

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 their 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 themselves in a manner that will earn patient and family respect and trust, and as well as make them feel comfortable. Body art and body piercings, including tongue piercings, may not be generally accepted by your patients, and should not be worn by medical students with the exception of one nose piercing (stud only) and ear piercings (refer to section C. Jewelry).

The following guidelines help prepare the student to establish a successful caregiver-patient relationship.

Pre-clerkship Phase - Attire should be comfortable and not detracting from the educational atmosphere. When patient contact is a part of the educational experience, students are expected to dress professionally (refer to clerkship phase guidelines below). These experiences include instances of actual patient encounters in the hospital or clinic, or when a patient is 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, peers, patients, and faculty.

Clerkship and Rotations - During clerkships and clinical rotations, the following attire is required by the School of Medicine. Check with clerkship directors to learn of any other or specific dress code requirements germane to the clinical environment in which a rotation occurs.

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 scents, which may precipitate allergies or sensitivities (e.g., strong or uncommon perfumes, aftershaves, colognes).

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, up to three modest earrings per ear (large earrings are distracting and may be pulled through the ear), one nose piercing (stud only), solid modest gauges, academic pin/s, other pins, badges, or insignias which represent an award, modest bracelets/s and necklace chains
3. Appropriate holiday/seasonal pin during the relevant season 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. Typically, appropriate dress includes skirts (of medium length), tailored slacks, and dress shirts with a necktie.
4. All students should wear a clean, white, jacket-length coat over their clothing.
5. Shoes must be comfortable, clean and in good repair. Shoes should be worn with socks or hose.
6. Fingernails should be clean and of short to medium length. Muted tones of nail polish are appropriate. Nail polish must be maintained. No artificial nails are permitted.

E. Scrub suits

1. Provided scrubs are to be worn in specific patient care areas only, i.e. OR, PAR, ICUs.
2. Scrubs 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. 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. Large tattoos should be covered, small tattoos can remain uncovered. Inappropriate tattoos must remain covered.
7. Hooded Sweatshirts

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.

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. 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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