



Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee Policy on Dress Code and Appearance

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You may use the information contained within this Policy by acknowledging the University of Strathclyde and/ or the appropriate source.

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1. Introduction

The University of Strathclyde is committed to creating learning, research and working environments that are inclusive and support the needs of all members of the university community.

This University welcomes the diversity of appearance which students, staff and visitors bring to the campus. However, there may be occasions where health and safety or professional considerations restrict certain modes of dress and the wearing of jewellery items, footwear such as, for example, when working in labs and/or on placement.

The Dress Code policy aims to ensure health and safety standards are met, best practice is followed and obligations required by the Equality Act 2010 are applied and implemented.

2. Scope

The Policy applies to students, staff and visitors to the University.

Professional requirements of external organisations for placements may supersede the dress code policy at the University of Strathclyde, for example, regarding wearing jewellery and displaying tattoos.

Where external dress codes may have different requirements based on a person's gender, the University will support students and staff to wear appropriate clothing that affirms their gender identity and gender expression.

Any existing dress code practice in departments must be in line with the University Policy.

3. Key Principles

The University does not prescribe a formal dress code for staff and students, except for uniformed staff (such as janitorial, security and hospitality staff) and those staff and students required to wear protective clothing, for example in laboratories and workshops.

As a general rule, smart casual attire is expected for day to day work wear. Employees are expected to make an appropriate interpretation of this dependent on their role and in particular on how they are expected to interact with current or potential students/staff or external stakeholders. Examples of smart casual could include trousers, skirts, smart dresses, shirts/blouses and smart tops or sweaters.

The University supports students and staff to wear appropriate clothing that affirms their gender identity and gender expression. This includes the wearing of clothing which may be considered 'atypical' to the gender the staff member or student was assigned at birth.

The University expects students and staff to practice appropriate standards of personal hygiene.

The wearing of religious and cultural dress and jewellery, including clerical collars, crosses, karas (bangle), kipas (skull cap), headscarves and turbans is welcomed on campus.¹ Wearing of ceremonial symbols for Kirpan² and imitation Skean Dhu should be discrete.

Students on placement visits may be required to follow particular dress codes as applied by the external agency, such as clinical placements in the National Health Service (NHS). The external dress code can include requiring an individual's face to be visible to ensure effective communication is carried out with all, particularly persons with hearing impairment. For cross-infection reasons, NHS Trusts may not permit wearing wristwatches and ties other than bow ties.

Visible body art such as tattoos, henna painting and/or piercing are not prohibited by the University. However, these may require covering up particularly for frontline staff and for students on external visits or placements. In the case of the latter, any professional requirements of external organisations must be followed.

The University does not permit the wearing of clothes³ or display of tattoos, badges, screensavers etc. which show obscene material or sectarian or discriminatory slogans (including in languages other than English).

Any breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Identity and visual checks

All staff and students are expected to carry University identity cards at all times whilst on campus.

The University is aware that some potential applicants and visitors may wish to wear peaked caps, hoods or the niqab (full facial cover) – however the University reserves the right to ensure that appropriate photo identity is received and which can be verified. A private room will be made available, where possible, in order to undertake such visual checks (through the temporary removal of the niqab) by a local female member of staff. Any person asked to remove their face covering for identification purpose may be denied entry if they refuse to do so.

Similar visual checks will take place on key occasions such as prior to student examinations.

It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate photo identification (e.g. University identity card or passport if the identity card is not applicable).

¹ Consent should be established prior to touching any cultural or faith related items.

² Guidance on the wearing of Sikh articles of faith in the workplace and public spaces:
http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/1986/1/sikh_articles_of_faith_guidance_final.pdf

³ This would normally be extended to include the wearing of any football shirt/ scarf which is likely to incite violence and/ or promote hatred on campus.

5. Health and Safety

Health and safety requirements may mean that, for certain tasks, specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing, uniforms, footwear⁴ etc. need to be worn or other items removed.

The University is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of staff, students, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected by its work activities. Where this is compromised by the wearing of certain dress (including footwear and jewellery items) or where this is likely to enhance the risk to other persons, a risk assessment for the activity will be carried out between the wearer and the local supervisor/manager. For further information, refer to the Local Rule on Personal Protective Equipment and in particular section 3.3 on Personal Considerations <http://www.strath.ac.uk/safetyservices/localrules/> Where any disagreement occurs, the University will work closely with the student or member of staff concerned to resolve the issue. Other staff from areas such as the Chaplaincy, Equality and Diversity Office, Student Support Services, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service and/or the Students Association may be involved as appropriate. The responsibility for the final decision will rest with the Chief Operating Officer.

6. Medical emergency

It should be noted that whenever possible medical intervention will take account of religion and cultural sensitivities. However, removal of any religious or cultural symbol/jewellery or face covering may be required.

It is preferable that a female member of staff is present when a female requires medical assistance and similarly for men. All first aid staff will be made aware of this preference.

7. Placements and external agencies

Students and staff should dress according to both the University's and the appropriate local guidelines and regulations. However, it should be noted that the University is not responsible for setting the dress code and/or wearing of symbols required by external institutions.

The external dress code can include covering tattoos, removing jewellery/symbols and making an individual's face visible to ensure effective communication⁵ is carried out with all, particularly persons with hearing impairment.

⁴ Slips and trips is one of the biggest causes of accident at the University and the appropriateness of footwear is often not considered. This would include the wearing of heels, flip flops, open toed shoes etc. For good practice guide read the TUC guidance: www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/footwear.pdf

⁵ Azmi v Kirklees (EAT 30 march 2007). Azmi, a school teacher, lost her case when the Employment Appeal tribunal reasonably concluded that her communication with children had been impaired when she was wearing the veil. <http://uk.practicallaw.com/7-375-8114?service=employment#>

8. Responsibilities

All staff, students, visitors and contractors are expected to comply with this Policy. Departments or other units hosting industry or other high profile events at the University are responsible for advising about this Policy and compliance.

All managers are responsible for implementing this policy within their area of responsibility.

The University reserves the right to take appropriate action where any breach is identified.

The University will provide guidance on the dress code for students in relation to study abroad. Similar guidance will also be provided for staff going abroad on visits or exchange programmes.

9. Seeking advice and guidance

For further advice and support please contact the Equality and Diversity Office, Human Resources Office, Safety, Health and Wellbeing, International Student Support Team, and/or the Students Association.

10. Complaints

If students/staff believe they have been unfairly treated with regard to implementation of the Dress Code, they are asked to bring this to the attention of the local Department/ School (students) or line manager (staff). Students/staff may also approach the Human Resources Office, Safety, Health and Wellbeing, and/or the Equality and Diversity Office.

Students may also contact the Vice President Diversity at the Students Association.

However, students/staff should note that any resolution would normally require involving lecturer(s) and/or the individual's line-manager.

Where an individual is in breach of this policy and students/staff do not feel confident in challenging then the process below may be followed.

Students should inform the Lecturing staff, Advisor of studies, the Head of Department/School, International Student Support Team, Student Business, Residential Services office and/or the Students Association.

Staff should inform the Head of Department/ School, Human Resources Office and/or Security Services.

If the issue remains unresolved then it would be escalated to the formal complaints and/or the disciplinary procedures. Outcomes may include sanctions.

11. Monitoring

The Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee will review the Policy every three years, in consultation with appropriate groups.

12. Links to other Policies

This Policy forms part of the University's suite of policies which govern the day-to-day workings of the institution.

12.i Information on student policies can be found on the University's Student Experience and Enhancement Services (SEES) Directorate web page:

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/academic/>

12.ii Staff-related policies information can be found on the University's Human Resources Directorate web page: <http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/hr/>

13. Useful contacts

Equality and Diversity Office	0141 548 2811 equalopportunities@strath.ac.uk
Chaplaincy Centre	0141 548 4144 chaplaincy@strath.ac.uk
Safety, Health and Wellbeing	0141 548 2726 safety@strath.ac.uk

Students specific support

Student Counselling service	0141 548 3510 student-counselling@strath.ac.uk
International Student Support Team	0141 548 4104 infoandadvice@strath.ac.uk
Students' Association Advice Hub	0141 567 5040 ussa.advice@strath.ac.uk
USSA Vice President Diversity	0141 567 5028 ussa.vpd@strath.ac.uk

Staff specific support

Human Resources	0141 548 4476 humanresources@strath.ac.uk
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14. Resources

The following information is provided by external agencies. Where a link is broken please inform the ED Office to remove the weblink.

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

<http://www.acas.org.uk/dresscode>

Equality and Human Rights Commission

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/guidance-employers>

Equality Challenge Unit

www.ecu.ac.uk/subjects/religion-and-belief

Guidance on uniform and work wear policies for NHS Scotland employers

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00398324.pdf>