

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Fitness to Practice – Student Information

Students undertaking WIL activities (placements) are expected to always behave professionally, both in and outside the workplace, according to the professional standards of their course. All Charles Darwin University (CDU) courses have [Inherent Requirements](#), which are entry requirements that students need to be able to demonstrate to complete their course. Professionally accredited courses must also ensure that the students enrolled in them, meet the professional conduct standards while undertaking placements. Hence, CDU has a responsibility to ensure that students meet their course requirements and demonstrate the necessary abilities, skills, and behaviours, including being medically, physically, and psychologically capable of successfully undertaking workplace placements. This is deemed **Fitness to Practice**. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the University's [Code of Conduct – Students](#) and the relevant codes or guidelines issued by the professional body, registering authority, or placement provider.

The inherent requirements identify the attributes students need to be able to meet the professional standards of behaviour and conduct to achieve their course learning outcomes and therefore become registered professionals (where applicable) with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (APHRA). Students in the Faculty of Health will be required to provide care to patients/clients from diverse backgrounds and meet their course's professional standards as part of their placement. Therefore, all students must establish and maintain their medical, physical, and psychological capabilities while on placement.

The [Fitness to Practice Declaration](#) is a self-assessment that students are required to complete annually to inform the university about any ongoing medical, physical, or psychological concerns, or previous criminal convictions. It is designed to promote early intervention so that CDU can provide guidance and support to balance the student needs with patient safety and safeguard the University and host organisations. If a student presents themselves to a WIL site (placement) they are declaring themselves 'fit to practice'.

Where a student has not disclosed any medical, physical, or psychological condition but university staff are concerned about the student's capability to meet the fitness to practice requirements, they may be required to undertake a *Health Assessment* before being considered for a placement.

Failure to maintain fitness to practice is dependent on the profession, but the following behaviours *may raise concerns* regarding a student's fitness to practice and should be discussed with their course coordinator.

- Not complying with contractual and pre-placement requirements.
- Not attending all scheduled placement hours, including induction and training sessions.
- Unprofessional behaviours and attitudes (including social media).
- Being dishonest or disrespectful at any time.
- Being intimidating or discriminative to a patient/client, host organisation, university staff, or fellow students.
- Performing in a manner inconsistent with the profession's standards.
- Disclosing confidential information.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Acting in a violent or aggressive manner.
- A disability or health condition that impairs the student's capability.

- A conviction (or found guilty) of an offense punishable by imprisonment in Australia and/or overseas.
- Not being able to control emotions in emergencies, during patient/client suffering, or in a way that could cause distress to staff, fellow students, patients/clients, or the community.
- Incorrectly performing drug calculations.
- Missing important medical alerts, such as drug or food allergies, which impact the patient's/client's safety.
- Unable to undertake physical tasks.
- Making recommendations to a patient/client or performing procedures that have posed a risk to patient safety.

Students who are not fit to practice pose a risk to the public, host organisation staff, and other students if they are allowed to undertake a placement. To protect the public from the risk of harm, CDU is required to make mandatory notifications. This is a legal requirement under the National Law for students enrolled in AHPRA-registered professions.

Understandably, students may be worried about declaring a medical, physical, or psychological concern that might impact their fitness to practice, however, this will not automatically exclude a student from undertaking a placement. Generally, a fitness to practice concern is not raised if the student is receiving the appropriate care. Students with a health condition (including disability) or carer responsibilities may be eligible for reasonable adjustments, helping them meet the fitness to practice requirements and participate in their placement. Reasonable adjustments cannot fundamentally change, replace, or override the nature of the program requirements. Some conditions may make it difficult for a student to graduate, hence any student who has concerns about their capability to meet the fitness to practice requirements for their course is strongly encouraged to speak to their course coordinator as soon as possible to discuss possible adjustments or alternative courses. CDU supports the rights of students to participate on an equitable basis and where possible, will make reasonable adjustments to enable all students to participate as long as they do not fundamentally change, replace, or override the course's inherent requirements or fitness to practice requirements.

Any concerns identified from the self-declaration regarding the student's capability to meet fitness to practice and the student will be required to undertake a *Health Assessment* by a medical practitioner before they can start their placement. Health issues identified during the self-declaration will be assessed independently.

CDU is committed to supporting the rights of all students to pursue a career in health. The University provides a range of [support services](#) for students. Any student with a disability, medical or mental condition (permanent or temporary) that may impact their ability to study should seek support from [Access and Inclusion](#) who will be able to ensure equal access and participation across their course.