



# Inherent Requirements/Fitness for Practice

## Professional Workplace Experience

**THIS DOCUMENT IS EFFECTIVE FROM January 2021**

**Purpose:** To guide and inform staff and students of the processes associated with professional workplace experience.

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**Responsible Office:** SON Clinical Office

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In addition to meeting academic requirements for admission into the Bachelor of Nursing students must also demonstrate a range of cognitive, behavioural and physical competencies (inherent requirements) necessary for ensuring the provision of safe, ethical nursing care. Consistent with schools of nursing nation-wide, these additional requirements have been adopted in recognition of the increased vulnerability of persons at times of illness, injury and/ or disability. In general, inherent requirements of nursing aim to capture those capabilities that nurses must possess in order to both complete the requisite courses of study, and to ensure the ethical integrity of care provided to persons, families and communities.

UNDA is committed to meeting the legislative requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education (2005). UNDA welcomes applications from students with a range of disabilities. Where a disability affects an inherent requirement, the School of Nursing will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to assist students in meeting the relevant requirement(s). However, reasonable adjustments do *not* allow any changes to the fundamental nature of the actual inherent requirements.

## 2 DECIDING TO BECOME A NURSE

Prior to enrolling in the Bachelor of Nursing at UNDA, applicants can be supported in their decision- making by gaining an understanding of the inherent requirements for nurses. In doing so, potential applicants are given the opportunity to identify any concerns they might have in meeting these requirements prior to enrolment. In case these requirements cannot be met, applicants can be provided with guidance regarding other program options.

Given the increased vulnerability of persons in need of nursing care, and in light of the possible power imbalance between nurses and those for whom they care, it is necessary for student nurses to be able to work towards meeting the professional and ethical standards of practice, as determined by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia:

- Registered nurse standards for practice
- Code of Conduct for Nurses
- ICN Code of Ethics

( <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards.aspx> ).

As required by the University and Health care providers student nurses must also provide documentary evidence of criminal record checks and immunisation records

( <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-and-Endorsement/Student-Registration/Fact-sheet-FAQ-student-registration.aspx> )

As a further means of ensuring public safety and professional integrity, student nurses must also demonstrate sufficient capacity for meeting a range of inherent requirements to be recorded under the following domains:

- I. Ethical integrity
- II. Behavioural stability and mental endurance
- III. Legislative compliance
- IV. Effective verbal, non-verbal and written communication
- V. Critical thinking, literacy and numeracy skills
- VI. Sensory ability
- VII. Physical strength and mobility

### 3 INHERENT REQUIREMENTS FOR NURSING STUDENTS (UNDERGRADUATE)

Domain I	Ethical integrity
<b>Statement</b>	Nursing practice is governed by a professional code of conduct, an international code of ethics, and the profession’s standards for practice. It is expected that nurses are aware of these requirements and reliably uphold them in practice in order to protect the community from physical, psychological, emotional and/or spiritual harm.
<b>Justification for Inherent requirement</b>	In order to reliably ensure that requisite ethical standards are upheld, it is necessary for nursing students to possess, firstly, ethical integrity. This capacity safeguards ethical behaviour, including when under stress, duress or when faced with ethical uncertainty. It also serves to strengthen professional boundaries and promote the requirement to act as patient advocate.
<b>Possible adjustments</b>	Nurses practice in a morally-pluralistic, culturally diverse society. It is expected that nurses provide care, unexceptionally, to all in health care need, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, social status, sexual orientation or other arbitrary factors. Adjustments must be limited to situations in which ethical conflicts arise between deeply held personal values of the student and a limited number of medical <i>procedures</i> . Students should demonstrate an awareness of the legal right to raise a conscientious objection, as well as the limits of this right.
<b>Exemplars</b>	<p>Protecting confidential information in clinical, educational and social contexts, including when using social media</p> <p>Identifying ethically sound ways to address ethical disagreement; e.g. knowing when and how to raise a conscientious objection to being implicated in a morally contentious procedure (e.g. termination of pregnancy).</p> <p>Speaking up on behalf of persons who are unable to do so for themselves; e.g. in cases where a person has not received effective pain relief.</p>

<b>Domain II</b>	<b>Behavioural Stability and Mental Endurance</b>
<b>Statement</b>	Behavioural stability is required to function effectively and sensitively in a nursing role. Students are required to demonstrate the capacity to work constructively in various clinical and academic environments. Students must also be able to manage their own mental and physical health effectively.
<b>Justification for Inherent Requirement</b>	Behavioural stability is necessary for working constructively, individually and in teams, in changing and unpredictable environments. Nursing students will be exposed to emergency situations and human suffering and are required to possess behavioural stability and mental endurance in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on the needs of others, and</li> <li>• contribute effectively and compassionately to the care of persons experiencing trauma, life-threatening conditions, aggressive behaviour or significant loss</li> </ul>
<b>Possible Adjustments</b>	Adjustments must aim to assist student to achieve behavioural stability, such as counselling sessions. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with the campus counselling service
<b>Exemplars</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being receptive and responding appropriately to constructive feedback.</li> <li>• Capacity to creatively and respectfully address interpersonal conflict in both academic and clinical environments</li> <li>• Capacity to control the expression of own emotions and behaviour in academic and clinical settings</li> <li>• Acceptance of working with persons who suffer severe mental health conditions, including those involving aggression</li> </ul>

<b>Domain III</b>	<b>Legislative Compliance</b>
<b>Statement</b>	Nursing practice is mandated by specific legislation to enable the safe delivery of care. Student can demonstrate knowledge of, and compliance with, Australian Law, professional regulations and designated scope of practice
<b>Justification for Inherent Requirement</b>	Knowledge, understanding, and compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements are necessary pre-requisites to clinical 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.
<b>Possible Adjustments</b>	Adjustments must be consistent with legislative and regulatory requirements. Any adjustments specific to the individual must be discussed with the Dean of the School of Nursing
<b>Exemplars</b>	Complying with the requirement for student registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).  Providing authorised evidence of a criminal record check and immunisation record

<b>Domain IV</b>	<b>Effective a) verbal, b) non-verbal and c) written communication/literacy skills</b>
<b>Domain IV</b>	<b>a) Verbal Communication Skills</b>
<b>Statement</b>	<p>Clear, comprehensible verbal communication in English is an essential requirement to provide safe delivery of care.</p> <p>Students must possess the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand and respond to spoken English, delivered at conversational speed, effectively and respectfully</li> <li>• provide clear, intelligible instructions in the context of both academic and clinical contexts</li> <li>• provide clear, intelligible feedback and timely reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Justification for Requirement</b>	<p>Clear, timely verbal communication is necessary for ensuring individual safety, coordination of care and delivery of effective treatment</p> <p>Respectful verbal communication is required for ensuring psychological and emotional well-being, and for developing therapeutic relationships</p>
<b>Possible Adjustments</b>	Adjustments must address effectiveness, clarity and accuracy of verbal communication to ensure safe clinical care and to fulfil assessment requirements. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with the Course Coordinator and English language teacher(s)
<b>Exemplars</b>	<p>Participating in tutorial, simulation and clinical discussions and oral presentations</p> <p>Responding effectively and comprehensibly in the clinical environment</p>

<b>Domain IV</b>	<b>b) Non-Verbal Communication Skills</b>
<b>Statement</b>	<p>Effective, non-verbal communication is fundamental to nursing. It must be respectful, attentive, empathetic and non-judgemental.</p> <p>Student must demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capacity to recognise, interpret and respond appropriately to behavioural cues</li> <li>• self-awareness</li> <li>• awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences</li> </ul>
<b>Justification for Requirement</b>	<p>The ability to understand and interpret non-verbal cues is essential for effective observation of a person's symptoms and responses/reactions to care and treatment</p> <p>The ability to observe and understand non-verbal cues assists with building rapport with people, gaining trust, and expressing respect in academic, professional and therapeutic relationships</p> <p>The ability to interpret and appropriately display facial expressions, eye contact, use of interpersonal space, body movement and gestures assists in developing personal understanding</p>

<b>Possible Adjustments</b>	Adjustments must support the capacity to recognise and respond effectively to non-verbal communication. Adjustments specific to an individual student can be discussed with the campus counselling service
<b>Exemplars</b>	Interpreting and responding appropriately in both classroom situations and in the clinical environment

<b>Domain IV</b>	<b>c) Written Communication Skills</b>
<b>Statement</b>	Effective written communication, in English, is fundamental to meeting professional and legal requirements of nursing practice. Students must demonstrate the capacity to communicate clearly, concisely, coherently, to paraphrase, to summarise and reference in accordance with academic conventions
<b>Justification for Requirement</b>	Written academic work must meet requisite academic standards such that student can convey knowledge and understanding in ways that are intelligible to academic faculty. Clear, accurate written communication, including record-keeping and in patient notes, is vital to provide safe, coordinated and effective treatment and care
<b>Possible Adjustments</b>	Adjustments must meet requisite standards of clarity, accuracy and accessibility to demonstrate level of knowledge in an academic setting, as well as clear and accurate communication of information in the clinical setting.
<b>Exemplars</b>	Writing an essay or other written assessment to requisite academic standard Writing a nursing report that is intelligible and accurate

<b>Domain V</b>	<b>Critical Thinking, Literacy and Numeracy Skills</b>
<b>Statement</b>	Achievement of program learning outcomes, as well as effective cognitive skills, are necessary for providing safe and competent care.  Student must demonstrate the capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate relevant sources of information and evidence to demonstrate understanding of program content</li> <li>• Interpret, process and integrate knowledge in practice</li> <li>• Comprehend and interpret literature from a range of academic sources, including scientific, sociological, legal, ethical, psychological, and mathematical</li> <li>• Accurately interpret and perform numerical calculations, including medication dosage</li> </ul>
<b>Justification for Inherent Requirement</b>	The ability to read, decipher, interpret and comprehend multiple sources of information is fundamental for the safe and effective delivery of nursing care. The ability to conduct accurate numerical calculations is essential for safe and effective treatment and care

<b>Possible Adjustments</b>	Adjustments must support the student’s capacity to think critically, acquire and communicate knowledge, and to calculate numerical data accurately.
<b>Exemplars</b>	Demonstrates ability to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptualise and apply knowledge to meet assessment requirements</li> <li>• accurately perform medication calculations, determine intravenous fluid administration rates, and maintain an accurate fluid balance record</li> </ul> understand and apply requirements of institutional policies and procedures in the clinical setting

<b>Domain VII</b>	<b>Strength and Mobility</b>
<b>Statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursing requires physical strength and mobility involving adequate fine and gross motor function</li> </ul>
<b>Justification for Inherent Requirement</b>	<p>Sufficient gross and fine motor skills are necessary for performing, coordinating and prioritising care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks involving gross motor skills include lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, standing, twisting and bending.</li> <li>• Tasks involving fine motor skills include grasping, pressing, pushing, turning, squeezing and manipulating various objects.</li> </ul> <p>Students must be able to demonstrate and perform these tasks consistently and safely to both provide nursing care, as well as to reduce the risk of harm to self and others.</p>
<b>Possible Adjustments</b>	Adjustments should promote functional effectiveness, safety of self and others, and the capacity to provide requisite care. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with the Dean of the School of Nursing and the counselling service.
<b>Exemplars</b>	<p>Gross motor skills: maintaining balance while safely mobilising and transferring persons or equipment</p> <p>Fine motor skills: performing an aseptic wound dressing; priming, inserting and setting prescribed drip rates on infusion devices</p>

These inherent requirements have been based on the following:

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