Standards of Dress and Appearance

Medical students are invited into virtual and interpersonal spaces that are perhaps the most challenging of any such spaces that humans traverse. This is not a space where we seek to further our own identity. Rather, we enter into our patients lives to provide compassionate care. In keeping with this role in service to others, students are expected to convey a professional demeanor, not only in their behavior but also in their dress and appearance. A professional image conveys credibility, trust, respect, and confidence to one’s colleagues and patients. In all educational settings—classroom, laboratory, clinical environment—students are expected to be clean, well groomed, and dressed in a manner appropriate to their responsibilities and the standards of their assigned clinical sites. When patient-student contact is part of the educational experience (including interactions in the clinic, in the hospital, and with standardized patients), students are expected to dress professionally and wear a clean white coat unless otherwise instructed by EUSOM faculty. When patients are invited into the classroom as part of the Foundations curriculum, medical students should wear respectful and professional attire, as would be expected when seeing patients in the clinical environment, save for white coats, which are not necessary.

Of note, students must conform to dress policies set by each healthcare facility in which they rotate.

All students are required to be clean and maintain appropriate personal hygiene regarding their body, hair, and nails. Hair and nails need to be clean, neat, and of a length to not interfere with the student’s and/or patient’s safety or ability to perform their duties.

Professional dress for clinical duty is outlined below:

Hair Maintenance

Hair should be neat, clean, and of a length that does not interfere with student and/or patient safety or ability to perform clinical duties. Unless head coverings are required for religious or cultural reasons, hats or other head coverings should be avoided.

Clothing

Students should wear business attire that is clean and in good repair. In general, clothes should be of a length, fit and style that are appropriate for the clinical environment. Shorts and blue jeans are not appropriate professional dress. Shoes must be clean and in good repair. Sandals should not be worn.

Scrubs

Scrub suits should be worn in specific patient care areas only. They are the property of the hospital and are not to be defaced, altered, or removed from the hospital. Scrubs are NOT to be worn in the School of Medicine Building (including ExCEL) unless otherwise specified. Stained or soiled scrub suits must be changed as soon as possible; they are a source of potential contamination. All Personal Protective Equipment (e.g., masks, hats, booties) must be removed upon leaving OR’s/procedural/patient room areas.
Body Piercing and Tattoos

Tattoos should be covered to the extent possible. Piercings, other than ear and nose piercings, should be covered or removed in professional settings. Body jewelry must be of a size and design to not interfere with student and/or patient safety or the ability to perform clinical duties.

Nametags/Badges

Students should always wear their nametag/badge in the clinical environment. Nametags/badges should be above the waist, near eye level.

The above provide guidelines that represent minimum standards for dress and appearance to ensure that students present a positive and professional image to patients. You will receive feedback about your grooming and attire from standardized patients, faculty, course directors, and peers when your appearance does not meet expectations for professional and clinical environments. If a faculty member, course or clerkship director or staff member feels that the dress is inappropriate for the setting, they may ask you to change prior to continuing in that environment.

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