

MODESTY AND APPROPRIATENESS

Effective Date: September 2010

Responsibility: VP Student Services

Amends Policy dated: September 1, 1989

Policy Number:

Scope: Students, faculty and staff

Modesty and Appropriateness.

Dress and fashion are constantly changing. It is recognized that within a student body there is a broad range of values and opinions with respect to fashion and appearance. It is impossible to issue a detailed dress code that is binding for all times and for all places. While it is true that “God looks at the heart,” it is also true that, for better or worse, humans look “on the outward appearance.” As individual Christians, as students of a Christian institution and as members of the Christian church at large, we are often subject to the standards and expectation of others.

Students, faculty and staff should dress in ways that reflect the Vision, Mission and Values of the University. It is believed that a Christian education is, in part, an education in preparation for success in the world, and, as such, students are expected to dress and behave in a dignified, appropriate and professional manner. A consciousness of how one appears to others is one way of gaining confidence and instilling confidence in others.

The Bible does not prescribe a specific dress code for Christians. However, some general principles are relevant to the issue.

1. **Modesty:** Appearance should not be immodest or draw inappropriate attention. Scripture warns against preoccupation with dress or appearance to the neglect of inner beauty (1 Tim. 2:9, 1 Peter 3:3, 4).
2. **Appropriateness:** The Christian’s appearance should accentuate rather than distract from the inner qualities/character essential to a consistent testimony. This includes developing cultural sensitivity to appearance and the humility to give up personal preference in order to prevent barriers to ministry or service.
3. **Neatness:** Appearance needs to demonstrate cleanliness and care.
4. **Distinctiveness:** God-given sexual identity calls students to dress in ways that are characteristic to specific gender (1 Cor. 11:2-16).
5. **Health:** Concern for health requires proper care of physical bodies in matters of personal hygiene and fitness.

It is the desire that students use common sense and rise to the challenge of making God-honouring choices. With the above principles in mind the following guidelines are given:

1. Expectations for All Students:

- a. With freedom comes responsibility. As a community, responsibility lies to and for each other. If dress or appearance is questioned by a staff member or another student, their inquiry or admonition should be accepted with a spirit of humility and deference.
- b. Appropriate dress for special events such as Vespers, Sabbath Schools and church services would be semi-formal. Casual dress is the general custom for the classroom.
- c. Clothing should not be torn, patched, sloppy in appearance, dirty or overly tight. Jeans, slacks, trousers and gym shorts must be worn above the hip level.
- d. Hair should be neat and not extreme in style.
- e. Modest attire should be worn outside of individual rooms in the dorm.
- f. Jewelry and body piercing is discouraged. Scripture promotes dressing jewelry free. It is hoped that students will understand that dressing “jewelry free” at Burman University is not seen as a matter of morality, but as part of the Adventist heritage of simplicity and authenticity.
- g. Forms of dress and adornment which imply endorsement of immoral, hateful, racist, occult or drunken behavior are not allowed (ex: alcohol logos, occult symbols, subculture attire).
- h. Swimsuits are to be modest in style.

2. Specific Expectations for Men:

- a. Shirts are to be worn at all times on campus. Exceptions may be made for athletics.
- b. Hats and other head coverings are to be removed upon entry to the church and chapel.

3. Specific Expectations for Women:

- a. Women’s clothing is to be of a non-revealing style and material, giving particular attention to necklines, hemlines, midriff and armholes. Strapless clothing is considered inappropriate.
- b. Dresses, skirts, shorts and tunics are to be a modest length. Miniskirts and short shorts are inappropriate.