

VCU Health System

Graduate Medical Education Guideline

Professional Attire

I. Purpose

To provide guidance on appropriate attire to individuals enrolled in graduate medical education programs and their supervisors. Each clinical department or division should establish dress codes specific for their areas and patient population.

II. Background

A patient's perception of a provider's competence may be influenced by the provider's attire and appearance. Inappropriate appearance or attire can make the patient uncomfortable and interfere with the establishment of effective communication and/or rapport with them. The ability to develop effective interpersonal relationships and communication may be impacted by inappropriate attire and appearance and this may ultimately impact patient care. Therefore the ACGME General Competencies of Professionalism, Patient Care, and Interpersonal Relationships and Communication are each potentially affected by the attire and appearance of the provider. It is therefore appropriate for supervisors to monitor and evaluate provider attire and appearance.

III. General Guidelines

- All attire should be clean, neat and of appropriate size.
- Scrubs should only be worn in designated areas. If they must be worn outside of these areas, a white coat should be worn over the scrubs.
- Females should wear dresses or skirts of knee length or longer or dress pants and blouses. Exposure of the abdomen or chest due to low cut shirts or pants is not appropriate.
- Jewelry and perfume/cologne should be worn at a minimum or not at all.
- Earrings should be worn in a professional manner and are limited to 1-2 per ear.
- With the exception of ear piercing, there should be no visible body piercing, including but not limited to tongue piercing, nose piercing, and eyebrow rings / bars.
- Hair should be clean, well groomed, and worn in such a manner that it will not interfere with patient care or job duties and will present a professional image. Facial hair must be trimmed and kept clean.

- Head coverings worn for religious purposes are permitted. Hats are otherwise not allowed.
- Make-up may be worn in moderation.
- Fingernails should be kept short, clean, neatly manicured and not extend ¼ inch past the fingertips. Artificial nails and nail jewelry are prohibited per Health Department regulations in any patient care role. Artificial nails are defined as any application of a product to the nail to include, but not limited to, acrylic, overlay, tips or silk wraps (does not refer to nail polish). Chipped nail polish is not permitted.
- There will be no visible tattoos; any visible tattoo must be covered with a bandage or clothing.
- Low or moderate heel shoes are recommended.
- The VCUCARD MUST be worn at all times.

III. Process

Program directors and supervisors should monitor and address inappropriate attire by their subordinates as it may negatively impact patient care activities. Persistent inappropriate attire and appearance should be addressed as outlined in “The Assessment, Promotion, Discipline and Dismissal of Residents in Graduate Medical Education Programs” policy.

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