



The health system of tomorrow **NOW.**

Student Orientation to University Health System

Last updated 2016-11-30



Is this document for you?

This orientation is intended for students who already have a confirmed/approved placement with University Health System. If you still need to submit a placement request, please work with your school.

Welcome.

University Health System is proud to teach the next generation of health professionals. We take our job seriously, and we aim to provide an outstanding learning environment. Whether your time with us is a short one-day internship or a year-long rotation, we expect you to follow the policies and guidelines outlined here. If you have any questions, please ask us.

Thank you for your professionalism and commitment to learning.

We expect great customer service from you.

University Health System strives to provide excellent customer service. As a guest in our facilities, you will be in contact with patients, and we expect that you will uphold our high standards.

There are too many behaviors to mention in this document, but they all can be summarized by simply using good judgment. Specifically, we ask these things of you.

- When greeting our patients and their families, always make eye contact, smile, and address them by Mr., Sir, Mrs., Ms., or Ma'am, unless they invite you to address them more informally.
- This is a large facility, and every day, patients get lost. Please make every effort to help these individuals by asking if you can be of assistance or find them someone who can be.

Enter patient rooms respectfully.



While on rotation at UHS, there will be times when you need to enter a patient's room.

Please respect their privacy by first:

- Knocking and asking permission before entering
- Introducing yourself and stating the purpose for your visit

Park respectfully.

If you will be parking your car at UHS facilities, please follow the rules and drive slowly.

- If you will be at University Hospital, please ask your school coordinator for more information on paying for parking garage access.
- If not, please park in staff (not patient) areas. Usually, staff parking is farther away from the front of the building.

No smoking on any UHS property.



Smoking is not allowed in any of the building owned or operated by UHS including the parking lots. To take a smoke break, you must leave UHS property.

We use trained medical interpreters.

We must provide care in the patient's preferred language. If you encounter a patient with limited English proficiency or who is deaf or hard of hearing, you must not simply rely on your knowledge of a language—you must reach out to UHS staff for guidance in helping the patient. Language Assistance is accessible throughout UHS using any UHS network phone or CyraCom-issued phone.

Students might be asked to serve as chaperones.

A chaperone is a person who is present during a medical examination or procedure and acts as a witness for both the patient and the healthcare provider. University Health System provides chaperones, when necessary, to protect patient privacy and/or employee safety. Please see [UHS Policy 9.06.04 Providing Chaperones for Patients](#).

We have a restraints policy.

Restraint is defined as any method of physically restricting a person's freedom of movement, physical activity or normal access to his/her body and are used on patients to ensure their safety and prevent them from injuring themselves or others. It is our policy that all patients have the right to be free from restraints, unless medically necessary. Please see the entire [UHS Policy 9.13 Restraints and Seclusions](#).

Know about our advance directives policy.

Competent adult patients shall be provided with written information on their rights under Texas law to make decisions regarding medical care, including the right to accept or refuse life-sustaining treatment and make advance healthcare directives. Please see [UHS Policy 9.07 Advance Directives](#).

We believe in patient rights.

We believe in patient rights, and we strive to make sure our patients know their rights. Please see [UHS Policy 9.06 Patient Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Rules apply to the news media.



Media representatives are not permitted on UHS property without an escort from Corporate Communications. They cannot interview or photograph patients without prior consent. If you see media representatives that do not appear to be escorted, please call:

- Corporate Communications 210-358-2335 or
- Protective Services 210-358-2465

Take confidentiality and privacy very seriously.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, or HIPAA, is a law that requires health care workers to guard the privacy and confidentiality of every patient's Protected Health Information (PHI).

Please be **EXTREMELY** careful. Health care students **CAN BE PROSECUTED** by the Federal Government for violating HIPAA.

- HIPAA violations can happen in casual conversations after you're done with your shift.
- HIPAA violations can happen on social media.
- You cannot even look at the health information of anyone you are not taking care of (friends, neighbors, your child, etc.) without written authorization already being on file in the patient's medical record.

Voice concerns when you need to.

The University Health System HIPAA Privacy Officer is Sherry Johnson. Please feel free to contact her at any time if you have any questions about HIPAA or to report a HIPAA violation.

University Health System's Integrity Standards provide guidance in carrying out duties within appropriate ethical and legal standards. Students are expected to adhere to the same guidelines when working with UHS staff and patients.

Everyone must wear an ID badge.

The University Health System unit, department, or preceptor hosting you is in charge. If you have not already gotten instructions, ask them (or your school coordinator) if you should wear your school ID badge or if you will need to wear a University Health System ID badge.

If you do not have a school ID badge, you must get a UHS ID badge. Please ask your school coordinator for more information.

Not everyone gets badge access.

The University Health System unit, department, or preceptor hosting you is in charge. Ask them (or your school coordinator) if you will need badge access. You can only have badge access by first getting a UHS ID badge. Please ask your school coordinator for more information.

Be careful who you let in.

Whether you have badge access or are being let in by someone who has badge access (such as your preceptor), always take a moment to watch the door close. A favorite target for seasoned criminals is to sneak into restricted areas behind someone with badge access.

Act as if all areas are not secure.

Do not leave your belongings or any equipment unattended. Badge-secured areas are a favorite target for thieves because people lower their guard when they think they are in a secure area.

Take infection control seriously.

Infections remain a problem in healthcare facilities. Do your part by following all procedures carefully and never taking shortcuts.

Watch your hand hygiene.



Hand washing compliance rates are unacceptable. Nationwide, less than 50% of medical staff use appropriate hand washing procedures.

Alcohol-based rub is best.



Several studies show that nurses who routinely cleaned their hands between patients by using an alcohol-based hand rub had less skin irritation and dryness than nurses who washed their hands with soap and water. However, when alcohol-based hand rub is not available or hands are visibly soiled, wash hands with soap and water using warm water and only one pump of soap. Scrub for at least 15 seconds and avoid touching the towel dispenser.

Use disinfectants appropriately.



All hospital-approved disinfectant wipes and sprays have a kill-time of two minutes, which means the surface being cleaned needs to stay wet for at least two minutes to properly sanitize the area. Hospital disinfectants are safe for use in workspaces such as desks and phones.

Cover your coughs and sneezes.



Do not spread infection by leaving your coughs and sneezes uncovered.

Always use appropriate PPE.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) consists of protective barrier items worn to protect you from exposure to blood, body fluids, or airborne particles. For every situation, there is an appropriate type of PPE. Please make sure you fully understand the PPE expectations your instructor or UHS preceptor has given you.

Specific PPE items should be worn the entire time you are in an isolation patient's room and should NEVER be worn outside patient care areas. Never take shortcuts. Always wear the appropriate PPE.

Protect yourself from bloodborne pathogens.

Bloodborne pathogens are viruses found in blood or certain body fluids. To become infected by a bloodborne pathogen, a person has to come in direct contact with infected blood or certain body fluids. This most commonly happens through a needle-stick, but it can also happen other ways, such as through splashes into mucous membranes or entry through an open cut.

Use of barriers such as gowns, gloves, face shields, goggles, or masks is always recommended when potential contact with blood or certain body fluids is anticipated.

If exposed to bloodborne pathogens, please follow the protocol.

1. Stop what you are doing
2. Dispose of sharps
3. Wash with soap and water
4. Notify your supervisor/instructor right away (they will attempt to obtain source blood, if possible)
5. Complete on-the-job-injury (OJI) form
6. Report IMMEDIATELY to the urgent care unit appropriate to your location and the day/time (Employee Health Clinic, Express Med Clinic, or Emergency Department)

This is an abbreviated version of the official protocol. If exposed, immediately seek help from a UHS staff member or your instructor.

Know what belongs in the red bag.



Red Bag Waste or biohazardous, regulated waste, is defined by Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) as:

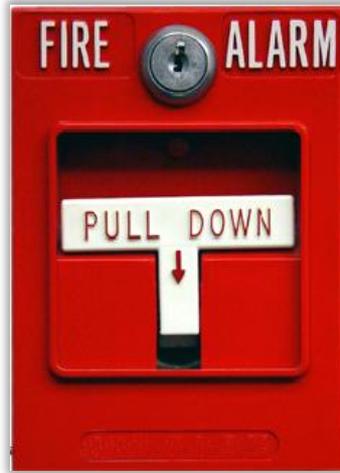
- Liquid or semi-liquid blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- Contaminated items that would release blood or other potentially infectious materials in a liquid or semi-liquid state if compressed.
- Items that are caked with dried blood or other potentially infectious materials and are capable of releasing these materials during handling and pathological and microbiological wastes containing blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Stay alert for emergency announcements.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| CODE RED Fire | CODE BLUE Cardiac / Respiratory Arrest | CODE GRAY Activation of UHS Disaster Plan | CODE WHITE Armed Intruder or Active Shooter |
| CODE YELLOW Utility Failure | CODE GREEN Combative Person | CODE BLACK Bomb Threat | CODE PURPLE Joint Commission |
| CODE PINK Infant/Child Abduction | CODE ORANGE Hazardous Agent or Explosive Incident | CODE SKYWARN Severe Weather | CODE SILVER Lost Adult |

UHS communicates incidents using codes, such as code blue or code red. While you are in our facilities, you might hear codes announced over the intercom system. Should there be an emergency, you will be expected to follow the instructions of the UHS supervisor in the area.

UHS uses Code Red to announce a fire.



If a Code Red is called in your area, or if the sirens and strobes on the fire alarm system activate, follow the instructions of the UHS supervisor in the area and/or remember the acronym RACE.

- **Rescue:** If possible to do so safely, help nearby patients, employees, and visitors evacuate the immediate area.
- **Alarm:** Use UHS phones and the following call sheet to report a fire at your location.
- **Control/Contain:** Close doors between you and the fire.
- **Extinguish/Evaluate:** If safe to do so, use a fire extinguisher. If unable to, then begin to evacuate.

PASS is for the fire extinguisher.

Just as RACE is the acronym to remember during a Code Red, PASS can help you remember the steps for using a fire extinguisher.

- **Pull:** the pin out of the fire extinguisher by twisting and pulling the pin.
- **Aim:** the fire extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **Squeeze:** the fire extinguisher handle gently.
- **Sweep:** the fire extinguisher back and forth across the base of the fire, slowly approaching the fire as it gets smaller.

Remember electrical safety.



Surge protectors/power strips are used to protect electrical equipment from power surges and are not to be used as extension cords or to simply plug in extra equipment.

If you see a cord that is not in good working condition, unplug equipment by pulling the plug, not the cord.

Know the basics about hazardous materials.

When using hazardous chemicals on UHS property, you must observe all safety and/or environmental precautions outlined in the Safety Data Sheet (SDS). UHS maintains an SDS for every chemical in a searchable online database.

To access the UHS SDS system, please ask a UHS staff member. It is accessible through the UHS intranet 3E quick link located on the intranet homepage or by calling 3E directly at 800-451-8346. If any hazardous chemical you come in contact with cannot be found in the SDS system, contact the Environment of Care Department to get it added.

Take care of your back. Lift safely.



You may be asked to assist in lifting or moving patients and/or equipment. It is important to always be mindful of using proper techniques in either of these situations to avoid injury.

Thank you for reviewing this information.

Remember to email your school coordinator/instructor to let them know you've reviewed this information.