



PROPEL PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE & DRESS STANDARDS

At Propel, we don't view dress standards as rules for compliance—we view them as tools for Leverage.

Every student who walks through our doors is investing in themselves, their future, and their professional reputation. How you present yourself matters because employers notice before you ever open your mouth. The habits you build here directly translate to how seriously you'll be taken on a jobsite, in an interview, or during a promotion conversation.

Our appearance standards are designed to help you optimize opportunity, align with real-world industry expectations, and begin developing a professional identity that works *for* you—not against you.

While these standards reflect common employer expectations, some employers or worksites may require stricter guidelines, especially during interviews, externships, or work-based learning—both on and off campus. Certain programs may also have additional safety-specific requirements that must be followed at all times.

General Professional Standards

The following guidelines apply to clothing, tattoos, jewelry, exposed skin, personal items, and similar expressions of appearance.

Our goal is simple: nothing you wear should distract from your competence, character, or employability.

- Clothing, accessories, tattoos, or paraphernalia may not display vulgarity, profanity, sexually explicit content, racially provocative imagery, derogatory language, or socially inappropriate messaging.
- These standards apply to tattoos. Tattoos that violate these guidelines must be covered while on campus.
- Threatening, violent, extremist, or hate-based language, symbols, imagery, or paraphernalia are not permitted.
- Drug-, alcohol-, or gang-related imagery or messaging is prohibited. Club or color patches are not permitted on campus.



- Dress standards are applied consistently and equitably. No student will be treated differently based on race, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability status, ethnicity, cultural identity, or religious identity.

Caps, Hats & Headwear

- Propel-branded apparel, industry-related caps, United States Armed Forces headwear, or plain baseball-style or knit caps are permitted.
- Caps must be worn forward and removed or adjusted as required in lab environments for Safety.
- All headwear must be clean, intact, and in good condition.
- Bandanas or similar head wraps may be worn to manage hair during lab activities.
- Religious headwear is permitted unless it presents a safety concern in a lab or shop environment.

Clothing & Uniform Standards

Your clothing should signal readiness, reliability, and respect for the trade.

- Pants must be solid-colored, clean, and free of rips or tears.
- Acceptable pants include blue jeans, commercially available work pants, or corduroy pants (except in the welding program).
- Pants must be worn at the waist, fit properly, and be secured with a belt. Pants may not drag on the ground.

The following are not permitted:

- Multicolored pants
- Overalls or cutoffs
- Sweatpants, yoga pants, or athletic wear
- Shorts
- Camouflage pants
- Pants with oversized or excessive pockets

Approved Propel uniform shirts (t-shirts or polos, as designated by program) are required.

- Button-up work shirts must be buttoned from the second button down.
- Shirts with tails must be tucked in.
- Uniform shirts may not be cut, altered, or modified.
- Vests of any kind are not permitted.
- Hoodies may be worn; however, hoods may not be worn over the head inside Propel Buildings.
- Hoodie drawstrings must be tucked in during lab activities for safety.



- Undershirts may be worn, but Propel-branded apparel must remain the outermost layer.
- All clothing must be clean, well-maintained, and professional in appearance.

Footwear

Footwear should reflect jobsite readiness—not convenience.

- Shoes or boots must have oil- and slip-resistant soles and a durable upper appropriate for lab environments.
- Laced footwear must be fully laced with the tongue secured.

The following footwear is not permitted:

- Gym or athletic shoes
- Canvas shoes
- Flip-flops or sandals
- Open-toed shoes
- High-heeled footwear

Steel-toe footwear is not required unless specified by a program or lab activity.

Jewelry, Piercings & Implants

Professional appearance and safety must work together.

- Dangling jewelry or accessories that present a safety risk must be removed or secured.
- Neck jewelry may not hang outside of clothing.
- Students may be asked to remove jewelry that poses a safety concern or disrupts instruction.
- Only post or stud-style earrings are permitted. Hoop or dangling earrings are not allowed.
- Facial and body piercings, including tongue piercings, are permitted provided they do not create a safety risk.
- Industrial bar piercings are not permitted.
- Facial, microdermal, transdermal, and subdermal implants are permitted if they are simple stud or gem styles.
- Ear piercings larger than standard earrings must be plugged with solid, single-color plugs.



Hair & Grooming

Grooming is part of professionalism—and professionalism builds trust.

- Hair and facial hair must be clean, neat, and well-groomed.
- Hairstyles must reflect a professional standard and not create a safety hazard.
- In lab environments, hair must be secured away from the face, eyes, and equipment.
- Hair extending beyond the collar must be tied back or restrained.
- Hair may be worn in a bun or a single ponytail; ponytails must be tucked into the shirt during lab activities.
- Bandanas or similar head wraps may be used to help secure hair in labs.

Additional Safety & Campus Standards

- ANSI-approved safety glasses with side shields must be worn at all times in lab environments.
- Blue-light-blocking lenses are permitted if they meet ANSI standards.
- Sunglasses or shaded safety glasses are not permitted unless approved by Student Services with a medical provider's note.
- Propel ID badges must be worn at all times on campus. • Badges must be visible, unaltered, worn above the waist, and displayed on the outermost layer.
- Chain wallets, hanging key rings, or items that hang from the waist are not permitted in labs.
- Headphones and personal audio devices may not be used during class or lab.
- Cell phones must be silenced and stored out of sight during class and lab activities.

Welding Program – Additional Requirements

All general standards apply, with the following welding-specific requirements:

- Corduroy pants are not permitted. Blue jeans or commercially available work pants are required.
- All shirts and jackets must be 100% cotton.
- Welding jackets must be fire-retardant and approved for lab use.
- Welding students are permitted to keep their shirts untucked in the lab for safety reasons.
- Jeans or pants should not be tucked into boots or shoes.



Accountability, Guidance & Exceptions

Our role is to prepare you—not punish you.

If a student does not meet appearance standards, staff will first address the issue through advice and education. Continued noncompliance may result in removal from class or lab, and repeated issues may lead to dismissal from the program.

Any unresolved concerns will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by campus leadership.

Safety and professional readiness will always guide decisions.

Students seeking accommodations for medical or religious reasons should contact Student Services to begin the appropriate process.

The Bottom Line

You're not here to blend in. You're here to stand out—for the right reasons.

How you present yourself is part of your personal brand. Propel's standards exist to help you build one that opens doors long after graduation.