



**University of Kansas
School of Pharmacy
Professionalism Tool Kit**

Definition of professionalism: “The conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person.”¹

American Society for Health-System Pharmacists Characteristics of a Professional²:

1. Knowledge and skills of the profession
2. Commitment to self-improvement of skills and knowledge
3. Service orientation
4. Pride in and service to the profession
5. Covenantal relationship with the patient
6. Creativity and innovation
7. Conscience and trustworthiness
8. Accountability for his or her work
9. Ethically sound decision-making
10. Leadership

Importance of professionalism in pharmacy:

Pharmacy is a profession. The job market is competitive, and pharmacy is a very small community. Your four years of pharmacy school are one continuous interview. Your classmates, professors, preceptors, and professional colleagues all see your behavior and can end up providing that “make or break” comment to a residency director or potential employer. The way you present yourself during those four years shapes their opinion of you and whether or not you represent the profession of pharmacy well and determines if they are willing to help you secure a position. Assume that behavior such as regularly coming to class/rotations late, being unprepared, arguing about points/tasks will follow you even when you leave the School of Pharmacy for rotations and after graduating.

1. Merriam-Webster Online. Professionalism. Merriam-Webster online dictionary, 2019. Available from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/professionalism>. Accessed November 21, 2019.
2. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. ASHP statement on professionalism. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm*. 2008; 65:172-4.

Dress Code

The dress code standards noted here are expectations specific to the KU School of Pharmacy and are intended to provide a professional face to the School and the profession. While a student of the School and representing the School, you are expected to follow the dress code information noted here unless and until told differently. Individuals who are not students in the School of Pharmacy may dress differently than noted here, but their deviation from these professional dress norms should not be seen as permission to dress differently from these expectations.

Definition of formal business attire:

- Women: Appropriate dresses, pantsuits, and skirts with shirts and/or business suits (skirts and dresses should be approximately knee length or longer)
- Men: Business suits with a shirt and tie

Definition of business professional attire:

- Women: Appropriate dresses or skirts and slacks with blouses or button-down shirts. Skirts and dresses should be approximately knee length or longer. All tops should have sleeves or be covered with a sweater or jacket
- Men: Trousers or slacks with button-down shirts and tie, with or without sport coat or sweater

Definition of business casual attire:

- Women: Pencil skirts, blouses, button-down shirts, polos, trousers, khakis, blazers, sweaters
- Men: Trousers, slacks, khakis, button-down shirts, polos, sweater, sport coats

Appropriate footwear:

- Women: Flats, loafers, mules, boots, heels (no higher than 3 inches), clean single colored sneakers (in some cases)
- Men: Loafers, oxfords, boots, clean single colored sneakers (in some cases)

Skills Laboratory Sessions:

- A lab coat must be worn with a name pin/badge affixed to the lab coat pocket in the correct orientation to be readable. Lab coats must be clean, unwrinkled, unstained and free from unpleasant odor.
- All clothing (e.g. tee shirts), jewelry or tattoos shall be free of the following: profanity; violent images, wording or suggestion; sexually suggestive phrases or images; alcohol, tobacco, drugs or advertisements for such products.
- General Lab sessions:
 - Appropriate attire includes ***long pants*** and ***closed-toed shoes***.
 - Shorts/skirts/open-toed shoes are not appropriate.
 - Ball caps or hats and sunglasses cannot be worn.
- Professional Encounters (e.g. OSLE, OSCE):
 - Professional dress (lab coat and business casual attire) is required for a standardized patient or simulator mannequin encounter.
 - A lab coat must be worn with a name pin/badge affixed to the lab coat pocket in the correct orientation to be readable. Lab coats must be clean, unwrinkled, unstained and free from unpleasant odor.

IPPE/APPE:

White coat, name pin/badge, and business professional unless otherwise specified. Sites may specify policies for fingernail length and color or may have policies regarding piercings and/or tattoos. Any restrictions must be followed.

Professional Meetings:

Formal business attire with name pin/badge unless otherwise specified.

Interviews:

Formal business attire.

Not Allowed at Any Time:

Hats (does not include religious headwear), hoodie hoods on your head, bandanas, baggy or sagging bottoms, shorts, mini-skirts, mid-drifts or low-cut tops, backless clothing, tank tops and spaghetti strap tops, cut-off shirts, pajamas, slippers, and flip-flop sandals.

Professionalism Dos and Don'ts

E-mail Communication

DO:

- Respond to e-mails within 24-48 hours
- Use appropriate spelling, grammar, spacing/paragraphs, and punctuation
- Always use formal salutations (e.g. "dear", "hello", etc.)
- Always use a closing/thank you
- Address someone with their title
- Take a minute to read over your e-mail for clarity
- Consider if e-mail is the best form of communication before sending an e-mail
- Reach out to preceptors before starting the IPPE/APPE
- Use your KU email account (i.e. not Gmail) for communication with faculty and preceptors
- Add an appropriate signature to your email with your contact information
- Follow-up to make sure someone received your email if you have not received a response in a week

DON'T:

- Assume that no response means something is approved/ok
- Use first names unless directed otherwise
- Expect a response after normal business hours
- Introduce yourself as a PharmD candidate or list PharmD candidate in your signature until your P4 year
- Advertise for a student organization using slang or inappropriate language
- Send flaming e-mails
- Use all capitals
- Use emojis
- Text or tweet your e-mail to a faculty member or preceptor
- Put something in an e-mail that you would not say to the person directly
- Use email to communicate urgent information requiring a response
- Use threatening language when seeking additional points (e.g. "you will get bad evaluations if you don't give me the points", "I will go to the dean about this")
- Make up an inappropriate e-mail alias (e.g. pillpusher@ku.edu, foxylady@ku.edu, etc.)

Phone/In-Person Communication

DO:

- Use a person's title and last name until directed otherwise
- Identify yourself, your contact information, and purpose for conversation
- Repeat your name and phone number for voicemails
- Indicate when you don't know the answer and offer to look it up
- Record a professional voicemail on your personal phone number
- Use an appropriate talking pace

DON'T:

- Assume familiarity because preceptor/patient is a similar age
- Make jokes that could be considered inappropriate or offensive

- Use profanity or slang

Social Media

DO:

- Maintain a professional presence
- Ask permission from people before posting their name or picture
- Consider other possible interpretations of comments/jokes before posting

DON'T:

- Post anything about patients
- Post anything which you wouldn't want an employer to see
- Defame the character of faculty, fellow students, etc.

Dress

DO:

- Keep clothes and shoes clean
- Dress to impress
- Always have your white coat clean and ironed
- Avoid clothing and accessories with profanity, offensive language, or advertisements
- Cover tattoos and remove non-traditional piercings or replace with unobtrusive studs
- Maintain proper grooming (i.e. hair and facial hair are orderly, etc.)

DON'T:

- Assume you can dress casually because the preceptor or faculty member does
- Wear clothes that are see-through or too small
- Wear scrubs unless specifically approved
- Wear fingernails that interfere with patient care or sterile compounding
- Wear hand/wrist jewelry when compounding sterile products
- Wear strong perfume/cologne

Professional Talks/Classroom Lectures

DO:

- Prepare before the talk/lecture
- Pay attention
- Participate when asked
- Ask questions when interested or confused

DON'T:

- Have side conversations
- Turn your back to the speaker during the presentation
- Browse unprofessional websites during talks, especially when others can see your screen
- Work on material for another course/organization
- Play with your phone

Professional Writing

DO:

- Be concise
- Reference appropriately
- Reference following the American Medical Association (AMA) style, unless otherwise directed

DON'T:

- Plagiarize on anything you write
- Use contractions
- Use exclamation points
- Use unnecessary terms to sound more important or to lengthen a document
- Use slang terminology

Self-Directed Learning

DO:

- Seek out work if you don't have any
- Actively seek information/definitions you don't know

DON'T:

- Assume that completing a task means you are done for the day
- Wait for someone to ask you to help with something
- Give up on something because you don't know how to do it

Academic Grievances

DO:

- Follow appropriate grievance procedures outlined in the student handbook
- Speak respectfully
- Document information on what happened and what actions you've taken
- Be consistent in your comments
- Wait until you are calm before communicating with faculty or preceptors

DON'T:

- Use threatening language when seeking additional points (e.g. "you will get bad evaluations if you don't give me the points", "I will go to the dean about this")
- Approach different faculty members attempting to get different responses
- Let your emotions get the better of you

Teleconference or Video Conference (e.g. Zoom)

DO:

- Be professional
- Type out your full first and last name to identify yourself
- Keep your microphone muted unless talking
- Be appropriately dressed
- Sign in early to address issues before the meeting starts

- Allow a longer pause when asking a question to allow for internet speed differences
- Clarify expectations for using functions such as chat, electronic hand raise, etc. and use them when requested
- Be in a well-lit room
- Clarify if you need your camera on at all times
- Say your name when speaking so everyone knows who you are
- Test your hardware and familiarize yourself with the program prior to your first meeting
- If sharing your screen only share the necessary page
- Stay engaged
- Participate
- Follow all other etiquette rules

DON'T:

- Have a mess or personal/sensitive items visible when your camera is on
- Be in a room with high traffic or noise, if possible
- Be late
- Use an inappropriate name, picture, or background
- Have personal chats in the open chat space for everyone
- Shout
- Interrupt other speakers
- Have side conversations either in-person, on the phone, or through instant message/chat
- Make distracting noises when not on mute such as typing on your keyboard or having your phone sound on
- Eat during educational sessions

General

DO:

- Be proactive in communicating issues or scheduling conflicts
- Be on time or a few minutes early
- Complete activities/assignments on time
- Seek clarification when confused or unsure how to do something
- Graciously accept any tasks assigned to you

DON'T:

- Ask to leave early
- Get up in the middle of class to go to the bathroom, etc.
- Assume you can go to lunch when you want
- Use your phone for personal reasons
- Assume faculty/preceptors will be accommodating to schedule conflicts or other issues

Contacting IPPE/APPE Preceptors

Treat each site as a month-long interview. Each person you meet/work with on a rotation is a potential professional connection. This includes pharmacists, technicians, and other healthcare professionals. They may be able to provide an introduction to residency directors, potential employers, or be your employer/co-worker. Give a good first impression by being proactive and professional in your communication.

- Reach out at least two (2) weeks before the scheduled first day (may be e-mail or phone)
- Provide your e-mail and phone number and indicate your preferred contact information method
- Request the following information:
 - Start time and tentative end time
 - Parking
 - Meeting location
 - Dress code
 - Space for personal items/lunch
 - Materials needed (particular references, pen and paper, etc.)
 - Activities to complete before starting (ID badge, e-learnings, etc.)
 - Additional information unique to site (need for government ID, stethoscope, etc.)
- If no response in a week, follow up with preceptor and/or site
- When response received, confirm receipt of information and clarify any remaining or new questions

Example First E-mail

Dear Dr. [last name],

My name is [name] and I will be on rotation with you at [site] starting on [date]. I am emailing today for information about the rotation to make sure I am prepared for the first day.

1. What time and where should I meet you on the first day? Is there anything I should do at the site before meeting with you?
2. Is there a specific place I should park?
3. What materials do you recommend reviewing prior to starting the rotation? Are there any materials or equipment (e.g. stethoscope) I should have during the rotation?
4. Is there anything else you think I should know prior to starting?

I can be reached either by email at [KU email] or by phone at [phone number]. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

[Closing],

[Name]

[Email signature]

Email Signatures

Email signatures are beneficial to have at the end of an email. A signature can provide important information to those you contact including contact information and position information.

- List your name
 - If you go by a nickname that is not a shortened version of your first name, put your full name in parenthesis (e.g. Joe (John) Smith)
 - If you go by a middle name, put only your first initial and list your full middle name (e.g. F. Jane Smith)
- Provide your position in the PharmD program
 - Do not list year of graduation, it is assumed by your position in the program
 - P1-P3 options:
 - P1 Student
 - P1 Student Pharmacist
 - First Professional Year Student Pharmacist
 - First Professional Year Pharmacy Student
 - P4 options:
 - PharmD Candidate
- List important positions you hold within organizations (Class President, Kappa Epsilon Secretary)
 - Limit to two positions
 - Consider listing only the most important or impressive
 - Do not list memberships or work positions
- List your contact information (email and phone if comfortable)
- Acceptable to list pronouns (e.g. he/him/his) but not standard across signatures

Example Pharmacy Student (P1 through P3) Email Signature

[Name]
P1 Student Pharmacist
[position]
[KU email]
[phone if comfortable]

Example PharmD Candidate (P4) Email Signature

[Name]
PharmD Candidate
[position]
[KU email]
[phone if comfortable]

Example Voicemail

Hello, this message is for Dr. [Last name]. This is [Name], a student pharmacist at [site name]. I can be reached at [phone number]. I am calling in regard to [prescription, drug information question, etc.]. [Provide brief, HIPAA-compliant statement]. Please give me a call back at your earliest convenience to discuss. Once again, my name is [Name] and I can be reached at [phone number]. Thank you.