

**YALE-NEW HAVEN MEDICAL CENTER**  
(YNHMC)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Subject: Professionalism/Standards of Appearance

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Introduction:

The Graduate Medical Education Training Programs of the Yale-New Haven Medical Center are committed to the highest standards of professionalism and professional image to all persons, agencies and associations. This foremost includes our patients, their families and other visitors. We believe that professionalism and the image we present inspires confidence in the care and services we provide as professionals and as an institution.

We expect that trainees must demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles, including:

- (1) compassion, integrity, and respect for others;
- (2) responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest;
- (3) respect for patient privacy and autonomy;
- (4) accountability to patients, society and the profession; and,
- (5) sensitivity and responsiveness to a diverse patient population, including but not limited to diversity in gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, and sexual orientation;
- (6) a safe, comfortable and healthy work environment;
- (7) presenting a professional and identifiable appearance to patients, their families and visitors, YNHH staff, and the medical and business communities;
- (8) supporting a culture of confidence and service excellence while at the same time, accommodating sincerely held religious and cultural beliefs when operationally feasible.

In order to promote the professional image, the following standards of appearance are put into place.

Scope:

This policy applies to all residents/fellows at Yale-New Haven Medical Center.

Individual program directors have the discretion to define appropriate attire for the work environment and the nature of the work performed within the scope of this policy.

## Policy:

### 1. General Appearance

In all circumstances, professionalism and appropriateness are the guiding standards. Extremes of fashion in clothing, hair styles and accessories must be avoided, as well as any clothing or adornment that detracts from the trainees' roles and responsibilities.

### 2. Identification

- a. All residents/fellows must wear their identification badges with the photo plainly visible above the waist when in patient care areas.
- b. A lab coat with name will not replace the use of a name badge
- c. Name badges should be clipped on and lanyards should not be used in areas and roles that necessitate patient contact
- d. Personal statements expressed by symbols, messages or insignia must be appropriate and consistent with our mission and patient satisfaction goals. This includes personal statements reflected on clothing, accessories, pins, buttons, stickers, fabric patterns and non-YNHH/YSM logo wear.

### 3. Grooming and Hygiene

- a. All residents/fellows will maintain reasonable personal hygiene and grooming standards essential to a professional image.
- b. Scents of any kind (perfumes, lotions, hair products, etc) must be used sparingly and are not permitted where there is sensitivity to fragrances.
- c. Cosmetics should be used in moderation.
- d. Hair must be clean and neat and worn off the face when working with patients or as required for safety and sanitation.
- e. Facial hair and fingernails must be clean and trimmed according to applicable health standards and Hospital policies. For additional information, please refer to the Fingernails, Natural and Artificial C: F-1 in the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual.

### 4. Jewelry and Accessories

- a. Jewelry must be discreet and appropriate, and not cause a safety or infection control hazard. Earrings must be small and unobtrusive, and not detract from the professional image or represent a safety risk.
- b. Visible body piercings (other than earrings) are prohibited.
- c. Tongue piercings can impact communications and are therefore prohibited.
- d. Tattoos and body art that are considered offensive, sexually explicit, racist or threatening must be covered.
- e. Authorized head coverings, i.e. surgical caps, may be worn correctly and as appropriate to the task and work environment.

## 5. Professional Dress

- a. When residents are not required to wear scrubs, their dress must be professional.
  - i. For men this includes: collared shirts (dress shirts, button downs), turtlenecks or sweaters (including cardigans), tailored trousers (dress slacks, khakis, corduroys) and loafers or lace-up shoes with socks. Blazers and sports jackets are optional.
  - ii. For women this includes: shirts (collared) or blouses with sleeves, turtlenecks, sweaters and sweater sets, skirts or tailored pants, and flats, pumps or boots.
  - iii. It is understood that when residents/fellows are asked to return to the hospital at night, in an emergency, the above requirements may be relaxed as arriving for patient care is the first priority.
- b. Inappropriate attire includes: denim, shorts, tee shirts (sleeveless shirts, tank tops, halter tops, crop tops), sandals (beach sandals, Birkenstocks, flip flops), athletic wear of any kind (sweatshirts, rugby shirts, sweatpants, leggings, stirrup pants, jogging suits, spandex, lycra, caps), torn clothing (clothing with holes or frayed ends), and provocative or revealing clothing.
- c. Clothing when on night call may include heavier upper garments, including fleece jackets/vest/sweatshirts, if clean, neat and in good repair without hoods.
- d. Clothing must be clean, neat and in a good state of repair.
- e. Clothing must cover the shoulders and midriff.
- f. Undergarments:
  - i. Undergarments must be worn under clothes and must not be distinguishable through attire.
- g. Ties:
  - i. Neck ties may be worn. In roles that require direct patient contact neck ties must be clipped or worn with a buttoned white lab coat or suit coat, so as to prevent transmission of infection.
- h. Lab Coats:
  - i. A clean, neatly pressed, white lab coat should be worn.
- i. Footwear/Shoes:
  - i. Shoes worn by direct patient care residents must be clean, well kept and should have an enclosed toe.
  - ii. Athletic or walking shoes (sneakers) may be worn, but must be plain and clean.

## 6. Scrubs:

- a. Direct patient care employees will wear scrubs as designated by their role and their department.
- b. Scrubs must be neat, wrinkle free and clean.
- c. Soiled scrubs need to be changed immediately.
- d. Scrubs should not be worn outside of the workplace, with the exception of transport to and from the hospital.
- e. Midriff must be covered.
- f. Clean, neat T shirts without logos or turtle necks can be worn under scrub tops but not in the place of scrub tops.

Accountability:

Every resident/fellow has the responsibility of being fit for duty within the core competency of professionalism. As such, it is expected that each resident/fellow will hold one another accountable. Residents/fellows who report for duty in unacceptable attire, improper grooming or uniform, may be sent home by a supervising resident/fellow, a Chief Resident or an attending. If sent home, they must return to duty in a timely manner. After counseling, continued violations of this policy will result in progressive discipline including written notice of failure to achieve competency in professionalism and possible probation, suspension or dismissal from the training program.

Reasonable accommodations based on religion and/or cultural observances or practices such as, but not limited to, style of dress, head coverings, grooming requirements will be considered on a case by case basis.

**References:**

Fingernails, Natural and Artificial C:F-1, Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual

Scrub Suits NC:S-6, Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual

Employee Conduct and Discipline B:8, Human Resource Policy Manual

Employee Photo Identification G:1, Human Resource Policy Manual

Telephone Calls and Use of Electronic Devices B:17, Human Resource Policy Manual