

 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF MEDICINE UGME Student Standards of Dress for the Clinical Learning Environment Guideline	Responsible unit: Undergraduate Medical Education Office	Established: June 15, 2023 Last revised: May 15, 2024 June 27, 2024 Sep 25, 2025
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A. Background & Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to establish professional standards of attire for all students participating in any educational activities associated with the Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) program. The dress code guidelines also aim to ensure the safety and health of all participants involved in these activities which include but are not limited to, Family Medicine Experience, Skilled Clinician, Rural Week, Clerkship, OSCEs and clinical longitudinal electives regardless of site or province. These guidelines were adapted from the NSHA, the IWK / and Horizon Health Network Dress Standards.

B. Application

This guideline applies to all students registered in the Dalhousie UGME program during all educational activities, including but not limited to, Family Medicine Experience, Skilled Clinician, Rural Week, Clerkship, OSCEs and clinical longitudinal electives regardless of site or province.

C. Definitions

- Horizon Health Network: a health authority responsible for the provision of health care programs and facilities in the Horizon Health Network, New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA): a health authority responsible for the provision of health care programs and facilities in NSHA, Nova Scotia.
- IWK: a health authority responsible for the provision of health care programs and facilities in the IWK Health Centre in Nova Scotia.
- UGME: Undergraduate Medical Education
- DMNB: Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick
- DMNS: Dalhousie Medicine Nova Scotia
- Pre-Clerkship: The foundational, introductory years that usually take place over the first two years of the UGME curriculum.
- Clerkship: The third, and fourth years of the UGME curriculum and clerkship extension (Med 5)
- C3LR: Centre for Collaborative Clinical Learning and Research located in Dalhousie University's Collaborative Health Education Building, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

- LRC: Learning Resource Centre which is DMNB's clinical skills and simulation teaching facility.

D. Guideline

Employee, Physician, Student & Patient Safety

Employee, physician, student and patient safety is paramount and cannot be compromised by inappropriate or unsafe attire, accessories, footwear, facial hair, unsecured hair, personal product scents and odors.

Image

We want to reflect an image of professionalism and to inspire confidence in patients, visitors and others. It is essential that personal grooming (such as hair, nails, and scents) and appearance (including clothing, tattoos, and body piercings) are inoffensive or inconspicuous. Visible inoffensive tattoos are acceptable.

Hair

- Styled in such a way that it does not come into contact with the patient nor obscures vision.
- If involved in direct patient care or performing medical tests, neatly tie back long hair.
- Keep beards and/or mustaches clean, well-trimmed and neat. In clinical areas where N-95 masks may be required, facial hair must be in compliance with mask fitting requirements.

Skin, Jewelry & Body Art

- Restrict the wearing of jewelry in patient care areas to small pieces (i.e., wedding bands, rings with no protruding edges, earrings, and watches).
- Do not wear dangling necklaces, earrings, bracelets or any other jewelry that may impede patient care or safety of the employee.
- Keep all body piercing objects tight to the body and ensure that such objects do not present any source of entanglements with moving objects.
- Ensure that all piercings are clean.
- Cover any infection so that it is not visible or transferable and ensure precautions are taken to prevent transmission. {The prevention of transmission of infection is a concern with any broken skin (either from patient/environment to staff and vice versa)}.
- Cover tattoos that could reasonably be considered offensive, such as depicting violence, pornography, or racism. Visible inoffensive tattoos are acceptable.

Nails & Nail Enhancers

- Artificial nails and enhancers are a barrier to effective hand hygiene. They are prohibited under this policy and also institutional infection prevention and control policies that are applicable to all health care workers

- Nails are to be kept short, clean and trimmed for hygiene and comfort to the patient.
- Nail enhancers (ie. Hard gel, acrylics, biogel) are not permitted during sensitive examinations teaching sessions or during clinical rotations /teaching sessions that involve sensitive exams, surgical scrub or physical examinations
- Performing physical exam on simulated, volunteer and clinical patients can be uncomfortable due to the length or due to nail enhancers.
- Faculty, preceptors and simulated patient educators may request students not participate in a learning experience secondary to inappropriate nails.

Eyelash extensions

- Must not be worn in the OR environment

Fragrances/Smells & Scents

Please keep perfumes, scented products and deodorants to a minimum. The learning and hospital spaces are scent-free environments.

Appropriate for Regular and for Casual Wear	Inappropriate Wear
PANTS • Business casual pants/slacks (e.g., khaki) • Dress pants • Casual dresses/skirts • Dress walking shorts/skort • Dark wash jeans in good repair for casual days (No patient interaction)	PANTS • Sweatpants (both fleece and knit) • Overalls • Shorts, skirts or dresses shorter than mid-thigh • Cut-off shorts • Spandex • Jeans or pants ripped/torn
TOPS • Blouses • Sweaters • Turtlenecks • Shirts with collars (e.g., golf) • Button shirts • Dress shirts • Shirts without collar (T-shirts not included) • Sweatshirts for casual days	TOPS • Sport tank tops • Transparent blouses and dresses • Low cut necklines • Strapless or halter tops without a covering (i.e., jacket or sweater worn at all times) • Spandex • Any top that does not cover to pant, short or skirt top while providing care (i.e., reveals bare midriff) • Muscle shirts, and/or shirts with monogrammed message (i.e., political, suggestive or offensive language, logos or images which promote alcohol, cannabis, smoking, or violence)

FOOTWEAR • Dependent on work area, this includes a variety of types of shoes; dress sandals may only be worn if there are no safety concerns- contact your tutor or C3LR/LRC staff as to whether these are appropriate in your area • Loafers or deck shoes • Dress shoes • Walking shoes • Flats	FOOTWEAR • Flip flops • Slippers • Any footwear that may present a danger to health or safety (i.e., Crocs with a perforated covering)
	MISCELLANEOUS Baseball hats, bucket hats, and visors

E. Procedures

If students are found in violation of these guidelines, they may be asked to leave the clinical learning session until they are deemed to be in compliance. The appropriate Unit or Clerkship/LIC Director will be notified and a meeting will be arranged with the student to discuss the professionalism concern. Following this, repeated violations may result in professionalism concerns being brought to the attention of the appropriate Assistant or Associate dean at the respective campus. If warranted, the assistant or associate dean may submit the student's situation for review by the progress committee. This will be documented for the student's file. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Deans Skilled Clinician, Pre-Clerkship and Clerkship to oversee adherence to the UGME Standards of Dress for Clinical Learning Environment Guidelines.

F. Other

Religious & Cultural Considerations

The Undergraduate Medical Education Office is committed to ensuring that students from all religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds feel comfortable and respected. If you believe this dress code may conflict with your religious or cultural dress norms, please contact Student Affairs. They will work with you to develop appropriate accommodations.

Procedural Skills

Procedural skill sessions may require the student to come into contact with fake blood, gel, and other materials that may stain clothing. Clean, personal scrubs may be worn in lieu of professional attire as outlined above.

OSCEs

In an effort to maintain consistency amongst candidates and mitigate any potential bias during the assessment, there is an examination dress code. Professional attire is required for Phase 1,2 and 4 OSCEs and scrubs are permitted in the Phase 3 OSCE. White coats are optional.