

Inherent Requirements & the Language for Equitable Choice: 10 lessons and 10 questions from One University's experience

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1. Documenting is an Occupational Justice issue

Occupational justice:

- “...doing **what they decide** is most meaningful and useful to themselves” (Wilcock & Townsend, 2009, p.330)
- “...emphasizes **individuals’ unique occupational needs, habits and capacities**” (Durocher, Gibson & Rappolt, 2014, p.428)

Occupational injustice:

- Barred, dis-empowered, segregated or restricted** (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005).
- Occupational marginalisation and deprivation (Stadnyk et al, 2010)

Q. What inclusions in IR statements make them occupational justice tools (grounded in reality, but emphasising the possible)?

2. Form and content need to relate to purpose

Reader empowering – *positive language* to encourage engagement

Reader-centred design – information *they* need eg *when* required; *the scope* of the requirement; specific examples; course intent; review date; routine scaffolded teaching & reasonable adjustment

Reader-tested – retain only useful components

Higher Education Standards Panel:

Transparency of Admissions recommendations (Oct 2016)

“...student-centred...”, “... clear information...”, “...better informed ...”,
“...standardized format...”, “...providers accountable...”.

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- Q. What wording encourages positive engagement?
 - Q. What are the necessary components, level of detail and best organisation *for the reader*?

3. Inherent Requirements should describe the task not the person

Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) :
inherent requirements *of the job*...

“Inherent requirements *of work* is a narrower concept than (all the requirements of) *the work* or the reasonable requirements *of work*”

Acting Against Disability Discrimination, manual, 1994, in Watt et al, p.12 (emphasis added).

“...the inherent requirements *of the trade or profession*...” Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) s19

Work only has *tasks to be performed*.

- **Its attributes are the attributes of the work, *not the worker*.**
- is primarily assessed by your *ability to complete the tasks* of work.

Inherent requirements of courses must be *the tasks* of the courses.

4. Benefits of describing the task, not the person

Two reasons be task-focused

1. Assists the primary purpose (solution-finding)

Task: “**Manage auditory information** sufficiently to engage with [learning environments] and to [meet patient care needs].

2. Reduces obstacles to, or disengagement from, purpose

Person: “**The student demonstrates sufficient aural function** to undertake [the required range of tasks].

(defensive/negative reactions;
perceptions of ability-cleansing;
misled use of the document)

5. Describing physical tasks is more straightforward

1. **Identify the outputs/outcomes.**
2. **Avoid sensory and physical performance terms** (look, see, smell, hear, touch, reach, hold, lift, walk) that assume 'how'
3. **Use task verbs that allow more ways** to reach the outcomes: engage with, interact with, use, access, measure, record, comply, produce, sustain etc
4. **Include the level of achievement:** sufficiently, reliably, sound, consistent etc

Q. Which terms will clearly encourage a range of methods for task completion?

6. Describing cognitive and metacognitive processes as tasks seems harder

1. **Identify the outputs/outcomes.**
2. **Avoid imposing the underlying, assumed or unseen internal mechanism**
(problem solve, emotional stability etc)
3. **Use task verbs that focus on the outcomes** (provide, list, reassure, identify, model, generate, select, detect, distinguish, monitor, adapt, calculate, modify, assess, adjust)
4. **Include the level of achievement**
Eg: Perform tasks calmly and effectively in high-demand situations.

Include parameters to allow comparison between courses

Eg. Assess a defined (cf. unfamiliar) range of variables, to select a solution from a limited range (cf. generate a novel solution)

Q. What range of terms would include all the essential tasks?

Q. What are effective guidelines for reliably *task-focused* statements?

7. Most documented tasks *seem* essential

Learning outcomes – learning outcomes are *the expression of* the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and *is able to demonstrate* as a result of learning.

(<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/media-publications/glossary> - emphasis added)

**Q. Are there any significant differences needed in the way
Inherent Requirements and Learning Outcomes are written?**

8. It is possible to identify the essential

- 1. Write the component as a task:** Allows positive engagement with the process
- 2. Evaluate:** *How important is it to avoid the negative outcome of not having this?*
- 3. Rank the importance:**
 - How likely that a negative consequence will happen
 - X
 - How significant that consequence would be
- 4. Identify the essential = a likely, significant negative consequence if it is not attained.**

Essential tasks = Inherent requirements

9. A visual tool may help: A task analysis matrix

LIKELIHOOD that task failure leads to a negative outcome	OUTCOME – Maximum credible consequence of not accomplishing the defined task.				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost Certain	Useful	Important	Essential	Essential	Essential
Likely	Useful	Useful	Important	Essential	Essential
Possible	Incidental	Useful	Important	Important	Essential
Unlikely	Incidental	Incidental	Useful	Important	Important
Rare	Incidental	Incidental	Useful	Useful	Important

Q. What are the best descriptors for levels of likelihood and consequences?

Q. What consequences are valid to consider (eg. safety, reputation, difficulty meeting other imposed requirements eg duration of study)?

Q. Should IR documents include “other important tasks” lists?

10. There's work beyond the document itself

Even the clearest document will still need significant supporting context for uniform and appropriate use by staff and optimal use by (prospective) students.

These documents need to work in the context of existing, and potentially confounding, institutional documents.

Q. What is needed for IR documents to be used effectively, and reliably?

10½. IRs: A potential tool for good.

