



Western University's Orientation Program

Soph Uniform Guidelines



EFFECTIVE: August 7, 2015

SUPERSEDES: May 7, 2014

RATIFIED BY: Orientation Planning Committee

For Orientation Week, all Sophs are required to wear a Soph uniform in order to be easily identified as Orientation Leaders, and to demonstrate pride for their constituency. Soph uniforms are creative expressions that symbolically reflect the values of a Soph team while also being consistent in upholding the values of the Orientation Program. The purpose of this policy is to regulate the cost incurred by Sophs as a part of their involvement in the Orientation Program, and to regulate the appropriate use of uniform accessories.

Financial Accessibility

Preamble

Uniforms are an important part of the Orientation Program, as is financial accessibility for all Orientation Leaders. Therefore, a balance needs to be struck between responsible spending and providing leadership teams the opportunity to develop unique and fun uniforms for their teams.

Soph Uniform Protocol

Soph teams must adhere to the following with respect to Soph uniforms:

- a. The price of the Soph uniforms must be no higher than one hundred dollars (\$100) including Rally and O-Week orders per person, **including taxes and any shipping costs.**
- b. Within the one hundred dollars (\$100) uniform budget, Soph uniforms must include:
 - i. A shirt
 - ii. A sweater
- c. The team may use the remainder of the uniform budget for a signature uniform item of their choosing (i.e. "covies", board shorts, etc.). Teams who have made the necessary budget allocation for a shirt and sweater and do not have a signature

uniform item, may use what remains of the \$100 uniform budget for other uniform items or accessories as they see fit. **Note: the \$100 must include all taxes and delivery costs.**

- d. In order to keep uniform expenses low, teams may permit their volunteers to use their own pants, jackets, back packs, water bottles etc.
- e. All Soph teams shall not purchase any items for their team's uniform until their budget and uniform design have been approved by OPC.
- f. All uniform and accessory items must be purchased through The Bookstore at Western. Note that the affiliate university college Soph teams are exempt from this policy but these teams must submit all receipts for uniform and accessory purchases to the OPC Co-chairs and to an administrative member of the affiliate university college to verify that the team leadership did not spend more than the allotted \$100.
- g. Constituency Councils may not subsidize the cost of uniforms.
- h. OPC shall review the \$100 uniform budget cap annually and make any increases or decreases in the budget to reflect changes in the consumer price index.

Rationale

Financial accessibility is an important part of the Orientation Program. No capable leader should be excluded from participating on the basis of financial struggle. As such, the Orientation Planning Committee has worked to develop guidelines that reflect the financial needs of individual Sophs, while preserving the Soph culture associated with uniforms.

Constituency Councils may not subsidize the cost of Soph uniforms because Councils in different financial positions should not perpetuate these inequalities to their Soph Teams and grant them more than another team may be able to afford. Subsidization to reduce the cost for individual Sophs below the \$100 amount is not permitted because it should not cost leaders different amounts to partake in this program because of the teams they are affiliated with. These guidelines strive to bring equality to Soph Teams and leaders.

All uniform and accessory items are to be purchased through The Bookstore at Western as these products are ethically sourced and are not priced competitively. If a Soph Team provides a valid quote from a company with better pricing, The Book Store may be able to price match. In this situation, a final quote must be submitted (all costs/pricing), and proof that the product is ethically sourced must be provided.

Cultural Inclusivity

Preamble

Orientation Week is an important week for incoming students, and as students are coming from a plethora of backgrounds, Orientation Leaders cannot fully understand the past experiences that have brought all incoming students to Western. Due to this, it is important that Orientation Leaders are sensitive to the perspectives and preferences of all students, and that cultural sensitivity is reflected in Soph uniform accessories.

Soph Uniform Protocol

Soph teams must adhere to the following with respect to Soph uniforms:

- a. Soph teams are prohibited from using bandanas to cover their face at any point throughout Orientation Week.
- b. Uniforms cannot include “tank tops” (sleeveless shirts), or shorts with an inseam shorter than 5”.
- c. Soph teams are prohibited from wearing any type of cultural or religious accessories as part of their team uniform, which **include but are not limited to:**
 - Fake dreadlocks
 - Native headdresses
 - Mohawks
 - Turbans
 - Hijabs

Rationale

A bandana being used to cover a Soph’s face is not a welcoming image, and beyond this, it may disturb some incoming students that have come from countries where they have been exposed to violence and unrest.

Tank tops are not permitted and shorts may not be shorter than a 5” inseam because they may require a leader to wear an item that they are uncomfortable with because of culture, or body image. It may also make those around them feel uncomfortable because of their own culture or body image.

While the festive nature in which Soph uniform accessories have been traditionally is conducive to the goals of the Orientation Program, the use of culturally or religiously significant items as uniform accessories can be considered insensitive. For example, feathered headdresses were traditionally worn in Indigenous culture to indicate a tribe member that has earned a title of respect, and they are still regarded today as culturally important headwear. When the meaning of any cultural object is taken out of context, its true symbolic meaning goes unrecognized in favour of the object being used to represent something stylish. **Note: this does not apply to Sops who embrace a religious or cultural item as part of their individual expression, but only to the inclusion of these items as team uniform accessories.**