

FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

DRESS CODE POLICY FOR STUDENTS IN CLINICAL SETTINGS

Physician attire influences patients' perception of their medical care. Historically, patients demonstrated a preference for physicians wearing professional clothing/formal wear, with a white coat. However, recent studies have proven that this patient preference is influenced by setting (outpatient vs inpatient), medical specialty, geographic location, culture and the sex and ethnicity of both the patient and the physician.

There is overwhelming evidence that patients prefer that physicians wear scrubs, professional attire with or without white coat or business attire with white coat.

The proposed dress code attempts to take into account all these factors whilst also promoting inclusion and diversity; these nuances have been deemed vital especially as patient attitude to non-traditional forms of self-expression increasingly becomes more accepting.

Objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure students maintain a positive professional image
- To ensure students wear clothing in line with the principles of this policy
- To ensure that infection prevention and control and health and safety issues are addressed

Dress Code for all students- General Principles

1. Student ID must be available and visible.
2. Clothing should be modest – the 'armpit to armpit' rule must be abided by, i.e., the area below a line drawn between one armpit to the other must be covered.
3. Shorts and leggings are not permitted.
4. Clothing must not be transparent. Underclothing must not be visible or become visible with movement.
5. Clothing must allow for adequate range of movement
6. Footwear must be clean and in good repair, suitable for the work task and of a style that is not hazardous
7. Hair must be clean and well groomed
8. Visible piercing must be discrete
9. Tattoos, body art where present should be covered if they may be considered offensive.
10. Use of strong fragrances avoided.

Dress Code Policy in Clinical Years/When interacting with patients real and simulated

1. Students must abide by the dress code regulations in the various schools/departments. Medical students must wear either:
 - a. Dress trousers/slacks with button-down shirt or white shirt jack.
 - b. Dress trousers/slacks with white coat.
 - c. Skirts with button down-shirt, white shirt jack or another professional top with white coat.
 - d. Scrubs with a white coat can be worn on call and post call ward rounds.
2. Religious headwear (scarf, veil, turban) is permitted.
3. Clothing should be modest – the ‘armpit to armpit’ rule must be abided by, i.e., the area below a line drawn between one armpit to the other must be covered.
4. Shorts and leggings are not permitted.
5. Clothing must not be transparent. Underclothing must not be visible or become visible with movement.
6. Clothing must allow for adequate range of movement, i.e., the student must be able to perform all movements required to examine a patient and perform ward work.
7. Name tags and student ID must be prominently displayed.
8. Jewellery should not hinder the student’s ability to participate in routine activities on the ward, i.e., wearing surgical gloves and performing surgical hand scrub. ‘Dangling’ jewellery is not permitted. Visible piercings must be discrete small earrings and / or a small nose stud (if nose pierced), but no dangling jewellery is to be worn.
9. Tattoos, body art where present should be covered if they may be considered offensive.
10. Use of a strong fragrances avoided.
11. Hair must be worn in manner that does not come into contact with the patient or interfere with the student’s ability to perform routine patient care. It is expected that facial hair will be covered in the operating theatre; either with surgical hair nets or beard covers.
12. Closed toe and non-porous shoes are required

Infection Prevention and Control

The white coat, arguably the defining example of medical dress has been implicated as a likely formite in the hospital setting. Similar concerns have been realised regarding the mobile phone, now an indispensable tool in the healthcare setting It is thus recommended that students:

1. Regularly wash all clothing worn in the hospital, including the white coat.
2. Engage in vigorous sanitisation of their mobile phone, electronic devices, and jewellery.
3. Avoid the use of neckwear including ties and scarfs are to be avoid in the clinical areas.
4. No long sleeves below the elbow in the clinical areas. If long sleeves cannot be avoided the student must wear the appropriate attire.
5. Nails should be neatly trimmed and clean, free from nail polish and false nails to facilitate appropriate hand washing.