

Guidelines for Professional Dress

Health Sciences students, staff, and practitioners are required to place a high value on personal appearance, including attire. The reasons are rooted in concerns for infection control, communication, and cultural sensitivity. This document sets forth standards for dress and appearance necessary to meet the service and safety objectives of placing patient welfare first and the educational objectives of preparing the student to assume the role of a professional health care worker. Patient trust and confidence in the health care provider are essential to successful treatment experiences and outcomes. The message communicated by the caregiver by his/her dress and appearance plays a fundamental role in establishing this trust and confidence. Students should consider the cultural sensitivities of their most conservative potential patients and present yourself in a manner that will earn their respect, ensure their trust, and make them feel comfortable. Recent trends in clothing, body art, and body piercing may not be generally accepted by your patients, and should not be worn by medical students. The following guidelines help prepare the student to establish a successful caregiver-patient relationship.

MS I and MS II- During most of the first two years of the curriculum, students will spend their time in lectures or other activities that do not involve patients. Attire at that time should be comfortable and not detracting from the educational atmosphere. When patient contact is part of the educational experience, students are expected to dress professionally (refer to MS III and MS IV guidelines below). This includes instances of actual patient encounters in the hospital or clinic, or when a patient is being brought to lecture. Neat, clean and professional attire, and a name tag are minimal requirements. Avoid dress or attire that could be potentially offensive to the public, your peers, patients and faculty.

MS III and MS IV- During the last two years, the following attire is required by the School of Medicine. Check with your course or clerkship coordinators to learn of any other dress code requirements when you begin that rotation.

A. General Standards

1. Health Sciences Center name tags or badges are worn at all times.
2. Good personal hygiene is to be maintained at all times. This includes regular bathing, use of deodorants/antiperspirants, and regular dental hygiene.
3. Avoid distracting perfumes or colognes (may precipitate allergies or sensitivities).

B. Hair maintenance

1. Hair should be neat, clean, and of a natural human color.
2. Hair should be styled off the face and out of the eyes.

3. Shoulder length hair must be secured to avoid interference with patients and work.
4. Avoid scarves or ribbons (unless culturally appropriate).
5. Beards/mustaches must be neatly trimmed.

C. Jewelry

1. Keep jewelry at a minimum (represents potential for cross-infection).
2. The following are permitted: a watch, up to four rings, small earrings (large earrings are distracting and may be pulled through the ear), academic pin/s, other pins, badges, or insignias which represent an award, modest bracelets/s and necklace chains
3. Appropriate holiday pin during the holiday is suitable.

D. Dress, Shoes, and Hand Care

1. Clothing should be clean, professionally styled and in good repair.
2. White coats are recommended to be worn over street clothes, and they must be kept clean.
3. **Women:** skirts of medium length or tailored slacks.
4. **Men:** tailored slacks, dress shirt and a necktie.
5. All students should wear a clean, white, jacket-length coat over their clothing.
6. Shoes must be comfortable, clean and in good repair. Shoes should be worn with socks or hose.
7. Fingernails should be clean and of short to medium length. Muted tones of nail polish are appropriate for women. No artificial nails.

E. Scrub suits

1. These are to be worn in specific patient care areas only, i.e. OR, PAR, ICUs.
2. They are the property of the hospital and are not to be defaced, altered or removed from the hospital. They are not to be worn in public places outside the Health Sciences Center.
3. If a scrub suit must be worn outside the designated hospital areas, it must be clean and then covered with a clean, white lab coat. Shoe covers, masks, and hair covers must be removed before leaving the clinical area.
4. Stained or soiled scrub suits must be changed as soon as possible (source of contamination)

F. The following items are **specifically prohibited** in the hospital or clinic situations.

1. Blue jeans, regardless of color, or pants of a blue jean style.
2. Shorts

3. Sandals or open toed shoes, high-heeled or canvas shoes (blood or needles may penetrate the fabric)
4. Midriff tops, tee shirts, halters, translucent or transparent tops, shirts or tops with plunging necklines, tank tops or sweatshirts.
5. Buttons or large pins (could interfere with function, transmit disease or be grabbed by the patient).
6. Visible body tattoos or visible body piercing.
7. Hooded Sweatshirts

LCME Standard 3: Academic and Learning Environments

A medical school ensures that its medical education program occurs in professional, respectful, and intellectually stimulating academic and clinical environments, recognizes the benefits of diversity, and promotes students' attainment of competencies required of future physicians.

Applicable Element 3.5: Learning Environment/Professionalism

A medical school ensures that the learning environment of its medical education program is conducive to the ongoing development of explicit and appropriate professional behaviors in its medical students, faculty, and staff at all locations and is one in which all individuals are treated with respect. The medical school and its clinical affiliates share the responsibility for periodic evaluation of the learning environment in order to identify positive and negative influences on the maintenance of professional standards, develop and conduct appropriate strategies to enhance positive and mitigate negative influences, and identify and promptly correct violations of professional standards.

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