.

Legal

Inherent requirement statements

1. Occupational Therapy is mandated by specific legislation to enable the safe delivery of care and services.
2. **Student demonstrates** knowledge and compliance with Australian Law, professional regulations and scope of practice.
3. **Justification of inherent requirements:**
 - Knowledge, understanding, and compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements are necessary pre-requisites to practice placements in order to reduce the risk of harm to self and others.
 - Compliance with these professional regulations, standards and the Australian Law ensures that students are both responsible and accountable for their practice.
4. **Adjustments** must be consistent with legislative and regulatory requirements.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Complying with the policies of clinical facilities
 - Complying with the requirements for student registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

Communication

This course requires effective, verbal, non-verbal and written communication skills.

Verbal

Inherent requirement statements

1. Effective and efficient verbal communication, in English, is an essential requirement to provide safe delivery of care.
2. **Student demonstrates:**
 - Sensitivity to individual and/or cultural differences.
 - 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.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - Communicating in a way that displays respect and empathy to others, develops trusting relationships.
 - Communication may be restricted to verbal because of physical limitations of the individual (e.g. injury, disease or congenital conditions).
 - Speed and interactivity of communication may be critical for individual safety or treatment.
 - Timely, accurate and effective delivery of instructions is critical to individual safety, treatment and management.
4. **Adjustments** for impaired verbal communication must address effectiveness, timeliness, clarity and accuracy issues to ensure safety
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Participating in tutorial, simulation and clinical discussions
 - Establishing rapport with individuals and their families and responding appropriately to requests in the service setting.

Non-Verbal

Inherent requirement statements

1. Effective non-verbal communication is fundamental to occupational therapy and needs to be respectful, clear, attentive, empathetic, honest and non-judgmental.
2. **Student demonstrates:**
 - The capacity to recognise, interpret and respond appropriately to behavioural cues
 - Consistent and appropriate awareness of own behaviours
 - Sensitivity to individual differences
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - 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/or cultural differences, displays respect and empathy to others and develops trusting relationships.
 - The ability to observe and understand non-verbal cues is essential for safe and effective observation of a client's symptoms and reactions to facilitate the assessment and the assessment and treatment of clients/individuals.
4. **Adjustments** must enable the recognition, initiation of or appropriate response to effective non-verbal communication in a timely and appropriate manner.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Recognising and responding appropriately in the academic environment. Recognising and responding appropriately to cues in the practice environment.

Written

Inherent requirement statements

1. Effective written communication is a fundamental occupational therapy responsibility with professional and legal ramifications.
2. **Student demonstrates** capacity to construct coherent written communication appropriate to the circumstances.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - 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, including record-keeping and clinical notes is vital to provide consistent and safe care and service.
4. **Adjustments** must meet necessary standards of clarity, accuracy and accessibility to ensure effective recording and transmission of information in both academic and practical settings.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Constructing an essay to Academic standards.
 - Documenting clinical notes, reports and information in a timely manner that meets professional standards.

Cognition

This course requires knowledge of theory and the skills of cognition, literacy and numeracy.

Knowledge and cognitive skills

Inherent requirement statements

1. Consistent and effective knowledge and cognitive skills must be demonstrated to provide safe and competent occupational therapy services.
2. **Student demonstrates:**
 - Capacity to locate appropriate and relevant information.
 - Ability to process information relevant to practice.
 - Ability to integrate and implement knowledge in practice in a timely manner.
3. **Justification of inherent requirements:**
 - Safe and effective delivery of occupational therapy is based on comprehensive knowledge that must be sourced, understood and applied appropriately
4. **Adjustments** must ensure that a clear demonstration of knowledge and cognitive skills is not compromised or impeded.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Ability to conceptualise and use appropriate knowledge in response to academic assessment items.
 - Applying knowledge of theory, research evidence, policy and procedures in the practice settings.

Literacy (Language)

Inherent requirement statements

1. Competent literacy skills are essential to provide safe and effective delivery of care.
2. **Student demonstrates:**
 - The ability to acquire information and accurately 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:**
 - 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 delivery care
4. **Adjustments** to address literacy issues must demonstrate a capacity to effectively acquire, comprehend, apply and communicate accurate information.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Demonstrating the ability to convey a spoken instruction to a client and communicate effectively in a clinical setting.
 - Paraphrasing, summarising and referencing in accordance with appropriate academic conventions in written assignments.
 - Producing accurate, concise and clear occupational therapy documentation which meets legal requirements.

Numeracy

Inherent requirement statements

1. Competent and accurate numeracy skills are essential for safe and effective care
2. Student interprets and correctly applies data, measurements and numerical criteria
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - Competent application of numeracy skills is essential in Occupational Therapy to facilitate the safe and effective delivery of occupational therapy care.
4. **Adjustments** must demonstrate a capacity to interpret and apply concepts and processes appropriately in a timely, accurate and effective manner
5. **Exemplars**
 - Recording accurate measurements in client notes
 - Prescribing adaptive equipment that correctly meets client measurement requirements. E.g. Wheelchair prescription

Sensory ability

This course requires adequate visual, auditory and tactile abilities.

Visual

Inherent requirement statements

1. Adequate visual acuity is required to provide safe and effective occupational therapy
2. **Student demonstrates** sufficient visual acuity to perform the required range of skills.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - Sufficient visual acuity is necessary to demonstrate the required range of skills, tasks and assessments to maintain consistent, accurate and safe care to self and others
 - Visual observations, examination and assessment are fundamental to safe and effective occupational therapy
4. **Adjustments** must address the need to perform the full range of tasks involved in the practice setting. Any strategies to address the effects of the vision impairment must be effective, consistent and not compromise safety or treatment.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Safely operating electrical equipment, e.g. splinting equipment
 - Observing and detecting subtle changes in posture movement and ability to perform functional activities during assessment and treatment

Auditory

Inherent requirement statements

1. Adequate auditory acuity is required to provide safe and effective occupational therapy
2. **Student demonstrates** sufficient aural function to undertake the required range of skills.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - Sufficient auditory ability is necessary to monitor, assess and manage an individual's health/ care needs consistently and accurately
 - Auditory assessments and observations are fundamental to safe and effective occupational therapy

4. **Adjustments** must address the need to perform the full range of tasks involved in clinical practice. Any strategies to address the effects of the hearing impairment must be effective, consistent and not compromise treatment or
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Engaging appropriately to a client's responses during assessment and treatment

Tactile

Inherent requirement statements

1. Sufficient tactile ability is required to perform competent and safe occupational therapy
2. **Student demonstrates** sufficient tactile function to undertake the required range of skills and assessments.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - Sufficient tactile ability is necessary to monitor, assess and detect an individual's physical characteristics and act on any abnormalities to provide appropriate occupational therapy.
 - Tactile assessments and observations are fundamental to safe and effective occupational therapy
4. **Adjustments** must have the capacity to make effective assessments of physical characteristics and abnormalities within safe time frames.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Detecting any changes in circulation observations (e.g. temperature and pulse palpation)
 - Palpating joints, muscles and soft tissue and detecting anatomical or movement abnormalities.

Strength & mobility

This course requires strength and mobility involving fine and gross motor skills.

Gross motor

Inherent requirement statements

1. Occupational therapy is a profession that involves physical demands and requires gross motor function.
2. **Student demonstrates** the ability to perform gross motor skills to function within scope of practice.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - Sufficient gross motor skills are necessary to perform the required level of care/ service.
 - Tasks that involve gross motor skills include lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, standing, twisting and bending. Students must be able to demonstrate and perform these tasks consistently and safely to reduce the risk of harm to self and others.
4. **Adjustments** should facilitate functional effectiveness, safety of self and others and a capacity to provide appropriate care.
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Maintaining own and clients balance while providing client support when transferring and mobilising individuals in a safe manner

- Evaluating clients in a safe and effective manner who have varying physical capacity who are positioned on plinths and hospital beds, mats on the floor, on chairs and when standing.

Fine Motor

1. Occupational therapy is a profession that requires manual dexterity and fine motor skills.
2. **Student demonstrates** the ability to use fine motor skills to provide safe effective care.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - Sufficient fine motor skills are necessary to perform, the required level of care and service.
 - Tasks that involve fine motor skills include being able to grasp, press, push, turn, squeeze and manipulate various objects and individuals.
4. **Students must be able to demonstrate** and perform these tasks consistently and safely to reduce the risk of harm to self and others
5. **Adjustments** should facilitate functional effectiveness, safety to self and others and
6. **Exemplars:**
 - Performing assessment techniques e.g. evaluation of hand sensation and joint movement
 - Performing treatment techniques e.g. Fabricating splints, demonstrating use of adaptive equipment, demonstrating fine motor tasks during activities of daily living.

Sustainable Performance

Inherent requirement statements

1. Occupational therapy requires both physical and mental performance at a consistent sustained level to meet individual needs over time.
2. **Student demonstrates** 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 time.
3. **Justification of inherent requirement:**
 - 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. **Adjustments** must ensure that performance is consistent and sustained over a given period
5. **Exemplars:**
 - Participating in tutorials, lectures and skills throughout the day
 - Providing consistent occupational therapy over a negotiated time frame while on clinical placement.

Document History and Version Control

Sponsor:	Dean, College of Health and Human Sciences
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1.0	June 2021	Dean, College of Health & Human Sciences	Creation of original document (September 2021) and uploaded to the CDU website and creation of PDF document for download.