



Administrative (Non-Clinical) Policy

This administrative policy applies to the operations, Directors, and employees of the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority (“UWHCA”), University of Wisconsin Medical Foundation (“UWMF”), and those subsidiaries and affiliates of UWHCA and UWMF that have adopted this administrative policy (each an “Adopting Affiliate”). UWHCA, UWMF and the Adopting Affiliates are referred to in this administrative policy as “UW Health”.

Policy Title:	Dress Code and Appearance
Policy Number:	9.16
Effective Date:	April 20, 2021
Chapter:	Human Resources
Version:	Revision

I. PURPOSE

To establish a dress code and appearance policy for all UW Health employees that emphasizes professionalism. UW Health’s employees are representatives of the organization whether conducting work virtually or in-person, and are responsible for creating a positive experience for our patients, families, visitors, clinical staff, and colleagues whenever they are working or attending work-related functions.

Departments may adopt department specific dress codes that are more stringent than the minimum standards outlined in this policy. However, before adopting such standards, department directors will consult with their Employee Relations Consultant (ERC) within Human Resources, and the Vice President responsible for the department operations.

II. DEFINITIONS

This policy applies to all persons performing work, virtually or in-person, for UW Health or at UW Health sites. “Employee” means the following people when employed by or acting on behalf of UW Health: regular employees, physicians, residents, fellows, temporary or contract employees, students and volunteers. For purposes of this policy, “employee” also refers to faculty physicians and other providers employed by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH).

III. POLICY ELEMENTS

Our patients and their families expect and deserve UW Health’s employees to dress and present themselves in a professional manner. UW Health employees will wear appropriate dress for the nature of the business and type of work being performed.

This policy provides detailed examples and guidelines for appropriate dress and appearance. These examples and guidelines set minimum standards and do not create an exhaustive list. Individual employees and leaders should always rely on their own sound judgement when determining whether dress or appearance is appropriate.

If any doubt exists, our employees and leaders should err on the side of increased professionalism to ensure that our patients and their families maintain confidence in UW Health employees and the services provided. Employees and leaders will seek counsel from their director whenever questions about appropriate dress or appearance arise.

In areas of UW Health not visited by patients and/or their families, or representatives from outside entities, leaders may set dress codes for their employees that are less restrictive than dress codes found in patient care areas. Employees in these areas are expected to maintain a professional appearance and dress for their day even in virtual settings (reference Work from Home Policy 9.61).

A. Identification Badge

1. Employees will be issued a UW Health photo ID badge that must be visible and properly displayed at chest level while onsite. Individuals shall not wear their UW Health badge when they are not at work or while in the role of a patient or visitor. Employees must wear their UW Health photo ID badge and applicable badge backers (i.e., Nurse, Physical Therapy, Child Life, etc.) at all times while on duty.
2. ID badges will not be defaced nor modified in any manner by anyone outside of the badging office. The ID badge is issued to the individual and should not be loaned for another person's use.

B. Pins, Badge Reels, and Lanyards

1. Employees choosing to wear pins, badge reels, and lanyards on clothing may do so as long as they are discreet, tasteful, non-promotional, and align with the following:
 - a. Related to UW Health major initiatives (e.g., #1 Hospital, Magnet Designation, Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare, healthy eating) and officially authorized and/or distributed by UW Health.
 - b. Supporting efforts to treat or cure specific diseases (e.g., pink ribbon, red dress).
 - c. National flag pins representing the employee's country of origin.
 - d. Serve a clinical function (e.g., pediatricians wearing animal pin/toys on their stethoscope to distract pediatric patients).

C. Dress

1. Employees will ensure that their dress is always appropriate for the setting and whether patients and families are present or could be present.
2. Dress for Patient Facing Work
 - a. Employees who work at or are visiting any location where patients and their families are present will maintain an appropriate and professional dress and appearance for patient care areas.
 - b. Employees providing care through telehealth will maintain an appropriate and professional dress and appearance during patient care.
 - c. Professional dress includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Suits
 - ii. Dress pants
 - iii. Casual dress pants (e.g., Dockers, chinos, khakis, corduroys)
 - iv. Dress capris, gauchos or cropped pants
 - v. Skirts and dresses just above the knee or longer
 - vi. Dress shirts/blouses and collared polo type shirts
 - vii. Sweaters/vests
 - viii. Sport coats/blazers
 - ix. UW Health apparel (see Director for acceptable options)
 - x. Sleeveless and cap sleeve tops are appropriate but cannot be spaghetti strapped.

- xi. Leggings may be allowed as long as they are professional looking and worn under a dress or tunic which covers appropriately. Leggings should be of a dark or neutral hue and may have a small or minimal pattern
 - xii. Head coverings and hats may only be worn when associated with religious affiliation or for medical reasons.
 - xiii. Only Facilities employees are permitted to wear jeans in patient care areas. Jeans worn shall have no holes and be clean and well-fitting (not overly tight or loose).
- 3. Dress for Non Patient Facing Work
 - a. Employees who work at or are visiting any location where patients, their families, or outside representatives are not present may also wear neat and presentable jeans, in addition to the professional dress listed above. Jeans worn in non-patient care areas shall have no holes and be clean and well-fitting.
- 4. Inappropriate Dress for UW Health locations or remote workers, includes the following, but is not limited to (staff working virtually should have appropriate attire where visible):
 - a. Baseball hats unless they are part of established departmental uniform
 - b. Mini-skirts or short dresses
 - c. Shorts unless they are part of established departmental uniform, such as in Valet
 - d. Blouses, shirts, sweaters, skirts, dresses or pants that do not cover the back or stomach while standing or sitting
 - e. Flannel shirts
 - f. T-shirts (e.g., graphic and athletic t-shirts)
 - g. Exercise/athletic clothing (e.g., sweatshirts, sweatpants, jogging suits). Exception: Sports Medicine personnel are permitted to wear appropriate fitness apparel related to their position.
 - h. Sheer, spandex and/or low cut/slung garments
 - i. Bib overalls
 - j. Any jean or jean-styled pant (e.g., denim jeans, blue jeans, white jeans, color fashion jeans) may not be worn where employees have patient contact (hospitals and clinics) or are meeting with individuals from external entities (e.g., vendors, surveyors, auditors).
 - i. Employees visiting another UW Health facility must observe the dress code at that facility (i.e., an off-site IS employee visiting University Hospital in a patient area shall not wear jeans.).
- 5. Clothing should be clean, neat, in good condition and fit properly. Torn, stained or frayed articles of clothing are not acceptable.
- 6. Shoes should be clean and in good repair.
 - a. Direct caregivers (those staff members that provide hands-on care at any time): closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times and have noise resistant soles and heels.
 - b. Non-direct caregivers: open-toe shoes may be worn as long as they look professional. Flip-flops are never acceptable in any patient care or nonpatient care setting.
- 7. Direct caregivers may have additional department-specific policies and/or guidelines related to use of scrub attire.
- 8. Compliance with this policy is expected at all times, including situations where personal attire may be covered by a lab coat.
- 9. Uniforms are allowed and will be determined by individual department guidelines and/or policy (e.g., Environmental Services, Facilities Engineering).
- 10. Theme dress days may be permitted on a reasonable basis with approval from the respective department director. Examples may include wearing a certain color of clothing to show support for a cause or sports team.

D. Appearance

1. Hair should be clean and professional in appearance; natural hair, as well as hair that reflects religious or cultural preferences, is professional. Unless prohibited by departmental policy, working conditions, or directives, non-traditional hair color may be allowed if vibrant hair color doesn't cause a distraction for patients and their families. With advanced notice, leaders may require natural hair color for certain meetings or events.
2. In patient contact situations, long hair must be controlled to prevent contact with the patient, equipment or supplies.
3. Control of beards and mustaches will be coordinated by individual departments, if they affect or interfere with job performance and/or safety.
4. Strong smelling cologne, perfume, scented lotions and/or powders should not be worn. Any complaints regarding excessive fragrances will be quickly resolved by the leader in consultation with Performance Management.
5. Unless prohibited by departmental policy, working conditions, or directives, cosmetics and jewelry may be worn sparingly.
6. Unless prohibited by departmental policy, working conditions, or directives, gauged ears may be allowed, and facial piercings may be allowed if rings or studs are small.
7. Tattoos with graphic or offensive images/wording must be covered (e.g., long sleeve shirt, gloves). Leaders have the discretion to require that an employee cover any tattoo(s) or combination of tattoos which could be considered offensive.
8. Direct caregivers are not permitted to wear artificial nails (any nail other than the natural nail is considered an artificial nail. This includes acrylic nails which are adhered to the underlying natural nail, extensions, tips, gel overlays, resin wraps, and bondings). Refer to UW Health Clinical Policy 4.1.13, Hand Hygiene. Other operational areas may prohibit wearing artificial nails due to safety or sanitary requirements.
9. During virtual work, employees should be aware of the remote environment and ensure the work location is appropriate and professional for display during the call. The virtual backgrounds should be used if necessary.

E. Cleanliness

1. Employees are responsible for maintaining appropriate personal hygiene and cleanliness.
2. Proper hand washing techniques are important for personal safety and control of infection. Refer to UW Health Clinical Policy 4.1.13.
3. Fingernails and toenails, if exposed, will be neatly trimmed and clean.

F. Safety

1. Protective shoes with reinforced toes are required when specified by individual departments.
2. Non-conductive safety shoes are required where specified by individual departments.
3. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is available on all inpatient units and clinics. Employees must wear this equipment when the risk of exposure exists.

G. Enforcement

1. While jeans are permissible in non-patient care areas, leaders may require traditional business attire for certain meetings or events.
2. Leaders should communicate and reinforce dress code and hygiene expectations in pre-hire interviews, during annual performance appraisals if necessary, and on an ongoing basis as needed.
3. Leaders are responsible for enforcement of this policy and may direct non-compliant employees to clock out for the day, return home, and may also apply appropriate counseling/disciplinary action.
4. Leaders will make final decisions related to attire and hygiene, in consultation with Performance Management.

H. Exceptions

1. Requests for exceptions related to a medical condition or a religious accommodation should be submitted to Performance Management and reviewed accordingly.
2. System-wide exceptions to dress guidelines may occasionally be made (e.g., allowing jeans in patient care areas) for specific purposes such as a UW Health collective fund-raising event. These exceptions may only be granted by the Chief Human Resources Officer in consultation with the requesting leader's operational Vice President.

IV. MODIFICATIONS

This policy creates no rights, contractual or otherwise. Statements of policy obtained herein are not made for the purpose of inducing any person to become or remain an employee of UW Health, and should not be considered "promises" or as granting "property" rights. UW Health may add to, subtract from and/or modify this policy at any time. Nothing contained in this policy impairs the right of an employee or UW Health to terminate the employment relationship at-will.

V. COORDINATION

Sr. Management Sponsor: VP, Chief Human Resources Officer

Author: Director, Performance Management and Organizational Development

Approval Committee: UW Health Administrative Policy & Procedure Committee

SIGNED BY

Elizabeth Bolt

UW Health Chief Operating Officer