member of the multidisciplinary team is important and that auxiliaries are no exception.

But should they, or anybody else, call themselves nurses if they are not trained? As a registered nurse, I believe not.

Barry Moses RGN
London SW15

But they are best at teaching students

I am a student entering the third year of the traditional registered general nurse course.

I have rapidly learned the value of auxiliary nurses as ward staff and teachers.

Since the beginning of my training, when I was terrified on the wards, it was always the auxiliaries who accepted me, showed me around and offered me a hand of friendship.

I have learned an awful lot from auxiliaries and have kept in touch with many of them. As far as I am concerned, they are an extremely important part of the multidisciplinary team.

When I qualify next year, I look forward to working in close contact with the many auxiliaries who contribute tremendously to the smooth running of the wards.

Dawn Robinson
RGN student
Essex

Uniforms reinforce nurses good image

I disagree with the anonymous correspondent (Off-ward uniforms win no awards, October 21), who criticises the wearing of uniforms at events away from work.

If anything, nurses should be seen wearing uniform in public more often.

The profession needs a positive and forward-looking image, and what better way to proclaim it than by taking pride in wearing our uniforms and being assertive about our professionalism?

The public image of a nurse in uniform is a very positive one. We should take our place alongside other uniformed professions, such as the police and the armed services. We must wear our uniforms with pride.

Emma MacDonald RGN
Staff nurse
Norfolk

Maintaining a clinical level of correctness

I wonder how many readers noted the positioning of the catheter tubing in the photograph illustrating Nursing Standard’s clinical article, ‘The bladder model: clinical implications’ (October 21)?

Not only should urinary drainage bags be kept below the level of the bladder, but an unobstructed downhill flow of urine must be maintained at all times. These stipulations are included in our unit’s catheter standard.

We welcome all readers’ letters, but reserve the right to edit them and to withhold names and addresses — either to protect readers or the journal, or both.

Celia Merrill RGN
Continence link nurse
Staff nurse
Wallingford Community Hospital

RCN criticised for one-sided debate

I believe that it is wrong for the Royal College of Nursing to be seen to back pressure groups that support only one side of contentious issues. Doing so displays unacceptable bias.

For example, if the Royal College of Nursing believes that the ‘smacking’ debate on the physical punishment of children is relevant to nursing, then I suggest it invites articles from members expressing their views on the subject.

This would reflect members’ views, enabling all sides of the debate to be expressed, and would be far better than the Royal College of Nursing being seen to represent only one side.

The principle of soliciting members’ views before taking sides is one that should clearly apply to all issues whenever possible.

I should be interested to hear whether other members feel that the Royal College of Nursing should remain neutral on issues until members’ opinions have been sought.

Paul Dobson
RCN District Health and Safety Representative
Waltham Forest

Appreciation for even-handed overage

I would like to congratulate Nursing Standard for its even-handedness in giving candidates for the forthcoming United Kingdom Central Council elections free space to publicise their manifestos.

In providing exactly the same coverage for all UKCC candidates, the magazine has maintained the principle of equality.

Nursing Standard could have sought to make a great deal of money from nurses by asking them to buy publicity space. Indeed, another nursing journal has done just that.

On this occasion, Nursing Standard has paid more than lip service to its principles and has acted in a highly responsible manner.

Kelvin Karim RGN
Dudley