



Chapter 3– Requirements Engineering

Topics covered



- ✧ Functional and non-functional requirements
- ✧ The software requirements specification document (SRS)
- ✧ Requirements specification
- ✧ Requirements engineering processes
- ✧ Requirements elicitation and analysis
- ✧ Requirements validation
- ✧ Requirements management

Requirements engineering



- ✧ The process of establishing the *services* that the customer requires from a system and the *constraints* under which it *operates* and is *developed*.
- ✧ The requirements themselves are the descriptions of the system services and constraints that are generated during the requirements engineering process.



What is a requirement?

- ✧ It may range from a high-level abstract statement of a service or of a system constraint to a detailed mathematical functional specification.
- ✧ This is inevitable as requirements may serve a dual function:
 - May be the basis for a bid for a contract - therefore must be open to interpretation;
 - May be the basis for the contract itself - therefore must be defined in detail;

Types of requirement



✧ User requirements

- Statements in natural language plus diagrams of the services the system provides and its operational constraints. Written for customers.

✧ System requirements

- A structured document setting out detailed descriptions of the system's functions, services and operational constraints. Defines what should be implemented so may be part of a contract between client and contractor.

User and system requirements



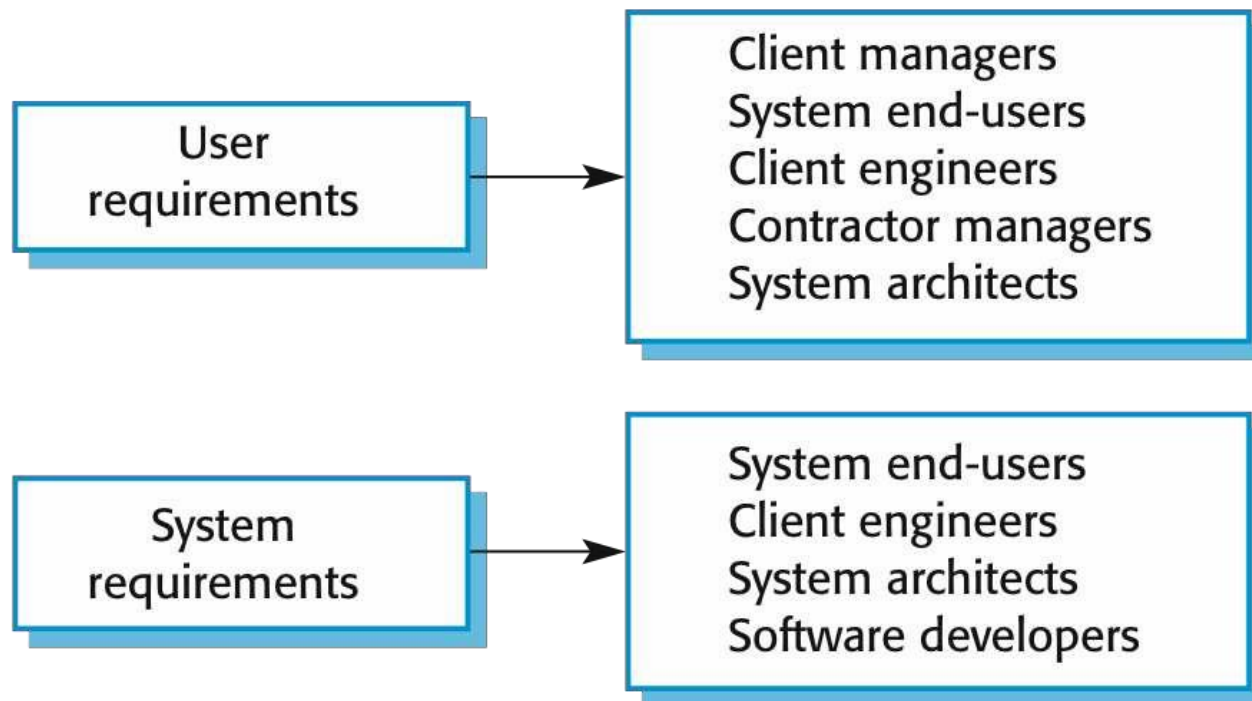
User requirement definition

1. The MHC-PMS shall generate monthly management reports showing the cost of drugs prescribed by each clinic during that month.

System requirements specification

- 1.1 On the last working day of each month, a summary of the drugs prescribed, their cost and the prescribing clinics shall be generated.
- 1.2 The system shall automatically generate the report for printing after 17.30 on the last working day of the month.
- 1.3 A report shall be created for each clinic and shall list the individual drug names, the total number of prescriptions, the number of doses prescribed and the total cost of the prescribed drugs.
- 1.4 If drugs are available in different dose units (e.g. 10mg, 20 mg, etc.) separate reports shall be created for each dose unit.
- 1.5 Access to all cost reports shall be restricted to authorized users listed on a management access control list.

Readers of different types of requirements specification



4.1 Functional and non-functional requirements



✧ Functional requirements

- Statements of services the system should provide, how the system should react to particular inputs and how the system should behave in particular situations.
- May state what the system should not do.

✧ Non-functional requirements

- Constraints on the services or functions offered by the system such as timing constraints, constraints on the development process, standards, etc.
- Often apply to the system as a whole rather than individual features or services.

No Clear-Cut

✧ Domain requirements

- Constraints on the system from the domain of operation



4.1.1 Functional requirements

- ✧ Describe **functionality** or system **services**.
- ✧ Depend on the type of software, expected users and the type of system where the software is used.
- ✧ **Functional user requirements** may be high-level statements of **what** the system should do.
- ✧ **Functional system requirements** should describe the system services in detail.

Functional requirements for the MHC-PMS



- ✧ A user shall be able to search the appointments lists for all clinics.
- ✧ The system shall generate each day, for each clinic, a list of patients who are expected to attend appointments that day.
- ✧ Each staff member using the system shall be uniquely identified by his or her 8-digit employee number.

Requirements imprecision



- ✧ Problems arise when requirements are not precisely stated.
- ✧ Ambiguous requirements may be interpreted in different ways by developers and users.
- ✧ Consider the term 'search' in requirement 1
 - *User intention* – search for a patient name across all appointments in all clinics;
 - *Developer interpretation* – search for a patient name in an individual clinic. User chooses clinic then search.

Requirements completeness and consistency



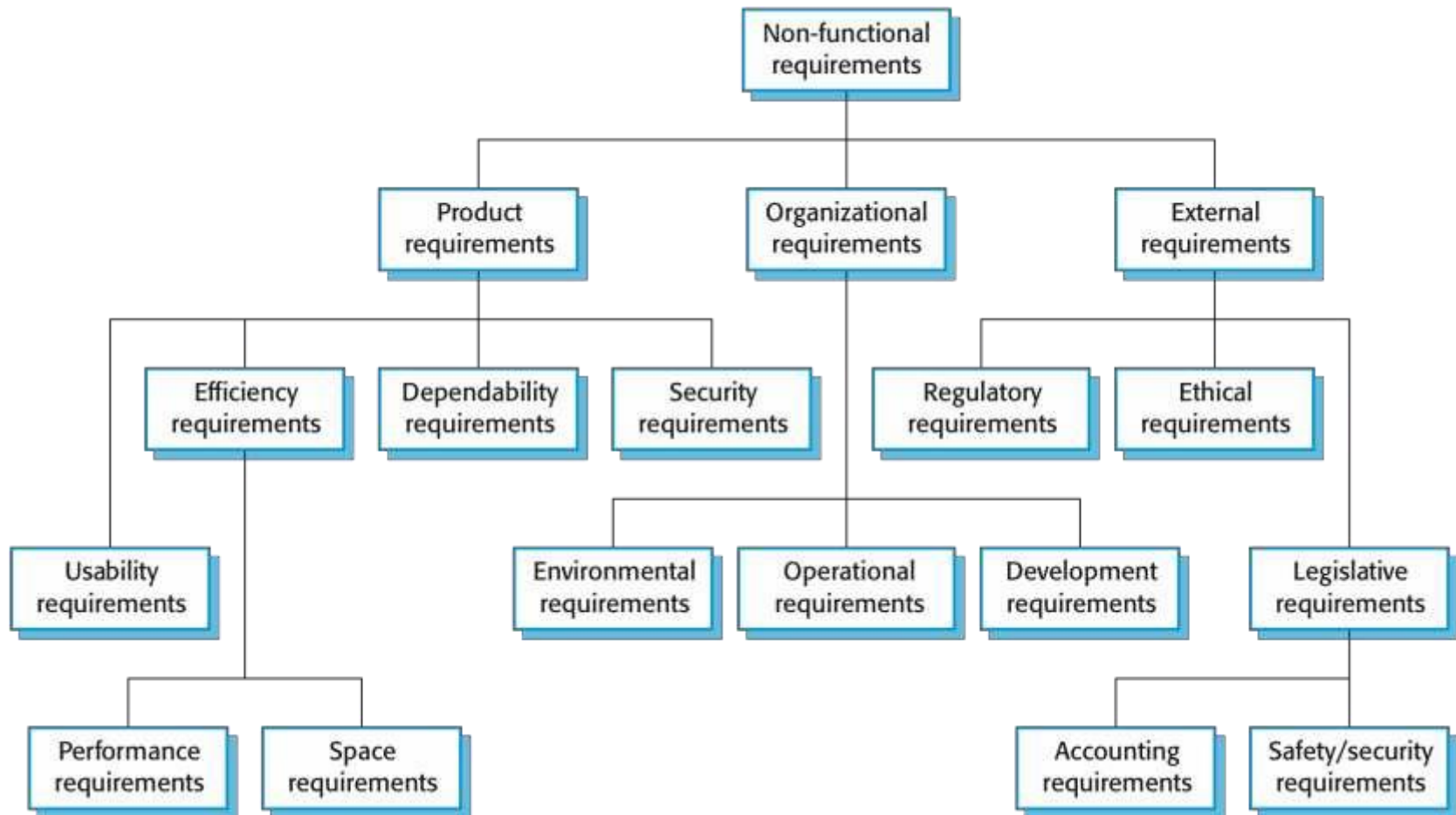
- ✧ In principle, requirements should be both **complete** and **consistent**
- ✧ **Complete**
 - They should include descriptions of all facilities required
- ✧ **Consistent**
 - There should be no conflicts or contradictions in the descriptions of the system facilities
- ✧ In practice, it is impossible to produce a complete and consistent requirements document

4.1.2 Non-functional requirements



- ✧ These define *system properties* and *constraints* e.g. reliability, response time, and storage requirements. Constraints are I/O device capability, system representations, etc.
- ✧ Process requirements may also be specified mandating a particular IDE, programming language or development method.
- ✧ Non-functional requirements may be more critical than functional requirements. If these are not met, the system may be useless.

Types of nonfunctional requirement



Non-functional requirements implementation



- ✧ Non-functional requirements may affect the overall architecture of a system rather than the individual components.
 - For example, to ensure that performance requirements are met, you may have to organize the system to minimize communications between components.
- ✧ A single non-functional requirement, such as a security requirement, may generate a number of related functional requirements that define system services that are required.
 - It may also generate requirements that restrict existing requirements.

Non-functional classifications



✧ Product requirements

- Requirements which specify that the delivered product must behave in a particular way e.g. execution speed, reliability, etc.

✧ Organizational requirements

- Requirements which are a consequence of organizational policies and procedures e.g. process standards used, implementation requirements, etc.

✧ External requirements

- Requirements which arise from factors which are external to the system and its development process, e.g. interoperability requirements, legislative requirements, etc.

Examples of nonfunctional requirements in the MHC-PMS



Product requirement

The MHC-PMS shall be available to all clinics during normal working hours (Mon–Fri, 0830–17.30). Downtime within normal working hours shall not exceed five seconds in any one day.

Organizational requirement

Users of the MHC-PMS system shall authenticate themselves using their health authority identity card.

External requirement

The system shall implement patient privacy provisions as set out in HStan-03-2006-priv.

Goals and requirements



- ✧ Non-functional requirements may be very difficult to state precisely and imprecise requirements may be difficult to verify.
- ✧ Goal
 - **A general intention** of the user such as ease of use.
- ✧ Verifiable non-functional requirement
 - A statement using some measure that can be objectively tested.
- ✧ Goals are helpful to developers as they convey the intentions of the system users.

Metrics for specifying non-functional requirements



Property	Measure
Speed	Processed transactions/second User/event response time Screen refresh time
Size	Mbytes Number of ROM chips
Ease of use	Training time Number of help frames
Reliability	Mean time to failure Probability of unavailability Rate of failure occurrence Availability
Robustness	Time to restart after failure Percentage of events causing failure Probability of data corruption on failure
Portability	Percentage of target dependent statements Number of target systems

Domain requirements



- ✧ The system's operational domain imposes requirements on the system.
 - For example, a train control system has to take into account the braking characteristics in different weather conditions.
- ✧ Domain requirements can be **new functional requirements**, **constraints** on existing requirements, or **define specific computations**.
- ✧ If domain requirements are not satisfied, the system may be unworkable.

Domain requirements problems



✧ Understandability

- Requirements are expressed in the language of the application domain;
- This is often not understood by software engineers developing the system.

✧ Implicitness

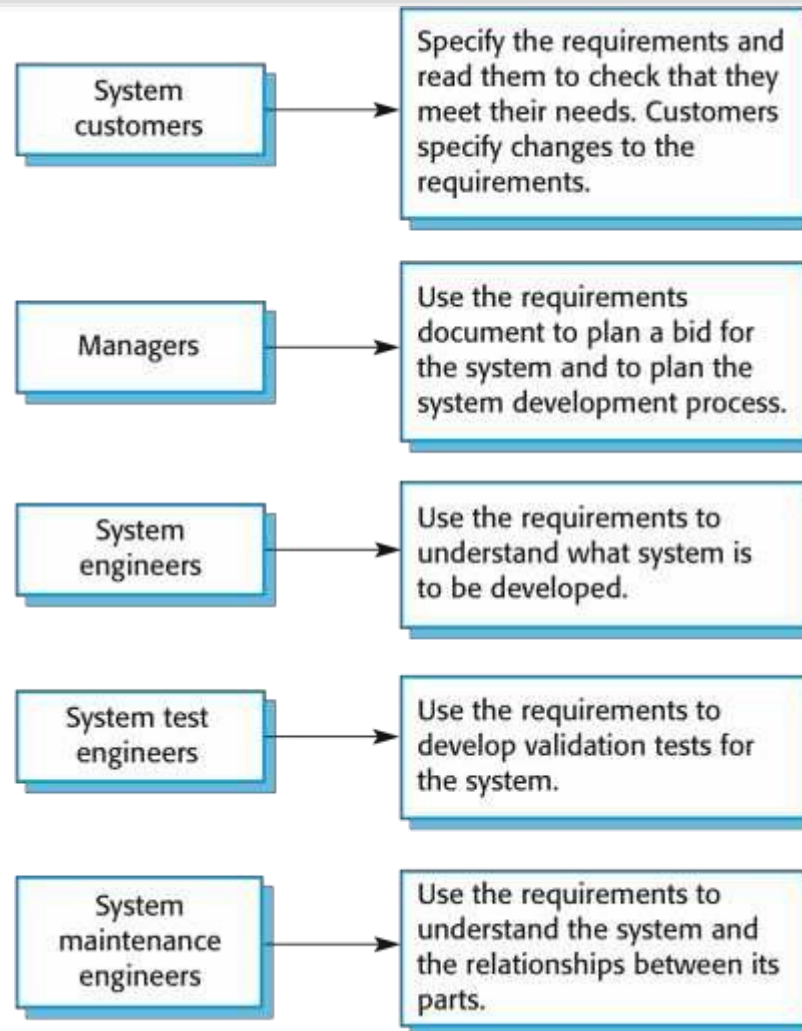
- Domain specialists understand the area so well that they do not think of making the domain requirements explicit.

4.2 The software requirements document



- ✧ The *software requirements document* is the official statement of what is required of the system developers.
- ✧ Can include both a definition of user requirements and a specification of the system requirements.
- ✧ It is NOT a design document. As far as possible, it should set of **WHAT** the system should do rather than **HOW** it should do it.

Users of a requirements document



The structure of a requirements document



Chapter	Description
Preface	This should define the expected readership of the document and describe its version history, including a rationale for the creation of a new version and a summary of the changes made in each version.
Introduction	This should describe the need for the system. It should briefly describe the system's functions and explain how it will work with other systems. It should also describe how the system fits into the overall business or strategic objectives of the organization commissioning the software.
Glossary	This should define the technical terms used in the document. You should not make assumptions about the experience or expertise of the reader.
User requirements definition	Here, you describe the services provided for the user. The nonfunctional system requirements should also be described in this section. This description may use natural language, diagrams, or other notations that are understandable to customers. Product and process standards that must be followed should be specified.
System architecture	This chapter should present a high-level overview of the anticipated system architecture, showing the distribution of functions across system modules. Architectural components that are reused should be highlighted.

The structure of a requirements document



Chapter	Description
System requirements specification	This should describe the functional and nonfunctional requirements in more detail. If necessary, further detail may also be added to the nonfunctional requirements. Interfaces to other systems may be defined.
System models	This might include graphical system models showing the relationships between the system components and the system and its environment. Examples of possible models are object models, data-flow models, or semantic data models.
System evolution	This should describe the fundamental assumptions on which the system is based, and any anticipated changes due to hardware evolution, changing user needs, and so on. This section is useful for system designers as it may help them avoid design decisions that would constrain likely future changes to the system.
Appendices	These should provide detailed, specific information that is related to the application being developed; for example, hardware and database descriptions. Hardware requirements define the minimal and optimal configurations for the system. Database requirements define the logical organization of the data used by the system and the relationships between data.
Index	Several indexes to the document may be included. As well as a normal alphabetic index, there may be an index of diagrams, an index of functions, and so on.

4.3 Requirements specification



- ✧ The process of writing down the user and system requirements in a requirements document
- ✧ User requirements have to be understandable by end-users and customers who do not have a technical background
- ✧ System requirements are more detailed requirements and may include more technical information
- ✧ The requirements may be part of a contract for the system development
 - It is therefore important that these are as complete as possible

Ways of writing a system requirements specification



Notation	Description
Natural language	The requirements are written using numbered sentences in natural language. Each sentence should express one requirement.
Structured natural language	The requirements are written in natural language on a standard form or template. Each field provides information about an aspect of the requirement.
Design description languages	This approach uses a language like a programming language, but with more abstract features to specify the requirements by defining an operational model of the system. This approach is now rarely used although it can be useful for interface specifications.
Graphical notations	Graphical models, supplemented by text annotations, are used to define the functional requirements for the system; UML use case and sequence diagrams are commonly used.
Mathematical specifications	These notations are based on mathematical concepts such as finite-state machines or sets. Although these unambiguous specifications can reduce the ambiguity in a requirements document, most customers don't understand a formal specification. They cannot check that it represents what they want and are reluctant to accept it as a system contract

Requirements and design



- ✧ In principle, requirements should state what the system should do and the design should describe how it does this.
- ✧ In practice, requirements and design are inseparable
 - A system architecture may be designed to structure the requirements;
 - The system may inter-operate with other systems that generate design requirements;
 - The use of a specific architecture to satisfy non-functional requirements may be a domain requirement.
 - This may be the consequence of a regulatory requirement.

Natural language specification



- ✧ Requirements are written as natural language sentences supplemented by diagrams and tables.
- ✧ Used for writing requirements because it is expressive, intuitive and universal. This means that the requirements can be understood by users and customers.

Guidelines for writing requirements



- ✧ Create a standard format and use it for all requirements.
- ✧ Use language in a consistent way. Use shall for mandatory requirements, should for desirable requirements.
- ✧ Use text highlighting to identify key parts of the requirement.
- ✧ Avoid the use of computer jargon.
- ✧ Include an explanation (rationale) of why a requirement is necessary.

Problems with natural language



✧ Lack of clarity

- Precision is difficult without making the document difficult to read.

✧ Requirements confusion

- Functional and non-functional requirements tend to be mixed-up.

✧ Requirements amalgamation

- Several different requirements may be expressed together.

Structured specifications



- ✧ An approach to writing requirements where the freedom of the requirements writer is limited and requirements are written in a standard way.
- ✧ This works well for some types of requirements e.g. requirements for embedded control system but is sometimes too rigid for writing business system requirements.

Form-based specifications



- ✧ Definition of the function or entity.
- ✧ Description of inputs and where they come from.
- ✧ Description of outputs and where they go to.
- ✧ Information about the information needed for the computation and other entities used.
- ✧ Description of the action to be taken.
- ✧ Pre and post conditions (if appropriate).
- ✧ The side effects (if any) of the function.

A structured specification of a requirement for an insulin pump



Insulin Pump/Control Software/SRS/3.3.2

Function Compute insulin dose: safe sugar level.

Description

Computes the dose of insulin to be delivered when the current measured sugar level is in the safe zone between 3 and 7 units.

Inputs Current sugar reading (r2); the previous two readings (r0 and r1).

Source Current sugar reading from sensor. Other readings from memory.

Outputs CompDose—the dose in insulin to be delivered.

Destination Main control loop.

A structured specification of a requirement for an insulin pump



Action

CompDose is zero if the sugar level is stable or falling or if the level is increasing but the rate of increase is decreasing. If the level is increasing and the rate of increase is increasing, then CompDose is computed by dividing the difference between the current sugar level and the previous level by 4 and rounding the result. If the result, is rounded to zero then CompDose is set to the minimum dose that can be delivered.

Requirements

Two previous readings so that the rate of change of sugar level can be computed.

Pre-condition

The insulin reservoir contains at least the maximum allowed single dose of insulin.

Post-condition r0 is replaced by r1 then r1 is replaced by r2.

Side effects None.

Tabular specification



- ✧ Used to supplement natural language
- ✧ Particularly useful when you have to define a number of possible alternative courses of action
- ✧ For example, the insulin pump systems bases its computations on the rate of change of blood sugar level and the tabular specification explains how to calculate the insulin requirement for different scenarios

Tabular specification of computation for an insulin pump



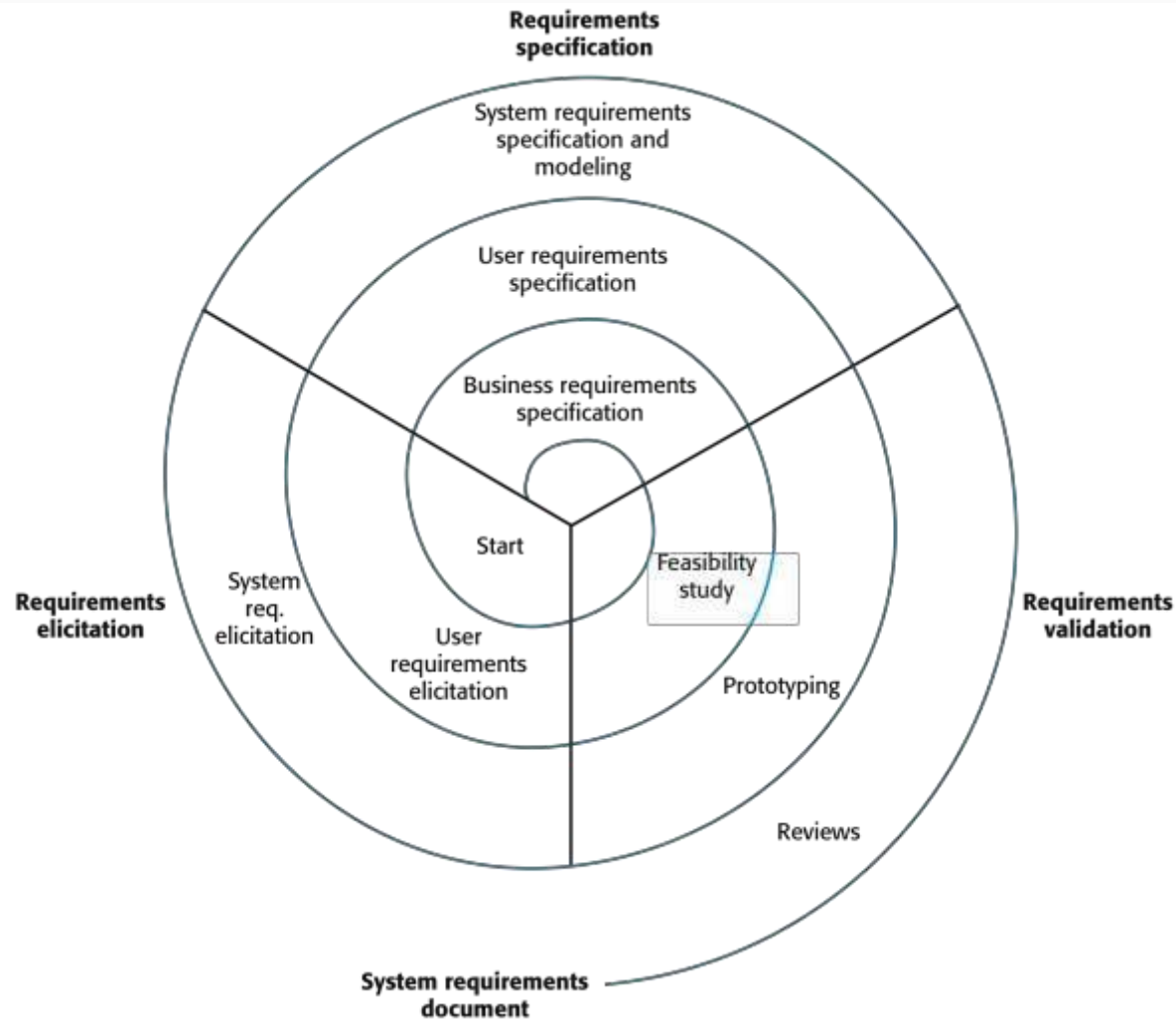
Condition	Action
Sugar level falling ($r2 < r1$)	CompDose = 0
Sugar level stable ($r2 = r1$)	CompDose = 0
Sugar level increasing and rate of increase decreasing ($(r2 - r1) < (r1 - r0)$)	CompDose = 0
Sugar level increasing and rate of increase stable or increasing ($(r2 - r1) \geq (r1 - r0)$)	CompDose = round $((r2 - r1)/4)$ If rounded result = 0 then CompDose = MinimumDose



4.4 Requirements engineering processes

- ✧ The processes used for RE vary widely depending on the application domain, the people involved and the organisation developing the requirements.
- ✧ However, there are a number of generic activities common to all processes
 - Requirements elicitation; (4.5)
 - Requirements analysis;
 - Requirements validation; (4.6)
 - Requirements management. (4.7)
- ✧ In practice, RE is an iterative activity in which these processes are interleaved.

A spiral view of the requirements engineering process



Requirements elicitation and analysis



- ✧ Sometimes called *requirements elicitation* or *requirements discovery*.
- ✧ Involves technical staff working with customers to find out about the application domain, the services that the system should provide and the system's operational constraints.
- ✧ May involve end-users, managers, engineers involved in maintenance, domain experts, trade unions, etc. These are called *stakeholders*.

Problems of requirements analysis



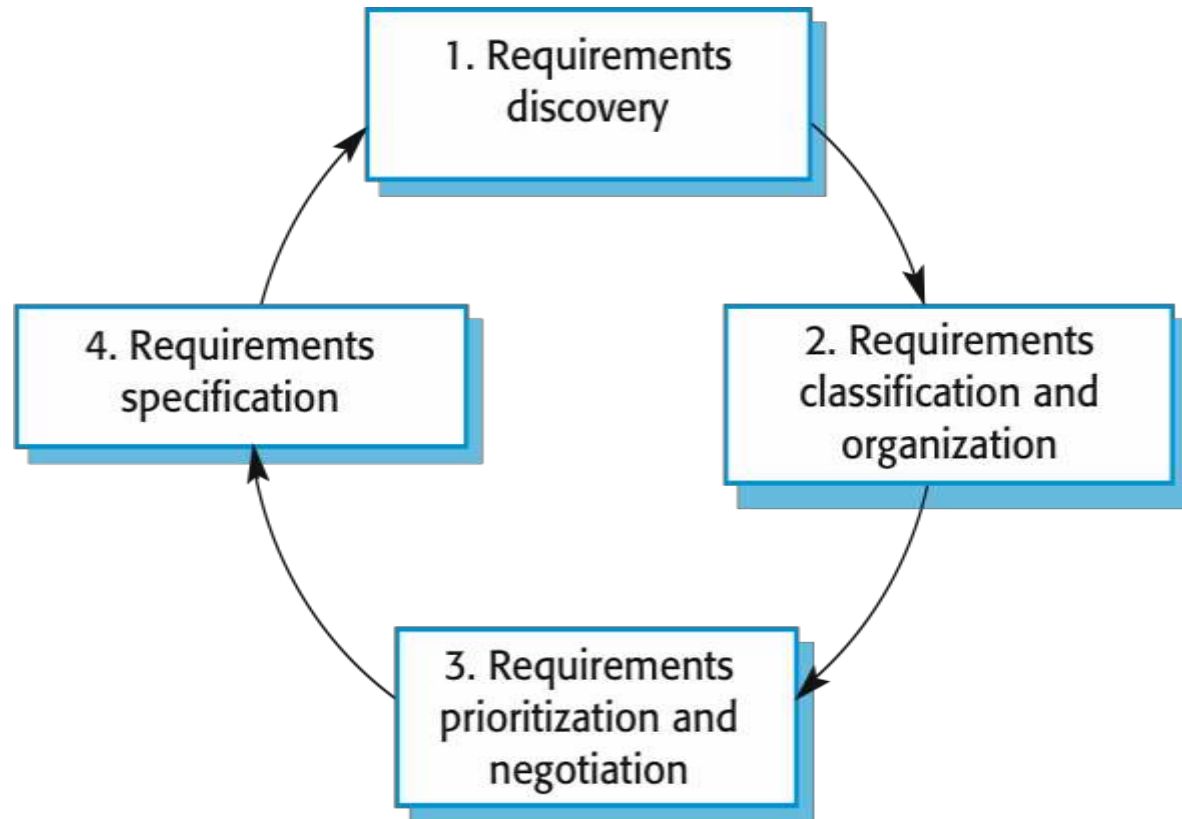
- ✧ Stakeholders don't know what they really want.
- ✧ Stakeholders express requirements in their own terms.
- ✧ Different stakeholders may have conflicting requirements.
- ✧ Organizational and political factors may influence the system requirements.
- ✧ The requirements change during the analysis process. New stakeholders may emerge and the business environment may change.

4.5 Requirements elicitation and analysis



- ✧ Software engineers work with a range of system stakeholders to find out about the application domain, the services that the system should provide, the required system performance, hardware constraints, other systems, etc.
- ✧ Stages include:
 - Requirements discovery,
 - Requirements classification and organization,
 - Requirements prioritization and negotiation,
 - Requirements specification.

The requirements elicitation and analysis process



Process activities



✧ Requirements discovery

- Interacting with stakeholders to discover their requirements. Domain requirements are also discovered at this stage.

✧ Requirements classification and organization

- Groups related requirements and organizes them into coherent clusters.

✧ Prioritization and negotiation

- Prioritizing requirements and resolving requirements conflicts.

✧ Requirements specification

- Requirements are documented and input into the next round of the spiral.

4.5.1 Requirements discovery



- ✧ The process of gathering information about the required and existing systems and distilling the user and system requirements from this information.
- ✧ Interaction is with system stakeholders from managers to external regulators.
- ✧ Systems normally have a range of stakeholders.

Stakeholders in the MHC-PMS



- ✧ Patients whose information is recorded in the system.
- ✧ Doctors who are responsible for assessing and treating patients.
- ✧ Nurses who coordinate the consultations with doctors and administer some treatments.
- ✧ Medical receptionists who manage patients' appointments.
- ✧ IT staff who are responsible for installing and maintaining the system.

Stakeholders in the MHC-PMS



- ✧ A medical ethics manager who must ensure that the system meets current ethical guidelines for patient care.
- ✧ Health care managers who obtain management information from the system.
- ✧ Medical records staff who are responsible for ensuring that system information can be maintained and preserved, and that record keeping procedures have been properly implemented.

4.5.2 Interviewing



✧ Formal or informal interviews with stakeholders are part of most RE processes.

✧ Types of interview

- Closed interviews based on pre-determined list of questions
- Open interviews where various issues are explored with stakeholders.

✧ Effective interviewing

- Be open-minded, avoid pre-conceived ideas about the requirements and are willing to listen to stakeholders.
- Prompt the interviewee to get discussions going using a springboard question, a requirements proposal, or by working together on a prototype system.

Interviews in practice



- ✧ Normally a mix of closed and open-ended interviewing.
- ✧ Interviews are good for getting an overall understanding of what stakeholders do and how they might interact with the system.
- ✧ Interviews are not good for understanding domain requirements
 - Requirements engineers cannot understand specific domain terminology;
 - Some domain knowledge is so familiar that people find it hard to articulate or think that it isn't worth articulating.

4.5.3 Scenarios



- ✧ Scenarios are real-life examples of how a system can be used.
- ✧ They should include
 - A description of the starting situation;
 - A description of the normal flow of events;
 - A description of what can go wrong;
 - Information about other concurrent activities;
 - A description of the state when the scenario finishes.

Scenario for collecting medical history in MHC-PMS



Initial assumption: The patient has seen a medical receptionist who has created a record in the system and collected the patient's personal information (name, address, age, etc.). A nurse is logged on to the system and is collecting medical history.

Normal: The nurse searches for the patient by family name. If there is more than one patient with the same surname, the given name (first name in English) and date of birth are used to identify the patient.

The nurse chooses the menu option to add medical history.

The nurse then follows a series of prompts from the system to enter information about consultations elsewhere on mental health problems (free text input), existing medical conditions (nurse selects conditions from menu), medication currently taken (selected from menu), allergies (free text), and home life (form).

Scenario for collecting medical history in MHC-PMS



What can go wrong: The patient's record does not exist or cannot be found. The nurse should create a new record and record personal information.

Patient conditions or medication are not entered in the menu. The nurse should choose the 'other' option and enter free text describing the condition/medication.

Patient cannot/will not provide information on medical history. The nurse should enter free text recording the patient's inability/unwillingness to provide information. The system should print the standard exclusion form stating that the lack of information may mean that treatment will be limited or delayed. This should be signed and handed to the patient.

Other activities: Record may be consulted but not edited by other staff while information is being entered.

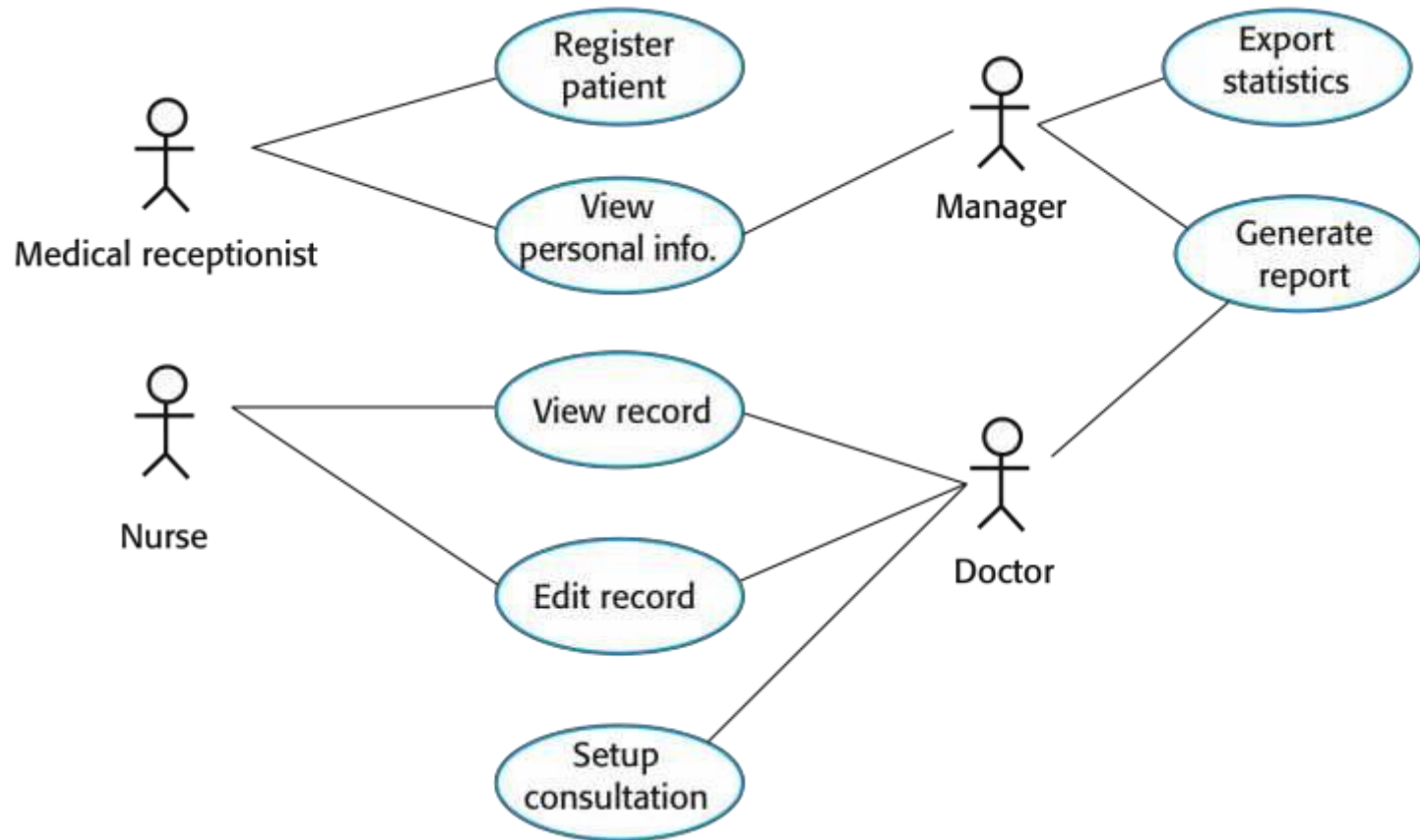
System state on completion: User is logged on. The patient record including medical history is entered in the database, a record is added to the system log showing the start and end time of the session and the nurse involved.

4.5.4 Use cases



- ✧ Use-cases are a **scenario based** technique in the UML which identify the actors in an interaction and which describe the interaction itself.
- ✧ A set of use cases should describe all possible interactions with the system.
- ✧ **High-level graphical** model supplemented by more detailed tabular description (see Chapter 5).
- ✧ **Sequence diagrams** may be used to add detail to use-cases by showing the sequence of event processing in the system.

Use cases for the MHC-PMS





END

Key points



- ✧ **Requirements** for a software system set out **what the system should do** and define **constraints** on its operation and implementation.
- ✧ **Functional requirements** are statements of the services that the system must provide or are descriptions of how some computations must be carried out.
- ✧ **Non-functional requirements** often constrain the system being developed and the development process being used.
 - ✧ They often relate to the emergent properties of the system and therefore apply to the system as a whole.

Key points



- ✧ The **software requirements document** is an agreed statement of the system requirements. It should be organized so that both system customers and software developers can use it.
- ✧ The **requirements engineering process** is an iterative process including requirements elicitation, specification and validation.
- ✧ **Requirements elicitation and analysis** is an iterative process that can be represented as a spiral of activities – requirements discovery, requirements classification and organization, requirements negotiation and requirements documentation.

Key points



- ✧ You can use a range of **techniques for requirements elicitation** including **interviews, scenarios, use-cases** and **ethnography**.
- ✧ **Requirements validation** is the process of checking the requirements for validity, consistency, completeness, realism and verifiability.
- ✧ Business, organizational and technical changes inevitably lead to changes to the requirements for a software system. **Requirements management** is the process of managing and controlling these changes.