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Oxford University changes gender dress code

30th July, 2012

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

For centuries, students at Britain's Oxford University had to stick to a dress code regarding who wore suits and who wore skirts. This will all change on August 4 after the university amended its rules related to formal academic clothing. Students will soon be allowed to wear what they like. This means that women can attend formal events and exams in a suit and bow tie and men can wear a skirt, blouse and stockings. The new rules are in response to concerns that the old ones were unfair to the transgender society. They come after a motion by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Society (LGBTQ Soc.) was passed by the students' union earlier this year.

LGBTQ Soc. official Jess Pumphrey said the rule amendment would make quite a few students feel, "significantly less stressful by eliminating the need for trans students to cross-dress to avoid being... disciplined during their exam". The old rules meant students who broke the dress code would be punished. Any student who wanted to wear clothing that was designated for the opposite sex previously needed to get special permission from their college. One student commented in the university newspaper: "This seems a bit unnecessary. It only applies to a tiny percentage of the student population and it seems unlikely that a trans student would really be confronted about what they are wearing."

WARM-UPS

1. DRESS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about dress. Change partners often. Share your findings with your first partner.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

centuries / Oxford University / dress code / clothing / formal event / transgender / rule amendment / less stressful / old rules / the opposite sex / permission / tiny

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. CLOTHING: Can these people wear what they want / cross-dress? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Yes? / No?	Why (not)?
Uni student		
Soldier		
Politician		
Actor		
Singer		
Business leader		

4. CROSS-DRESSING: Students A **strongly** believe cross-dressing is OK; Students B **strongly** believe it isn't OK. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. WHO ONLY?: Put an 'M' next to the things that only men should wear, a 'W' for women-only and a 'B' for both. Share what you decided with your partner(s).

- a dress
- a bow tie
- lipstick
- ear-rings
- soldier's uniform
- a string vest
- perfume
- leather pants

6. GENDER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'gender'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Oxford Uni will soon allow students to wear jeans to formal events. T / F
- b. Oxford Uni will soon let anyone wear a dress to exams. T / F
- c. The dress code was changed because of pressure from students. T / F
- d. The student union opposed the change. T / F
- e. An official says the new rule will reduce exam stress for some students. T / F
- f. The old rule allowed for students who cross-dressed to be punished. T / F
- g. Students were never allowed to get permission to cross-dress. T / F
- h. A student said in the university newspaper the change will affect many. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. stick to | a. changed |
| 2. code | b. considerably |
| 3. amended | c. challenged |
| 4. concerns | d. adhere to |
| 5. motion | e. cutting out |
| 6. significantly | f. regulations |
| 7. eliminating | g. punished |
| 8. disciplined | h. worries |
| 9. designated | i. proposal |
| 10. confronted | j. chosen |

3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. stick | a. clothing |
| 2. the university amended | b. for the opposite sex |
| 3. formal academic | c. to the transgender society |
| 4. attend formal | d. tiny percentage |
| 5. unfair | e. to a dress code |
| 6. feel significantly | f. about what they are wearing |
| 7. students who broke the | g. its rules |
| 8. clothing that was designated | h. dress code would be punished |
| 9. It only applies to a | i. events |
| 10. be confronted | j. less stressful |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

For centuries, students at Britain's Oxford University had to (1) _____ to a dress code regarding who wore suits and who wore skirts. This will all change on August 4 after the university (2) _____ its rules related to formal (3) _____ clothing. Students will soon be allowed to wear what they like. This means that women can (4) _____ formal events and exams in a suit and bow tie and men can wear a skirt, blouse and stockings. The new rules are in (5) _____ to concerns that the old ones were (6) _____ to the transgender society. They come after a (7) _____ by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Society (LGBTQ Soc.) was (8) _____ by the students' union earlier this year.

attend
motion
amended
unfair
stick
passed
academic
response

LGBTQ Soc. official Jess Pumphrey said the rule amendment would make (9) _____ a few students feel, "significantly less stressful by (10) _____ the need for trans students to cross-dress to (11) _____ being... disciplined during their exam". The old rules meant students who broke the dress code would be (12) _____. Any student who wanted to wear clothing that was designated for the opposite sex (13) _____ needed to get special permission from their college. One student commented in the university newspaper: "This seems a bit unnecessary. It only applies to a (14) _____ percentage of the student population and it seems (15) _____ that a trans student would really be (16) _____ about what they are wearing."

punished
eliminating
confronted
unlikely
quite
tiny
avoid
previously

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

For centuries, students at Britain's Oxford University (1) _____ dress code regarding who wore suits and who wore skirts. This will all change on August 4 after the university (2) _____ related to formal academic clothing. Students will (3) _____ to wear what they like. This means that women (4) _____ events and exams in a suit and bow tie and men can wear a skirt, blouse and stockings. The new rules (5) _____ to concerns that the old ones were unfair to the transgender society. They come (6) _____ the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Society (LGBTQ Soc.) was passed by the students' union earlier this year.

LGBTQ Soc. official Jess Pumphrey said the (7) _____ would make quite a few students feel, "significantly less stressful by eliminating the need for trans students to cross-dress (8) _____ disciplined during their exam". The old rules meant students who broke the dress code would be punished. Any student who wanted to wear clothing that was (10) _____ opposite sex previously needed to get special permission from their college. One student commented in the university newspaper: "This seems (11) _____. It only applies to a tiny percentage of the student population and it seems unlikely that a trans student would really (12) _____ what they are wearing."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'trans' and 'gender'.

trans	gender
--------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stick• related• allowed• stockings• concerns• motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• quite• need• old• opposite• special• unlikely
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

DRESS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

Write five GOOD questions about dress in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DRESS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'gender'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Do you think of the new rules?
- e) Do you think the amendment will make a difference to life at Oxford University?
- f) Does it matter what people wear?
- g) Are there any rules about dress you don't like?
- h) What do you think of formal wear and having to wear it at formal occasions?
- i) Why do people care so much about who wears what?
- j) Would this rule be passed at universities in your country?

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DRESS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Should Oxford University have stuck to its centuries-old tradition regarding its dress code?
- c) Why would a university discipline students for wearing what they liked?
- d) What kind of punishment do you think trans students got for cross-dressing?
- e) What do you think of rock stars and politicians who cross-dress?
- f) Will clothing and fashion be completely unisex one day?
- g) What clothes do you most like wearing and why?
- h) Has fashion and the way the sexes dress changed over the past century?
- i) Are there things you would love to wear in public but don't?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the head of Oxford University?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1207/120730-oxford_university.html

For (1) _____, students at Britain's Oxford University had to stick to a dress code regarding who wore suits and who wore skirts. This will all change on August 4 after the university (2) _____ its rules related (3) _____ formal academic clothing. Students will soon be allowed to wear what they like. This means that women can attend formal events and exams in a suit and bow tie and men can wear a skirt, blouse and stockings. The new rules are (4) _____ response to concerns that the old ones were unfair to the transgender society. They come after a (5) _____ by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Society (LGBTQ Soc.) was (6) _____ by the students' union earlier this year.

LGBTQ Soc. official Jess Pumphrey said the rule amendment would make (7) _____ a few students feel, "significantly less stressful by eliminating the (8) _____ for trans students to cross-dress to avoid being... disciplined during their exam". The old rules meant students who (9) _____ the dress code would be punished. Any student who wanted to wear clothing that was designated for the (10) _____ sex previously needed to get special permission from their college. One student commented in the university newspaper: "This seems a bit unnecessary. It only (11) _____ to a tiny percentage of the student population and it seems unlikely that a trans student would really (12) _____ confronted about what they are wearing."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) century | (b) centurions | (c) centenarians | (d) centuries |
| 2. | (a) amended | (b) upended | (c) appended | (d) apprehended |
| 3. | (a) by | (b) of | (c) to | (d) as |
| 4. | (a) on | (b) in | (c) at | (d) of |
| 5. | (a) mission | (b) motion | (c) movement | (d) moment |
| 6. | (a) past | (b) parsed | (c) passed | (d) paused |
| 7. | (a) quite | (b) quiet | (c) quit | (d) quilt |
| 8. | (a) needy | (b) necessary | (c) necessitate | (d) need |
| 9. | (a) destroyed | (b) smashed | (c) damaged | (d) broke |
| 10. | (a) apposite | (b) opposite | (c) appalling | (d) opportune |
| 11. | (a) applies | (b) replies | (c) supplies | (d) plies |
| 12. | (a) do | (b) have | (c) be | (d) take |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about dress codes. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. DRESS CODE: Make a poster about a dress code. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. CROSS-DRESSING: Write a magazine article about the Oxford University rule change. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of Oxford University. Ask him/her three questions about the amendment to the dress code. Give him/her three of your opinions on it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. T d. F e. T f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. stick to | a. adhere to |
| 2. code | b. regulations |
| 3. amended | c. changed |
| 4. concerns | d. worries |
| 5. motion | e. proposal |
| 6. significantly | f. considerably |
| 7. eliminating | g. cutting out |
| 8. disciplined | h. punished |
| 9. designated | i. chosen |
| 10. confronted | j. challenged |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. stick | a. to a dress code |
| 2. the university amended | b. its rules |
| 3. formal academic | c. clothing |
| 4. attend formal | d. events |
| 5. unfair | e. to the transgender society |
| 6. feel significantly | f. less stressful |
| 7. students who broke the | g. dress code would be punished |
| 8. clothing that was designated | h. for the opposite sex |
| 9. It only applies to a | i. tiny percentage |
| 10. be confronted | j. about what they are wearing |

GAP FILL:

Oxford University changes gender dress code

For centuries, students at Britain's Oxford University had to (1) **stick** to a dress code regarding who wore suits and who wore skirts. This will all change on August 4 after the university (2) **amended** its rules related to formal (3) **academic** clothing. Students will soon be allowed to wear what they like. This means that women can (4) **attend** formal events and exams in a suit and bow tie and men can wear a skirt, blouse and stockings. The new rules are in (5) **response** to concerns that the old ones were (6) **unfair** to the transgender society. They come after a (7) **motion** by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Society (LGBTQ Soc.) was (8) **passed** by the students' union earlier this year.

LGBTQ Soc. official Jess Pumphrey said the rule amendment would make (9) **quite** a few students feel, "significantly less stressful by (10) **eliminating** the need for trans students to cross-dress to (11) **avoid** being... disciplined during their exam". The old rules meant students who broke the dress code would be (12) **punished**. Any student who wanted to wear clothing that was designated for the opposite sex (13) **previously** needed to get special permission from their college. One student commented in the university newspaper: "This seems a bit unnecessary. It only applies to a (14) **tiny** percentage of the student population and it seems (15) **unlikely** that a trans student would really be (16) **confronted** about what they are wearing."

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - a 3 - c 4 - b 5 - b 6 - c 7 - a 8 - d 9 - d 10 - b 11 - a 12 - c