

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM)

Policy: Dress Code
Subject: Student Affairs
Administrator: A. Knight
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1 Policy

As representatives of the medical profession, all medical students at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) are expected to convey a professional demeanor not only in their behavior but also in their dress and appearance. A professional image evokes credibility, trust, respect, and confidence in one's colleagues and patients. The manner of dress, personal hygiene, appearance, and general behavior, verbal and non-verbal, contributes considerably to a professional image. Appropriate dress is also essential to enhance patient safety in the clinical setting.

When students are assigned to clinical activities in any of the VTCSOM's participating institutions, they should consider themselves as representatives of VTCSOM. Hence, attire and behavior should promote a positive impression for the individual student, the specific course, and the institution. In addition to the guidelines outlined below, certain departments and some affiliate clinical institutions may allow alternate dress guidelines based upon site and activities. Alternative requirements are typically included in written course materials, but if any doubt exists, it is the responsibility of the student to inquire.

2 Procedures

The following policy outlines some of the major expectations concerning appropriate dress and personal appearance:

1. General Standards:

- a. VTCSOM ID name badges are required to be worn by all students, faculty, staff, and physicians at all times.
- b. All clothing must be clean, neat, professionally styled, and in good repair.
 - i. Clothing should not be excessively tight.
 - ii. Appropriate under garments should be worn and the outline or color shall not be visible.
- c. Footwear shall be clean and in good repair. Shoes are to be appropriate for the attire.
- d. Good personal hygiene and grooming are required to be maintained at all times.
- e. Excessive use of fragrances should be avoided as some people may be sensitive to scented chemicals which may cause allergic or other adverse reactions.
- f. Hair should be neat and clean. Hairstyle and/or color should not interfere with assigned duties nor present a physical hazard to the patient, to self, or to another person.
- g. Fingernails should be clean and of short to medium length.
- h. Students may not wear acrylic nails while providing patient care services.

2. Standards in the classroom setting:

- a. For men, a shirt with a collar is preferred.
- b. For women, shirts and blouses must extend to the waistband of the pants.
- c. Students are permitted to wear casual slacks, jeans, shorts, and T-shirts, provided they are clean, in good repair, and do not contain any offensive language or pictures.
- d. Students may wear open-toed shoes/sandals. Flip-flops are not permitted.

3. Standards in the laboratory setting:

- a. Students should follow the guidelines of the particular lab; otherwise follow the guidelines as established for the classroom setting.
- b. Men and women are required to wear closed-toe shoes; Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations prohibit open-toed shoes.
- c. Lab coats should be clean and in good repair.

4. Standards in the clinical care and case wrap-up settings:

- a. Professional attire and physician-identifying clothing:
 - i. Men should wear a shirt, long pants, socks, and hard-soled shoes (i.e., no tennis shoes).
 - ii. Women should wear comparable attire. For safety reasons, open-toed shoes or sandals are not allowed in the clinical setting.
 - iii. A white coat with the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine embroidered logo should be worn during clinical care activities once the students have received these (optional for case wrap-up).
 - iv. While wearing a white coat in the clinical setting, medical students are also expected to identify themselves as students at all times and must assume responsibility to clarify their role to patients.
 - v. White coats must be clean, neat, and professionally styled.
 - vi. School, credentialing and hospital recognition pins may be worn. Novelty pins/buttons are not permitted.
 - vii. Coats, caps, and/or hats may not be worn while on duty. Caps worn for religious purpose are permitted.
- b. Students should not chew gum or tobacco.

5. Additional Guidelines:

- a. The use of jewelry (e.g., necklaces, rings, earrings, bracelets, etc.) and other fashion accessories should be appropriate and not interfere with assigned duties. Jewelry represents a potential for infection and loose jewelry can be grabbed or caught on equipment causing a potential physical hazard to the student or the patient. Visible body piercing, other than ears, is discouraged.
- b. Tattoos and body art with wording or images that may be perceived as offensive should be covered during the time of professional contact with patients and families. Some examples of such offensive art or images include racial slurs; profanity, symbols of death, or inappropriate revealing of body parts in a way that a patient could perceive as inappropriate.

VTCSOM students should also be familiar with Carilion Clinic Dress Code – Residents Policy which is available on the intranet.