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## Human Resources

HR-03.21

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**SUBJECT/TITLE: PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE POLICY**

**PURPOSE:** Staff, faculty, physicians, students, and volunteers, who are required by UI Hospitals and Clinics Photo Identification Card Policy to wear a UI Hospitals and Clinics identification badge, are expected to present a professional personal appearance at all times while on duty in the hospitals and clinics. A professional appearance is one that contributes to our Service Leadership values and to a positive, respectful, and safe health environment for patients, staff, and the public. Such an environment is essential to the organization's daily success as a quality health care provider. Personal appearance and conduct of UI Hospitals and Clinics staff, students, and volunteers must reflect concern and respect for the diverse group of individuals (generational, ethnic, demographic, etc.) served at UI Hospitals and Clinics, inspire confidence in the staff's knowledge and skills, and assure staff and patient safety. Staff members must be aware that being unclean, unkempt, offensive to all individuals, or inappropriately casual in personal appearance or dress may provoke discomfort, lack of confidence, or a negative image of UI Hospitals and Clinics as an organization.

**DEFINITION:** None

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of UI Hospitals and Clinics that the dress, grooming and personal hygiene of each person covered by this policy should be professional and appropriate to the work situation. Applicants and new hires should receive information about this policy as part of their interview/orientation process. Department management through their supervisors will be responsible to enforce consistently the guidelines set forth in this policy.

**PROCEDURE:**

**Policy Application:**

- A. This policy will apply to all on-duty staff, faculty, physicians, students, volunteers, or any other individuals in the hospitals and clinics who are required by policy to wear a UI

Hospitals and Clinics identification badge. Some departments may, because of the nature of job duties or other regulatory or legal requirements, adopt personal appearance guidelines that address issues not covered by this policy.

- B. At their discretion, supervisors may allow staff, faculty, physicians, students, or volunteers to dress in a more casual fashion than is normally required within the department for specific occasional department-sanctioned events. On these occasions, these individuals are still expected to present a neat appearance consistent with the guidelines of this policy.
- C. Individuals who are returning to the hospitals and clinics as on call for emergency situations, working outside of assigned hospital duties in a non-patient care setting, or en route to or from their worksite or changing area may dress in a more relaxed fashion.
- D. This policy should be administered with sensitivity and respect for each individual's medical, religious, or ethnic need to diverge from the guidelines set forth. Therefore, exceptions to the policy for these reasons should be considered on a case-by-case basis and appropriate counsel sought from Hospital Human Resources.
- E. Supervisors and managers who determine that a staff member, faculty, physician, student, or volunteer's personal appearance is inappropriate for the work environment are responsible for ensuring that person changes into appropriate work attire or alters his or her appearance appropriately before returning to the workplace. Repeated instances of inappropriate dress/personal appearance may result in discipline.

### **Guidelines for Supervisory Staff to Use**

- A. When requesting that staff, faculty, physicians, students, or volunteers change attire or alter their appearance in some manner, the supervisor should consider the following:
  - 1. Does appearance violate the UI Hospitals and Clinics Professional Appearance Policy, or guidelines set forth at the departmental level?
  - 2. Is there a significant risk of infection to the staff member or patients and visitors?
  - 3. Does the appearance pose a safety threat either personally or to others?
  - 4. Could the appearance be perceived as offensive (such as displaying racial slurs, swear words, symbols of death, or revealing body parts in a way that a reasonable person could perceive as inappropriate) to an individual or particular group of individuals?
  - 5. Are there religious or ethnic issues that need to be considered?
  - 6. Have there been complaints that the appearance is inappropriate or offensive in light of our desire to create a patient-centered and professional health care environment (see bullets above)?

### **Appearance Guideline Specifics:**

**These requirements are of all staff, faculty, physicians, students, and volunteers who are required to wear a UI Hospitals and Clinics identification badge while working or volunteering within UI Hospitals and Clinics.**

**A. Staff Identification:**

1. All staff, faculty, physicians, students, and volunteers are required to wear UI Hospitals and Clinics identification badges at all times while on duty.
2. The ID badge must be worn above the waist, without attachments, and with picture and name forward, immediately visible to patients, visitors, and other staff. Pins and awards are to be attached to clothing or a lanyard, not the ID badge.

**B. Grooming/Personal Hygiene:**

1. Staff, faculty, physicians, students, and volunteers must be physically clean, well groomed, and take steps to prevent and/or address problems of offensive odors such as body odor, cigarette or cigar smoke, etc.
2. Staff, faculty, physicians, students, and volunteers should avoid excessive use of fragrances and must be sensitive to scented chemicals that may be offensive, cause allergic, or other adverse reactions for patients, visitors, or staff.
3. Hairstyle and/or color should not interfere with assigned duties.

**C. Jewelry/Adornments:**

1. The wearing of jewelry, scarves, and accessories should not interfere with assigned duties and must not pose an infection or physical hazard to the patient, to self or to another person.
2. Tattoos and body art with wording or images that may be perceived as offensive (such as, racial slurs, swear words, revealing body parts in a way that a reasonable person could perceive as inappropriate, symbols of death) to patients, families or other persons should be covered during the time worked.

**D. Clothing/Apparel/Uniforms:**

1. Clothing must be neat, clean and free from offending odors.
2. Certain departments may require special dress standards, such as wearing uniforms.
3. Shorts, blue denim jean pants of any length, and exercise or workout clothing, including sweatpants, spandex or legging are not considered appropriate attire. Denim jean pants in colors other than blue are acceptable if they are clean, and in good condition with no holes, ragged hems, or patches. Groundskeepers and valets may wear knee-length shorts for exterior work.
4. Appropriate footwear to the job and duties is required. In addition, specific footwear requirements, such as steel-toed shoes, may be defined in areas with special safety concerns. Beach type shoes such as thongs or flip-flops and bedroom slippers are not appropriate.
5. Caps or hats, unless worn for medical or religious reasons or for nature of specific duties, such as outdoor work, are not considered appropriate attire.
6. Shirts or other apparel with images, wording or logos that may be perceived as offensive to patients, families or others are not considered appropriate attire.

7. Tank tops, halter tops, or tops that leave the midriff or back exposed, skirts or other clothing that exposes undergarments or could be perceived as sexually provocative to a reasonable person are inappropriate attire in light of the desire to be patient-centered.
8. Scrubs are to be worn in compliance with UI Hospitals and Clinics Policy HR-03.05, [Scrub Attire](#).

#### **E. Special Holiday Dress Guidelines:**

Each year, a number of UI Health Care staff, faculty, physicians, students, and volunteers participate in Halloween (and to a limited extent other holiday) festivities by coming to work in costume. Many of our patients and others enjoy this practice. However, costumes must be appropriate to the work area and respectful to patients, fellow staff and the public.

In order to balance the desire for fun and the necessity of maintaining a respectful, safe work environment, the following costume guidelines have been adopted for staff members, volunteers, and students working and/or studying within UI Hospitals and Clinics. While this list should not be considered all encompassing, staff members, etc., should adhere to the following guidelines for *apparel to be avoided* when dressing for a holiday occasion.

#### **Costume Apparel to Avoid:**

- Masks or other full-face coverings that cause the wearer to be unrecognizable;
- Costumes depicting monsters, death, or controversial political figures;
- Items resembling guns or weapons;
- Costumes which promote harmful stereotypes, including those on the basis of race, creed (religion), color, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity; \*
- Costumes that are too revealing to be considered acceptable under normal work circumstances;
- Unclean or soiled clothing items not in keeping with hospital epidemiology guidelines.\*\*

\*Human Rights: University of Iowa's [Policy on Human Rights](#)

\*\*UI Hospitals and Clinics [Infection Control Manual](#)

#### **RELATED POLICIES:**

[UIHC Photo Identification Card Policy](#)

[Scrub Attire](#)

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