

BACKGROUND

In the context of health, health being “... *a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*”¹, physiotherapists provide services to people and populations to develop, maintain and restore maximum movement and functional ability throughout the lifespan. Physical therapist practice includes the provision of services in circumstances where movement and function are threatened by the process of aging or that of injury, disorders, or diseases. Functional movement is central to what it means to be healthy. ¹

Physiotherapy practice is concerned with identifying and maximising quality of life and functional movement potential, within the spheres of promotion, prevention, maintenance, intervention/treatment, habilitation and rehabilitation. This encompasses physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being. Physiotherapy practice involves the interaction between the physiotherapist, patients or clients, families, care givers, other healthcare providers and communities, in a process of assessing movement potential and in establishing agreed-upon goals and objectives using knowledge and skills unique to physiotherapists. ²

Physiotherapists are qualified and professionally required to:

- undertake a comprehensive examination/assessment of the patient/client or needs of a client/population group.
- formulate a diagnosis, prognosis, and plan.
- provide consultation within their expertise and determine when patients/clients need to be referred to another health professional.
- implement a physiotherapy intervention/treatment program.
- determine the outcomes of any interventions/treatments.
- make recommendations for self-management.

The physiotherapist's extensive knowledge of the body and its movement needs, and potential is central to determining diagnosis and intervention/treatment strategies. Physiotherapists operate as independent practitioners*, as well as members of health service provider teams and are subject to the ethical principles of World Physiotherapy.⁴⁻⁵ They are able to act as first-contact practitioners and patients/clients may seek direct services without referral from another health care professional.⁵⁻⁶ Physiotherapy is an established and regulated profession, with specific professional aspects of clinical practice and education, indicative of diversity in social, economic, cultural and political contexts. In Australia Physiotherapist's (and Physiotherapy students) are regulated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) – Physiotherapy Board and are accountable to the registered health practitioners Code of Conduct (2014)⁷ which was established to ensure physiotherapists in Australia are meeting the expectations of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009⁸.

“The overarching aim of physiotherapy professional entry-level educational programs is to educate and develop physiotherapists who are knowledgeable, self-assured, adaptable, reflective, humanistic and service-oriented and who, by virtue of critical thinking, life-long learning, and ethical values, render independent judgments concerning patient/client needs” (WCPT, 2011)³.

INHERENT REQUIREMENTS

To assist students to make informed choices regarding their study options, we have identified and set out below the Inherent Requirements for completion of the Doctor of Physiotherapy program at Bond University which have been developed to meet the expectations of Physiotherapy accreditation and registration authorities and the public.

Bond University welcomes applications from all students including students with disabilities and diverse social and or cultural backgrounds. Where physical, learning, cultural, religious, and other factors impact on a student's ability to meet the Inherent Requirements, Bond University will make reasonable adjustments to assist students to meet program requirements whenever possible.

**Practitioner – the term practitioner encompasses all roles that a physical therapist may assume such as patient/client care, management, research, policy maker, educator, and consultant.*

The Doctor of Physiotherapy (DPHTY) at Bond University is a 2-year (6 semester) Masters (Extended) course. To successfully complete the Doctor of Physiotherapy program at Bond University, students must meet the academic and clinical placement requirements of the program which are outlined in the [Bond University Doctor of Physiotherapy Program Charter](#). In addition to this, physiotherapy students are required to comply with the Australian laws and Bond University rules, policies and [codes of conduct](#). Bond University upholds the academic standards relevant to the Physiotherapy Program so that all student who graduate, have the knowledge, skills and attributes required to provide safe and effective physiotherapy services. Physiotherapy is a complex and demanding profession requiring appropriate behavioural, cognitive, culturally safe, and physical abilities to ensure the delivery of appropriate physiotherapy services including healthcare. As physiotherapists work closely with people at some of the most vulnerable and challenging stages of their lives, it is essential that students have insight into their own personal and professional capabilities.

With appropriate supports and reasonable accommodations in place, students must be able to carry out the list of Inherent Requirements described below, to successfully complete and graduate from the Doctor of Physiotherapy program at Bond University. Any accommodations must not fundamentally change the nature of the inherent requirement or compromise the academic integrity of the program.

Placement requirements:

- Students will be required to undertake practical learning experiences that may take place outside the standard academic year and or traditional working hours. Placements will occur in metropolitan, regional, rural, interstate and potentially remote locations.
- Students are required to complete and satisfy all the mandatory legal and medical clearances required for student placements to demonstrate that they are fit for practice and this information can be found at:
<https://bond.edu.au/about-bond/academia/faculty-health-sciences-medicine/compliance>

In alignment with previously published frameworks related to inherent requirements from health professional programs,^{9,10} there are six categories of Inherent Requirements for the Doctor of Physiotherapy program, including:

Inherent Requirement Categories	Subcategories
Behavioural requirements	
	Ethical and legal behaviour
	Behaviour stability
Communication requirements	
	Verbal
	Non-verbal
	Written
Cognitive requirements	
	Knowledge and cognitive skills
	Literacy (Language)
	Numeracy
Sensory requirements	
	Visual
	Auditory
	Tactile
Motor / Mobility requirements	
	Gross motor skills
	Fine Motor Skills
Sustainable performance requirements	

Behavioural Requirements

Ethical and Legal

Rationale:

Physiotherapy practice is mandated by [legislation](#) to enable safe and effective delivery of care and services. All students within the Doctor of Physiotherapy program will be registered by Bond University with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Under the [National Law](#)⁸, all students are required to comply with a range of legislative requirements, [codes of conduct](#), [guidelines](#) and [standards](#).

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students will need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and compliance with, Australian law, professional regulations and standards, and scope of practice. This ensures students are both responsible and accountable for their practice.
- Students must also meet the legal and ethical requirements of their clinical placement provider, which may exceed the Bond University's usual compliance schedule and the legislative requirements mandated by AHPRA. See

Adjustments:

- Any adjustments must ensure the codes and standards are not compromised or result in unethical behaviour. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Behavioural Stability

Rationale:

Behavioural stability (e.g., coping with own emotions and behaviour effectively when dealing with persons in the clinical setting and on university campus) is required to function and adapt effectively and sensitively in the Doctor of Physiotherapy Program. This is particularly important for students to work individually and in teams in diverse and changing environments.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students must be able to demonstrate behavioural stability to work constructively and effectively in diverse environments, including changing academic and clinical settings, which may at times be challenging and unpredictable.
- Physiotherapy students are expected to proactively engage support (e.g., counselling) to assist with behavioural stability should this be challenged during learning in the Doctor of Physiotherapy program.

Adjustments:

- Any adjustments should be directed towards supporting stable, effective and professional behaviour in both classroom and clinical environments. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Communication Requirements

Students in the Doctor of Physiotherapy are required to provide evidence of proficiency in English language. The required standard of English to study physiotherapy at Bond University is - Academic IELTS of 7.0 overall within minimum 7.0 in each of the four bands (listening, reading, writing and speaking), or equivalent.

Physiotherapy students must communicate respectfully with people of different gender, sexuality, age, and from diverse cultural, religious, socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

Verbal

Rationale:

Effective verbal communication, in English language, is an essential requirement to provide safe and effective delivery of physiotherapy care and service for Bond University physiotherapy students. Being able to communicate in ways that display respect and empathy to others assists physiotherapy students to develop trusting relationships. Speed and precise two-way communication that is timely, accurate and effective in delivery may be critical for individual safety and management (e.g., accurate assessment of patient symptoms to facilitate high levels of care).

Requirements:

- When verbally communicating, physiotherapy students must be able to demonstrate:
 - Sensitivity to individual and / or cultural differences. (e.g., undertaking a patient / client interview with an aboriginal person or young child).
 - Ability to comprehend spoken English delivered at conversation speed. (e.g., in noisy environments, such as classrooms, wards, gyms).
 - Respond to verbal communication accurately, appropriately and in a timely manner. (e.g., responding appropriately to a patient / client's question while walking alongside them in a rehabilitation gym).
 - Ability to provide clear instructions in the context of the situation.
 - Timely clear feedback and reporting.
 - Ability to actively lead and participate in group discussions (e.g., participating in problem-based learning tutorials or case management meetings).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must meet the necessary standards of functional, effective, timely, clear, and accurate communication to ensure safe, effective, and appropriate care. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Non-Verbal

Rationale:

Effective non-verbal communication is fundamental to physiotherapy practice and needs to be respectful, clear, attentive, empathetic and non-judgmental. The ability to observe and understand non-verbal cues assists physiotherapy students with building rapport with patients / clients and educators and in gaining 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, assists physiotherapy students to display respect and empathy to others and develop trusting relationships. The ability to observe and understand non-verbal cues is essential for safe and effective observation of patient symptoms and reactions to facilitate the assessment and treatment of patients.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students need to be able to demonstrate:
 - Capacity to recognise, interpret and respond appropriately to behavioural cues.
 - Consistent and appropriate awareness of own behaviours.
 - Sensitivity to individual and / or cultural differences.

Adjustments:

- Any adjustments must enable the recognition, initiation of and appropriate response to effective non-verbal communication in a timely and appropriate manner. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Written

Rationale:

Effective written communication in English, is a fundamental physiotherapy responsibility with professional and legal expectations and ramifications. Construction of written text-based assessment tasks to reflect and required academic / clinical standards are necessary to convey knowledge and understanding of relevant subject matter for professional practice. Accurate written communication, including record-keeping and patient notes which meet legal requirements, is vital to providing consistent and safe patient care and is a legal responsibility of physiotherapy students during placements.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students must be able to demonstrate:

- Capacity to construct coherent written communication appropriate to the circumstances (academic and clinical). (e.g., record of results of physiotherapy tests, writing referral letters or reports).
- Read and comprehend information presented in a variety of standard formats in a reasonable timeframe in the context of clinical consultations (e.g., hand-written and electronic format medical records, research articles and pathology / imaging reports).

Adjustments:

- Any adjustments must meet necessary standards of clarity, accuracy and accessibility to ensure effective recording and transmission of information in both academic and clinical environments. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Cognitive Requirements

Knowledge and Cognitive Skills

Rationale:

Consistent knowledge and effective cognitive skills must be demonstrated to provide safe and effective physiotherapy services.

Requirements:

- Students in the Doctor of Physiotherapy program will need to demonstrate their ability to:
 - Locate appropriate and relevant information.
 - Process information relevant to physiotherapy practice.
 - Accurately recall information in a timely manner (e.g., perform a patient handover to a clinical educator or senior colleague).
 - Integrate theory and knowledge from various sources to solve problems in a timely manner (e.g., Formulate provisional diagnoses and plan treatments based on patient / client interview and physical examination using sound clinical reasoning in the classroom or a clinical setting).
 - Engage in rational and ethical reasoning based on knowledge from legislation, policies, guidelines, and procedures. (e.g., give consideration to patient autonomy and preferences during end-of-life care).
 - Complete clinical tasks in a safe and reasonable timeframe whilst prioritising patient / client and or family needs.
 - Maintain concentration to focus on an activity through to completion (e.g., set goals and implement long term treatment for patients with chronic disease).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must ensure that a clear demonstration of knowledge and cognitive skills is not compromised or impeded. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Literacy (language)

Rationale:

Competent literacy skills are essential to provide safe and effective physiotherapy practice. The ability to acquire information and to accurately convey messages is fundamental to ensuring safe and effective assessment, treatment and delivery of care / services. The ability to read, decode, interpret

and comprehend multiple sources of information is fundamental for safe and effective delivery of care.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students must be able to demonstrate:
 - Ability to acquire information and accurately convey appropriate and effective messages.
 - Ability to read and comprehend a range of literature and information.
 - Capacity to understand and implement academic conventions to construct written text in a scholarly manner. (e.g., paraphrasing, summarising and referencing in accordance with appropriate academic conventions in written assignments and clinical notes).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must demonstrate a capacity to effectively acquire, comprehend, apply and communicate accurate information. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Numeracy

Rationale:

Competent and accurate numeracy skills are essential for safe and effective physiotherapy practice.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students will be required to demonstrate ability to:
 - Accurately undertake arithmetic calculations (e.g., calculating the chronological or adjusted age of a baby born premature).
 - Interpret and correctly apply data, measurements and numerical criteria (e.g., Administering accurate electrotherapy dosages or recording measurements in patient / client notes).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must demonstrate a capacity to interpret and apply concepts and processes appropriately in a timely, accurate and effective manner. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Sensory Requirements

Physiotherapy study requires adequate visual, auditory and tactile abilities.

Visual

Rationale:

Adequate visual acuity is required for safe and effective physiotherapy service provision. Sufficient visual acuity is necessary to demonstrate the required range of skills, tasks and assessments to maintain consistent, accurate and safe care of self and others. Visual observations, examinations and assessment are fundamental to safe and effective physiotherapy practice.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students must be able to demonstrate:
 - sufficient visual acuity to perform the required range of tasks. (e.g., observing and detecting subtle changes in posture, movement and the ability to perform functional activities during assessment and treatment whilst monitoring changes).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must address the need to perform the full range of tasks involved in clinical practice. Any strategies to address the effects of the vision impairment must be effective, consistent and not compromise treatment or safety. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Auditory

Rationale:

Adequate auditory ability is required for safe and effective physiotherapy practice. Sufficient auditory ability is necessary to monitor, assess and manage an individual's health needs consistently and accurately. Auditory assessments and observations are fundamental to safe and effective physiotherapy practice.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students must be able to demonstrate:
 - Sufficient aural function to undertake the required range of tasks. (e.g., performing accurately cardiopulmonary assessment by auscultation or responding to alarms in the ICU or wards).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must address the need to perform the range of tasks involved in clinical practice. Any strategies to address the effects of the hearing loss must be effective,

consistent and not compromise treatment or safety. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor](#)

Tactile

Rationale:

Sufficient tactile ability is required to perform competent and safe physiotherapy practice. Sufficient tactile ability is necessary to monitor, assess and detect patients' physical characteristics and act on any abnormalities detected to provide appropriate physiotherapy care. Tactile assessments and observations are fundamental to safe and effective physiotherapy practice.

Requirements:

- Students must be able to demonstrate:
 - Sufficient tactile function to undertake the required range of skills and assessments to gather and interpret information through touch (e.g., detecting changes in skin temperature to identify inflammation in soft tissues and palpating joints, muscles and soft tissues to detect anatomical landmarks or movement abnormalities).
 - Ability to don and doff personal protective clothing and equipment (e.g., students will be required to wear protective gowns and masks when treating patients with infectious diseases or low immunity).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must have the capacity to make effective assessments of physical characteristics and abnormalities within safe time frames. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Motor / Mobility Requirements

Gross Motor Skills

Rationale:

Physiotherapy is a profession that involves physical demands and requires gross motor function. Sufficient gross motor skills are necessary to perform the required level of care to meet patient / client needs. Tasks that involve gross motor skills include lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, standing, twisting and bending. Ability to appropriately position self, equipment and patient so as to perform tasks reliably with a range of movement is required to reduce risk of harm to self and others.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students must demonstrate the ability to:
 - Perform gross motor skills to function within the scope of practice of a clinical physiotherapist (e.g., maintaining own and patient's balance, while providing patient support, when transferring, mobilising or positioning patients/ clients in a safe manner or maintaining balance whilst performing treatment such as percussions).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must facilitate functional effectiveness, safety of self and others and capacity to provide appropriate care. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Fine Motor Skills

Rationale:

Physiotherapy requires manual dexterity and fine motor skills. Sufficient fine motor skills are necessary to perform the required level of care. Tasks that involve fine motor skills include being able to grasp, press, push, turn, squeeze and manipulate various objects and individuals. Students must be able to demonstrate and perform these tasks consistently and safely to reduce the risk of harm to self and others.

Requirements:

- Physiotherapy students must be able to demonstrate:
 - Ability to use fine motor skills to function within scope of practice (e.g., performing assessment techniques with hands such as joint movements and treatment strategies such as suctioning, joint mobilisation, soft tissue massage or goniometer measurements of small joints).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must facilitate functional effectiveness, safety to self and others and a capacity to provide appropriate care. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Sustainable Performance

Sustainable Performance in class and clinical settings

Rationale:

Physiotherapy practice requires both physical and mental performance at a consistent and sustained level over prolonged periods (e.g., intensive subjects or full-time clinical placement blocks of 5 – 12 weeks). Sufficient physical and mental endurance is an essential requirement needed to perform multiple tasks in an assigned period to provide safe and effective care.

Requirements:

- Students must be able to demonstrate:
 - Consistent and sustained levels of physical energy to complete specific academic or clinical tasks in a timely manner and over time. (e.g., providing consistent physiotherapy management over a negotiated time frame).
 - 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 (e.g., completing a full-time 5-week clinical placement).

Adjustments:

- Adjustments must ensure that performance is consistent and sustained over a given period. Adjustments should be discussed with the [Accessibility & Inclusion Advisor](#).

Will exceptions be made?

Bond University strongly supports the rights of all people who wish to undertake physiotherapy studies and will support students to reach their fullest potential where possible. However, it is recognised that in some given situations, adjustments may not be possible and some students' inability to meet the inherent requirements may limit their ability to complete the Doctor of Physiotherapy program.

Students who have impaired function in their upper limbs (i.e., hands or arms) and lower limbs (e.g., walking and balancing) or significant visual and or auditory impairments, will have difficulty undertaking this program. Prospective students with such impairments are encouraged to contact the Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine to discuss their circumstances prior to submitting an application to the Doctor of Physiotherapy program at Bond University.

Acknowledgements:

This Inherent Requirements document has been developed based on the following resources:

1. World Health Organization. Basic Documents, Forty-fifth edition, Supplement, October 2006. Constitution of the World Health Organization. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO; 2006. http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf
 2. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Description of physical therapy. London, UK: WCPT; 2021. <https://world.physio/policy/ps-descriptionPT>
 3. World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT) (2011). WCPT guideline for physical therapist professional entry level education. *London, UK: WCPT.*
 4. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Ethical responsibilities of physical therapists and member organisations. London, UK: WCPT; 2019. <https://world.physio/policy/ps-ethical-responsibilities> (Access date 18.02.2021).
 5. World Physiotherapy. Policy statement: Direct access and patient/client self-referral to physical therapy. London, UK: WCPT; 2019. <https://world.physio/policy/ps-direct-access> (Access date 18.02.2021)
 6. World Confederation for Physical Therapy. Policy statement: Autonomy. London, UK: WCPT; 2019. <https://world.physio/policy/ps-autonomy> (Access date 18.02.2021)
 7. Physiotherapy Board of Australia. Code of Conduct for Registered Health Practitioners (March, 2014). <https://www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines/Code-of-conduct.aspx>
 8. Australian Government. Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009. <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-045>
 9. Bialocerkowski, A., Johnson, A., Allan, T., & Phillips, K. (2013). Development of physiotherapy inherent requirement statements—an Australian experience. *BMC medical education*, 13(1), 1-13.
 10. Johnson A, Allan T, Phillips K, Azzopardi T, Dickson C, Goldsmith M: Inherent Requirements Resource Package. Inherent Requirements of Nursing Education (IRONE). 2012, Sydney: School of Nursing and Midwifery and Student Equity and Disability Services, University of Western Sydney, Australia.
 11. Inherent requirements for Physiotherapy (Western Sydney University) https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ir/inherent_requirements/inherent_requirements_for_physiotherapy_courses#top The Inherent Requirements content by the University of Western Sydney was utilised under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial Share Alike 4.0 International licence. The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the [Creative Commons website](#).
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- © University of Western Sydney
12. Macquarie University, Student Handbook, Physiotherapy Course-specific Inherent Requirements. <https://coursehandbook.mq.edu.au/2020/courses/C000077>

Inherent requirements for entry into the Bond University Physiotherapy Program

This declaration form has been developed for physiotherapy students at Bond University. Physiotherapy students will be required to complete this declaration on entry into the physiotherapy program.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date _____