



## **Policy Title**

Demeanor and Attire

## **Identifier**

USCSOMG – STAF – 5.02

<b>Prepared by:</b> Office for Student Affairs	
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Associate Dean for Student Affairs	<b>Review Date:</b> 02/20/2025
<b>Approved by:</b> USCSOMG Policy Committee	<b>Approval Date:</b> 04/02/2025
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## **LCME Standards**

3.5 – Learning Environment / Professionalism

## **Scope**

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students

## **Policy Statement**

The personal appearance and demeanor of every student is an important component of establishing a safe and professional environment for learning, respect among peers, and optimal patient care. Students are expected to dress appropriately while at USC School of Medicine Greenville and affiliated learning sites. Medical students are to present a professional appearance to their university community of faculty, staff, and colleagues, as well as to those whom they encounter in a clinical setting – including but not limited to physicians, patients, and all hospital employees. In addition, USC School of Medicine Greenville students are expected to maintain a professional attitude towards patients, colleagues, faculty, and all team members.

## **Reason for Policy**

To provide clear expectations for the students at USC School of Medicine Greenville as representatives of the medical field and university.

## Definitions

**Artificial fingernails:** Any coating placed on the nails that cannot be removed with a non-acetone nail polish remover pad. This includes but is not limited to extenders, wraps, decal, gel, dip, shellac or overlays. Research reports have linked hospital acquired infections and deaths with increasing numbers of gram-negative bacteria and fungi cultured from fingertips of personnel wearing artificial nails as compared to personnel with natural nails.

## Procedures

Students must demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and adherence to ethical principles. Students are expected to demonstrate compassion, integrity, and respect for others; responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest; respect for patient privacy and autonomy; accountability to patients, peers, society and the profession; and sensitivity and responsiveness to diverse populations, including but not limited to diversity in gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities and sexual orientation.

Students are required to clearly display their USC School of Medicine Greenville name badge and the hospital security ID Badge. The hospital security ID Badge will include the student's name and status. When talking with patients, students must clearly indicate their student status. Medical students must never exert authority that exceeds their level of training. Students must not speak, write, or represent themselves as independent health professionals.

USC School of Medicine Greenville follows the requirements of the partner health system policy:

### Dress Code Policy

1. Students are prohibited from wearing any form of political or activism attire in immediate patient care areas. This includes displaying or wearing of buttons, shirts, pins/lapels, masks, bandanas, or other accessories or other items of clothing that contain slogans, writings, and/or images advocating, promoting, or supporting personal or political affiliations, causes, views, or messages in immediate patient care areas. Additionally, Prisma Health prohibits wearing any political or activism attire that is unrelated to workplace matters at all times on the premises, even outside immediate patient care areas.
2. Graphic designs, logos, and other symbols/emblems or stickers that are political in nature or activism related are prohibited in immediate patient care areas. Graphic designs, logos and other symbols/emblems or stickers that are political in nature or activism-related and that do not relate to workplace matters are prohibited at all times on the premises, even outside immediate patient care areas. Notwithstanding this restriction, students are allowed to wear an approved and authentic "I voted" sticker.
3. Fragrances (perfumes, colognes, after-shaves, etc.) will not be worn while on duty as it can cause potentially harmful allergic reactions to patients or coworkers. Students must not smell of tobacco or tobacco smoke while on duty.
4. Fingernails will be kept clean. In clinical care areas as determined by each campus: Natural fingernails are to be kept less than ¼ inch in length, and nail polish must not be

chipped or cracked. Artificial fingernails and extensions, including nail wraps, overlays, and nail jewelry, are also not to be worn in those clinical areas, including OSCEs.

5. Hair length, cleanliness, and styling of student's hair, including facial hair, conform to generally accepted business and professional standards. Students involved in patient care must wear their hair pulled back and secured.
6. Only appropriate and professional jewelry are to be worn including piercings. Tongue and dental jewelry are not permitted. Nose piercings are limited to a single, simple non-protruding stud. All other body piercings (gauged ears, lips, eyebrows, etc.) are to be plugged with non-detectable coverings. Faculty and administration also have the discretion to require that a student cover/remove any piercings that could be considered offensive and potentially harmful (e.g., impedes job performance or presents an infection control risk).
7. Any visible tattoos of a violent or inappropriate nature are to be covered (e.g., long sleeve shirt, pants, gloves, or other approved clothing styles, makeup can be used-if complete and undetectable coverage of tattoo.) The partner health system also has the discretion to require that a student cover any tattoo(s).
8. The ID badge is part of each student's official attire and must be worn at all times. The ID badge is required to be clearly visible and worn above the waist. The ID badge must remain in the forward-facing position at all times.
9. All apparel must be worn conservatively (e.g., no bare midriffs or low-cut shirts/blouses, no sweatpants, no tight pants) and be appropriate for business needs and settings. Dresses and skirts must be maintained at an appropriate length, no more than 1.5 inches above the knee. Shorts, denim jeans and t-shirts are not allowed. Polos, sweatshirts, fleeces, and long-sleeved collared shirts with USC SOMG school logo are acceptable.
10. Shoes must be appropriate for a standard business setting. In clinical areas and laboratories, open-toe shoes and/or with holes, including but not limited to Crocs and other garden shoes, are not permitted.

Clerkship specific information about appropriate attire is addressed at the clerkship's orientation. Students are cautioned not to wear "scrub attire" outside of an operating room or procedure room area. Scrub attire is the property of the clinical facility and must not be removed from the grounds of the institution.

For all students, modesty in attire is expected. General guidelines for student dress include:

- *Clothing and Attire:*
  - Button-up shirts, blouses or polos with dress pants or khakis are acceptable on normal class days.
  - Clothing must be at appropriate length when sitting and/or standing.
  - Tops must have shoulder straps and/or sleeves, and shoulder straps must be 3-finger width if visible.

- Shoes must be professional in appearance. No bedroom slippers or flip-flops are allowed. Shoes must be closed-toe and closed-heel in laboratory and clinical settings
- No hats, caps or other types of headgear except those required by the hospital or those worn for religious purposes (e.g., hijab, yarmulke, turban) are allowed.
- Ties and bowties are not required but can be worn at the discretion of the student. Ties must be restrained by a tie clip, buttoned coat, sweater, etc. when interacting with patients.
- Whitecoats must be worn in a clinical setting, including working with standardized patients or partner health system patients.
- Scrubs can substitute shirts and pants only when suggested in advance by the medical school faculty and/or hospital officials. This includes time in the anatomy lab, but students must change before and after anatomy lab. Scrubs for anatomy lab can only be worn in the anatomy lab area.

### **Exceptions to the Appearance Standards**

Students are permitted to deviate from this Attire policy in the following instances.

- Once released from all formal responsibilities: If students choose to “dress down” after they are released from formal responsibilities, security badges are to be removed before leaving the USC School of Medicine Greenville Building.
- During test weeks for summative module exams, students are permitted deviate from appearance standards in the interest of comfort during informal or self-directed study. However, students need to adhere to the standards of appearance if they are interacting with peers, faculty, staff, or patients (standardized or otherwise) in a formal education setting or when there is a specific request from school administration.
- Time spent in the medical school on weekends does not require adherence to the appearance standards because this time does not constitute “formal responsibilities.”
- Student-planned events that do not specify a specific dress do not require adherence to appearance standards.

### **Sanctions**

Faculty and staff reserve the right to determine whether a student is compliant with this policy. Students who are found in violation of this policy may be sent home and repeated offenses will be reported to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC).

### **Additional Contacts**

Office for Student Affairs

### **Related Information**

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook  
Prisma Health Dress Code Policy

## History

Date of Change	Change
April 2025	Strengthen language in response to policy audit
May 2024	Clothing with school branding is acceptable
April 2023	Editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles
June 2022	Updated to align closely with the Prisma Health Dress Code policy
Oct 2021	Based on feedback from students and faculty, open-toed and open-heeled shoes may be worn when not in a clinical or laboratory setting.
May 2020	Based on input from students, gender-specific guidance was removed. Exceptions were extended to testing week for module exams.
July 2019	Editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles; formal approval not required.
July 2018	Policy formalized into standardized template, LCME CQI