

OPERATING STANDARD

SUBJECT/TITLE: Attire for Students in the Practice Setting		PAGE: 1 of 3
RELATED OPERATING STANDARD: Attire for Faculty in the Practice Setting (Undergraduate Programs)		DATE ESTABLISHED: 2001
AUTHORIZATION: Practice Procedure & Guidelines Sub-Committee Undergraduate Programs Committee Nursing Council	DATE LAST REVIEWED: April 8, 2026 April 14, 2026 June 24, 2026	LAST REVISED: April 8, 2026 (editorial revisions)

Purpose: To ensure nursing students, as University of Calgary representatives dress appropriately in all practice settings. The Attire Operating Standard has been developed to promote a professional image, providing a safe environment for the student and the patient, and to promote appropriate personal hygiene and prevent the spread of infection. Dress and personal care must be neat, clean and appropriate for the practice environment.

Note: Agency policies supersede the Faculty Operating Standard.

Policy: Nursing Practice Course Coordinators (NPCC) need to ensure that Instructors are aware that the Attire for Students in the Practice Setting Operating Standard must be enforced at all times.

If a student is not in compliance, a verbal warning will be given by the Instructor. If the issue is not remedied, the following protocol must be followed:

- The student will be required to leave the practice environment immediately in order to comply with the Attire Operating Standard. The student will only be permitted to return to the practice area once the infringement to the operating standard has been rectified.
- Consistently failing to comply with the Attire Operating Standard means that such a student will be unsuccessful in the practice course. Practice evaluations will include Learner Outcomes concerning professionalism (i.e. demeanor, conduct, dress code).
- The instructor will document a student's refusal to adhere to the operating standard and will copy the NPCC and Associate Dean, Undergraduate Practice Education.
- The instructor will direct the student to make an appointment with the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Practice Education.

**Points of
Emphasis:**

1. **Uniforms:** Uniforms are required for practice in simulation, hospitals, congregate living facilities (i.e. long term care/supportive living), and a variety of other care centres. The Faculty of Nursing requires a standard uniform and specific instructions regarding the uniform will be provided at orientation. Where uniforms are not required, specific instructions will be given.
 - Students are advised to change out of their uniform and work shoes following each off-site practice. Uniforms and work shoes are considered vectors for transmission of pathogens.
 - Long sleeve shirts (solid, non-patterned) may be worn under the student uniform except in pediatric areas where appropriately patterned long sleeve shirts may be worn (specific unit policies may apply). Sleeves must be able to be pushed up, above the elbow, when providing direct hands-on patient care.

When uniforms are not required (e.g. most community and mental health settings), students must be conservatively and appropriately dressed. Refer to respective course documents or agency policy guidelines for specific details related to these expectations. The dress code in community agencies is determined by the type of agency in which the practice experience is occurring. Very casual clothes (e.g. sweat pants, yoga wear, tank tops, tracksuits, jeans, jean jackets, shorts, hats, sweat and t-shirts with logos) are not considered appropriate dress for students in a professional school (some exceptions may apply).

2. **Shoes:** Proper footwear must be worn during practice whether on and off campus. All shoes will have a closed heel and toe to offer adequate support and protection against injury or exposure to spills and punctures. Footwear must have a low heel and adequate shock absorbing, non-marking, slip resistant sole. Footwear is to be well maintained, clean, dry and in good condition.
3. **Jewelry:**
 - A watch marking seconds is required. Fob watches worn on clothing are preferred in clinical areas to facilitate improved hand hygiene, but wrist watches with cleanable/waterproof face and straps are permitted. Watches with gemstones/raised decoration or fabric wristbands are not permitted.
 - Rings on hands should be limited to plain bands (may be required to be removed for some practice settings).
 - Medical alert identification is acceptable.
 - Piercings should be limited to plain studs or sleepers [may be required to be removed for some practice settings (e.g. Infectious Disease)].
4. **Personal Hygiene:**
 - Natural nails must be clean, healthy and short. No artificial fingernails and no nail polish may be worn in the practice setting.
 - Hair must be worn in a controlled fashion (i.e. pulled back, or in a ponytail) so as not to interfere with patient care.

- Groomed beards and moustaches must be neat; and, if required to wear a N95 mask must meet N95 standards.
 - No chewing gum is permitted.
5. **Fragrances:** Students should refrain from using fragrances as they can be harmful to clients. Unscented personal hygiene products are recommended (e.g. deodorant, shampoo and soap).
6. **Identification Cards/Name Badges:**
Students will receive a:
- University of Calgary, Faculty of Nursing, Name Badge (displaying first name and last initial) – is part of the uniform; therefore, must be worn at all times unless agency policy or clinical judgment precludes this.

And, if in an AHS setting: AHS Photo ID and Access Control Card – must be clearly visible at all times. This will be issued prior to commencement of the first AHS practice placement and will be retained for the duration of the program.

7. It is expected that the dress and deportment of nursing students will be in accordance with the expectations of this operating standard and of the practice setting. Due to the admittedly subjective nature of what constitutes appropriateness, students are advised to consult with their Instructor if they are unsure of the suitability of their attire or their personal presentation.

References: Alberta Health Services, “Hand Hygiene” Policy Level 1 (Document #: PS-02), 2021. <https://extranet.ahsnet.ca/teams/policydocuments/1/clp-hand-hygiene-ps-02-policy.pdf>

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University of Calgary, Undergraduate Medical Education Handbook, “Attire”. <https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/4/Policies/A/Attire%20Medical%20Students%20Guideline%20August%202022.pdf>