

UW Medicine

DEPARTMENT: Administration, Human Resources	DOCUMENT TYPE: Policy
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APPROVED BY: Assistant Vice President, Medical Centers Human Resources	

Professional Image (UW Medicine Policy)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The gender inclusive standards set forth in this policy provide a safe, sanitary, therapeutic, and professional environment for all members of the UW Medicine Community. By adhering to these standards, hospital staff will be safely and effectively attired for work and will also portray a positive and professional image to the public.

POLICY

It is the policy of UW Medicine that:

- A. All staff (hereinafter including, but not limited to, professional and classified staff, affiliates, hourly and per diem employees, interns, and volunteers) are required to maintain these minimum standards of personal appearance.
- B. Some duties may require employees to wear uniforms/scrub suits or safety articles, or to adhere to more specific requirements than those set forth in this policy. Supervisors will inform employees when they are subject to more restrictive unit/departmental appearance or dress code standards that supersede this policy's general guidelines.
- C. Closeness and frequency of contact with patients, the public, and fellow employees demand a high degree of personal cleanliness. Such cleanliness is an essential condition of quality patient care and overall professional demeanor.
- D. Staff shall dress in accordance with special safety requirements in their work unit based on the nature of the work and their proximity to possible safety hazards, such as machinery or equipment with moving parts, and hazardous or infectious substances.
- E. In areas where identification badges are provided it is a required part of each employee's attire and must be worn prominently while on duty. The photo ID badge must display above the waist at all times.
- F. Employees seeking an exception to this policy based on a protected classification such as race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, should discuss the issue with their supervisors, who will assess the need for same in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, and in consultation with Human Resources. In these circumstances, for example, there will be a review of the existence of alternatives to a given policy, if any, in light of the performance, safety, and/or health demands of a given job responsibility or work area.
- G. Employees seeking an exception to this policy because of a disability or injury, should provide Human Resources with the required medical documentation so that they can work with your supervisor to assess the need for reasonable accommodations in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
- H. Repeated non-compliance with this policy may result in corrective action.

- I. "Patient care" refers to any staff who directly or indirectly provide patient care or work in a clinical setting. More restrictive standards may apply for staff who provide direct patient care services due to patient safety or infection control reasons.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. All staff must adhere to the dress and safety standards outlined in this policy.
- B. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staffs comply with this policy.

GUIDELINES

A. HAIR

Hair must neither obstruct vision nor interfere in any way with the employee's job performance. A hair restraint (e.g., hair net), may be required in certain settings.

B. FACIAL HAIR

Facial hair must not interfere in any way with the employee's job performance. Certain facial hairstyles might not be permitted, or beard guards may be required due to safety and infection control reasons in some settings (e.g., employees working in operating rooms).

C. FINGERNAILS

Fingernails should be clean and well maintained to promote good hand hygiene practices. Fingernail length must not interfere with patient care, job performance, or safety. For these same reasons, artificial nails and/or fingernail length may be restricted in certain work environments.

D. JEWELRY, ACCESSORIES, AND SCENTED-PRODUCTS

Jewelry worn by employees may not interfere with patient care, job performance, or safety. Visible pierced jewelry is limited to earrings and small nose studs or hoops. Rings must be small enough to allow for the use of gloves, with no risk of tearing the gloves. Due to the impact on patients, families and other staff, fragrances such as perfume, cologne, after-shave and other scented products are prohibited. In addition, staff & faculty are encouraged to use mild scented or unscented bath products.

E. TATTOOS

Visible tattoos are generally acceptable, provided they do not contain derogatory or discriminatory words and or symbols.

F. ATTIRE

Clothing worn by staff members must be clean, in good condition, and project an image appropriate to a hospital environment. White lab coats or scrubs may be worn or required by clinical staff and Foodservice Managers. Jeans (all colors including blue) are permitted in the workplace with the following conditions:

- i. Jeans should be in good condition, without tears or visible wear.
- ii. Jeans should not have any designs, embellishments, or decorations (e.g. rhinestones, appliques, embroidered designs).

Examples of inappropriate dress that are not permitted include, but are not limited to:

1. Excessively tight or revealing clothing. Torn, ripped, frayed, patched, or un-hemmed clothing.
2. Shorts or cut-offs.
3. Beachwear and sportswear (e.g., jogging suits or sweatpants), unless they are specifically required for a particular position.
4. Hats, caps, (particularly worn within buildings), unless worn for safety or because of a medical condition, a disability, or religious reasons.
5. Stenciled clothing, including caps, jackets, shirts, etc., that advertise products or display messages or pictures that are inappropriate to the treatment setting, (including but not limited to, clothing with logos for alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, offensive/suggestive content, or

clothing displaying nudity or illegal substances), are not allowed. This provision does not apply to reasonable displays of union-related clothing, buttons, stickers, etc., that conform to the standards outlined in this paragraph.

6. Employees may wear spirit gear on designated days/events. The specific days and occasions will be communicated by leadership. Spirit gear should be clean, in good condition and free from offensive content.
7. Employees may wear shirts/fleece jackets with the UW or UW Medicine Logo.

G. SHOES

All staff must wear shoes that are appropriate for their work area. Thongs, flip flops and slippers are not allowed. Staff providing direct patient care must wear closed toe shoes.

H. HEADPHONES OR EARBUDS

Use of headphones or ear buds is strictly prohibited for employees in direct and indirect patient care roles while they are on duty in patient care areas unless being used for business purposes (e.g. telehealth visits or zoom calls)

I. EXCEPTIONS

Nothing in this policy is intended to abridge any employee's rights pursuant to, for example, state or federal laws relating to non-discrimination provisions, or to hinder the advancement of equity, diversity, and inclusion at this institution. Requests for reasonable accommodation for either religious or disability reasons will be assessed in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, as well as University of Washington policies. If questions arise, supervisors shall contact their department's Human Resources Consultant.

Special permission may be granted by the supervisor to make exceptions to this policy for special outings or events, such as picnics, or off-campus activities; however, appearance at these events, nevertheless, must remain appropriate and project a professional image.

J. ENFORCEMENT

Whereas all supervisors, managers and administrators are authorized to enforce the provisions of this policy, the supervisor of each shift or each department bears the primary responsibility for enforcing this policy promptly, consistently, and in accordance with state and federal laws. Supervisors are directed to seek advice from their department's Human Resources Consultant in applying/interpreting this policy.

CROSS REFERENCE

[UW Labor Relations Contracts](#)

REVIEW/REVISION DATES

UW Medicine dates: 04/2023 (revised), 01/2024 (revised)

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