

INHERENT REQUIREMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS POLICY

Section	Teaching and Learning
Contact	Centre for Education Transformation
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Next Review	July 2027
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Purpose:

This policy establishes Massey University's approach to identifying, documenting, publishing, and applying the inherent requirements of all qualifications. It ensures that students are provided with clear information about the essential requirements of qualifications to support informed decision-making, equitable participation, and academic success, while upholding the integrity of a qualification, professional standards, and safety.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- all Massey University qualifications at sub-degree, undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels
- all academic units responsible for teaching and assessment
- all staff involved in admission, teaching, assessment, student support, practicals, field work and placements, and academic decision-making
- all enrolled students.

Policy:

Massey University will ensure that inherent requirements of qualifications are clearly identified, documented, and communicated, and that they are applied consistently and transparently. The University will support the provision of reasonable adjustments to support students to meet these requirements, provided this does not fundamentally alter the requirement or compromise safety, the integrity of a qualification, or professional standards.

Students are required to meet the inherent requirements of the qualifications in which they enrol. These requirements define the essential tasks and standards that must be demonstrated to successfully complete a qualification.

Where qualifications include external partnerships, placements, or accreditation requirements, inherent requirements must also align with any contractual, regulatory, and professional obligations.

1. Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, equity and inclusion

Massey University is committed to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and providing an inclusive learning environment where students can participate on an equitable basis. This includes recognising cultural needs, including Māori led definitions of capability, knowledge or reasonable adjustments, supporting Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Maori, and enabling culturally appropriate assessment and support where appropriate. Where possible, inherent requirements will be co-developed with Māori to reflect diverse knowledge systems.

2. Purpose of inherent requirements of qualifications

Inherent requirements enable the University to:

- communicate essential expectations of specific qualifications to prospective and current students
- support informed decision-making at admission and during study
- guide support planning and reasonable adjustments
- ensure academic, professional, ethical, and safety standards are maintained
- provide a transparent framework for decisions related to progression, placement, and performance

3. Nature of inherent requirements

The inherent requirements of a qualification must:

- be essential to achieving core learning outcomes or professional standards
- reflect safe participation in learning environments, including placements
- align with external accreditation, regulatory, and professional expectations where relevant
- not include those skills that can reasonably be developed during the course of study
- protect Māori knowledge, language and practices

4. Framework for requirements

Massey University will use the following domains as a common framework for inherent requirements:

- Sensory abilities
- Physical and practical abilities
- Communication
- Intellectual tasks
- Ethical, legal, and professional behaviour
- Interpersonal and cultural competency.

Each qualification will express requirements within these domains in discipline-specific terms.

For research degrees, these domains are interpreted in relation to the conduct of independent scholarly research, including the ability to engage with supervision, sustain a programme of research, and produce and communicate an original contribution to knowledge.

Each expressed requirement will include:

- an introduction and description of the inherent requirement

- discipline specific examples of things students must be able to do to show they meet the requirement
- an explanation of why this is an inherent requirement of the qualification
- the nature of any adjustments that may be made to allow students to meet the requirement.

Information about pathways to request or initiate supportive conversations about students' plans and possible adjustments, and who makes decisions and how they are made, communicated and appealed, must also be provided.

5. Reasonable adjustments

The University is committed to continually improving the overall accessibility and inclusiveness of our offering and will support the provision of reasonable adjustments wherever possible. Adjustments must:

- remove unnecessary barriers and support participation
- be both proactive and responsive
- maintain academic, professional, and ethical integrity
- support safety for students, staff, and others
- comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

Adjustments will be determined through a transparent process involving academic units and support services. Where required, escalation and final decisions will occur through defined academic governance processes.

6. When an adjustment is not possible

If an adjustment would fundamentally alter an inherent requirement or compromise safety, the integrity of the qualification, or professional standards, the University will:

- clearly explain the decision
- consider alternative adjustments
- consider alternative pathways or qualifications where appropriate.

Decisions must follow clearly documented processes, including access to review or appeal where applicable.

7. Transparency for students

Inherent requirements must be:

- available prior to admission decisions
- published and clearly accessible on the Massey University website
- communicated through qualification information
- expressed in clear, task-based language that is easy for students to understand
- embedded in student support and advisory processes
- referenced in admission and progression regulations.

The process used to decline or cancel admission to a programme based on a student's ability to meet an inherent requirement will be outlined within the university admission and academic progress regulations.

Definitions:

Inherent Requirements of qualifications ('inherent requirements'): The essential tasks, activities, and standards of conduct and performance that are intrinsic to a qualification and must be demonstrated to successfully complete that qualification. These requirements define the core academic, behavioural, and (where relevant) professional expectations necessary to achieve the qualification's learning outcomes or, in the case of research degrees, to undertake and complete independent scholarly research leading to an original contribution to knowledge.

Inherent requirements establish the fundamental expectations that must be met to preserve the academic integrity of the qualification and to enable effective participation in academic, professional, or research practice. Standards set by relevant professional or accreditation bodies may also apply where appropriate.

Field work: Study or research carried out directly in the environment being studied, rather than in a classroom, office, or laboratory.

Practical: Physical, applied or task-based skills such as performing manual or technical tasks.

Reasonable Adjustments: Changes or supports that enable a student to meet inherent requirements without altering the fundamental nature of the requirements, or compromising the integrity of the qualification, safety, or professional standards. Adjustments are determined through appropriate academic and support processes, taking into account feasibility, resources, and safety obligations.

Integrity of the qualification: preservation of the core learning outcomes, academic standards, and professional competencies that the qualification certifies.

Placement: Any practicum, internship, clinical placement, laboratory-based learning, or other work-integrated learning required by a qualification.

Student Support Services: Any Massey University service that provides advice, support, and coordination to students, including services such as culturally specific support services, disability support, wellbeing services, learning support, library and academic skills support, which work in partnership with academic units.

Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

1. **Te Tiriti o Waitangi, equity and inclusion:** Massey University is committed to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, providing equitable outcomes and access to education and supporting all students to participate fully through reasonable adjustments where possible. The University will apply inherent requirements in a manner consistent with the Human Rights Act 1993, ensuring that requirements and decisions do not unlawfully discriminate and that all students are treated fairly and equitably.
2. **Integrity of qualifications:** Inherent requirements preserve the academic integrity of qualifications and ensure that all graduates meet the required standards.
3. **Transparency:** Inherent requirements will be clearly defined and communicated to support informed decision-making by students and staff.

4. **Reasonable adjustments:** Adjustments will be made where possible and reasonable to support students to meet inherent requirements, provided these do not fundamentally alter the nature of the qualification.
5. **Consistency and fairness:** Decisions relating to inherent requirements will be applied consistently and through appropriate academic governance processes.
6. **Safety:** The university is responsible for the health, safety, and wellbeing of students, staff, and others in alignment with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and professional standards. Decisions regarding inherent requirements and reasonable adjustments will ensure that safety is not compromised.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Academic Units

- identify, document, and maintain inherent requirements for qualifications
- ensure alignment with learning outcomes, safety obligations, and professional standards
- apply requirements consistently and in collaboration with support services
- consult with relevant Māori academic leadership, including the Associate Dean Māori or equivalent, where appropriate
- consult with students or student representatives where appropriate.

Office of Academic Quality, Reporting and Assurance

- provide templates, guidance, and oversight
- support consistency across colleges

Student Support Services

- advise on reasonable adjustments
- support development of support plans
- coordinate with academic units

Student Registry

- ensure inherent requirements are available to applicants before decision-making
- support informed admissions processes

Graduate Research School and Ethics

- provide guidance on applying inherent requirements in research degree contexts and ensure alignment with regulations and examination processes

Doctoral Research Committee

- provide oversight of complex or escalated decisions relating to doctoral students

Students

- review inherent requirements
- engage in discussions about support needs
- participate in agreed support plans and adjustments

Final decisions regarding whether a student can meet an inherent requirement and whether reasonable adjustments are available will be made through a documented process involving

Academic Units and Student Support Services, with escalation pathways and review rights specified in university regulations.

Audience:

All staff and students.

Relevant legislation:

N/A.

Legal compliance:

N/A.

Related procedures / documents:

Code of Student Conduct
Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching, and Evaluations Involving Human Participants
Code of Ethical Conduct for the Use of Animals for Research, Testing, and Teaching
Human Rights Act 1993
Code of Responsible Research Conduct
Disability and Inclusion Action Plan
Student Wellbeing and Safety Framework
Te Tiriti o Waitangi Policy
The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

Document Management Control:

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