

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

ENTRY-LEVEL MASTER OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE CODE

Rationale: ‘You never get a second chance to make a first impression’ is a commonly heard saying and in health care, physical appearance of practitioners has been shown to influence how comfortable their patients are with them. Patients or clients who are comfortable with their practitioners are more likely to provide accurate and complete information during interviews, and to listen to their advice or recommendations. In the interprofessional setting in which you are likely to work, your appearance will influence the respect that other professionals have for you, as well as potential referrals and opportunities for collaboration. In summary, your appearance has the potential to influence health care outcomes for better—or for worse.

As a professional program, our job is to help you develop the professional behaviors that you will need to be an excellent therapist and valued employee in any practice environment. As an occupational therapy student at NSU, you represent not only yourself, but also our department, the College of Health Care Sciences, and NSU in the greater community. Here are the expectations, policies, and procedures.

Dress: The NSU Occupational Therapy Department adheres to the College of Health Care Sciences dress code policies, whether on or off campus, during the work day for program-related events. Students may wear scrubs or professional attire to class. As an alternative to the scrub top, students may wear OT T-shirts of any color, as long as the language is appropriate, professional, and not offensive. When engaged in pediatric, community, or clinical experiences, Level I Fieldwork, volunteer experiences, or special events, either on or off campus, MOT students must wear NSU OT polo shirts (sold by student organizations) and either khaki or dark-colored pants, unless directed otherwise by the faculty member or staff responsible for the event. OT white lab jackets are required for some fieldtrips and Level I Fieldwork experiences, e.g., HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, so students should have one clean and pressed lab jacket. Additional rules in individual practice settings must be followed. Contact your course instructor and/or fieldwork educator for details.

All pant legs must be trouser, boot-cut or straight in style. No jeans of any color, tight leg pants, jeggings or leggings, or shorts of any length are acceptable during academic activities. Check with your faculty or site supervisor for the dress code for outdoor volunteer events, such as runs/walks, adaptive golf, and CarFit, etc., as the requirements may be slightly different. Clothes should be modest; exposure of the abdomen, chest, or backside due to low cut tops or low rise pants is not acceptable. Flip flops, sandals, and open-toed shoes are **never** allowed, due to safety precautions. Heels should be a sensible height for both walking on campus and working with clients. Soles should be non-slip.

Grooming: Jewelry, makeup, and grooming should be professional and adhere to safety and hygiene

Adapted from: (2012). Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine. Standards and policies. Recommendations for professional attire (all students). Retrieved on 5/20/2014 from http://www.medschool.vcu.edu/professionalism/standards/pro_attire.html

laws, e.g., no acrylic nails or nail jewelry are permitted. Fragranced products should be minimal, if used at all. Earrings should be limited to 1 or 2 per ear. With the exception of ear piercing, there will be no visible body piercing, e.g., no tongue piercing, nose piercing, or eyebrow rings/bars. Nail polish is permitted but must not be chipped. Nails should be kept short, clean, neatly manicured, and not extend ¼ inch past the fingertips. In health care and professional settings, e.g., hospitals, clinics, schools, community sites, and professional conferences, visible tattoos must be covered with a bandage or clothing.

For orientation, students should come in business professional dress, as described above. Suits are *not* required, but beach or club attire is not permitted.

Here is a link to a great webpage called “Dress to Impress—Professional Attire” on <http://www.tarleton.edu/careerservices/Students/dress-to-impress.html> that shows both what to wear and what not to wear as a professional. Note that the shoes do not need to be ‘heels’ for women.

Consequences (see College of Health Care Sciences Handbook):

- Asked to leave class or site, with unexcused absence recorded
- Email to student with copy to advisor, director, and department chair
- Note in student’s file in the OT office
- Potential referral to Committee on Student Progress