



# Operating Standard

**Title:** Professional Appearance

**Number:** A4000.15

**Type:** Administrative

**Responsible:** CHRO; Executive Director, Human Resources

**Related Policies:** [B3001](#), [B3003](#), [B3004](#), [A4000](#), [A4100](#), [A4200](#), [A4300](#), [A4400](#)

**Linked Operating Standards:** [A4000.10](#), [A4100.65](#)

**Related Laws:** [42 U.S.C. 2000e](#), [ADA](#), [775 ILCS 5](#), [OSHA](#)

**Related External Standards:** [CUPA-HR](#), [SHRM](#)

**HLC Criterion:** 1C, 2A, 4A

## 1.0 Statement

Shawnee Community College expects employees to maintain a professional appearance that reflects positively on the institution and supports a respectful, cohesive, inclusive, and effective work environment. Professional appearance contributes to workplace culture, community perception, and institutional credibility, while balancing professionalism with safety, comfort, and personal expression.

## 2.0 Purpose & Scope

**2.1 Purpose:** To establish clear and consistent expectations for employee appearance that support professionalism, safety, inclusion, and institutional image.

**2.2 Scope:** This standard applies to all employees in all work-related settings, including on campus, remote work environments, virtual meetings, travel, and College-related online or social media activity where the employee represents the College.

## 3.0 Definitions

- **Business Casual:** Slacks, khakis, dress pants, skirts, blouses, polo shirts, and button-down shirts.
- **Casual Dress Days:** Specific days authorized by Human Resources where employees may wear attire that is more relaxed than standard business casual, including jeans (without holes or excessive wear) and approved casual apparel, while maintaining a professional appearance.
- **Departmental Standards:** Safety- or function-specific attire requirements (e.g., Facilities, Athletics, Allied Health/Nursing) approved by Human Resources.

## 4.0 Procedures

### 4.1 Requests for Exceptions and Accommodations

- A. Employees requesting exceptions to appearance expectations (including religious, cultural, or disability-related accommodations) must submit requests to Human Resources or their supervisor.
- B. Supervisors must consult with Human Resources prior to approving exceptions or accommodations to ensure consistency, compliance with applicable laws, and alignment with this standard.
- C. Human Resources will review and approve requests involving legal accommodations (e.g., religious, cultural, or disability-related) and provide guidance on appropriate implementation.

#### *4.2 Review & Approval*

- A. Human Resources is responsible for reviewing and approving appearance-related exceptions and ensuring consistency across departments.
- B. Supervisors will consult Human Resources when questions arise regarding application of this standard.

#### *4.3 Addressing Appearance Concerns*

- A. Supervisors are responsible for addressing appearance concerns promptly and respectfully with employees.
- B. Supervisors will consult Human Resources, as needed, to ensure consistent and appropriate application of this standard.

#### *4.4 Corrective Action*

- A. When appearance concerns are not resolved through coaching or guidance, *corrective action* may be taken in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.
- B. Human Resources will advise supervisors on appropriate responses to ensure fairness and consistency.

#### *4.5 Communication of Expectations*

- A. Human Resources will communicate updates, clarifications, or temporary modifications to appearance expectations through official College channels.
- B. Supervisors are responsible for reinforcing expectations within their departments and addressing questions or concerns in consultation with Human Resources.
- C. Employees are expected to remain informed of communicated expectations and comply with this standard.
- D. Communication may include institutional announcements, supervisor briefings, and guidance provided through Human Resources.

### **5.0 Guidelines**

#### *5.1 Professional Appearance Expectations*

- A. Employees are expected to maintain an appearance that is appropriate to their role and reflects professionalism, respect, and good judgment.

#### *5.2 Acceptable Attire*

- A. Business casual is the standard expectation for daily work.
- B. Casual attire is defined as more relaxed clothing (e.g., jeans or College-branded apparel) that is permitted only on designated days and must still reflect a professional appearance.
- C. Supervisors should evaluate attire based on job function, safety, and institutional image rather than personal preference.

#### *5.3 Unacceptable Attire*

- A. Clothing that is excessively casual, revealing, unsafe, or disruptive to the work environment is not permitted.
- B. Examples of attire that may be inappropriate include, but are not limited to: shorts, tank tops, midriff tops, recreational or athletic attire (outside of job-related functions), and clothing displaying profanity or inappropriate messaging.

#### 5.4 Casual Dress Days

- A. On designated Casual Dress Days or other approved occasions, employees may wear College-branded apparel (e.g., Shawnee Community College t-shirts, spirit wear) or other approved themed attire, such as sports jerseys.
- B. Jeans without holes or excessive wear are permitted only on designated casual dress days or as otherwise approved.
- C. All attire must remain appropriate for the workplace, free from offensive or inappropriate messaging, and consistent with safety and job-related requirements.
- D. Participation in these days must be communicated through official College channels.

#### 5.5 Virtual and Remote Work Expectations

- A. Employees participating in virtual meetings must maintain a professional appearance consistent with this standard.
- B. Visible backgrounds and presentation should remain appropriate to a professional setting.

#### 5.6 Accommodations and Inclusion

- A. The College supports reasonable accommodations for religious, cultural, and disability-related attire.
- B. Accommodations will be provided unless doing so would create an undue hardship or pose a safety risk, consistent with applicable law.
- C. Application of this standard will be consistent with applicable federal and state laws and will not discriminate based on any protected characteristic.

#### 5.7 Department-Specific Expectations

- A. Certain departments may require specialized attire based on safety or job function.
- B. Department heads must document and review such requirements annually with Human Resources to ensure they remain job-related, non-discriminatory, and consistent with institutional expectations.

### 6.0 Roles & Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Maintain professional appearance and comply with this standard.
- **Supervisors:** Model expectations, address concerns, and consult Human Resources to ensure consistency.
- **Human Resources:** Provide guidance, approve exceptions, ensure consistency, and communicate expectations.
- **President:** May modify or suspend this standard to meet institutional needs.

### 7.0 SCCES Connections

This Operating Standard supports the Employee Engagement Element within the SCCES framework, particularly the Workplace Climate, Contribution & Voice, and Employee Retention Key Performance Areas.

It establishes expectations for professional appearance that contribute to:

- A professional and welcoming campus environment (Workplace Climate)
- Clear and consistent expectations (Contribution & Voice)
- A positive and inclusive workplace supporting retention (Employee Retention)

These practices reinforce institutional credibility, consistency, and organizational culture.

## 8.0 Monitoring Report Connections

This Operating Standard supports the College's annual Human Resources Monitoring Report by generating evidence related to professional standards, workplace consistency, and supervisory practices.

Evidence generated through this standard contributes to the evaluation of Board policies, including:

- B3000 – General Executive Limitations.
- B3001 – Employee Relationships.
- B3004 – Employment, Compensation, and Benefits.

Evidence generated may include:

- Reported concerns related to professional appearance
- Accommodation and exception requests
- Coaching and corrective actions
- Training and communication activity

The following alignment illustrates how operational practices defined in this standard contribute to key Monitoring Report measures:

<b>Operational Area</b>	<b>Evidence Generated</b>	<b>Monitoring Alignment</b>
Appearance Standards	Reported concerns or inconsistencies	Workplace Climate
Accommodations	Requests and approvals	Equity & Inclusion
Supervisory Practices	Coaching and corrective actions	Accountability Culture
Communication	Training and updates	Organizational Effectiveness

Collectively, these indicators provide insight into employee behavior, workplace conditions, and institutional culture, supporting continuous improvement and timely intervention.

## 9.0 Data Collection & Review

This Operating Standard supports ongoing evaluation of professional appearance expectations and consistency across the institution through structured data collection and review.

*Data Collection:* Human Resources will maintain and review data related to:

- Reported concerns regarding employee appearance
- Requests for accommodations or exceptions
- Corrective actions or supervisory coaching related to this standard
- Communication and training related to appearance expectations

*Review and Analysis:* Human Resources will evaluate compiled data for patterns, trends, and areas of concern, including consistency across departments, frequency of exceptions, and alignment with institutional expectations. Findings will be used to inform communication, training, and potential updates to this standard.

*Review Cycle:* Data will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with formal reviews conducted at least annually or as needed in response to operational needs, trends, or institutional priorities.

*Coordination:* Human Resources will coordinate with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, as appropriate, to support alignment with SCCES and Monitoring Report development.

### 10.0 Oversight & Review

This Operating Standard will be reviewed at least every three (3) years, or sooner as required by legal, regulatory, accreditation, or institutional needs.

Oversight of this standard is coordinated by Human Resources, with support from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to ensure alignment with SCCES and Monitoring Report development.

Revisions will follow the College's Shared Governance processes and will be documented in the Change Log.

<b>Change Log</b>		<b>Governance Unit: Human Resources Council</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>	
04.30.26	Initial Adoption; Replaces legacy policy 6117.	