

TITLE OF POLICY

UNC Physician Assistant Studies Classroom and Clinical Setting Dress Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy advises students on professional demeanor regarding dress in the classroom and clinical setting.

ARC-PA STANDARD ADDRESSED

B4.02: The program must monitor and document the progress of each student in a timely manner and according to its defined and published policies and procedures, to identify and address any deficiency in meeting program competencies in: (e) professional behaviors

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed triennially as needed by the Directors of Pre-Clinical and Clinical Education and Program Coordinator, elevating any policy amendments to the Program Director for approval.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

POLICY

Student professional dress and conduct should, at all times, reflect the dignity and standards of the medical profession. It is important that physician assistant students dress in a manner that is respectful to their professors, classmates, patients, and other interprofessional and administrative colleagues. The UNC Physician Assistant Studies along with the UNC School of Medicine and Department of Allied Health Sciences has the authority to set dress code requirements for students admitted into the program.

The dress code at various clinical sites may be more or less rigorous than the guidelines outlined below. If the culture of a particular clinical setting supports a specific dress code that is inconsistent with the policy outlined below, the student should discuss this with the Director of Clinical Education to determine proper dress behavior for the student (see “Style” below).

Classroom and Clinical Seminar Setting:

Classroom attire can be most appropriately described as “business casual”.

Men: All shirts should have collars. 3-button polo shirts, partial zipper shirts with collars are acceptable. Shirts with other than designer logos (e.g. corporate, political, personal statement, etc.) are not permitted. T-shirts are not permitted. Shirts should be tucked in unless the style specifically prohibits this (e.g. sweater-style). All buttons except the top button should be fastened. Acceptable pant styles are khakis, dress pants, trousers and corduroy pants. Blue jeans are not permitted. Acceptable shoe styles include oxfords, lace-ups, and loafers. Sneakers, tennis shoes, sandals, flip-flops or other open-toed shoes are not permitted. Socks should be worn at all times.

Women: Skirts and dresses should have hemlines no more than two inches above the knees. Avoid low-cut dresses or those with high slits. Pants such as khakis, corduroy pants, linen pants or dress pants are all acceptable. Blue jeans are not permitted. For the upper body, blouses, sweaters, turtlenecks, vests, and sleeveless shirts are all acceptable. No T-shirts, exposed midriffs, halter-tops or tank tops. Avoid any skin-tight clothing on both upper and lower body. Acceptable footwear choices include leather shoes, moderate heels and tasteful open-toed shoes (unless lab/patient care activities are scheduled for that day). Flip-flops and sneakers are not permitted.

Specific modifications to this dress code (e.g., for labs, clinical skills courses) are at the discretion of the course director. Refer to [Student Substitution as Instructional, Clinical or Administrative Staff Policy](#) for further clarification of lab and clinical skills environments. Students should keep appropriate changes of clothes in their lockers.

In both clinical and non-clinical settings all students should use discretion with fragrances, as patients, classmates and instructors may have allergies or sensitivities (see “Fragrance” below).

Jewelry and other adornments such as body piercing should be in good taste and consistent with policies established in clinical settings.

No clothing should be unprofessionally revealing regardless of student gender. Please consult a Principal Faculty Member if you are unsure about this.

Whether in class or on your personal time, your personal appearance will reflect on UNC-CH Master of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Studies and your chosen profession as a physician assistant.

Clinical Setting and OSCEs:

Identification in the Clinical Setting and OSCEs

University of North Carolina Physician Assistant students will be clearly identified to distinguish themselves from physicians, medical students, and other health professions students and graduates. The issued name tag will clearly state the student’s name followed by “UNC Student” on the second line with an underlying title of “DIV. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES.” There will be no other identifying names or titles. Physician Assistant students will wear their UNC School of Medicine identification badge on the upper right side of the white coat. The ID badges must not be obscured or altered in any manner except as determined by clinical necessity, (e.g., special stickers for newborn nursery access).

White Coats

Physician Assistant students will wear the UNC PA Program embroidered short, white coat with an issued name tag attached and centered below the embroidered Allied Health Sciences title on the left chest pocket while in clinical settings and during certain laboratory sessions, simulation exercises, competency evaluations and any other times as designated by the Course Director. The white coats must be clean and neat. Exceptions to this rule are at the discretion of the clinical instructor and must be approved by the Director of Clinical Education. If wearing scrubs outside the operating area, a clean short white coat should be worn over scrubs.

Scrubs

In general, scrubs should not be worn outside of the hospital or clinic. Scrubs are expected to be clean when worn in a public area and should be covered with a white coat. The ID Badge must be worn outside the white coat. Scrubs may be worn only as delineated by individual departmental/clinical policy.

Shoes

Footwear must be clean, in good condition, and appropriate. For safety reasons, open-toed shoes and sandals are not allowed in patient care areas or designated laboratory components of didactic courses.

Style

No sweatshirts or shirts with messages, lettering or logos (except UNC PA Program). No shorts, cut-offs, etc. *Jeans are not to be worn even if it is clinic policy to allow providers to wear jeans!* A tie is recommended for men, unless described as optional in specific policy for that clinical setting.

Fragrance

No wearing of colognes, perfumes or scented lotions in clinical settings as patients may be sensitive to fragrances.

Hands

Fingernails must be clean and short to allow for proper hand hygiene, use of instruments, prevention of glove puncture and injury to the patient. Artificial nails and decorative nail designs are prohibited. Some clinics/hospital settings do not permit any colored polish.

Hygiene

Daily hygiene must include personal cleanliness, including use of deodorant. Clothing should be clean, pressed, and in good condition, including the white coat.

Hair

Mustaches, hair longer than chin length, and beards must be clean and well-trimmed. Students with long hair who participate in patient care should wear hair tied back to avoid interfering with performance of procedures or having hair come into contact with patients.

Jewelry

Jewelry should not be functionally restrictive or excessive. Students should avoid wearing long or dangling earrings for their own and for patient safety. There should be no visible jewelry in body piercings with the exception of earrings. In the case of religious requirement, certain piercings may be acceptable. Please consult the Director of Clinical Education if you have a religious requirement for piercings. No other facial jewelry (e.g., tongue, eyebrow piercings, etc.) is allowed.

Tattoos

Tattoos shall be appropriately covered when possible.

PROCEDURE

Students in violation of any of the above dress codes may be asked to change into appropriate attire and a UNC PAP Student Professionalism Encounter Form will be documented with a written warning. Students will receive an unexcused absence for class time missed as a result of a violation. Additional violations will result in referral of the student to the Academic Excellence Committee for further program action to include professional probation, deceleration, or dismissal from the program.

PUBLISHED & COMMUNICATED

- UNC PA Program Policies and Procedures web page: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/unc-pa/students/policies-procedures/>
- At initial program orientation and prior to starting clinical rotations
- The UNC PA Program Student Handbook.

HISTORY OF APPROVAL AND UPDATES:

- Approved by the Program Director, 18 December 2020