

Inherent requirements for Midwifery (undergraduate) courses

UTS:HEALTH

These inherent requirements apply to the following courses:

C10225v4 Bachelor of Midwifery, C10329v3 Bachelor of Midwifery Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation

Introduction to inherent requirements for Midwifery courses

The Faculty of Health at the University of Technology, Sydney strongly supports the rights of all people who wish to pursue a course in midwifery to achieve their potential and career objectives. The Faculty 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 midwifery, has certain characteristics that are integral to their profession. Caring for women and their families during pregnancy, labour and birth can be emotionally challenging as well as physically strenuous. Many of the activities associated with the professional practice of midwifery are time sensitive. The capacity to perform certain activities by students and registered midwives within specified time limits is required to reduce or avoid risks to the safety and wellbeing of women and/or their newborns. 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 midwife with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA), 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 Midwifery (BMid) 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.

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 students to complete the course without compromising the academic integrity of the course.

How to read the inherent requirement statements

If you are intending to enrol in the undergraduate midwifery course in the Faculty of Health, 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 a UTS Special Needs advisor or Faculty of Health staff, such as the Director of Clinical Practice, Academic Liaison Officer, Course Coordinator or your Instructor. 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 NMBA publications such as Guidelines for Mandatory Notifications, A Midwife's Guide to Professional Boundaries and National Competency Standards for the Registered Midwife.

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

Inherent requirement domains

There are eight domains of inherent requirements in the Bachelor of Midwifery. Some domains have a number of sub-domains.

- Ethical behaviour
- Behavioural stability
- Legal
- Communication
- Cognition
- Sensory ability
- Strength & mobility
- Sustainable performance

Ethical behaviour

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - ethical behaviour

Inherent requirements statements

1. Midwifery is a profession governed by competency standards, codes of ethics, professional conduct and professional boundaries where midwives 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 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 codes of conduct or result in unethical behaviour.
5. Exemplars:
 - Complying with academic and non-academic misconduct policies
 - Demonstrating appropriate behaviour with confidential information in classroom and practice settings
 - Demonstrate appropriate behaviour when working with women from diverse backgrounds

Behavioural stability

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - behavioural stability

Inherent requirements 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. Midwifery students will be exposed to a woman's private and emotionally charged pregnancy, labour and birth and post birth period which may include complex and emergency situations. Midwifery students 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 women and their families during their maternity experience

Legal

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - legal

Inherent requirements statements

1. Midwifery practice is mandated by specific legislation to enable the safe delivery of care.
2. Student demonstrates knowledge and compliance with Australian Law, professional regulations and scope of practice.
3. Justification of inherent requirement:
 - 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 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 relevant child protection and safety legislation
 - Complying with relevant drugs and poisons legislation

Communication

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

Verbal

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - verbal communication

Inherent requirements statements

1. Effective and efficient verbal communication, in English, is an essential requirement to provide safe delivery of care.
2. Student demonstrates:
 - 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:

- 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
 - Responding appropriately to a care request in the practice environment

Non-verbal

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - non-verbal communication

Inherent requirements statements

1. Effective non-verbal communication is fundamental to midwifery 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 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 woman's and/or newborn's symptoms and reactions to facilitate the assessment and treatment of women and/or their newborn
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 classroom situations
 - Recognising and responding appropriately to cues in the practice environment

Written

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - written communication

Inherent requirements statements

1. Effective written communication is a fundamental midwifery 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 women's and newborns' notes, is vital to provide consistent and safe midwifery care
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 midwifery notes in a woman's maternity record 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

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - knowledge and cognitive skills

Inherent requirements statements

1. Consistent and effective knowledge and cognitive skills must be demonstrated to provide safe and competent midwifery care.
2. Student demonstrates:
 - Capacity to locate appropriate and relevant information
 - Ability to process information relevant to practice
 - Integrate and implement knowledge in practice
3. Justification of inherent requirement:
 - Safe and effective delivery of midwifery care 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 policy and procedures in the practice setting

Literacy (language)

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - literacy (language)

Inherent requirements statements

1. Competent literacy skills are essential to provide safe and effective delivery of care.
2. Student demonstrates:
 - 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:
 - 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 of midwifery 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 message accurately
 - Paraphrasing, summarising and referencing in accordance with appropriate academic conventions in written assignments
 - Producing accurate, concise and clear midwifery documentation which meets legal requirements

Numeracy

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - numeracy

Inherent requirements 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 midwifery to facilitate the safe and effective delivery of midwifery care

4. Adjustments must demonstrate a capacity to interpret and apply concepts and processes appropriately in a timely, accurate and effective manner.
5. Exemplars:
 - Performing accurate drug calculations
 - Demonstrating accurate recording on a fluid balance chart

Sensory ability

This course requires adequate visual, auditory and tactile abilities.

Visual

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - visual sensory ability

Inherent requirements statements

1. Adequate visual acuity is required to provide safe and effective midwifery care.
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 midwifery practice
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:
 - Accurately drawing up medication to administer
 - Observing and detecting subtle changes in a newborn's colour

Auditory

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - auditory sensory ability

Inherent requirements statements

1. Adequate auditory ability is required to provide safe and effective midwifery care.
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 a woman and newborn's health needs consistently and accurately

- Auditory assessments and observations are fundamental to safe and effective midwifery practice
- 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 safety.
- 5. Exemplars:
 - Accurately undertaking a blood pressure measurement by auscultation
 - Detecting the non verbal sounds made by a woman in labour which may indicate birthing was in progress

Tactile

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - tactile sensory ability

Inherent requirements statements

1. Sufficient tactile ability is required to perform competent and safe midwifery care.
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 a woman's physical and pregnancy related characteristics and act on any deviation detected to provide thorough midwifery care
 - Tactile assessments and observations are fundamental to safe and effective midwifery practice
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)
 - Conducting an abdominal palpation during labour and detecting deviations from normal (e.g. breech presentation)

Strength & mobility

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

Gross motor

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - gross motor skills

Inherent requirements statements

1. Midwifery 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, coordinate and prioritise care. 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 balance while safely mobilising and transferring women, or newborns or resources
 - Able to safely retrieve and utilise stock and equipment

Fine motor

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - fine motor skills

Inherent requirements statements

1. Midwifery 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, coordinate and prioritise care. Tasks that involve fine motor skills include being able to grasp, press, push, turn, squeeze and manipulate various objects and individuals. Midwifery 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 to self and others and a capacity to provide appropriate care.
5. Exemplars:
 - Performing the insertion of a urinary catheter
 - Able to prime, accurately insert and set prescribed rate on an infusion device

Sustainable performance

Bachelor of Midwifery inherent requirements - sustainable performance

Inherent requirements statements

1. Midwifery practice requires both physical and mental performance at a consistent and 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 duty
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 care over a negotiated period of time

*Developed from: 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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Inherent requirements key terms

Inherent Requirements

Inherent requirements are the essential components of a course or unit that demonstrate the capabilities, knowledge and skills to achieve the core learning outcomes of the course or unit, while preserving the academic integrity of the university's learning, assessment and accreditation processes. These must be met by all students – they are the abilities, knowledge and skills needed to complete the course.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Disability Discrimination Act [DDA] 1992, as amended in 2009 (Australian Government Comlaw, 2010) through the Disability Standards for Education [DSE] (Australian Government Comlaw 2005), requires institutions to take reasonable steps that enable the student with a disability to participate in education on the same basis as a student without a disability.

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. Examples of adjustments include: provision of a note taker or provision of adaptive equipment / furniture or assistive technology.

An adjustment is reasonable if it balances the interests of all parties affected.

Making changes to ensure equal opportunity for people with a disability is commonly referred to as a "reasonable adjustment."

Adaptive Equipment

- Equipment / furniture / devices designed to facilitate independence for people with people with disabilities and medical conditions

Adaptive equipment includes: ergonomic furniture such as height adjustable desks and chairs; mobility equipment and may include industry specific equipment.

Assistive Technology

- Software or hardware devices by which people with disabilities can access technology

Assistive technology can include devices such as alternate keyboards and mice, voice recognition software, monitor magnification software, multiple switch joysticks, and text-to-speech communication aids.

Inherent Requirements Domains

To provide clarity and consistency, the Inherent requirement statements have been grouped under several domains. Courses may contain some or all of these domains

Ethical Behaviour

Acting in ways consistent with what society and individuals typically think are good values and avoiding activities that do harm to people or the environment. In the context of Inherent Requirements, this could mean adherence to the Code of Ethics set down by the University or the professional body associated with a student's course of study.

Behavioural Stability

- The maintenance of a level of conduct that is deemed acceptable and appropriate, according to societal or situational mores, over a given period of time

This requirement is most pertinent to students with mental health issues, neurological impairments and students on the Autism Spectrum and refers to circumstances where the student can demonstrate consistent, predictable and appropriate conduct.

Legal

- Pertaining to law

For the purposes of the Inherent Requirements, this refers to the legal requirements set out by professional bodies associated with particular courses of study.

Communication

Verbal Communication

- The act of conveying messages, ideas or feelings through the use of speech.

For the purposes of the Inherent Requirements, speech producing / voice output communication devices are also considered verbal communication.

Non Verbal Communication

Elements of speech and communication behaviour aside from words that transmit meaning including: pitch, speed, tone and volume of voice; gestures and facial

expressions; body posture, stance, and proximity to the listener; eye movements and eye contact.

Non-verbal cues can provide significant additional information to a listener/ conversational partner.

Written Communication

Communication by means of written symbols -this includes typed, printed or handwritten material in addition to the use of electronic devices such as tablets.

Cognition

The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through one's thought, experience, and senses.

Knowledge and Cognitive Skills

Any of a number of acquired skills that reflect an individual's ability to think. Cognitive skills include: verbal and spatial abilities; concentration; memory; perception; reasoning; planning and organisation; flexible thinking and problem solving.

Literacy (language)

For the purpose of the inherent requirements, this defined as the ability to acquire information, understand that information and apply in a scholarly manner. This includes collecting information from multiple sources, comprehending that information and reporting the findings to demonstrate understanding.

Numeracy

The ability to understand and work with numbers. Basic numeracy skills consist of comprehending fundamental mathematics like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Sensory Ability

The mode by which one's body perceives external stimuli - through sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch.

In the context of the Inherent Requirements, the key sensory modalities are vision, hearing and tactile abilities.

Visual

The extent to which a person can see; accuracy of vision.

Auditory

The sense of hearing; the ability / inability to hear.

Tactile

The sense of touch.

Strength and Mobility

Gross Motor Skills

The use of large muscle groups that coordinate body movements for activities such as walking, lifting, pushing, pulling and maintaining balance.

Fine Motor Skills

The ability to undertake precise coordinated movements of the hands for activities such as writing and manipulating small objects.

Dexterity is the skill in performing physical tasks, especially with the hands.

Sustainable Performance

The ability to maintain a level of function over a pre-determined 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.

1. [Australia Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training \(ADCET\) - Creating Accessible Teaching and Support](#)
2. [Australian Human Rights Commission.](#)
3. Further information can be located at http://www.ddaedustandards.info/oblig_adjust.php

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