

## **Inherent Requirements for Entry to Practice Social Work courses, La Trobe University**

### **Inherent requirements**

Inherent requirements are the essential components of a course or subject that demonstrate the abilities, knowledge and skills to achieve the core learning outcomes of the course or subject, while preserving the academic integrity of the University's learning, assessment and accreditation processes. The inherent requirements are the abilities, knowledge and skills needed to complete the course that must be met by all students. Students with a disability or chronic health condition may be able to have reasonable adjustments made to enable them to meet these requirements.

The discipline of Social Work at La Trobe University is committed to making reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning, assessment, field placement and other activities to enable students to participate in their course. Reasonable adjustments must not fundamentally change the nature of the inherent requirement.

Students are required to undertake activities which reflect the Australian social work context which may include mixed gender, religious and culturally diverse environments. For further information, contact your Course Coordinator.

To support potential and current students' decision making a series of inherent requirement statements has been developed. These statements specify the course requirements of the social work courses for **student admission** and progression. The statements are articulated under eight domains consisting of ethical behaviour, behavioural stability, legal, communication, cognition relational skills, reflective skills and sustainable performance.

### **How to read the inherent requirement statements**

If you are intending to enrol in entry to practice Social Work courses at La Trobe University, 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 [Disability Adviser](#) or 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 Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) publications such as the [AASW Code of Ethics](#) and the [AASW Practice Standards](#).

The inherent requirements are made up of the following five components and domains:

- Level 1 - introduction to the inherent requirement
- Level 2 - description of the inherent requirement
- 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 tasks that show you've met the requirement. These are examples only and not a comprehensive list

There are eight domains of inherent requirements in each of the social work and related courses. Some domains have a number of sub-domains.

- Ethical behaviour
- Behavioural stability
- Legal
- Communication
- Cognition
- Relational skills
- Reflective skills
- Sustainable performance

## Inherent requirement statements

### Ethical behaviour

Inherent requirement statements	
<b>1</b>	Students undertaking social work studies are governed by practice standards and codes of ethics where students are both accountable and responsible for ensuring professional behaviour in all contexts.
<b>2</b>	Student demonstrates knowledge of, and engages in ethical behaviour in practice.
<b>Justification of inherent requirement:</b>	
<b>3</b>	<p>» Compliance with the <a href="#">codes, guidelines and policies</a> facilitates safe, competent interactions and relationships for students and/or the people with whom they engage. This supports the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all.</p> <p>» Knowledge of, and compliance with the <a href="#">AASW Code of Ethics</a> is a requirement of course accreditation and graduate standards as mandated in the <a href="#">AASW Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards June 2012</a>.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Adjustments</b> must ensure the codes and standards are not compromised or result in unethical behaviour. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with <a href="#">University Disability Advisers</a> .
<b>Exemplars:</b>	
<b>5</b>	<p>» Demonstrating appropriate behaviour with confidential information in classroom and field placement settings</p> <p>» Demonstrate ability to reflect on ethical dilemmas and issues and take responsibility for ensuring awareness of ethical behaviour</p>

## Behavioural stability

<b>Inherent requirement statements</b>	
1	Behavioural stability is required to function and adapt effectively and sensitively in this role.
2	Student demonstrates behavioural stability to work constructively in a diverse and changing academic and field placement environment.
<b>Justification of inherent requirement:</b>	
3	» Behavioural stability is required to work individually and in teams in changing and unpredictable environments. Social work students will be exposed to highly complex human situations and will be required to have behavioural stability to manage these events. Failure to maintain this standard could jeopardise the health and wellbeing of others.
4	<b>Adjustments</b> must support stable, effective and professional behaviour in both academic and field placement settings. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with <a href="#">University Disability Advisers</a>
<b>Exemplars:</b>	
5	» Being receptive and responding appropriately to constructive feedback » Coping with your own emotions and behaviour effectively when dealing with individuals in the field placement setting.

## Legal

<b>Inherent requirement statements</b>	
1	Social work is mandated by legislation and professional regulations to enable the delivery of safe and appropriate professional practice.
2	Student demonstrates knowledge and compliance with Australian Law, professional regulations and scope of practice.
<b>Justification of inherent requirement:</b>	
3	» Knowledge, understanding, and compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements are necessary prerequisites to field placements in order to reduce the risk of harm to self and others » Compliance with these professional regulations and the Australian Law in the field placement setting ensures that students are both responsible and accountable for their practice
4	<b>Adjustments</b> must be consistent with legislative and regulatory requirements. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with <a href="#">University Disability Advisers</a>

---

### Inherent requirement statements

---

#### Exemplars:

- 5
- » Complying with relevant child protection and safety legislation and reporting any notifiable concerns to your field placement supervisor

## Communication

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

## Verbal

---

### Inherent requirement statements

---

- 1
- Effective verbal communication, in English, is an essential requirement to provide safe delivery of support.

Student demonstrates:

- 2
- » 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

---

#### Justification of inherent requirement:

- 3
- » Communicating in a way that displays respect and empathy to others and 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 and or assessment
  - » Timely, accurate and effective delivery of instructions is necessary to provide safe professional support

- 4
- Adjustments** must address effectiveness, timeliness, clarity and accuracy issues to ensure appropriate support. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with the [University Disability Advisers](#)

---

#### Exemplars:

- 5
- » Participating in tutorial and clinical discussions
  - » Responding appropriately in an interview in the field placement setting

## Non-verbal

<b>Inherent requirement statements</b>	
1	Effective non-verbal communication is fundamental to social work and needs to be respectful, clear, attentive, empathetic and non-judgmental.
2	Student demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» The capacity to recognise, interpret and respond appropriately to behavioural cues</li><li>» Consistent and appropriate awareness of own behaviours</li><li>» Sensitivity to individual and/or cultural differences</li></ul>
<b>Justification of inherent requirement:</b>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» 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.</li><li>» 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.</li><li>» Being sensitive to individual and/or cultural differences displays respect and empathy to others and develops trusting relationships that are essential for effective professional support.</li><li>» The ability to observe and understand non-verbal cues is essential for effective observation of client reactions to facilitate assessment and to provide professional support.</li></ul>
4	<b>Adjustments</b> must enable the recognition, assessment, initiation of or appropriate response to effective non-verbal communication in a timely and appropriate manner. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with <a href="#">University Disability Advisers</a>
<b>Exemplars:</b>	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Recognising and responding appropriately in classroom situations</li><li>» Recognising and responding appropriately to cues in the field placement environment</li></ul>

## Written

<b>Inherent requirement statements</b>	
1	Effective written communication, in English, is a fundamental social work student responsibility with professional and legal ramifications.
2	Student demonstrates capacity to construct coherent written communication appropriate to the circumstances.
3	<b>Justification of inherent requirement:</b>

---

### **Inherent requirement statements**

---

- » 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 standards
- » Accurate written communication, including record keeping, client instructions and case notes is vital to provide consistent and accurate assessments and professional support in the field placement context

4

**Adjustments** must allow the students to meet necessary standards of clarity, accuracy and accessibility to ensure effective recording and transmission of information in both academic and field placement settings. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with [University Disability Advisers](#).

### **Exemplars:**

5

- » Constructing an essay to academic standards
- » Constructing a social worker's report in a timely manner that meets professional standards

## **Cognition**

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

### **Knowledge and cognitive skills**

---

#### **Inherent requirement statements**

---

1

Consistent knowledge and effective cognitive skills must be demonstrated to provide professional and competent social work practice.

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

#### **Justification of inherent requirement:**

3

- » Safe and effective social work practice is based on knowledge that must be sourced, understood and applied appropriately
- » A demonstrated defined range of knowledge and cognitive skills is a requirement for course accreditation, field placements and professional registration by the AASW

4

**Adjustments** must ensure that a clear demonstration of knowledge and cognitive skills is not compromised or impeded. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with [University Disability Advisers](#).

### **Exemplars:**

5

- » Ability to conceptualise and use appropriate knowledge in response to academic assessment items

---

### Inherent requirement statements

» Appropriately applying knowledge of policy and procedures in the field placement setting

## Literacy (language)

---

### Inherent requirement statements

1 Competent literacy skills are essential to provide safe and effective professional support.

Student demonstrates:

- 2
- » The ability to acquire information and accurately convey appropriate, effective messages
  - » Ability to read and comprehend a range of literature and information
  - » The capacity to understand and implement academic and practice conventions to construct written text in an appropriate manner for the intended audience

### Justification of inherent requirement:

- 3
- » The ability to acquire information and to accurately convey messages is fundamental to ensure safe and effective assessment, treatment and professional support
  - » The ability to read, decode, interpret and comprehend multiple sources of information is fundamental for safe and effective professional support in the field placement context

4 **Adjustments** must demonstrate a capacity to effectively acquire, comprehend, apply and communicate accurate information. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with [University Disability Advisers](#).

### Exemplars:

- 5
- » Conveying a spoken message accurately and effectively in a field placement setting
  - » Paraphrasing, summarising and referencing in accordance with appropriate academic and/or professional practice conventions
  - » Producing accurate, concise and clear case notes which meets legal and professional practice requirements

## Relational skills

---

### Inherent requirement statements

1 Social work practice requires the ability to make and maintain strong relationships with a wide range of individuals, groups and communities.

Student demonstrates:

- 2
- » The ability to establish and maintain rapport with clients, academic staff, supervisors and peers
  - » The ability to engage in effective and empathic counselling skills

---

**Inherent requirement statements**

---

» Ability to engage and relate appropriately in individual and group clinical supervision and experiential learning groups

**Justification of inherent requirement:**

- 3 » Highly developed relational skills are a cornerstone of effective relationships that permit effective assessment and intervention

- 4 **Adjustments** must not compromise the student's ability to demonstrate an acceptable level of effective relational skills. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with [University Disability Advisers](#).

**Exemplars:**

- 5 » Rapidly building rapport with a client in order to engage them in an assessment while on placement  
» Effectively using relational and interpersonal skills to manage relationships with clients while on placement

**Reflective skills**

---

**Inherent requirement statements**

---

- 1 Social work practice requires self-awareness and a capacity for reflectivity in order to consider the effect of one's own issues, actions, values and behaviours on practice.

Student demonstrates:

- 2 » The ability to accurately reflect on their professional performance  
» The ability to accept feedback on their professional practice and respond constructively

**Justification of inherent requirement:**

- 3 » Participation in supervision is a key teaching strategy in social work education which requires well developed understanding of oneself in order to appropriately engage in this activity  
» Working with clients while on placement and understanding and responding to them requires well developed understanding of oneself and the ability to effectively manage one's reactions to situations that may arise

- 4 **Adjustments** must not compromise the student's ability to demonstrate an acceptable minimum level of capacity in this area. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with [University Disability Advisers](#).

**Exemplars:**

- 5 » Identifying when a practice issue is outside one's scope or expertise or when one's practice may be negatively affected by personal experience and/or reactions.

## Sustainable performance

### Inherent requirement statements

1 Social work practice in the field placement context requires both physical and mental performance at a consistent and sustained level.

2 Student demonstrates:  
» Consistent and sustained level of physical energy to complete a specific task in a timely manner and over time  
» The capacity to maintain consistency and quality of performance throughout the designated period of time

### Justification of inherent requirement:

3 » Sufficient physical and mental resilience is an essential requirement needed to perform tasks in an assigned period to provide effective, safe and professional support in the field placement context

4 **Adjustments** must ensure that performance is consistent and sustained over a given period. Adjustments specific to the individual can be discussed with the [University Disability Advisers](#).

### Exemplars:

5 » Participating in tutorials, lectures, skills  
» Providing consistent field placement practice over a negotiated time frame

### Attribution:



Inherent Requirements <http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ir>

© University of Western Sydney is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial Share Alike 4.0 International licence.