

Professional Appearance: Policy

Introduction

It is essential that the correct uniform, reflecting the policies of the Faculty of Health Sciences and practice areas in which you gain experience, is worn:

- in practice settings,
- during practice related travel including community settings

Please note this policy will detail the minimum standard required by all students while in clinical practice during their professional healthcare programmes but local trust/organisation policy holds precedence. As a student of the University of Southampton you are representing this institution in the clinical environment and as such you need to abide by this Professional Appearance Policy regardless of whether your mentor/supervisor/practice educator or other members of staff follow these standards.

Uniforms are provided by the University and are fitted to meet your personal requirements but you are responsible for laundry arrangements. Uniforms vary according to the professional programme being studied. 'Scrubs' are supplied in areas such as theatres. Where 'civvies' (your normal clothes) are worn, you will be advised accordingly at the start of your placement. Uniforms remain the property of the university and you will be advised of what to do with your uniform on completion of your programme.

Infection prevention, control and other health and safety policies take precedence, and dress must always conform to these principles. Trust policies and mentor guidance should always be followed to ensure local compliance.

Policy

1. An overall professional appearance which cannot be deemed offensive to patients, colleagues and the public should be maintained at all times.
2. You are expected to comply with the Professional Appearance Policy at all times.
3. The principle of 'nothing below the elbow' must be adhered to in all clinical areas.
4. Uniform:
 - a) You are expected to wear the appropriate uniform for your designated professional programme.
 - b) There can be no alterations to style which will affect the overall image of the uniform; dress hemlines will be at knee level.
 - c) Uniforms must not be worn in public areas - e.g. shops, libraries or cafes. This is to help prevent cross infection and reduce the risk of litigation arising from public expectation of a uniform wearer in the event of an accident or emergency. Uniforms must not be worn unless in connection with programme activity.
 - d) Changing facilities are available in some practice areas. Larger hospitals often have showers and changing rooms.
 - e) If there are no changing facilities, uniforms may be worn to travel directly between home and University and home and practice areas. When travelling to and from practice the uniform must be completely covered appropriately to maintain professional appearance. Uniform should not be worn when cycling to and from work.
 - f) Uniforms must be washed daily without other items of clothing at 60°C in a domestic washing machine and then tumble dried and ironed on a medium setting. Scrub clothing worn as uniform will be treated as Theatre Linen.

- g) Some areas may have additional or amended uniform requirements and/or policies which must always be followed by students, e.g. "Scrubs" in theatre.
- h) If you need to replace items of your uniform please follow process detailed below in Appendix 1.

5. Jewellery:

- a) Rings: Only one plain metal ring may be worn.
- b) Watches: No wristwatches are to be worn in any clinical environment.
- c) Earrings: see piercings below.
- d) Necklaces: No necklaces are to be worn in the clinical environment.
- e) Medic-alert jewellery is not to be worn on the wrist (but could be attached to uniform) and must be cleanable, plain and discreet. On grounds of health and safety and infection control, the only accepted items of jewellery are a single plain wedding ring and a small pair of plain metal stud earrings. Students who have ear stretching post ear piercing should wear flesh plugs.

6. Piercings:

- a) Earrings: one pair of small plain metal studs only should be worn.
- b) Staff who have ear stretching post ear piercing should wear flesh plugs.
- c) All new visible body piercings must be covered with a blue plaster until the wound has healed. Once the wound has healed, all associated piercing jewellery must be removed. No visible piercings, other than a small pair of plain metal stud earrings, are allowed.

7. Tattoos: Offensive, visible tattoos should be covered if likely to cause offence to patients, carers, visitors or staff. Any covering of the tattoo must be in compliance with the Hand Hygiene Policy.

8. Footwear: Must be clean, plain, low heeled, black, non-porous, enclosed and in a good state of repair and ideally have a non-slip tread. Shoe style and colour must be in keeping with the overall uniform style

9. Tights/Stockings/Socks: If not wearing trousers, tights must be worn and be plain black or natural colour. Stockings/socks should be plain and of a colour in keeping with the overall uniform.

10. Fingernails: Must be clean and short. Nail varnish, acrylic nails and false nails must not be worn.

11. Hair: Must be clean, neat and tidy and tied back off the face and off the collar even as a ponytail. Hair must not be loose, hanging or be able to fall forward onto patients. Hair accessories and fastenings should be discreet and in keeping with staff uniform.

12. Trusts may have separate guidelines on the wearing of items of religious significance, supporting the individual but prioritising health and safety and infection control issues. If you need further information or clarification in this area please seek advice from the admissions team before you commence the programme.

13. Identification badges must be worn on the uniform at all times. Photographic ID is required in some areas.

Status:	Approved
Originated by:	Julian Pearce on behalf of Practice Learning Committee
Date of Approval	01/10/2015
Updated	01/10/2015
Effective from (date)	10/10/2015
Date for review	01/10/2018