Students’ Uniform, Dress and Appearance

1.0 Your Dress and Appearance
1.1 Your School of Health Sciences Uniform
1.2 Personal Appearance
1.3 Non-Uniform Dress Policy
1.4 Non-Compliance with Uniform and Dress Policy
1. Your Dress and Appearance

You have the responsibility as a student at City University London undertaking a programme leading to a professional qualification to dress in a manner that maintains the good name of the profession and of the School of Health Sciences. Your wearing of either the School uniform or your own clothes when on practice placement exposes you to the public gaze and should inspire confidence and respect from your patients/clients and carers. Consequently it is essential that you always dress and act in a way that promotes public confidence in your personal and professional integrity. You have a duty of care to act strictly in accordance with the guidelines provided by the professional statutory body (the NMC), the School and the University. In practice placement areas a smart and professional appearance has a direct effect on practitioner/patient relationships and subsequent care. A professional approach to appearance and dress can also reduce the risk of cross infection and maintain not only your own safety, but also the safety of your patients and your colleagues.

By only wearing your uniform whilst on duty or in a campus learning environment helps to ensure that you are not exposed to being called upon to assist in a manner that exceeds your capability as a midwifery or nursing student. In this guidance you will find detailed guidance on meeting the minimum standards required by the Uniform and Dress Policy of the School and it is essential that you follow the Policy carefully.

The Purpose of the Policy is as follows:

- To ensure you maintain a professional appearance at all times.
- To ensure the protection of you and the public.
- To ensure a consistent standard of dress whilst respecting where possible, current practices and cultural beliefs.
- To minimise the risk of cross infection and to facilitate good and effective hand decontamination.
- To ensure uniforms are compatible with safe moving and handling.

1.1 Your School of Health Sciences Uniform

1.1.1 Issuing of Uniforms

At the beginning of your midwifery or nursing programme you will be measured for a set of uniforms and it is a good idea to make sure that you get a size which will allow you to look and work professionally whilst undertaking any care delivery activities including moving and handling. This set of uniforms is provided free of charge and is intended to last you for the duration of your programme.

When you have completed your programme you will be expected to dispose of your uniform so that it cannot be used by anyone else. This is to protect the name of the School of Health Sciences, and thus your reputation as a graduate of the School.
1.1.2 Replacement Uniforms

If you need to replace your uniform because it has become damaged or because it is no longer the correct size, you will be expected to pay for any replacement uniforms.

1.1.3 Laundering of Uniforms

To promote a professional image and to reduce the risk of cross infection you are expected to wear a clean and neatly pressed uniform every shift. You must make sure that you wash your own uniform at a temperature of 60 degrees Centigrade.

In some specialist placement areas such as in the labour ward, intensive care unit or operating department, special uniforms are provided by the placement provider. These are replaced daily and are laundered as part of the normal dirty linen procedure. You must make sure that you place such clothes in the designated dirty linen bin/store when you complete your shift and they will be collected by the linen team.

1.1.4 Travelling to and from Placement

When travelling to and from your placement, you must wear your own clothes (Mufti) and change into your uniform at your placement site. Wearing uniform outside the placement site or skills laboratories could place you at risk and incurs infection.

1.1.5 Dress Code when on Community Placement

When you are on a community placement you are not normally required to wear your uniform, but in situations where it is necessary you must always be accompanied by a registered practitioner to provide you with supervision and protection.

1.1.6 Protective Clothing

There will be times during your practice experience when you may be required to wear protective clothing. This may be to protect either your patient or to protect you as the health care provider from unnecessary health and safety risks and serious accidents. In these situations it is essential to make sure that you understand and abide by the related policies and procedures for wearing the protective clothing. You have the responsibility to ensure you are knowledgeable about these policies from your first day on each placement. Make sure that you always wear and discard any protective clothing safely and in a timely manner.

1.1.7 Plastic Aprons and Gloves

When you wear either plastic aprons or gloves you must always adhere to local policies and practices.

- Plastic aprons must be worn in areas of direct patient care and a different apron must be worn when nursing a different patient. You must make sure that you dispose of your apron safely and correctly. The apron creates an impermeable barrier between the patient and that area of the uniform which has the most patient contact. This aids the prevention of cross infection.
- Gloves should only be worn according to the local policies of the placement provider.
1.2 Personal Appearance

When people are sick or pregnant they often find strong or unfamiliar smells, (such as cosmetics, after-shave or perfume, strong food smells or cigarette smoke) nauseating. As a nursing or midwifery student you will be engaged in providing care that includes close physical contact with your patients and clients, so it is essential that you make sure your personal hygiene and any perfume or other odours do not cause patients discomfort. If you wish to wear perfume, after-shave or make up whilst on duty this should be discreet.

You must also make sure that your personal attire (and uniform) is clean and freshly pressed for each shift.

1.2.1 Fingernails

Make sure that your fingernails are always kept short and clean to prevent harm to patients through infection transfer or inadvertent scratching. Your hands and fingernails must at all times be:

- clean to avoid transferring bacteria on or under the nail.
- short to prevent patients and staff being scratched.
- free from nail varnish, nail decoration or any form of nail covering to prevent flakes of contamination. False nails or extensions are not permitted.

1.2.2 Hair

There is a possibility of hair carrying bacterial or parasitic infection such as Staphylococcus Aureus or head lice and these may be transmitted to patients. To promote your health and safety and that of your clients/patients, you must make sure that your hair is always kept clean and tidy. To achieve this it must be:

- clean, tidy and tied away from your face.
- it should be off your face and shoulders and above the level of your uniform collar.
- hair should be tied back with a simple dark hair band or ring, clips or hair pins.
- free from any form of decoration or adornment such as: fastenings that have sharp points, beads, slides, decorated or plain bands, ribbons, scarves and hats, all of which are an infection risk.
- if you are a male student you must either be clean-shaven or have your beard and moustache kept clean and neatly trimmed.

1.2.3 Footwear

Your shoes must be designed to provide good support to your feet and loco-motor system so that you are protected from harm. Unless alternative footwear is provided by the placement provider for specialist areas of practice (such as labour ward, operating department), your shoes must be:

- plain
- black, leather or waterproof material (not suede)
• if lace-up the laces should be the same colour as the shoe – Velcro fastened shoes must have three straps
• securely fitted and covers the whole of the foot and heel
• non slip soles
• low heeled – (no greater than 2.5cm)
• clean
• in a good state of repair

The wearing of trainers or open sandals/shoes is potentially dangerous as they do not provide sufficient protection to your feet and back and you must NOT wear them whilst wearing uniform. No boots or any footwear that covers the ankles should be worn.

1.2.4 Socks, Stockings and Tights

You should always wear suitable hosiery. If you wear socks they must be:
• plain
• black
If you wear stockings or tights they must be:
• plain
• black 15 -30 denier

In extremely hot weather you may seek the permission of your placement manager to dispense wearing socks, stockings or tights.

1.2.5 Jewellery

Wearing jewellery of any kind whilst working in a health care setting can be hazardous, both for you and for your patients. This is because jewellery introduces a health and safety risk. Jewellery can potentially injure patients or be dangerous for you if you are caring for a confused or aggressive patient. Stones in jewellery often harbour micro-organisms, may become dislodged and can cause damage to patients. Therefore you must adhere to the following principles:

i) rings – only a single plain band may be worn i.e. a wedding/civil partnership ring.
ii) earrings – only ONE small plain metal stud in each ear
iii) bracelets – must not be worn.
iv) necklaces – hanging jewellery must not be worn.
v) wrist watches – must not be worn – fob watches are favoured and must be pinned to fall
inside a pocket. Wrist watches have been found to be a source of infection and prevent adequate hand washing and drying. A wrist watch may also injure a patient and must not be worn on the wrist.

vi) tattoos – you are discouraged from being tattooed in areas of your body that are visible to patients

vii) body piercing – visible body rings/studs/bars e.g. on the face must be removed whilst on duty. New piercings (including ear studs) will be treated as a new wound and must be covered with a surgical dressing and a blue plaster until the site has healed.

1.2.6 Badges/Identification

Your name and designation must always be visible as a matter of security and reassurance to your patients. Whilst on placement experience you must wear your university identity card at all times, and you will be refused admission to the placement area if you are unable to produce it on request. If this does happen it will be considered an absence from duty.

Students must wear epaulettes (if supplied with your uniform) at all times whilst wearing your uniform (as these are a means of identification as a student).

1.2.7 Additional Clothing

a) Polo shirts/sweat shirts – if these are supplied as part of your uniform they are worn with trousers.

b) Cardigans – You are only permitted to wear a clean and tidy blue lightweight and easily washable cardigan. Wearing of cardigans is not permitted whilst undertaking direct patient care.

c) Uniforms for students with cultural/religious considerations

If for religious or cultural reasons you wish to wear a modified uniform, you should apply to the Student Services Team, during your orientation programme. This will be of the same colour and material as the standard School of Health Sciences uniform and will have been adapted to meet standards that reflect health and safety legislation and requirements. Any such adaptations will meet the following standards:

i) Headdress – Needs to be plain white, black or navy blue with no adornment and must be secured safely and tucked into your collar.

ii) Tunic – This is modified from the standard model, loose and shapeless. The tunic will have slightly longer sleeves; the forearms must be bare and so must be rolled up when in practice. This is essential to prevent soiling and thus transmission of infection.

1.3 Non-Uniform Dress Policy

i) Whilst you are on a practice placement you are an ambassador of the University and School of Health Sciences. In practice areas such as community areas and mental health, you are working in a context where you likely to be more vulnerable.

ii) Prior to commencing your placement you must establish the dress code requirement for your placement. Depending upon the policies of the placement provider, you may wear your own clothes in preference to wearing your uniform. When doing so you must observe the following;
iii) You are expected to wear clothes that are clean, conventionally smart and informal. At no times should you wear clothes that are tightly fitting, revealing/transparent or low necked as this is both unprofessional and can cause offence to some clients and could place you at risk.

iv) Your hair should be clean, tidy and tied off the face; it should be free of adornment other than a simple hair band or ring;

v) You may only wear a plain wedding/civil partnership ring

vi) If you wish to wear a necktie it must be clip-on only. This is to prevent strangulation by for example, a confused patient. You should not wear a neck scarf for this reason.

vii) Shoes should be comfortable, designed to support your feet and loco-motor system and enable you to walk easily and undertake the required duties safely;

viii) The following items may be worn at the discretion of the Practice Experience Facilitator/Manager:

    Jeans cannot be worn in the clinical setting but can be worn if clean and smart in the community and mental health setting by agreement. Jeans if worn must not be faded, ripped and should cover your under garments

    Knee length skirts or shorts may be acceptable, but you should seek advice from your mentor as in some circumstances this dress may be offensive to the client group.

1.4 Non-Compliance with Uniform and Dress Policy

If you are considered to be inappropriately dressed or you have not observed the requirements of the Uniform and Dress Policy, you will be given a verbal warning and will be sent off duty. This will be reported as an absence until you return dressed appropriately. The time associated with these absences will need to be made up. Following this first verbal warning any second incident of breach in following the Uniform and Dress Policy will be considered unprofessional conduct and as a result you will normally face disciplinary action.