

Faculty of Health & Life Sciences  
The Leicester School of Nursing & Midwifery  
Practice Division

Uniform and Dress Policy

Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery

1. Introduction

Student nurse and midwife dress standards exist to:

* + - Ensure compatibility with safe moving & handling principles.
    - Ensure compatibility with evidence-based infection prevention & control principles.
    - Ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of students during the course of their practice experience.
    - Ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of peers, colleagues, and service users when delivering any aspect of nursing or midwifery care.
    - Minimise risk during interventions such as breakaway or physical restraint.
    - Promote and maintain public confidence in the nursing & midwifery professions.
    - Convey your role as a student and your year of study.

For these reasons, DMU-issued uniform should be worn for the duration of most clinical placements (Sections 2-4). Occasionally, there may be specific placement environments where alternate uniform standards or plain clothes dress are more appropriate (Sections 3 & 5). All students should adhere to the standards in Section 6.  
  
**This policy should be read in conjunction with the uniform policies or guidance applicable to the clinical area or NHS Trust that you have been allocated to. It is each student’s responsibility to identify any additional requirements on first contact with each placement and to adhere to these requirements for the duration of the placement.**

1. Collecting Your Uniform

**2.1** Five sets of uniform will be provided by the University. Each set consists of tunic and trousers or a dress. You may choose to order a combination of dresses and tunics. Male and female tunics are available – these differ primarily in the cut of the sleeves, torso proportion, and the shape of the collar. In accordance with DMU policy, you may order whichever uniform is most congruent with your affirmed gender.

**2.2** The HLS Placement Team will contact all students within the first two weeks of the programme with full instructions for ordering uniforms, as well as the process for exchanging them. Uniforms may only be exchanged for alternate sizes and dresses cannot be exchanged for tunics after collection. Uniform collection is a mandatory timetabled session, and exchanges are limited to a specific time period indicated by the placements team.

**2.3** Uniform allocations should last the duration of the course. In the event of size fluctuations or damage occurring, replacements can be purchased at your own cost.

**2.4** Up to three sets of maternity uniform will be provided by DMU on request. Additionally, new uniforms will be provided by DMU when necessitated by a medical condition. Evidence should be provided to your Personal Tutor, who will in turn authorise the Placements Team to purchase additional uniforms. There can be an 8-10 week order time for uniforms, and so these requirements should be raised as soon as reasonably practical to avoid disruption.

**2.5** The HLS Placements Team are based in Edith Murphy House 1.23

**2.6** If you discontinue the programme before completion, you must destroy your uniforms by cutting through the logo before disposing of them.

3. Wearing Your Uniform

**3.1** This policy does not apply to academic elements of the programme, such as lectures or seminars.

**3.2** DMU Uniform (Section 4) should be worn during all placements unless advised otherwise.

**3.3** Uniform may be required in certain practical learning environments on the DMU campus such as OSCEs, simulation, and clinical skills sessions. Where this is the case, it will be communicated to you in advance.

**3.4** For placements in prison environments, the alternative uniform (blue DMU-branded polo shirt) should be worn. This is to ensure student safety by differentiating student nurses or midwives from prison officers, police, and other prison staff. Contact the HLS Placements Team to arrange the collection of this uniform.

**3.5** DMU students in uniform are representatives of their profession and their university. It is therefore best practice to cover your uniform when travelling to and from placement or to travel in your own clothes. Uniform should not be worn for any private or social activity outside of the practice learning environment.

**3.6** Students should ensure that their uniform is fully covered or removed when smoking or vaping, and take steps to ensure that their uniform does not smell of smoke on return to the clinical area.

**3.7** DMU-issued ID badges should be visible at all times. You may be required to wear additional ID badges in certain placement environments. These should be worn on a double-sided ID card holder.

**3.8** You will be issued with a blue HLS student lanyard and are advised to use this for the duration of the programme for ease of recognition both on- and off-campus. You may wear your own lanyard or ID clip at your discretion. These must not depict discriminatory words or imagery, represent a safety hazard, or be otherwise incompatible with upholding the professional image of a student nurse or midwife.

**3.9** You will be invited to order a DMU “Hello My Name Is” name badge at the start of your programme. This will include your role as a student nurse or midwife. It is your choice whether you include your full preferred name (nursing and midwifery), just your first name (nursing only), or your personal pronouns (nursing and midwifery) on this badge. The name badge does not replace your DMU photo ID.

**3.10** Fob watches may be worn as long as they adhere to the same standards as lanyards. Stethoscopes should be stored in pockets rather than around the neck, as this presents a contamination and ligature risk.

4. Uniform Standards

**4.1** Dresses should fall just below the knee and may be worn with plain black, navy or beige tights, or black socks. Dresses may be tailored to the appropriate length. Neither DMU nor the uniform supplier provides tailoring services and you must arrange it yourself.

**4.2** Tunic and dress sleeves should not fall below the elbow at their lowest extent.

**4.3** Trousers should be 2cm from the ground at their lowest extent.

**4.4** Bare Below the Elbow (BBE):

* To avoid contamination risk and ensure the ability to wash or sanitise hands and wrists up to the elbow, you must be ‘bare below the elbow’ at all times in the clinical area.
* The ‘clinical area’ is any area in which direct patient care or medicine preparation takes place.
* Wristwatches, bangles, and bracelets must not be worn in the clinical area.
* A plain black, white, or blue long- or short-sleeved shirt may be worn under the uniform, however this must be securely rolled up above the elbow at all times within the clinical area.
* Sleeves may be rolled down to cover the forearm outside the clinical area.
* Where disposable oversleeves are available, these may be worn in the clinical area but local guidance for disposal and usage must be followed.

**4.5** Epaulettes corresponding to the correct programme and year of study should be worn at all times, fastened medially (closest to the neck). You will receive an email with instructions for obtaining these from HLS placements at the start of each year.

* Midwifery students should wear no epaulettes in the first year and lilac and purple epaulettes in years 2 and 3 respectively.
* Nursing students should wear light blue, medium blue, and dark blue epaulettes for years 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

**4.6** Plain black shoes and socks should be worn. Shoes must not feature any written or graphic elements, be water resistant, and have non-slip flat soles. Toes and heels must be closed. Shoes should be well-fitting with comfortable insoles as they may be required to offer support for twelve or more hours per day.

**4.7** Uniforms should be washed at the highest permissible temperature between each use. Five sets are provided to allow a continuous rotation of uniforms to be washed together.

**4.8** Uniforms must be free from stains and creases. Allowing uniforms to air-dry rather than tumble-drying will reduce the amount of creasing. You will be expected to iron out any creases and may be turned away from any practice learning environment if your uniform is creased or soiled.

5. Non-Uniform Dress Standards

**5.1** In some environments, primarily those with vulnerable or distressed service users, the healthcare professionals you work with may wear plain clothes. In this instance, you should not wear your uniform and adhere to the following standards instead:

**5.2** You must be clearly identifiable as a student nurse or midwife. DMU and any required local ID should be visible at all times, except in placement areas where this is identified as a potential wellbeing or safety hazard for students or service users. In this scenario, students should have ID on their person and must be able to produce it at any time. If a lanyard is worn, it should be a DMU-issued lanyard that clearly shows that you are a student nurse or midwife.

**5.3** Plain dress shoes should not feature any graphic or written elements and must be of a single plain colour, comfortable, water resistant, and have closed heels and toes. Heels should not exceed one inch (2.4cm) in height.

**5.4** Shorts, skirts, and dresses should fall between the level of the knee and 2cm from the ground at their minimum and maximum extents. Tights should be a single dark or skin-shade colour.

**5.5** Clothing must convey a smart, professional image and be fit for purpose. Jeans, leggings, jogging bottoms, vests, and combat-style trousers must not be worn. Cropped tops exposing the abdomen or low-waisted trousers must not be worn.

**5.6** Clothing depicting discriminatory language or imagery, or referencing any subject incompatible with the standards set out by the NMC Code, must not be worn.

**5.7** Jewellery, wristwatches, tops, blazers, and jackets must have the ability to be removed or securely rolled up above the elbow in situations such as providing direct patient care, hand washing, and medicine preparation & administration (**4.4**).

6. Standards for All Students

**6.1** You may be required to wear various forms of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including masks, gloves, and aprons. Local policy and procedures should be followed for all usage of PPE. If you have a latex allergy or any other barrier to the safe usage of standard PPE, you must make your personal tutor aware of this at the first opportunity.

**6.2** Visible tattoos and body art must not depict any discriminatory language or imagery, or otherwise reference any subject incompatible with the NMC Code. Temporary body art (including henna) may be worn but will likely be degraded by hand hygiene procedure. You must always follow hand hygiene policy.

**6.3** Plain metal rings with no engraving or inset jewellery may be worn and are compatible with BBE principles.

* Placement environments may stipulate the allowed location, type, or number of rings. You must remove rings when required by local policy.

**6.4** Necklaces should not be worn as these present a contamination and ligature hazard.

**6.5** Piercing jewellery must be robust and without small components such as inset jewels which may become detached and contaminate the clinical area. Piercing jewellery should be chosen to minimise the risk of being caught on masks, lanyards, patients, or objects.

* DMU recognises that there is no conclusively proven objective infection control or safety reason to limit the location or number of visible body piercings, including facial piercings.
* Placement environments may stipulate the allowed location, type, or number of visible piercings. You must be able to replace, cover, or remove such piercings when required by local policy.

**6.6** Hair, hair extensions, and wigs must be tied up and back to ensure that it does not touch the collar (or the skin of the neck, back, or shoulders if no collar is worn).

* DMU recognises that there is no conclusively proven objective impact on an individuals’ ability to provide professional, safe, and competent care based on their hair style or colour.
* Placement environments may stipulate that ‘extreme’ colours and styles are covered up. You must be prepared to cover your hair with a suitable covering when required by local policy.

**6.7** False nails may not be worn, and should be removed before each placement. Nails must not protrude from fingertips when looking at the palm of your hand. You should be aware than nail varnish/polish is not permitted in many placement environments, and you must follow local policy in this instance. You are responsible for the cost of removing any nail products, and will be turned away from the practice learning environment until all nail products are removed.

**6.8** False eyelashes or eyelash extensions may not be worn, as these can become detached and contaminate the clinical area. You will be turned away from the practice learning environment until these are removed.

**6.9** Makeup may be worn by any student.

**6.10** You are expected to maintain an appropriate level of personal hygiene. The use of simple or lightly fragranced deodorant is appropriate and encouraged, but you should not use strongly scented perfumes or aftershave as staff or service users may be sensitive to such products.

**6.11** All lanyards worn around the neck should have at least two breakaway fasteners. Some placement environments require a triple-breakaway design. Lanyards should be tucked in a pocket and must not swing freely when providing direct patient care.

**6.12** You may wear badges and pins in the clinical area. These may be fixed to lanyards or clothing. Badges should be relevant and not feature discriminatory language or imagery, or reference any subject incompatible with the standards set out by the NMC Code.

* You must exercise professional judgement over the number and placement of badges, and they must not interfere with any professional duties.
* Placement environments may ask you to remove some or all of your badges, where there is an assessed risk of staff or service user harm due to the presence of pins or magnetic fasteners.

**6.13** Students with religious considerations should follow the additional information in Appendix 1.

7. Equality Considerations & Penalties

This policy has been reviewed by:

* DMU Faith Team
* Programme Leads - Nursing & Midwifery
* Practice Division
* Practice Learning Committee
* HLS Placements Team

Individual alterations and exemptions to this policy must be discussed with and approved by the Practice Division, supported by relevant stakeholders such as the Programme Lead(s), Placements Team, Occupational Health, and practice partner representatives.

Students found in breach of this policy will face the relevant penalty to their circumstance. This may include awarding a failure/not achieved for the relevant practice assessment criteria (*i.e.* *Professional Values*).

8. Supporting Documents

[Bearman, G., Bryant, K., Leekha, S., Mayer, J., Munoz-Price, L. S., Murthy, R., Palmore, T., Rupp, M. E., & White, J. (2014). Healthcare personnel attire in non-operating-room settings. *Infection control and hospital epidemiology* 35(2) pp.107–121](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4820072/)

[British Islamic Medical Association – Bare Below the Elbows Toolkit](https://britishima.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/toolkit_bbe_web_6June17.pdf)

[British Islamic Medical Association – Theatre Hijab Toolkit](https://britishima.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/toolkit_hijab_web_6June17.pdf)

[Cox, G., Sobrany, S., Jenkins, E., Musipa, C., & Darbyshire, P. (2021) Time for nursing to eradicate hair discrimination. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 30(9-10): e45-e47](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jocn.15708)

[De Montfort University - Policy on protecting and supporting trans, gender fluid and nonbinary staff and students](https://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/edi-strategy/trans-policy-2022-v4.pdf)

[De Montfort University - Religion or Belief Policy Statements and Guidance for Staff and Students](https://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/edi-strategy/religion-or-belief-policy.pdf)

[Dorwart, S., Kuntz, S. & Armstrong, M. (2010) Developing a Nursing Personnel Policy to Address Body Art Using an Evidence-Based Model. *The Journal of continuing Education in Nursing* 41(12) pp.540-546](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44665867_Developing_a_Nursing_Personnel_Policy_to_Address_Body_Art_Using_an_Evidence-Based_Model)

[Equality and Human Rights Commission – Guidance on the wearing of Sikh articles of faith in the workplace and public spaces](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/1986/1/sikh_articles_of_faith_guidance_final.pdf)

[Leicestershire Partnership Trust – Work Wear and Uniform Policy](https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Work-Wear-and-Uniform-Policy-exp-Jul-24.pdf)

[Nursing & Midwifery Council – *The Code (2018)*](https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/)

[St Andrew’s Healthcare – Code of Conduct](https://www.stah.org/assets/Code-of-Conduct-Brochure-2020-final-final.pdf)

[University Hospitals of Leicester – Uniform and Dress Code Policy](https://secure.library.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/PAGL/Shared%20Documents/Uniform%20and%20Dress%20Code%20UHL%20Policy.pdf)

Appendix 1: Religious Considerations

Students with religious dress considerations may modify their uniform in the following ways:

* The Kara (plain metal bangle) and Kirpan (ceremonial dagger) may be worn by Sikhs but the Kirpan must not be visible and must be secured under clothing at all times.
* The Kara must be washed during hand hygiene procedures. Students should be aware that they may be asked to remove the Kara in certain environments, such as around strong magnetic fields and in operating theatres.
* Some placement environments may require that the Kirpan is removed and stored safely until you leave the clinical area when valid staff or service user safety risks are assessed to be present.
* Religious head and neck coverings including the hijab and turban may be worn, as long as they adhere to the head covering standards below.
* Forearms may be covered at the times set out in Sections 3 and 4. There is no outright religious exemption to the BBE principle in the clinical area – all students must abide by this principle. Depending on local availability, disposable oversleeves or alternative PPE may be worn as a sterile cover whilst maintaining compatibility with hygiene protocols (Section **4.4**).
* You can approach your Personal Tutor or the DMU Faith Advice Team directly with any questions or concerns: <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/wellbeing-disability/chaplaincy-spiritual-support/faith-advice.aspx>

Head and neck coverings may be worn for any reason, including for the purposes of religious observance:

* All head coverings must either be ‘off the collar’ or securely tucked underneath the uniform at all times.
* Head coverings must not obscure the eyebrows, eyes, cheeks, nose, or mouth. Full-face veils must not be worn in any placement environment.
* The Kanga (wooden comb for Sikhs) may be worn, as long as it is securely fixed under the turban.
* Plain, dark-coloured material that can be washed at a high temperature with uniforms should be used for all head coverings.
* You should be aware that some placement environments (primarily operating theatres) may provide disposable hijabs, hair coverings, or orthopaedic hoods. These must be used and disposed of according to local policy. You are entitled to secure and private changing facilities where these garments are required.