

**FACULTY OF HEALTH**  
**School of Nursing & Midwifery**  
**Student Uniform Policy**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
PLYMOUTH**

**Version 1.0 July 2020**

Policy will be updated as required in response to a change in national policy or evidence-based guideline.

## Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Page No</b>
1	Introduction	3
2	Purpose	3
3	Duties	3
4	Uniform Policy	4
5	Infection Control	6
6	Safety Issues	8
7	Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness	9
Appendix A	Uniform Allocation	10
Appendix B	Advice from the Muslim Spiritual Care Provision	11

## **Uniform Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Uniforms should be compatible with safe moving and handling practices, breakaway, control and restraint, minimising cross infection and be appropriate to the area in which they are worn.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the uniform policies/guidance applicable to the clinical areas/Trust that you have been allocated to. It is the students' responsibility to check the uniform requirement on first contact with placements.

### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students clearly understand the standards of dress, when in uniform, expected of them whilst on Clinical Placement and in the Simulation Facilities on campus.
- 2.2 Standards should support and promote the following principles:
  - The health, safety and wellbeing of patients, clients, carers and visitors.
  - The health, safety and wellbeing of staff/students.
  - The need to maintain public confidence and respect.
  - The professional accountability of staff as defined by the Nursing and Midwifery Council.
  - The diversity, rights and beliefs of staff/students.

### **3. Duties**

- 3.1 The School of Nursing & Midwifery (SNAM) will provide appropriate uniforms in sufficient quantity and quality for all students at the start of their Programme. See Appendix A for details of uniform provision.

- 3.2 The epaulettes are provided through a recycling service, so students are required to return these following the last placement/simulation session of the academic year. These will be laundered prior to being issued to the next year group. It is important that the final grey epaulettes are returned prior to graduation. There is currently no charge for lost or damaged epaulettes.
- 3.3 Maternity tunics and trousers (not dresses) can be provided on presentation of proof of pregnancy. This can be either: the MATB1 certificate (issued by a Midwife around 20 weeks gestation); or a copy of the maternity notes (copy will be taken of the front page only). Students on the Adult, Child and Midwifery Programmes will receive two sets, those on the Mental Health Programme will receive one. Please provide as much notice as possible to enable an order to be placed with the suppliers (Alexandra), if there is none available in the small stock held on campus.
- 3.4 SNAM do not accept the return of worn uniforms and ask that these are disposed of in a responsible manner, ensuring that any embroidered branding is cut out. It is acceptable to pass uniforms to other nursing students at this University. Any unworn uniform maybe returned, providing it is still in its original packaging.
- 3.5 SNAM will also provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as necessary to maintain the health and safety of employees and others. If students are required to wear protective clothing they must do so in accordance with Infection Control policies and guidance. Hands must always be decontaminated after removal of PPE.
- 3.6 Students must ensure that uniform, footwear and standard of dress are appropriate to their role. Standards of uniform must ensure that infection control, clinical care, treatment, communication and respect for patients/clients/carers/visitors are not compromised and that professional standards, support of colleagues and the reputation of University of Plymouth is upheld.

#### **4. Uniform Policy**

- 4.1 Students are expected to maintain their uniforms in a good state of repair. Uniforms must be clean and well presented at all times. If students appear

unkempt this can be interpreted as a lack of professional pride and poor personal standards.

- 4.2 Should your uniform become irreversibly stained during placement, the item will be replaced from current stock held, or ordered from the suppliers should the right size not be available. If additional uniform is required (e.g. nurse dresses and epaulettes), a self-purchase scheme has been set up with the Suppliers for those students wishing to purchase additional items.

In order to set up a self-purchase account and obtain a unique coupon code to view the appropriate pages please contact the following:

Plymouth Students: [rollestudentreception@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:rollestudentreception@plymouth.ac.uk)

Exeter Students: [exeterson@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:exeterson@plymouth.ac.uk)

Truro Students: [KSPAreception@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:KSPAreception@plymouth.ac.uk)

- 4.3 When on duty, staff must only wear the designated type and style of uniform approved for their workplace and grade. This will denote their role within the organisation/work area and will help the patient identify who is caring for them.
- 4.4 A badge denoting the students' preferred name will be issued with the uniform. This will be replaced free of charge if lost, damaged or due to official name change. Please contact the Faculty Office (as above) with details of name and branch to place order. However, the Suppliers require the placement of multiple orders, so there may be a delay.
- 4.5 Student ID Cards are issued at the commencement of the Programme. Damaged or faulty cards can be replaced free of charge at the Card Office situated in Room 6 on the ground floor of the Roland Levinski Building.
- Lost cards can be replaced through the University e-store on <https://estore.plymouth.ac.uk/product-catalogue/card-office>
- 4.6 Students are strongly encouraged to wear their own clothing whilst travelling to and from placement or simulation sessions on campus. If this is unavoidable, uniform should be worn for the minimum amount of time outside these areas. Students are advised to purchase a full-length coat to wear whilst travelling, in the interests of infection control and to avoid a member of

public mistaking them as a Registered Nurse/Midwife and seeking assistance inappropriate to their status.

- 4.7 Staff who smoke should ensure their uniform and ID badge is totally covered.
- 4.8 Students must not wear University of Plymouth uniform or student identification when undertaking work for Bank or Agency Healthcare.
- 4.9 Students are not to share any photographs of themselves in uniform on social media without prior permission from the University of Plymouth.

## **5. Infection Control**

- 5.1 Students must be bare below the elbows when in uniform. Full or three quarter length sleeves are allowed for religious/cultural reasons except during clinical procedures with a patient and during hand washing, where sleeves must be rolled up or pulled back and kept securely in place. (For advice from the Muslim Spiritual Care Provision please see Appendix B).
- 5.2 Jewelry and wrist watches should not be worn when in uniform or performing physical care.
  - 5.2.1 A plain wedding band may be worn with extra vigilance with hand washing around it when worn. Fob watches may be worn.
  - 5.2.2 In areas where jewelry is permitted, this should be discrete, and consideration be paid to personal safety and infection control. Exception may be negotiated for religious beliefs or Medi-Alert jewelry/SOS Talismans.
  - 5.2.3 Earrings must be in the form of one pair of plain studs. The wearing of hoop type earrings in clinical areas is not acceptable as these can easily be intentionally pulled or grabbed by patient, or accidentally by a confused patient. A student may be required to cover or remove all piercings in certain clinical environments to adhere to infection control measures, particularly where piercings are below the elbow.
- 5.3 Hair should be tidy, off the face and above the collar. Long hair should be securely pinned up using plain hair accessories. For infection control reasons hair extensions should not be worn. Hair colour must also be taken into

consideration. For example unnatural hair colours such as pink and green may not be acceptable.

- 5.4 Beards and moustaches should be clean and neatly clipped
- 5.5 Hands must be clean at all times, nails must be kept clean short, to avoid damage to examination gloves or risk injury to a patient. It is not acceptable to wear nail varnish, false, acrylic or gel nails.
- 5.6 Use of cosmetics and perfume or aftershave should be kept to a minimum and should reflect the need to maintain public confidence and respect.
- 5.7 Students are permitted to have tattoos. However it is essential to maintain a professional appearance. Visible tattoos may need to be covered in accordance with partner Trust's own policies.
- 5.8 All uniform should be freshly laundered and maintained. SNAM does not provide a laundry service for uniforms so students are responsible for the laundering of their own uniform.
  - 5.8.1 Uniforms should be washed separately from other items and should be washed at the hottest temperature recommended for the fabric. It is advised that uniforms are washed inside out, without epaulettes attached, to aid colour retention. **N.B. for the first wash uniforms should be washed in cold water to set the dyes.**
  - 5.8.2 Overloading of machines will also reduce wash efficiency.
  - 5.8.3 It is not necessary to use a biological powder but it is important to use the quantity of detergent advised by the manufacturer.
  - 5.8.4 Although there is no published evidence to suggest an infection control risk, staff should ensure that washing machines and tumble driers are maintained according to manufacturer's instructions as dirty or under-performing machines can result in contamination with micro-organisms.
  - 5.8.5 Students may be able to claim tax relief in respect of laundry costs. The form for claiming this is available from your local Inland Revenue office.

5.8.6 If wearing head coverings for religious reasons (e.g. a turban or skull cap) these should be washed and changed daily, and secured to avoid loose ends.

YES	NO
<b>Short sleeves</b> <b>Plain wedding band</b> <b>Short finger nails</b> <b>One pair plain stud earrings</b> <b>Hair tied back/off collar – natural colour</b> <b>Facial hair neat</b>	<b>Long sleeves</b> <b>Hoop earrings or visible piercings not in accordance with Trust policy</b> <b>Wrist watches or bracelets*</b> <b>Lanyards or necklaces*</b> <b>Long nails, nail varnish, gel or acrylic nails</b>

\* Exceptions may be made on religious/cultural/ethnic or health grounds where possible in accordance with partner Trusts. For further information on University policy: [www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/religious-observance-teaching-learning-and-assessment](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/religious-observance-teaching-learning-and-assessment)

## 6. Safety Issues

- 6.1 Uniforms and clothing must be appropriate in style and fit, to allow staff to move easily and safely when handling patients.
- 6.2 It is advisable that pens/scissors are either carried in hip pockets. They should not be carried in outside breast pockets where they could cause injury when providing clinical care.
- 6.3 Shoes worn must support and protect the foot during everyday duties, especially for manual handling procedures, and using equipment. The ideal shoe is non-slip, soft-soled (reduces noise), and fully encloses the foot. They should also be low heeled, anti-static and easily cleaned or washed. They must be black in colour. Open-toe and open front or open-backed footwear is not acceptable for those delivering patient care and clog style shoes and trainers are not acceptable.
- 6.4 Black or neutral coloured socks should be worn, or plain black or skin coloured tights if wearing a dress.

YES	NO
<b>Black</b> <b>Non-slip</b> <b>Flat, soft sole</b> <b>Fully encloses foot</b> <b>Wipe clean</b>	<b>Open toe</b> <b>Open front or back</b> <b>Trainers</b> <b>Suede or canvas</b> <b>Clogs</b>

6.5 Where uniform is not required a student should dress in accordance with their professional position, supporting the therapeutic relationships with patients, carers and families. Garments worn must be of a professional appearance and in a good state of repair.

6.5.1 Clothing must be appropriate in style and fit, to allow students to move easily and safely when participating in moving and handling in the workplace or simulation facilities. Suitable clothing would be:

- Plain coloured short sleeved shirt/polo-shirt;
- Navy blue or black trousers. Trousers must be full length, of a professional style and fabric i.e. not denim or leggings;
- Shoes must be of professional appearance. They must fully enclose the foot (toes and heels) and be of a material which will protect the foot from liquid spillages or sharp instruments and enable to wearer to move easily around the DEF.

6.5.2 Students must continue to adhere to the guidance regarding jewellery and general appearance when attending placement or clinical simulation facilities when not in uniform.

YES	NO
<b>Uniform shoes as detailed above</b> <b>Black or navy blue comfortable trousers</b> <b>Plain coloured short sleeved shirt/t-shirt/polo shirt</b> <b>Name Badge</b>	<b>Flip-flops/trainers</b> <b>Jeans, shorts, skirts or leggings</b> <b>Loose or low fitting tops/vests</b> <b>Long sleeved tops/shirts</b> <b>Clothing with slogans which may be perceived as offensive or provocative</b>

## 7. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

7.1 The wearing of a uniform is primarily to provide protection and safety to patients and staff and to promote a professional image. In circumstances where the uniform policy is seen by an employee to cause him/her difficulties or offence, due consideration should be given to allowing a different style of uniform within the general standards and principles.

7.2 Where a student feels, for any reason, that they cannot comply with the policy, their objections and concerns will be taken seriously and wherever

possible, and consistent with the principles in Section 2, an accommodation or compromise will be sought.

- 7.3 Non-compliance to uniform guidelines may result in a student being turned away from clinical placement or simulation session.
- 7.4 Where a student does not meet the expectations of the policy, Faculty Staff/Personal Tutor will discuss with them how to put the problem right. If noncompliance continues, disciplinary procedure may be invoked.

## Appendix A

### Details of Uniform Issue from SNAM

Health Programme	Uniform Supplied
<b>Adult, Child Nursing and Midwifery</b>	3 Tunics 3 Pairs of trouser 2 pairs of epaulettes Polo shirts will be provided if undertaking a dual qualification with mental health Nursing  The short programme Return to nursing will receive a reduced allocation
<b>Mental Health Nursing</b>	2 Tunics 2 pairs of trousers 2 polo shirts 1 pair epaulettes  The short programme Return to nursing will receive a reduced allocation
<b>Epaulettes</b>	Year 1: Red – issued with uniform Year 2: Yellow Year 3: Grey  Return to Nursing: Blue – issued with uniform

## Appendix B

### Advice from: Muslim Spiritual Care Provision in the NHS (MSCP).

Uniforms and Work-wear: guidance on uniform and work wear policies for NHS employers (DH, 2010) confirms there is no new evidence from the 2007 guidance and updates examples of best practice. It provides more specific guidance on cultural issues:

1. Exposure of forearms is not acceptable to some staff because of their Islamic faith. The MSCP made some recommendations to ensure that local dress code policies are sensitive to the obligations of Muslims and other faith groups whilst maintaining equivalent standards of hygiene. Incorporating any of these into trust policy will have to be agreed with clinical managers and the infection prevention and control team. PDSE currently does not provide long sleeved or three quarter length sleeved uniforms. However, these could be made available on request. The recommendations below can be related to staff members' own clothing.
  - Uniforms may include provision for full length sleeves when staff are not engaged in direct patient care activity
  - Uniforms can have three-quarter length sleeves
  - Any full or three-quarter length sleeves must not be loose or dangling. They must be rolled or pulled back and kept securely in place during hand-washing and direct patient care activity
  - Disposable over-sleeves, elasticated at the elbow and wrist, may be used but must be put on and discarded in exactly the same way as disposable gloves. Strict procedures for washing hands and wrists must still be observed.
2. Use of hand disinfection gels containing synthetic alcohol does not fall within the Muslim prohibition against natural alcohol (from fermented fruit or grain).