

Policy

Dress Code and Uniform Policy

POLY-102164

1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance to all employees of NSW Health Pathology, on the expectations related to how we represent the organisation in a professional way, ensuring all employees remain compliant with relevant Work, Health and Safety (WHS), Hand Hygiene, and Infection Control Guidelines.

Additionally, guidance is provided on who is required to wear a prescribed NSW Health Uniform, as well as clarity on the expectations for those not required to wear a uniform to dress professionally consistent with our values of Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, Excellence and Safety (RITES).

Where any conflict arises, Work Health and Safety and infection-prevention requirements will take precedence over aesthetic or professional image considerations. This policy is informed by relevant WHS and infection-control principles and developed in alignment with consultation obligations under applicable legislation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- (a) Employees of NSW Health Pathology, whether permanent, casual, or temporary;
- (b) Contractors (including honorary appointments, agency employees, volunteers);
- (c) Students (including those undertaking placements), researchers, or persons delivering services—collectively referred to as ‘employees’ throughout this policy.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Clinical area	Refers to a designated space within a hospital or healthcare facility where clinical or forensic functions are performed, encompassing any area where diagnosis, treatment, and care of patients or deceased take place, including in-patient wards, out-patient clinics, mortuaries and Laboratories.
Compulsory Uniform	Uniforms mandated by NSW Health Pathology for specific roles due to safety, infection control or patient-facing duties.
Direct Clinical Care	Care or treatment involving physical contact with or potential exposure to a patient or deceased person.
Employee	Full-time and part-time employees employed by NSW Health Pathology, and for the purposes of this policy includes contractors, students and researchers.
ID Badge	Identification Badge (ID) is a card that visually identifies a person and typically includes a photograph, person’s name and position title.
Laboratory	A Clinical area where Pathology samples or specimens, are examined/tested.

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Lanyard	A lanyard is typically a strap worn around the neck used to hold and carry items such as an ID card.
Laundry Allowance	An allowance payable to an employee under an applicable Award which compensates the employee for laundering a Uniform that they are required by NSWHP to wear.
Manager	Delegated person responsible for the day-to-day management of the employee.
Non-clinical area	In NSW Health, a non-clinical area is a work environment that does not involve direct contact with patients, clients, deceased persons, or infectious substances. Examples of non-clinical areas include administrative offices, meeting rooms and reception areas, where there is no direct contact with patients.
Non-Compulsory Uniform	A position as identified by NSWHP that is not required to wear an NSW Health Uniform.
NSWHP	New South Wales Health Pathology.
PPE	Personal protective equipment (PPE) is anything a worker uses or wears to keep them healthy and safe.
SARA	Search and Request Anything (SARA) is the portal where NSW Health employees can seek support and make requests.
TAMS	Total Apparel Management System. All NSW Health employees order their uniforms using the online Total Apparel Management System (TAMS). You must use the Total Apparel Management System online order system to select and order garments. TAMS can be accessed via SARA.
Uniform	Items of specific clothing or apparel supplied by the employer to be worn by employees in the course of their duties.
Uniform Allowance	An allowance payable to an employee under an applicable Award which compensates an employee where they are required by NSWHP to wear a Uniform, but NSWHP does not supply the Uniform.

4. Overview of Expectations

- a) NSW Health Pathology values the diversity of its workforce, which includes employees working across a range of roles, environments, and locations—such as patient-facing areas, laboratories, and administrative settings. This policy acknowledges that professional appearance may vary depending on the nature of the role and work environment.

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- b) Employees are expected to maintain a standard of dress that reflects professionalism and aligns with NSW Health Pathology's RITES values, while also considering cultural, religious, and individual differences.
- c) Where this policy requires an employee occupying a particular position to wear prescribed NSW Health Uniform, employees must comply with the uniform requirements. For employees not required under this policy to wear a Uniform, attire should be appropriate for the role and setting, ensuring safety, hygiene, and infection control requirements are met.
- d) The professional appearance requirements vary depending on the nature of work and associated risks, and include (but may not be limited to) the categories below:
 - 1. Patient-Facing Clinical Areas
 - a. Employees must maintain a professional appearance that reflects NSW Health Pathology's image and RITES values.
 - b. Compliance with prescribed NSW Health uniforms and infection control standards is mandatory.
 - 2. Laboratory and Specimen-Handling Areas
 - a. Attire must prioritise safety, hygiene, infection control and contamination prevention.
 - b. Employees must comply with PPE requirements and any laboratory-specific dress guidelines.
 - 3. Non-Clinical Areas (No Patient or Specimen Contact)
 - a. Employees should wear attire appropriate for a professional office environment, considering virtual meeting standards where applicable.
 - b. Clothing should reflect professionalism while respecting cultural, religious, and individual differences.

4.1. Professional Image

- a) All NSWHP employees must maintain a professional appearance at all times.
- b) Clothing should provide appropriate coverage and maintain a neat, professional appearance. Attire should not be excessively sheer, inappropriately revealing, excessively casual, scruffy, untidy, or soiled. Examples of clothing that are not considered professional include midriff tops and excessively short skirts or shorts. While these standards apply across all roles, the level of formality may vary in Non-clinical Areas, provided the overall appearance remains appropriate for the workplace.
- c) Articles of clothing displaying political messages, inappropriate slogans, images, or text are not permitted.
- d) Clothing with sexist, racist, or other offensive messages, cartoons, or drawings is strictly prohibited.
- e) When not wearing a Uniform, attire should represent NSWHP positively and align with our RITES values.
- f) Employees must wear their official identification badge and ensure it is visible while on duty.

4.2. Safety and Infection Control

- a) Workplace attire must not pose a WHS risk to the individual, their colleagues, or patients. This includes avoiding clothing or accessories that could get caught in equipment or impede movement.

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- b) In Laboratory areas, clothing must provide adequate protection against hazards such as chemical exposure. While garments that leave skin exposed—such as sleeveless tops, shorts, or skirts—are ordinarily not permitted, they may be acceptable when a long-sleeved laboratory gown is worn correctly and provides full coverage in accordance with PPE requirements. Closed-in footwear remains mandatory.
- c) Staff providing Direct Clinical Care must start each shift in a clean Uniform, and any visibly contaminated Uniforms (e.g., with blood or body fluids) must be changed promptly.
- d) Uniforms should be laundered regularly to prevent the spread of infectious substances and pathogens.
- e) Lanyards should not be worn in a Clinical Area as they pose entanglement and infection risks. There are available safe alternative methods for ID display (e.g. belt clips, retractable reels).
- f) For those providing Direct Clinical Care, anything that can come into contact with the patient or deceased should be secured or where possible removed. This includes scarves, long hair, ID badges or other items that may scratch, catch, or irritate a patient or deceased.
- g) For employees providing Direct Clinical Care, fingernails must be kept short, clean, and no longer than the fingertip to support effective hand hygiene. Artificial nails, including acrylics, gels, or extensions, are not permitted because they can harbour microorganisms and affect hand hygiene.
- h) Long hair must be tied back in Clinical Areas to meet hygiene and safety requirements
- i) Acceptable Footwear should be non-slip, enclosed and of a practical height. Open footwear is not to be worn by employees working within Clinical Areas, including Laboratories. Thongs are not permitted in any environment. Refer to NSWHP PD 015 Personal Protective Equipment for further guidance.

4.3. Infection Control Requirements

- a) Effective infection prevention and control is central to providing high quality healthcare for patients and a safe working environment for those that work in healthcare settings.
- b) All employees involved in patient, laboratory, mortuary or other activities that can spread infection must comply with the NSW Health Infection Prevention and Control Policy directive PD2023 025.
- c) To comply with the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare*, employees delivering patient care are encouraged to wear short-sleeved clothing. This concept is known as ‘bare below the elbow’, which supports effective hand hygiene and reduces infection risk.
- d) NSW Health Pathology acknowledges that some employees may need to wear long sleeves or make other modifications due to pregnancy, breastfeeding, menopause, disability, skin conditions, or cultural/religious reasons. NSWHP will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate these needs while ensuring infection-control requirements are met as far as reasonably practicable.
- e) Where sleeves are worn in clinical or patient care areas, they must be able to be pushed back securely when engaged in Direct Clinical Care to allow proper hand and forearm hygiene.

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4.4. Cultural/Religious Wear

- a) NSW Health Pathology respects and values cultural and religious diversity. Articles of clothing or jewellery considered to have cultural or religious significance are acceptable provided they do not interfere with acceptable standards of health service delivery (including infection control requirements) and do not pose a WHS risk.
- b) Where an item may pose a WHS or infection-control risk, the following process will apply:
- c) A documented WHS/infection-control risk assessment must be undertaken to determine whether the risk can be mitigated.
- d) If the item is deemed to present an unacceptable risk that cannot be mitigated, the decision to prohibit it must:
 - 1. Be subject to review by the relevant Associate Director of HR or Director of People & Culture in consultation with the WHS Team Lead; and
 - 2. Be communicated in writing to the employee, including the reasons for the decision.
- e) NSW Health Pathology will work with employees to identify reasonable alternatives or adjustments wherever practicable. Employees are encouraged to raise concerns or requests with their immediate manager for consideration.

4.5. Identification Badges

- a) All NSW Health Pathology employees must carry their name badge or employee ID badge to ensure clear identification.
- b) The displayed identification (ID) badge may be either the Hospital or NSWHP-issued photo ID badge or a magnetic name badge.
- c) ID badges should be visible when on duty, displaying the employee's name and title. In consultation with their direct Manager, employees may be permitted to conceal their surname for safety reasons.
- d) Where a risk assessment indicates that visible display could escalate risk to staff, employees may temporarily conceal their ID badge, provided this is consistent with local security procedures and in accordance with the *Protecting People and Property: NSW Health Policy and Standards for Security Risk Management in NSW Health Agencies (Chapter 9 – Access and Egress Control)*. A documented risk assessment should be undertaken if staff raise safety or security concerns regarding ID display.
- e) Defacing or altering an ID badge with labels, clip-ons, markers, etc., is not permitted.
- f) All employees are issued a photo-ID badge at the beginning of their appointment. In some areas, the photo-ID badge is issued by Hospital Management and provides access to permitted areas.
- g) Any loss of a photo-ID badge must be reported to local Security immediately, allowing the badge to be cancelled and replaced.
- h) If an individual is onsite without a visible photo-ID badge, it is appropriate to request identification to confirm they have permission to be onsite.

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- i) Employees required to make home visits as part of their role must always have the photo-ID badge visible.

4.6. Employees required by NSWHP to wear a uniform

- a) NSWHP specifies roles that are required to wear a Uniform, primarily those providing Direct Clinical Care.
- b) The roles specified by NSWHP that are required to wear a Uniform are listed in Table A.
- c) Any changes to the prescribed list of positions in Table A (including introduction of new positions) will require internal consultation with those impacted and relevant internal approvals with a Tier 3 Management Delegation and this Policy Contact Officer.
- d) Uniforms are provided to these employees as per applicable Award requirements. Employees uncertain about uniform requirements should consult with their line manager.
- e) The number of uniforms provided aligns with the NSW Health Allocation Model.
- f) Replacement of uniforms due to 'fair wear and tear' or if lost or stolen is subject to manager approval.
- g) Uniform variations for cultural or religious reasons require approval from the manager and may require consideration of WHS and Infection Control risks.
- h) Employees who wish to order uniforms that align with their chosen gender, body type, or cultural preferences can do so via TAMS. The online TAMS portal displays uniforms based on the gender recorded in the employee profile; selecting 'Unspecified' will display all uniform options available for the assigned job role, allowing employees full flexibility in their choices.
- i) Employees are free to select any uniform items available within their workstream, based on their own comfort, style preferences, and role requirements. This includes the ability to choose any items regardless of gender.

4.7. Uniform & Laundry Allowance

- a) Award conditions determine eligibility and entitlement to allowances in relation to the uniforms and laundering. Please refer to the relevant awards and policy at NSW Health Awards - Remuneration and Conditions
- b) Employees required by NSWHP to wear the NSW Health uniform (refer to Table A) receive allocations as specified in the Uniform Allocation Model prescribed by HealthShare. Uniform allowance will not be payable to these employees since the uniforms are provided by NSWHP (unless the applicable award provides otherwise).
- c) Employees who purchase uniforms at their own expense, whose positions are not listed as compulsory by NSWHP in Table A, do not receive a Uniform Allowance.
- d) Employees in positions identified as compulsory by NSWHP may be eligible for a Laundry Allowance if their uniform is not laundered at NSWHP's expense, where this is provided under the employee's

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applicable Award conditions. The Laundry Allowance also applies to some employees who provide Direct Clinical Care but are not required to wear a uniform, pursuant to the NSW Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award

4.8. Allowances whilst on leave

- a) Laundry Allowances are generally not payable to employees during periods of planned leave exceeding one continuous week, when the uniform is not being laundered.
- b) Refer to the applicable Award for further information as to whether the allowance applies during leave.

4.9. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- a) Where specified in site-specific Safe Work Practices, employees that are required to wear PPE for WHS reasons will be supplied with the appropriate items by NSWHP. Employees must wear the clothing and equipment provided to ensure compliance with:
 - 1. NSW Health Pathology Personal Protective Equipment Policy NSWHP_PD_015
 - 2. Work, Health and Safety Act (2011) (Sect 28 – Duties of Workers) and
 - 3. Work, Health and Safety Regulations (2011) (Sect 46 – Duties of Workers).
- b) PPE Exemptions are dealt with in section 5.6 of the NSW Health Pathology Personal Protective Equipment Policy NSWHP_PD_015. Exemptions to PPE must still comply with hand hygiene and infection control guidelines and WHS standards.
- c) Failure to comply with the direction to wear the prescribed PPE may result in disciplinary action managed in accordance with the NSW Health Code of Conduct.

4.10. Employees who purchase their own uniform

- a) Employees not required by NSWHP to wear a Uniform may purchase a Uniforms at their own cost and should seek approval from their manager to purchase the uniform through the TAMS self-purchase module.
- b) Employees not required by NSWHP to wear a Uniform who self-purchase one are not eligible for the Laundry Allowance (except for nurses who provide Direct Clinical Care, as per Clause 23 of the Public Health System 'Nurses and Midwives' (State) Award).

4.11. Ordering Uniforms

4.11.1. Ordering Process

- a) Orders are placed via the online Total Apparel Management System (TAMS). All new employees will receive clear information during orientation on how to order Uniforms (where required) and any local expectations regarding Uniform use.

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- b) Employees must create, maintain, and update their mandatory personal profile information based on the TAMS Employee User Guide
- c) Employees are encouraged to have their uniform allocation sent to their home address.
- d) Employees will be responsible for ordering their own Uniforms during the allocated order timeframes annually.

4.11.2. Replacement and Additional Items

- a) Replacement of items due to fair wear and tear requires online authorisation by the cost centre manager.
- b) Employees are able to self-purchase over and above their allocation at their own expense.
- c) NSW Health Pathology recognises that additional or replacement Uniform items beyond usual allocations may be required for reasons such as pregnancy, injury, or disability. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the employee's manager.

4.11.3. Resources

The Uniform catalogue and other information is available on the NSW Health intranet on the following link: [NSW Health Uniform Information](#)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Compliance with this policy is a shared responsibility and is supported by obligations under the [NSW Health Code of Conduct \(PD2015 035\)](#).

5.1. Manager Responsibilities

- a) Ensure all employees comply with this policy and any related policies, including Personal Protective Equipment requirements.
- b) When ordering Uniforms on behalf of employees, provide accurate details required for TAMS profile creation (e.g., measurements, home address, contact information).
- c) Seek resolution of issues, including consideration of medical, cultural, religious and gender needs, ensuring the completion of risk assessments in consultation with those affected is undertaken, and adjustments as far as reasonably practicable are adopted.
- d) Address breaches promptly, fairly, and consistently, ensuring employees understand expectations and have the opportunity to rectify issues.
- e) If an employee fails to comply with reasonable direction, after genuine attempts to resolve lack of compliance, or where serious safety risks are present; progress formal disciplinary action in accordance with applicable NSW Health policies and the Code of Conduct.

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5.2. Employee Responsibilities

- Adhere to all provisions of this policy and related applicable policies.
- Where a Uniform is compulsory, wear the complete Uniform and do not mix with personal items.
- Discuss any need to dress outside the provisions of this policy with your manager.
- Follow management directions to change or alter attire to ensure compliance.
- If ordering a Uniform, register and create a profile within the Total Apparel Management System (TAMS).
- Upon leaving NSWHP, return any Uniform or part thereof supplied by NSWHP that is still in use immediately prior to departure.

6. Table A – NSWHP Position Uniform requirements

Positions/Classifications within work areas have been determined below. This list does not extend to the requirements of prescribed PPE within each work area. C = Compulsory (also referred to as Mandated) C* = Compulsory as determined by site specific requirements. C assignment can be assigned to a position/classification with the approval of a Level 3 Approval Delegate – <u>NSW Health Pathology Delegations Manual</u>. NC = Non-Compulsory (also referred to as non-mandated)			
Administration within Hospital/Laboratory - All Classifications	C*	Cytology – All Classifications	NC
Anatomical Pathology – All Classifications	NC	Embryology– All Classifications	NC
Biochemistry/Chemistry – All Classifications	NC	Engineer	NC
Biobank - All Classifications	NC	FASS - Forensic Biology/DNA, Illicit Drug Analysis Unit and Chemical Criminalistics Unit – All Classifications	NC
Blood Marrow Transplant (BMT), BTCT	C	FASS – Administration & Support Services – All Classifications	C*

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Central Specimen Reception – All Classifications	NC	FASS – Drugs & Driving Toxicology, Drug Toxicology Unit, Forensic Toxicology, and Water and Environmental Chemistry – All Classifications	NC
Collections – Registered Nurse, Nurse Manager, Clinical Nurse Educators, Clinical Midwife Specialists/Consultant, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Enrolled Nurse	C	FASS – Forensic Medicine – All Classifications	C*
Collections – Ward, Clinic, Home Collections. Including Administration staff that are located within a Collection centre.	C	FASS – Maintenance, Electrical Tradesperson	C
Courier Drivers	C	Mortuary – All Classifications	C
Customer Service Centres/Call Centre	NC	Multi-Disciplinary Laboratories – All Classifications	NC
Cytogenetics – All Classifications	NC	Pathologists/Staff Specialists/Medical Staff/Post Graduate Fellows – All Classifications	NC
Flow Cytometry– All Classifications	NC	Positions within Corporate Offices, including all state-wide positions	NC
Genetics - All Classifications	NC	Point of Care Testing – All Classifications	NC
Haematology - All Classifications	NC	Stores – All Classifications	NC
Immunology – All Classifications	NC	Transfusion/Blood Bank - All Classifications	NC
Microbiology – All Classifications	NC	Molecular – All Classifications	NC

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7. Legal and Policy Framework

- NSW Health Uniforms Policy PD2019_012
- NSW Health Code of Conduct PD2015_049
- NSW Health Pathology Personal Protective Equipment NSWHP_PD_015
- NSW Health Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings PD2023_025
- NHMRC – Australian Guidelines for Prevention & Control of Infection in Healthcare
- CEC Infection Prevention and Control Practice Handbook: <https://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/keep-patients-safe/infection-prevention-and-control/resources/handbook>
- NSW Health Policy Directive (PD2025_024) Work Health and Safety-Better Practice Procedures
- Work, Health and Safety Act 2011
- Public Hospital Medical Officers (State) Award 2023
- Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award 2023
- Hospital Scientists (State) Award 2024

8. Review

This Policy will be reviewed by 10 March 2027

9. Risk

Risk Statement	This policy is required to ensure NSWHP employees have consistent uniform image, uniforms meet work health safety requirements, effective infection control, protect cultural safety and avoid inappropriate workplace attire.
Risk Category	Assets & Infrastructure; Clinical Care & Patient Safety; Compliance; Cyber Security; Governance; Information, Technology & Data; Leadership & Management; People & Culture; Resilience; Technological Cyber Security ☐; Governance ☐; Information, Technology & Data ☐; Leadership & Management ☐; People & Culture ☒; Resilience ☐; Technological ☐

10. Further Information

For further information, please contact:

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1	27/03/2026	SLT	17/03/2026	Acting Director, People & Culture	Medium	New Policy

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