

**York University – School of Nursing  
Undergraduate Programs**

**Policy**

<b>Title: Professional Appearance and Dress Code</b>	
<b>Document Number:</b>	<b>File Name:</b>
<b>UPC Review &amp; Approval Date:</b> August 2021; May 2018; May 2016; March 28, 2012	<b>Executive Committee Date:</b> June 2021; April 2018
<b>SON Council Decision Date:</b> October 2021; June 2018; August 9, 2016; April 18, 2012.	
<b>Effective Date:</b> November 2021	<b>Evaluation Period:</b> Every 2 years
<p><b>Introduction and Rationale:</b></p> <p>The policy is intended to promote a style of appearance and dress that reflects a professional image, adheres to safe practices for the student and patient, promotes appropriate personal hygiene, and prevents the spread of infection by York University undergraduate nursing students. The appearance and dress expectations should distinguish nursing students from agency staff<sup>5, 6, 10</sup>. The policy is not intended to infringe on anyone’s individual rights<sup>8</sup>.</p>	
<p><b>Guiding Policy Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) SoN students must be clearly identifiable and distinct from health care staff</li> <li>b) A professional image must be maintained in all clinical practice settings and in the Nursing Simulation Centre</li> <li>c) Principles of infection prevention and control must be followed to protect students and patients.</li> </ul> <p>Notes: 1. Agency polices that require additional requirements must be adhered to. 2. Unique student needs are considered upon discussion with Faculty. Accommodations for religious and cultural practices are considered as long as the guiding policy principles or agency policies are not infringed upon.</p>	
<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <p>SoN students must be clearly identifiable and distinct from health care staff<sup>5, 6, 10</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SoN clinical photo ID must be visible at all times, displaying student’s legal first and last names<sup>3a</sup>. If agencies require further photo ID this will be made known to students;</li> <li>• SoN student uniform; dark navy-blue scrub top and pants or skirt.</li> </ul>	

A professional image must be maintained in all clinical practice settings and in the Nursing Simulation Centre

#### Uniform

- Dress and personal care must be neat, clean and appropriate for the practice environment. To build trust with the public;<sup>1, 5, 6, 10</sup>
- If panty hose are worn with a skirt, they must be solid colour (white, black, beige) and without a pattern;
- Some clinical practice placements may allow dress and shoes other than the uniform. Dress must follow the agency and client expectations and the guiding policy principles.

#### Footwear

- Footwear selection must be leather or vinyl;
- Must be supportive and comfortable so as not to inhibit practice activities;
- Must be clean, solid colour (white, brown, blue, black, beige) non-slip, soft-soled, closed-toe, closed-heel and non-mesh<sup>6</sup>.

#### Hair

- Hair must be clean and neat and not present a contamination or infection risk;
- When performing patient care, hair should be off-the-shoulder in length or restrained so as not to require manipulation or touching during procedures<sup>4</sup>;
- Facial hair must facilitate respirator-fit.

#### Jewellery

- Hand and arm jewellery is limited to plain bands with an absence of gems or raised settings (if jewellery is religious seek guidance from Clinical Faculty and agency policy);
- Medic alert identification is permitted;
- Watches required with a second hand. Smart watches that act as personal communication devices should not be used while providing client care;
- Piercings should be limited to studs or sleepers<sup>6</sup>.

#### Body Art

- Tattoos may be required to be covered at the request of the agency or a patient.

#### Personal Hygiene

- Students have the responsibility to ensure their personal hygiene and cleanliness meets professional standards;
- Fragrance Free: Students should refrain from using fragrances as they can be harmful to clients, families, staff or colleagues. No use of perfumes or aftershaves that are scented. Use personal hygiene products that are fragrance free (i.e., deodorant, shampoo, soap, or lotion).

Principles of infection prevention and control must be followed to protect students and patients.

#### Uniform & Shoes

- Wear the uniform and shoes only in the clinical placement and not while travelling to and from practice placement as uniform and shoes may be vectors for pathogens; <sup>4, 11</sup>
- No lab coats or jackets when providing client care;<sup>9</sup>
- Religious head covers must be fastened securely and non-dangling during patient care to prevent cross contamination or personal risk of being pulled by confused/angry patients, infants, or children.

#### Equipment

- Students should have their own stethoscope with bell and diaphragm. Stethoscope is to be cleaned before and after each client encounter;<sup>2, 9</sup>
- Watches: Fob watches worn on clothing are preferred. If a wristwatch is worn it must be cleanable and waterproof. No fabric straps as they may be a reservoir for microorganisms<sup>9</sup>.

#### Nails

- Fingernails must be short, 1/4 "clean and free of nail polish and nail art as these may be a reservoir for microorganisms<sup>2, 7, 9</sup>;
- No artificial nails as these may be a reservoir for microorganisms.<sup>2, 7, 9</sup>

#### Jewellery

- Follow agency policy, 'bare below the elbows', if in place;
- Hand jewellery is limited to plain bands with an absence of gems or raised settings as these may be a reservoir for microorganisms.<sup>2, 7, 9</sup>

#### **Not Following the Policy**

- A discussion will occur between the student and clinical faculty.
- Missed clinical or NSC hours resulting from such actions must be made up at the convenience of the practicum agency, NSC staff, and the Clinical Course Director. The Course Director will be notified.

## References

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2. Canadian Patient Safety Institute. (2019). Stop Clean Your Hands Day. Retrieved from: <https://www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca/en/Events/StopCleanYourHandsDay/Documents/SCYHD%202019/STOP!%20Clean%20Your%20Hands%20Day%20Slides.pdf#search=nails>
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10. Shaw, K. & Timmons, S. (2010). Exploring how nursing uniforms influence self-image and professional identity. *Nursing Times*. 106(10).

11. University of Calgary. (2019). Attire for students in the practice setting (Calgary Campus - Undergraduate Programs). Retrieved from:  
[https://nursing.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/5/Attire\\_for\\_Students\\_in\\_the\\_Practice\\_Setting.Nsg\\_Council.APPROVED.Dec10-19.pdf](https://nursing.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/5/Attire_for_Students_in_the_Practice_Setting.Nsg_Council.APPROVED.Dec10-19.pdf)

### **Relevant School of Nursing Policies**

Student Professional Behaviour Policy. Retrieved from: <https://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/student-professional-behaviour-policy-bscn/>