



UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

Uniform Policy

2026/27

Academic Registry

This Policy is available on the University of Cumbria website, and it should be noted that any printed copies are uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to constitute the current version of the policy.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Learners on placement are ambassadors of the University of Cumbria. The uniform policy and dress code are to ensure that all students project a professional appearance and promote public confidence.
- 1.2. Learners must not travel to and from placement in their designated uniform. If undertaking a community placement, branded uniform should be hidden.
- 1.3. Health and safety policies, including those for infection prevention and control, take priority, and attire must always align with these standards. This is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, patients and members of the public.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy ensures that learners on placement represent the University of Cumbria professionally, maintain public trust, and adhere to health and safety standards. It provides guidance on appropriate dress to safeguard the wellbeing of staff, patients, students, and members of the public.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy is applicable to all Health and Social Care professional programmes at the University of Cumbria that contain a placement element where a dress code or uniform is required.
- 3.2. The remainder of this policy uses "health care setting(s)" as a generic term to cover any type of placement setting.
- 3.3. The phrase "the University" refers to the University of Cumbria.
- 3.4. The phrase "Learner(s)" refers to students and apprentices registered with the University of Cumbria and studying towards one of its courses leading to a healthcare professional qualification.
- 3.5. The term "Placement" refers to assessed, observation, elective, experiential and enrichment.
- 3.6. Where a programme is recognised by, and subject to, the regulations and standard of a Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB), the specific PSRB requirements relating to uniform will apply.

4. Non-Compliance with Uniform and Dress Code

- 4.1. If a learner is deemed by their supervisor, assessor, educator,

placement area staff, Practice Educator Facilitator, or university staff member to be inappropriately dressed, guidance will be provided on necessary adjustments. Where adjustments are not possible, the learner will be required to leave the placement setting. Any resulting absence must be recouped, and the breach will be formally recorded by the learner's personal tutor in their placement record.

- 4.2. If a learner wears their uniform outside of duty hours this will be classed as breach of policy and a note will be made in the learner's placement record.
- 4.3. A second breach of the uniform and dress code will be regarded as unprofessional conduct. This will result in the initiation of disciplinary procedures by the Personal Tutor, Academic Assessor or the university.

5. Appropriate Dress Code

- 5.1. Learners of the University of Cumbria are required to wear the designated university-issued uniform when working in applicable practice settings, unless the policy of the host department or Trust specifies otherwise. In such cases, learners must adhere to the local dress code of the respective department or Trust.
- 5.2. A professional appearance must be maintained at all times. Clothing should be clean, smart, and appropriate to the setting.
- 5.3. Learners are responsible for laundering their own uniforms, which must be changed daily and washed separately to prevent cross-infection. Uniforms must be disposed of responsibly, with university branding removed, and may be donated to other enrolled University of Cumbria students.
- 5.4. University-issued uniforms must only be worn during official university practice learning experiences and are not to be used for any other purpose, including paid employment such as bank work.
- 5.5. To support infection prevention and control, learner uniforms must not be worn outside of placement settings.
- 5.6. The University will provide each student with a pre-determined amount of uniform per programme at the start of their programme. Any additional uniform required thereafter is the responsibility of the learner to purchase. The University will supply maternity uniform upon request, provided a minimum of six weeks' notice is given.

6. Uniform Exemptions

- 6.1. The University recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments and to

ensure that no learner is disadvantaged on the basis of a protected characteristic. Accordingly, there may be circumstances in which wearing all or part of the standard uniform is not appropriate or may present a barrier for individual learners. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Learners with disabilities or impairments that affect their ability to wear the standard uniform
- Learners whose religious or cultural practices require specific forms of dress
- Learners with medical conditions that necessitate adjustments
- Learners who are pregnant
- Learners who are trans, non-binary, or undergoing gender reassignment

6.2. Learners should contact the placement team for help and support if any of the above circumstances apply.

7. Uniform Appearance and Guidance

7.1. To minimise the risk of injury to patients, clients, or staff, learners must ensure that items such as pens and scissors are stored safely. Scissors must be placed only in front or lower side pockets of the uniform.

7.2. Hair must be clean, tidy, and secured off the face and above the collar, with minimal use of plain accessories. Facial hair should be neatly groomed. Fingernails must be short, clean, and well-maintained. False nails are not permitted.

7.3. Make-up must be minimal and natural in appearance. False eyelashes, strong perfumes, or aftershaves are not permitted.

7.4. Jewellery must be kept to a minimum. Facial and body piercings are not permitted, and jewellery is restricted to one plain ring, one pair of stud earrings (maximum 5mm diameter), and a fob watch. Exceptions may be considered for religious requirements or medi-alert jewellery or SOS talismans.

7.5. Visible tattoos must be covered while in uniform, except when located on the forearm or hand, where they must remain uncovered to support hand hygiene practices.

7.6. Smoking and vaping in uniform is not permitted and chewing gum must not be consumed whilst on duty.

7.7. Learners are required to adhere to the mobile phone policy of the Trust or placement area. If use is restricted, phones should only be used in exceptional, agreed situations (e.g., for learning support).

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1. Learner Responsibilities:

- Learners are expected to familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy, including the sections relevant to their programme, and to comply with all applicable requirements.
- Learners must wear the full, approved uniform as specified by the University during all placement activities and any other designated occasions.
- Learners must comply with any additional dress code requirements, including footwear, accessories, and personal grooming, as outlined in the programme or Placement Handbook.
- Beyond the initial issue provided by the University, learners are responsible for purchasing any additional or replacement uniform items.
- Any issues with uniform sizing, defects, or delivery should be reported to the relevant administrative team as soon as possible.

8.2. Placement Team Responsibilities:

- Managing the contract with the uniform supplier.
- Ensure each learner receives the standard set of uniform at the commencement of their programme, in accordance with university guidelines.
- Keep detailed records of uniform distribution, including sizes, quantities, and dates of issue.
- Clearly communicate uniform expectations to learners, including dress code standards for placements and any programme-specific requirements.
- Process maternity uniform requests in a timely manner, ensuring learners submit requests with a minimum of six weeks' notice.
- Respond promptly to learner enquiries regarding uniform sizing, replacements, or placement-specific dress codes.
- Liaise with healthcare settings to ensure uniform standards align with provider expectations and regulatory requirements.
- Work with academic and placement staff to identify and address any issues of non-compliance with the uniform policy.
- Regularly review uniform policy documentation and ensure any updates are communicated to learners and relevant staff.

8.3. Academic Institute Responsibilities:

- Ensure all programme teams are familiar with the Uniform Policy and integrate its requirements into programme handbooks, induction materials, and placement preparation activities.
- Communicate uniform and dress code expectations to learners before placement and reinforce these throughout the programme.
- Work collaboratively with the Placement Team to address learner concerns or queries relating to uniform requirements, exemptions, or replacements.

- Support learners who require uniform exemptions due to disability, medical needs, religious or cultural dress requirements, pregnancy, or gender identity, ensuring appropriate adjustments are facilitated.
- Monitor and address learner compliance with the uniform policy during placement-related academic activities and escalate repeated non-compliance through existing academic or fitness-to-practice procedures.
- Liaise with practice partners, healthcare settings, and placement providers to ensure alignment between university policy and local dress code requirements.
- Review the effectiveness of uniform-related guidance annually and contribute to updates of the policy in collaboration with the Placement Team and Academic Registry.
- Ensure academic staff involved in practice learning, assessment, or supervision understand their role in identifying and reporting uniform breaches or concerns.

9. Related Policies and Procedures

- Placement Learning Policy
- University Sourced Placement Allocation Policy
- Student International Travel Policy and Procedure

10. Document Control Information

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