

Policy: Practice Instructor Attire

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations for professional attire and appearance for practice instructors across diverse practice settings during student supervision and teaching in **PRACTICE courses** within the Nursing BN Programs during **work integrated learning opportunities**. These standards aim to promote professionalism, maintain public trust, ensure hygiene, and support safe effective educational and clinical experiences.

DEFINITIONS:

Attire: Refers to the clothing worn by practice instructors while supervising students in PRACTICE courses across all Nursing BN practice settings. This includes, but is not limited to, tops, bottoms, dresses, skirts, lab coats, scrubs, and other garments appropriate to the professional, educational, or clinical environment (Alberta Health Services, 2021). *Attire requirements may differ depending on the practice area;* while some settings may require clinical uniforms or personal protective equipment (PPE), others such as community agencies, office environments, or classroom-based learning spaces may not require uniforms and instead expect professional or business-appropriate clothing. Practice instructors are expected to select attire that aligns with the safety, regulatory, and professional expectations of the specific setting in which teaching and supervision occur.

Direct Patient Care: Direct patient care refers to hands-on nursing activities in which practice instructors and students interact directly with patients or clients to assess, treat, monitor, or support their health status. These settings typically include acute care units, critical care, emergency departments, procedural or surgical spaces, long-term care, and other clinical environments where bodily fluid exposure or use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is likely. In these settings, scrubs (or AHS-issued clinical attire) are required to support infection prevention and control, ensure safety, and maintain a professional, consistent appearance (Alberta Health Services, 2020).

Equitable Practices: The application of policies and expectations in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with human rights legislation, including the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Human Rights Act (Government of Alberta, 2024; Government of Canada, 2024).

Grooming: Practices related to personal hygiene and appearance, including hair care, facial hair, nail care, and the safe use of cosmetics, fragrances, or accessories (Alberta Health Services, 2021).

Practice Instructor: A practice instructor is an individual responsible for guiding, supervising, and supporting students enrolled in PRAXIS courses within the NESA BN Programs. This role involves facilitating hands-on, practical learning experiences across diverse environments, including clinical units, laboratories (ad-hoc, Be Ready experiences, etc.), community health agencies, and other practice sites where nursing care and experiential learning occur in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities. Practice instructors promote safe practice, skill development, and professional growth while adapting their teaching approach to the specific expectations, risks, and operational requirements of each practice area (Melrose & Perry, 2022).

Practice Setting: Any location where students are engaged in teaching, supervision, or clinical practice activities including clinical units, laboratories (ad-hoc, Be Ready experiences, etc.), community health agencies, simulation or classroom environments (NESA BN Programs, 2025) during PRAXIS courses where Work Integrated Learning (WIL) occurs.

Professional Appearance: The presentation of an individual through clothing, grooming, and overall personal presentation that reflects credibility, competence, and professionalism appropriate to the clinical or educational setting (Alberta Health Services, 2021).

POLICY SCOPE:

This policy applies to all practice instructors in the NESA BN Programs across all practice sites during student supervision and teaching in **practice rotations**. The expectations outlined herein are intended to support professional, safe, and effective conduct while respecting all individuals in accordance with human rights legislation.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

1. This policy shall be applied in accordance with the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to ensure equitable and non-discriminatory practices related to attire expectations (Government of Alberta, 2024; Government of Canada, 2024).
2. Practice instructors are expected to convey a professional appearance appropriate to their practice area. The way individuals present themselves has a direct and meaningful impact on how they are perceived by students, clients, and colleagues. A professional image reinforces confidence, credibility, and the success of educational and clinical experiences (Alberta Health Services, 2021).

3. Professional attire, grooming, and hygiene expectations must support safe and effective supervision, teaching, and clinical practice. Clothing or accessories must not expose undergarments, display offensive language or images, or compromise professional credibility (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
4. Identification badges must be clearly visible at all times in practice settings to ensure proper identification and access to specific areas, supporting safety and professional credibility (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
5. Business formal attire is generally not suitable for roles providing direct patient care. In clinical settings, scrubs or other required uniforms must be worn to meet safety and infection-control standards. In mental health, community health, and other non-clinical practice settings, professional or business-appropriate attire, including business casual, is acceptable for supervision and direct client interactions. Office- or classroom-based supervision roles also do not require scrubs but should maintain a professional appearance consistent with the practice environment (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
6. Hair, including facial hair such as beards or sideburns, must be clean, neat, and secured where necessary to prevent interference with clinical duties, maintain hygiene, and ensure proper fit of personal protective equipment (PPE) (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
7. Body piercings and jewelry must not compromise hygiene standards or the safe use of PPE and should be limited to discreet items that do not pose a risk to patients, students, or instructors (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
8. Fingernails must be clean, short, and appropriately maintained. Artificial, gel, or long nails that may compromise hygiene or infection control are not permitted in clinical or patient care areas (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
9. The use of wearable recording or augmented reality devices (e.g., Meta Glasses or similar technologies) is prohibited in all practice settings. These devices pose risks to patient privacy, confidentiality, and professional standards and are not permitted during any clinical, community, or educational practice activities.

SPECIFIC(S) OF THE POLICY

1. **Professional attire:** Must support safe, effective, and professional supervision, teaching, and clinical practice. Clothing and accessories should not expose undergarments, display offensive language or images, or compromise professional credibility (Alberta Health Services, 2021). In clinical settings requiring uniforms or PPE, these must be worn as mandated. In mental health, community health, and other non-clinical practice settings, professional or business-appropriate attire, including business casual, is acceptable and aligns with the values of these practice areas.

2. **Footwear:** Footwear must be closed-toe, clean, and safe for clinical environments, suitable for the duties being performed, and compliant with infection control standards (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
3. **Hair and Facial Hair:** Hair should be tied back or secure when it could come into contact with students, patients, or clinical equipment. Facial hair must be groomed and, if required, fitted with PPE-compatible masks or respirators to maintain hygiene and safety (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
4. **Piercings and Jewelry:** Visible piercings should be limited to discreet items that do not interfere with PPE or clinical tasks. Rings, bracelets, or dangling jewelry that compromise hygiene or safety are prohibited in clinical settings (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
5. **Nails:** Fingernails must be clean, short, and free from chipped polish. Artificial, gel, or long nails are not permitted in clinical areas due to infection control risks (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
6. **Identification:** Name badges or program identification must be worn; clearly visible at all times in all practice settings (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
7. **Religious or Cultural Modifications:** Modifications to attire, hair, or jewelry for religious or cultural reasons are supported and must be accommodated wherever possible, provided they comply with human rights legislation (Alberta Health Services, 2021).
8. **Compliance:** Practice instructors are responsible for monitoring their own attire and grooming to ensure compliance with this guideline. Supervisors or program administrators may provide feedback if standards are not met (Alberta Health Services, 2021).

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

This guideline is informed by:

- University of Lethbridge Student Code of Conduct Policies, Artificial Intelligence Literacy Resources
- Lethbridge Polytechnic Student Rights and Code of Conduct Policies, Artificial Intelligence Strategies
- Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) Code of Ethics
- Principles of Responsible AI (OECD, UNESCO)
- Emerging scholarship on AI bias, sustainability, and digital ethics

APPENDIX:

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

List here

REFERENCES:

Alberta Health Services. (2021). *Quick reference guide to managing general workplace issues*. Edmonton AB. [Professional Appearance/Dress code](#)

Alberta Human Rights Commission. (2017). *Appearance and dress codes*. (2017).
<https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/media/hurcavzd/appearance-and-dress-codes.pdf>

Government of Alberta. (2024). *Alberta Human Rights Act*, RSA 2000, c. A-25.5. Alberta King's Printer. <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-human-rights-act>

Government of Canada. (2024). *Canadian Human Rights Act*, RSC 1985, c. H-6. Justice Laws Website. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/>

For the most current policy information, always refer to the official NESA BN Program Guidelines and Forms Website: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/healthsciences/policies>

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