

Professional Dress Code
Department of Pharmacy Practice
Purdue University

Purpose for a Professional Dress Code

Pharmacy has become a patient-centered profession. As health professionals, it is believed that a pharmacist's professional image enhances the patient-pharmacist relationship leading to increased levels of patient comfort and trust, enhancing communication by the patient with the pharmacist. An important part of the professional image is the way in which the pharmacist is dressed. Thus, a professional dress code is an essential component of the professional image. As those responsible for assuring that graduates of the school of pharmacy project a professional image to patients, other health care professionals and the public, the faculty and professional staff of the department of pharmacy practice must also project that professional image. In addition, members of the department should provide instruction and guidance to our students regarding correct professional attire as it pertains to issues of image, safety and hygiene. Faculty and professional staff should follow the professional dress code when interacting with students in lectures, discussions, laboratories, and other student meetings which are of a professional nature. Students should be expected to follow the professional dress code in specified laboratories (including the Purdue University Pharmacy), introductory and advanced experiential rotations, and during other activities where the dress code is enforced. The professional dress code below is the minimal acceptable standard for dress. This dress code is consistent with practice and current guidelines in medical facilities and retail establishments. Supervisors of specific areas may adopt more stringent dress code standards. Enforcement of the professional dress code is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor or the student's course instructor who may take appropriate remedial action. The department head is ultimately responsible for dress code enforcement.

Professional Dress Code

The individual's dress, grooming, behavior and attitude should convey a feeling of confidence and respect from peers, other health care providers, patients, and the public. In general, attire (clothing, shoes, etc) should be tasteful, neat, clean, in good repair, and of appropriate size and length, providing reasonable coverage when bending over. Accessories should reflect a professional image and not interfere with safety or job performance. A clean, pressed, white professional coat and nametag may be required in specific settings. In addition to the above, the individual should maintain good personal hygiene and be clean and free of body odor. Hair and nails should be clean, neat, trimmed, and of reasonable length so as not to interfere with safety and the ability to perform the job. (For example, long hair should be pulled back from the face.) Since fragrances (perfumes, colognes, etc) may have a negative health impact on sensitive individuals, their use should be minimal, if at all. Since pharmacy is a caring profession, individual behaviors and attitudes should be friendly and helpful.

Items considered inappropriate and not in compliance with the professional dress code include:

- a. Bare back tops, halter tops, tank tops, spaghetti strap tops, midriff tops, spandex tops, or other form fitting materials. Plunging necklines or necklines that expose cleavage (identified by a visible vertical line or valley) are never appropriate in a health care setting. Undergarments should not be readily visible.
- b. Clothing or accessories bearing pictures or writing that states or implies non-professional, illegal, distasteful, bigoted, or suggestive language or activities.
- c. Sunglasses which remain dark indoors (without medical reason)
- d. Visible tattooing, branding, purposeful scarring and other body modifications should be covered, if at all possible. Extensive tattooing should be covered.
- e. Facial piercing exemplified by eyebrows, nose, lip, or tongue, or three or more earrings in one ear.
- f. Shocking hair color
- g. Open-toed shoes, slippers, foot thongs, and flip-flops. In addition, athletic shoes except for medical/health reasons. Some health care settings allow duty shoes for employees involved in providing patient care and environmental services.
- h. Shorts including walking shorts.
- i. Head coverings and hats except when associated with professional, medical, or religious rationale, or ethnic custom (must be appropriate for the health care setting and not interfere with safety or the job).
- j. Ethnic dress is not forbidden, but should be appropriate to a health care setting, and not interfere with safety or the job.
- k. T-shirts (tops, pants, dresses made of t-shirt material), sweatshirts and pants, mini-skirts (more than 3 inches above the knee), spaghetti strap dresses, and sundresses.
- l. Blue jean (denim) pants, shirts, vests and jackets. Other colors of denim may be inappropriate if they are too casual or faded in appearance. In general, denim is not an appropriate choice in the health care setting.
- m. Cargo pants, Capri pants, painter/carpenter pants and overalls and bib overalls.
- n. Excessively worn, frayed, or wrinkled items.
- o. Any attire that would be worn for sports activity including gym shorts, athletic tops, baseball type hats, sweat bands, athletic socks, etc.
- p. Clothing which advertises a service, club, business, association or other non-health related enterprise except for specific days when a health-related service is being promoted by the health care facility (e.g., Diabetes Walk). Discreet designer logos (e.g., Izod, Polo, Tommy) are allowed.

NOTE: There are situations that may require exceptions to the professional dress code. Two examples were already addressed above concerning medical needs pertaining to sunglasses, duty shoes, and discreet athletic shoes. Other special events that commonly arise include activities such as wearing denim on a specific day for Breast Cancer Awareness or sites may have Casual Friday. This dress code is not meant to eliminate these types of special events. In the event these situations need to be addressed, it would be the responsibility of the person responsible for the area and if needed, the Department Head.

Suggested Attire

For men, dress trousers and a collared dress shirt which is tucked in and dress type shoes or duty shoes. Belts should be worn with dress slacks that have belt loops. Suspenders are not appropriate unless worn with a suit. Wearing a tie is dependent upon the requirements of the setting. In some settings, it may be permissible to wear dressy sweaters and/or turtleneck tops. Appropriate slacks should be non-denim, clean, and pressed. For women, appropriate dress is considered a clean and pressed dress, skirt or skirt of reasonable length, or non-denim slacks with an appropriate top consistent with the season. The midriff should be covered. "Dressy" closed toes shoes or boots or "duty" shoes are recommended. A clean, pressed, white professional coat and nametag may be required in specified settings. The coat should be in good repair, not wrinkled, grayed, yellowed, and/or stained.