



School of Health Sciences

Students' Uniform, Dress and Appearance Policy

Scope

This policy applies to students on the undergraduate/pre-registration programmes that require a period of experience in a clinical practice placement setting leading to a professional registration. It specifies the roles, responsibilities and expectations on uniform, dress and appearance whilst on a placement setting.

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Governance: Practice Education Committee and Board of Studies

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Equality and Diversity statement

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

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1. Your Dress and Appearance

You have the responsibility as a student at City, University of 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 of Health Sciences 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 regulatory and statutory body (the Nursing and Midwifery Council, Health and Care Professions Council), 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 healthcare student. In this policy 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 identify you as a student in placement or a learning environment
- To ensure the protection of you and the public
- To ensure consistent standard of dress whilst respecting where possible, current practices and cultural beliefs
- To minimize the risk of cross infection and 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 Radiography students

The School of Health Sciences uniform for Radiography students consists of the following:

- White tunic with short sleeves (no epaulettes)
- Black trousers

Additional clothing: you are only permitted to wear a clean and tidy black lightweight and easily washable cardigan. Wearing of cardigans is not permitted when undertaking direct patient care.

1.1.2 Nursing and Midwifery students

The School of Health Sciences uniform for Nursing and Midwifery students consists of the following:

- White tunic with short sleeves and epaulettes
 - Navy blue trousers
- OR
- White, short sleeved, knee length dress with epaulettes

Additional clothing: you are only permitted to wear a clean and tidy navy blue lightweight and easily washable cardigan. Wearing of cardigans is not permitted when undertaking direct patient care.

1.1.3 Speech and language therapy students

You are not required to wear a uniform but should follow the guidelines for non-uniform dress outlined in section 3 below.

1.1.4 Optometry students

You are not required to wear a uniform but should follow the guidelines for non-uniform dress outlined in Section 3 below. When working in a clinical area you should wear a white lab coat over your own clothes, unless you are working in a paediatric setting or Moorfield's Hospital placements.

1.2 Cultural Adjustments

Students can contact the programme team to discuss cultural or religious requirements. Adjustments to the uniform for cultural/ethnic reasons will be considered where possible but must be in line with national and local policies, ensuring that the health and safety and security of patients or staff is not compromised. In relation to the university supplied items of uniform, adjustments are limited to the option of wearing trousers under the dress for nursing and midwifery students.

- Sleeves - must finish above the elbow in order to comply with health and safety and infection control policies. The wearing of long sleeved garments under the dress or tunic is not permissible.
- Dress - must not be longer than knee length to allow for maximum mobility and to comply with health and safety policies.
- Headscarves – a plain white, black or navy blue headdress (nursing and midwifery) or a plain black headdress (radiography) can be worn with no adornment and must be safely tucked in to your collar. There may be specific placements where headscarves are not to be worn around the neck according to the provider's policy. Students will be informed by the allocations team if they have been allocated to such a placement and offered an alternative if uncovering the neck is not acceptable for religious or cultural reasons.
- Facial covering for religious reasons is not permitted whilst on duty. This is to ensure that you are identifiable, and to enhance engagement and communication with patients, staff, visitors and colleagues.
- A plain white, short sleeved t-shirt may be worn under the dress or tunic to cover the neck area if required
- A black turban or skull cap may be worn.

1.3 Other Uniform Adjustments

If you require gender neutral or alternative uniform for health reasons please contact the programme team to discuss your requirements. Alternative uniforms will only be provided based on a clear rationale.

1.4 Issuing of Uniforms

At the beginning of your healthcare 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 also applies if you withdraw from the programme. This is to protect the name of the School of Health Sciences, and thus your reputation as a graduate of the School.

1.5 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.

1.6 Laundering 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 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.

1.9 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.

1.10 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 caring for 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 the area of the uniform which has the most patient contact, which aids the prevention of cross infection.
- Gloves should only be worn according to the local policies of the placement provider

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 health care 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.

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 or staff being scratched
- Free from nail varnish or nail decoration or any form of nail covering to prevent flakes or contamination. False nails or extensions are not permitted.

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 away from your face
- Off your face and shoulders and above the level of your uniform collar
- Tied back with a simple dark band or ring, clips or hairpins
- Free from any 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

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-ups, laces should be the same colour as the shoe
- Non-slip soles
- Low heeled (no greater than 2.5 cm)
- 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.

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 with wearing socks, stockings or tights.

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 disorientated 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:

- Rings – only a single plain band may be worn i.e. a wedding or civil partnership ring
- Earrings – only ONE small plain metal stud in each ear
- Bracelets – must not be worn
- Necklaces – hanging jewellery must not be worn
- 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.
- Tattoos – tattoos that may be offensive should not be visible to patients
- Body piercing – visible body rings or studs or bars (for example 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

2.6 Badges and 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 to identify you as a student).

Table 1: Summary of dress code for uniformed students

	Radiography	Nursing and Midwifery
Tunic	White tunic without epaulettes Sleeves finish above the elbow	White tunic with epaulettes Sleeves finish above the elbow
Dress	Not applicable	White dress Knee length Sleeves finish above the elbow
Trousers	Black trousers	Navy blue trousers
Additional Clothing	Black cardigan Black headscarf, tucked in to tunic, no adornments	Navy blue cardigan Navy blue, black or white headscarf, tucked in to tunic, no adornments
Badges and identification	Your name and designation must always be visible You must wear your university identity card at all times	Your name and designation must always be visible You must wear your university identity card at all times You must wear epaulettes at all times whilst wearing your uniform
Footwear	Black leather or waterproof material (not suede) If lace-ups, laces should be the same colour as the shoe Non-slip soles Low-heeled (no greater than 2.5 cm) Clean and in good state of repair	
Hosiery	Socks should be plain and black Stockings or tights should be plain, black, 15-30 denier	
Jewellery	Plain wedding band permitted One small plain metal stud earring in each ear No other jewellery permitted	
Hair	Clean, tidy and away from your face Off your face and shoulders and above the level of your uniform collar Tied back with a simple dark band or ring, clips or hairpins If you are a male student you should be clean shaven or have your beard and moustache kept clean and neatly trimmed	

3. Non-uniform Dress Policy

Whilst you are on a practice placement you are an ambassador of the University and the School of Health Sciences. In some placement areas such as community, mental health nursing or speech and language therapy, you may not be required to wear uniform. In such cases you should establish the dress code requirement prior to commencing the placement. Depending on 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:

- You are expected to wear clothes that are clean, conventionally smart and informal. At no time should you wear clothes that are tightly fitting, revealing or transparent or low necked. This is unprofessional, can cause offence to some clients and may put you at risk.
- You should not wear clothes that have slogans on that state political, religious or inflammatory views, nor should your clothing advertise a product or a service or be representative of drug or alcohol use.
- Adhere to the principles outlined above with regard to personal appearance and professionalism.
- 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.
- Shoes should be comfortable, designed to support your feet and loco-motor system. You should be able to walk (and potentially move fast) easily and undertake the required duties safely.
- You may only wear a plain wedding or civil partnership ring
- In practice areas such as community areas and mental health, you are working in a context where you likely to be more vulnerable. You should not wear items of clothing that may make you vulnerable to strangulation by, for example, a disorientated patient, such as a scarf or tie.

The following items may be worn at the discretion of the placement provider:

- Jeans cannot be worn in the clinical setting but can be worn in the community and mental health setting if they are clean and tidy 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.

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 home from placement. 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 undertaken through the Cause for Concern or Fitness to Practise process.

All placement areas will have organisational uniform policies. These are to be observed in addition to City, University of London School of Health Sciences Policy. The placement area will always have the final say where there are differences in dress code.

For further information about the uniform as applied to your programme of study, or to discuss cultural or religious options, please contact your Programme Director, your personal tutor or Gowri Jeevaratnam, Course Operations Manager on Gowri.Jeevaratnam.1@city.ac.uk tel: [020 7040 5893](tel:02070405893)