

## Uniforms for nurses and midwives

**Policy Number:** C68 (QH-POL-178)

**Publication date:** June 2020

**Purpose:** To outline the arrangements for the provision of uniforms to nurses and midwives.

**Application:** This policy applies to all nursing and midwifery employees working for Queensland Health.

**Delegation:** The 'delegate' is as listed in the Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual or Hospital and Health Services Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

**Legislative or other authority:**

- Queensland Health Nurses and Midwives Award – State 2012 (award)
- Nurses and Midwives (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (EB8) 2012

**Related policy or documents:**

- Standing Offer Arrangement 601 (SOA601)

**Policy subject:**

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**SCHEDULE ONE Uniform entitlements and arrangements**

## 1 Policy statement

Nurses and midwives are to dress in accordance with workplace health and safety standards, infection control standards, and in accordance with their professional position.

The wearing of a standard uniform by Queensland Health nurses and midwives is to:

- enable the ready identification by the public
- promote a professional public image and
- provide authoritative access in the performance of nursing and midwifery duties.

### 1.1 Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA)

SOA601 applies for the provision of uniforms to nurses and midwives, and includes:

- core / compulsory garment range – purchased (and provided free-of-charge) for nurses and midwives by their respective Hospital and Health Service (HHS)
- nurses and midwives have access to a range of optional garments e.g. knitwear, jackets, belts etc. These are self-purchased by the employee independent of their respective HHS
- differentiation between nursing and midwifery roles is achieved via the colour of blouses/shirts in the uniform range e.g. 'blue' stripe – registered nurse or midwife or enrolled nurse; 'green' stripe – assistant in nursing
- a variety of fabrics, shapings and features have been incorporated into the range e.g. easy care fabrics with stretch properties, action backs, secret waist, deep pockets
- size range available – Women sizes 4 to 32; Men sizes 37 to 50. Note: size ranges do differ between individual garment styles
- link: <http://gcd.govnet.qld.gov.au/Pages/Details.aspx?SOANumber=QH601>.

### History:

<b>June 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy application amended as a result of changes outlined in the Hospital and Health Boards (Changes to Prescribed Services) Amendment Regulation 2019.</li> </ul>
<b>October 2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy re-published due to proposed amendments to the nurses and midwives award as a result of the award modernisation process.</li> <li>• Policy formatted as part of the HR Policy Simplification project.</li> <li>• Policy amended to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– update references and naming conventions</li> <li>– reflect reference to the SOA601</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>March 2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed as a result of the HR policy consolidation project.</li> </ul>
<b>Previous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRM 2.7-37 Nurses' Uniforms - Standing Offer Arrangement 601</li> </ul>

## Uniforms for nurses and midwives – Schedule One

### Uniform entitlements and arrangements

The following information is provided as the minimum mandatory standard practice, procedure or process to enable satisfactory compliance with this Queensland Health HR policy.

Local guidelines/procedures may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. Any local guidelines/procedures must be consistent with this policy and schedule and ensure employee entitlements continue to be met.

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## 1 Uniform ranges A and B

There are two ranges of uniforms available:

- Core garment (range A) – uniforms issued to employees in accordance with the award and
- Self-purchase (range B) – an additional range of accessories developed in recognition that nurses and midwives seek flexible options beyond basic supplied uniforms.

Standard Offer Arrangement 601 (SOA601) details specific information relating to the provision of uniforms to nurses and midwives including range options and supplier details.

The features of the core garment and self-purchase ranges are as follows:

### 1.1 Core/compulsory garment range – the Queensland Health standard uniform

- Issued free of charge to nurses and midwives required to wear a uniform.
- Supplied in accordance with the award.
- Managed by Uniform/Sewing Rooms within HHSs.
- Can be laundered in Queensland Health laundries.
- Cannot be self-purchased by an employee.

### 1.2 Self purchase range – Queensland Health accessory and complementary uniform items

These are non-compulsory items which are intended to enhance the basic uniform.

- Employees may self-purchase garments or accessories.
- Employees are to deal directly with the supplier on all range B matters.
- Responsibility of employee to launder and maintain.
- Items can only be worn in accordance with Queensland Health uniform policy.

## 2 Uniform entitlements

### 2.1 Award provisions

Uniform entitlements are outlined in accordance with clause 5.5 of the award.

Queensland Health is to supply free of charge, uniforms from the core garment range of SOA601 to the value of the indexed cost of supply (ICS) or in lieu thereof, an employee is to receive an allowance equal to the ICS (refer clause 5.5.1 of the award).

The ICS is calculated at the cost, from time to time, for an employee to purchase five uniform culottes and five uniform shirts pursuant to the SOA601.

The employer will ensure that the supply of uniforms provides flexibility in the range of items supplied including (but not limited to) shirts, polos, shorts, culottes, trousers, pants, skirts and dresses.

Replacement of all uniform items supplied is to be on a fair wear and tear basis. Criteria for assessing fair wear and tear are outlined in section 2.7.

When the uniform allowance is paid in lieu of the supply of uniforms, the allowance is to be paid each pay day on a pro rata basis, including during periods of absence on paid leave.

When reimbursement is provided for the self-purchase range uniforms, reimbursement is to be provided to the value of the ICS for any one year. The employee is eligible for further reimbursement when the item/s purchased require replacement due to fair wear and tear.

## 2.2 Part-time and casual employees

Entitlements for part-time and casual employees are calculated on a pro rata basis in accordance with the award.

The initial issue to casual employees is to be dependent on the proposed number of shifts to be worked by the employee. A review of the average hours worked after a period of time may be used to adjust uniform allocation. Use of uniform recycling programs may be considered.

## 2.3 Uniform guidelines

The HHS is to outline dress requirements and entitlements for nurses and midwives employed within the HHS under any or all the following three categories:

- Employees required to wear a uniform.
- Employees required to wear civilian clothing.
- Employees who have no uniform requirements.

## 2.4 Entitlements

Uniform entitlements are outlined in accordance with clause 5.5 of the award. Local area guidelines may be developed to assist the HHS outline uniform entitlements in relation to the requirement to wear a uniform.

## 2.5 Laundering and laundering allowance

In facilities where laundering of core garment range uniforms is not available, a laundry allowance will be paid in accordance with the award. Employees who choose not to use the available laundry service have no entitlement to an allowance in lieu.

Employees receiving a uniform allowance in lieu of the provisions of uniforms are not entitled to a laundering allowance.

## 2.6 Reimbursement for self purchase of uniforms

Nurses and midwives can purchase the self-purchase range uniforms and claim as a tax deductible item.

A limited number of employees are eligible for reimbursement for the self-purchase range uniforms. Reimbursement is to be limited to employees who have no requirements in relation to uniforms (in accordance with the HHS uniform guidelines), e.g. director of nursing. HHSs are to establish a process for eligible employees to obtain reimbursement for self purchased items.

## 2.7 Replacement of uniforms

Uniforms are to be replaced on the basis of fair wear and tear. Procedures are to be established by the HHS where an inspection of garment/s determines if they meet each of the following criteria before replacement:

- the uniform is altered in appearance from when originally issued
- the uniform is considered to look unprofessional by the line manager
- the altered appearance is irreparable
- the damage or change occurred through the course of duty and/or appropriate laundering, or was beyond the control of the employee.

Indications for replacement may include (but not limited to):

- discolouration
- stains
- the uniform has been worn continuously beyond its normal life expectancy
- the fabric is damaged or seams are split
- thinning of fabric
- the uniform is no longer a reasonable fit (if alteration is not a reasonable option).

## 2.8 Maternity arrangements

Nurses and midwives are entitled to maternity uniforms to the ICS value or on a pro rata for part-time employees. Use of uniform recycling programs may be considered.

## 2.9 Made to measure uniforms

An employee who is required to wear a uniform, but is unable to be fitted with a uniform from the available size range, is to be provided a uniform allowance for the self purchase of made to measure uniforms (as outlined in section 2.4).

## 3 Uniform description

Employees are required to dress in accordance with the provisions of SOA601 and their HHS uniform guidelines.

Dress standards are to be appropriate to the functions being performed, workplace health and safety, cultural diversity, local community standards and climate.

In addition to the uniform items available from the SOA601, nurses and midwives are to wear:

- Shoes - shoes that are closed/covered, non permeable to fluids and sharps. Navy or black colour is preferred.
- Socks/stockings – it is preferred that female dresses, skirts, shorts and culottes are worn with stockings or footlets/sockettes. The male uniform is to be worn with socks that are white or navy.

Shoes and socks are not supplied as part of the Queensland Health uniform.

### 3.1 Long sleeve shirts

Employees in community and outdoor settings may consider the use of long sleeve shirts to minimise exposure to the sun. Decisions to wear long sleeves in these situations is dependent upon the nature of the work being performed as sleeves interfere with the ability to adequately wash hands and forearms particularly prior to a surgical hand scrub.

### 3.2 Compliance with uniform policy

Responsibility for compliance with the uniform policy rests with the employee and line manager.

## 4 Management of the uniform

The following information is provided to assist HHSs manage the uniforms in accordance with the current award provisions and supplier obligations.

### 4.1 Resignations and transfers

Employees transferring across Queensland Health are to take all issued uniforms to the new HHS. Reimbursement or transfer of costs between HHSs for the uniforms is not necessary.

A process for the return of uniforms upon resignation is to be determined by the HHS if required to enable subsequent re-allocation of uniforms.

The HHS is to keep a record of the allocation of uniforms to assist monitoring of the transfer of uniforms with the employee.

### 4.2 Fittings

The HHS is to issue uniforms which are a reasonable fit for the employee. The need for alteration or tailoring garments should be kept to a minimum due to the large size range which has been made available, and the variety of shaping/garment features which have been incorporated into the range.

Features include:

- An extensive size range e.g. female size 4 to 32 and male size 37 to 50.
- The choice of different shirt styles and a range of lower garments that suit various shapes and sizes.
- Elastic insert tabs on female lower garments which allow a 5cm stretch either way.
- Men's trousers are available in short, regular or long.
- Maternity shirts and lower garments may provide a suitable option for some females who need more room through the midriff.

A fitting range of the core garment uniforms has been supplied to assist fitting of nurses and midwives with correct sizing. The HHS is responsible for the maintenance and replacement of items from the core garment range as necessary.

In accordance with the SOA601, the supplier is to assist employees with fittings for the core garment range.

The supplier is to conduct fittings in one of three ways, dependent on the location of the health facility and number of employees requiring fittings:

- Supplier representatives are to visit facilities to measure and fit employees.
- The employee can visit any of the supplier outlets.
- The supplier is to send fitting charts and samples to the HHS.

The HHS contact officer for uniforms is to liaise with the supplier regarding fitting requirements. The contact officer is to provide assistance to the supplier in accordance with the fitting checklist, and includes such things as notification of fitting dates, rooms for fittings etc.

#### 4.3 Employees unable to be fitted in uniforms

Wherever possible, a nurse or midwife is to be provided with Range A uniforms from the SOA601.

If a nurse or midwife is required to wear a uniform, but is unable to be fitted with a uniform from the available size range, a uniform allowance is to be provided for the self-purchase of made to measure uniforms.

The employee may choose from two options:

- (a) Made to measure process coordinated by the employee
- (b) Made to measure process coordinated by the supplier.

Option (a) would be most cost effective for employees who tailor their own garments or where minimal tailoring costs are charged.

Option (b) would be most cost effective for employees who require a professional tailor/dressmaker. Payment to the supplier covers the cost of fabrics, trims and all tailoring expenses.

Figure 1 (at the end of this Schedule) outlines the made to measure process coordinated by the employee and the supplier.

#### 4.4 Uniform maintenance and repair

The HHS is to issue core garment range uniforms which are in reasonable condition. It remains the responsibility of the employee to ensure their uniform is laundered and maintained, at all times, to an acceptable standard.

Relevant guidelines are to be provided by the HHS to cater for uniforms that require alterations or repairs.

Maintenance and repair of the self purchase range of uniforms are the responsibility of the employee.

#### 4.5 Laundering uniforms

Some of the fabrics for the core garment range of uniforms have been tested to withstand industrial laundering. Employees are to be advised by the HHS of the processes to use the HHS laundry.

Employees who opt not to use the Queensland Health laundry are not entitled to a laundry allowance.



Uniforms are not supplied with employee identification labels. Should an employee wish to use Queensland Health laundries, the HHS is to supply a tag in order to place the employees' name on the uniform. Iron-on labels are available through state supplies that can withstand heat to 70° celsius in an industrial laundry.

The self purchase range uniforms remain the responsibility of the employee to launder and maintain.

#### 4.6 Ordering uniforms

The HHS is to have a process to ensure employees can be issued the appropriate type and number of uniforms in accordance with their entitlements.

### 5 Further information

Full details of the uniform range and related matters can be found on QHEPS as follows:

- SOA601 - <http://qcd.govnet.qld.gov.au/Pages/Details.aspx?SOANumber=QH601>
- Health Services Purchasing and Logistics Branch home page - <http://qhps.health.qld.gov.au/pl/home.htm>

Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work  
Code of Practice 2022  
applies 1 April 2023

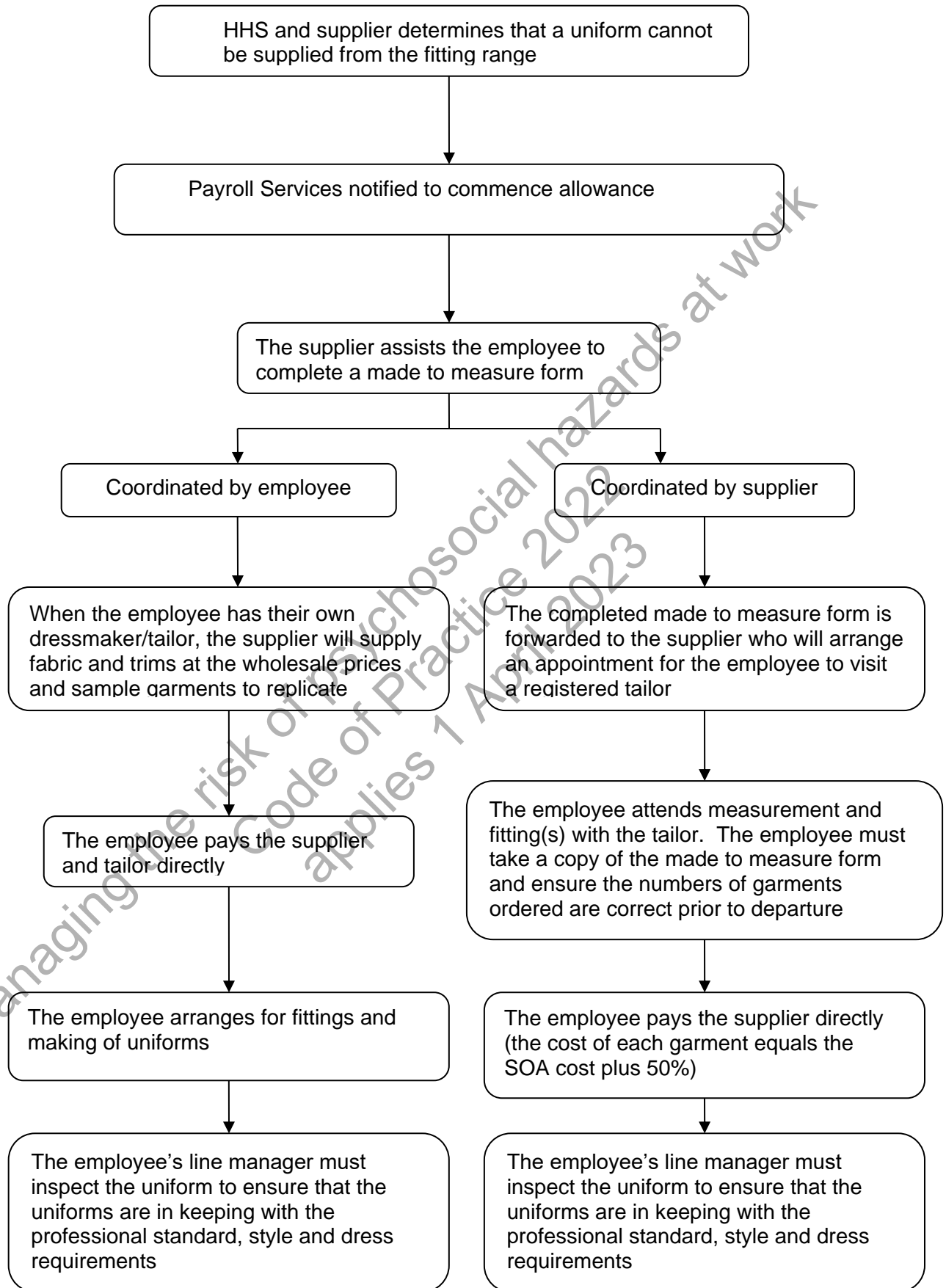


Figure 1: Made to measure process (refer section 4.3 of this Schedule)