

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 80)

10 January 2025

Faculty and Staff Uniform and Customs Requirements

1. Purpose: The purpose of this order is to outline requirements for the appropriate wear of military uniforms at VMI. This order also establishes guidelines for basic military customs and courtesies and the use of military titles. It further provides guidance on the acquisition, alteration, maintenance, and replacement of faculty/staff military uniforms.
2. Scope: This order applies to all members of the VMI faculty and staff who are required or otherwise authorized as commissioned members of the Virginia Militia to wear the uniform of a military service in the United States Armed Forces. In accordance with Va. Code Title 44, Chapter 1.
3. Uniform Information: For those faculty and staff wearing the uniform, it is imperative that it be worn properly. Any questions about the proper wearing of the uniform can be answered by consulting *Wearing the Virginia Militia Uniform and Military Courtesies 2024* or by contacting either Auxiliary Services or the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Planning .
4. Service Uniforms: The uniformed faculty and staff at VMI are members of the Virginia Militia (Unorganized) and are authorized to wear the U.S. Army uniform. Any Administrative and Professional Faculty or Teaching and Research Faculty members with no previous military service will be appointed as an Officer in the Corps of Engineers in the Virginia Militia. A&P Faculty and T&R Faculty that have previous active duty or reserve service but maintain no current affiliation with the branch of service will be appointed as an Officer in the Corps of Engineers in the Virginia Militia. Retired officers and NCOs who have served on active duty, in the reserves, or in the National Guard may normally wear the uniform of that service and the rank earned in that service. Retired officers/NCOs and currently serving reserve/National Guard officers/NCOs employed at VMI must wear "VA" insignia while on duty for VMI. The wearing of other service uniforms must meet those individual service regulations governing the wear of that uniform by non-active duty personnel. Retired or presently serving Guard or Reserve officers, for instance, may normally wear their service uniform. Refer to the service branch's uniform regulation below for specific guidance on authorized and non-authorized wear of the uniform.
 - a. U.S. Army: [Department of the Army Pamphlet 670-1, Guide to the Wear and Appearance of the Army Uniform and Insignia](#), 1 July 2015
 - b. U.S. Navy: [United States Navy Uniform Regulations NAVPERS 15665J](#)
 - c. U.S. Air Force: [Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Dress and Personal Appearance of Department of the Air Force Personnel](#), dated 29 February 2024

- d. U.S. Marine Corps: [MCO 1020.34H, Marine Corps Uniform Regulations](#), dated 1 May 2018
 - e. U.S. Space Force: [SPFGM2023-36-01, Space Force Guidance Memorandum for Dress and Appearance Standards](#), dated 8 November 2023
 - f. U.S. Coast Guard: [Commandant Instruction M1020.6K, United States Coast Guard Uniform Regulations](#), dated 7 July 2020
5. Acquisition of Uniforms: Officers and Non-Commissioned officers (not including those serving in the ROTC detachments) receive an initial issue of uniforms in one of two ways.
 - a. Those newly hired personnel who are retired from the armed forces or are serving in the reserve component and have access to uniforms through the military exchange system may be provided a one-time stipend to bring their uniforms up to date. This is normally annotated in the initial employment agreement.
 - b. Faculty and staff members who do not have access to uniforms (or travel to the closet post/base is deemed an inefficient use of time) are provided their initial issue of Army uniforms through the VMI Military Store. The amount and type of clothing in the initial issue is stipulated in an attachment to the employment agreement extended by VMI.
 6. Alteration of Uniforms: The VMI Tailor Shop assists in this process of equipping faculty and staff with their initial issue of Army uniforms with alterations to ensure a good fit and a professional military appearance. There is no cost to the member. Thereafter, uniforms may be altered by the Tailor Shop at the member's expense.
 7. Maintenance of Uniforms: Following the initial issue of military uniforms, the maintenance, laundry and dry cleaning, alterations, repairs and eventual replacement are an individual's responsibility. All faculty and staff members are expected to maintain a complete set of uniforms, to include the Class A uniform.
 8. Uniform Requirements: During normal business hours and during academic instruction periods when the Corps of Cadets is present, uniformed faculty and staff should be in appropriate uniform as they are working with or providing support to cadets. Specific additional requirements are detailed as below:
 - a. Faculty and staff are expected to be in uniform while performing their work at VMI. During normal business hours (most offices are 0730-1630 or 0800-1700) Monday through Friday, all persons authorized to wear the uniform must be in uniform while present for duty. Although wearing the uniform to and from home is strongly encouraged, it is not mandatory. Faculty and staff who choose to change into their uniform at work may do so but should do so immediately upon arrival. Similarly, faculty and staff who wish to change to civilian attire to depart work should do so immediately before departure.
 - b. Teaching and Research (T&R) faculty and Administrative and Professional Faculty (A&P) shall wear the Class B uniform, or service equivalent, during normal business hours during the academic year. However, when cadets are authorized to wear the Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) to class, T&R faculty who have been issued, or who have purchased OCP's, may also wear the uniform or their appropriate service

equivalent. Following are examples of when T&R faculty may wear the OCP while teaching class:

- (1) When cadets are authorized by the instructor to wear OCP's; often in a laboratory setting.
 - (2) When cadets are authorized to wear OCP's due to inclement weather.
 - (3) When teaching back-to-back lecture and laboratory classes, the need to visit laboratories to conduct research between classes, or the preparation of laboratory classes make it impractical to change uniforms.
 - (4) The list above is not all-inclusive, and there may be other reasons for T&R faculty to teach lecture courses in OCP's. However, T&R faculty should make a reasonable effort to wear the Class B uniform while teaching lecture classes and should speak with their department head when this is not practical to reach a solution the department head feels is reasonable.
- c. T&R faculty teaching classes in which the cadets are required to wear Gym Dyke may also wear the equivalent physical training uniform issued by the Institute's Physical Education Department.
- d. At any time when representing VMI in an official capacity on or off Post within the State of Virginia, the appropriate uniform for the occasion should be worn. Requests for exceptions should be submitted through your proper chain of command. Note: Virginia Militia uniforms by policy should not be worn outside the State of Virginia. If there is a situation where a faculty or staff member believes that it is appropriate to do so, please coordinate with your chain of command or contact the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Planning. Exceptions to the out of state policy include "VMI events" such as admissions functions, New Cadet Recruiting events, and Alumni Chapter meetings where wear of the uniform is strongly encouraged or required.
- e. At any time, when meeting with a class or group of cadets as part of an official academic or VMI activity where cadets are required to be in uniform, the faculty and staff member should also be in uniform. This includes evening and weekend functions, as well as evening make-up and review sessions. Faculty and staff support for academic clubs, athletic events and for other events outside normal duty times are excluded from this requirement; however, wearing of the uniform is strongly encouraged at events where cadets are present and in uniform.
- f. When performing personal physical training, uniformed faculty and staff members may wear appropriate civilian workout attire.
- g. When attending voluntary functions outside of normal business hours or academic class times on Post, faculty may wear civilian attire if desired. Example functions are athletic, theatre, and cultural events. Similarly, however, when cadets are present at these types of functions, wearing of the uniform is encouraged.
- h. The uniform will not be worn when off Post and engaged in some form of political or partisan activity. Wearing of the uniform at such functions or events implies VMI support or endorsement and is improper. Questions regarding the appropriateness of wearing the uniform when off Post should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent for Operations & Planning.

9. Customs and Courtesies Requirements: As a faculty member in uniform, attendant customs and courtesy requirements must be followed. VMI is a military college providing unique instruction to a Corps of Cadets who expect faculty and staff in uniform to demonstrate these professional behaviors. Specific customs and courtesy requirements are as follows:
- a. Faculty and staff in uniform must use their military title, particularly when dealing with cadets. These officials should be addressed by cadets using their military rank.
 - b. Similarly, for correspondence with cadets, electronic mail signature blocks should specify the member's military rank and not simply Dr. or Mr./Ms.

Examples:

For retired military personnel the following is appropriate:

John Q. Smith
Colonel, USA Retired
(position title)
Virginia Military Institute

Faculty and staff members serving as officers in the Virginia Militia (Unorganized), and retired military personnel who have been promoted by VMI beyond their retirement grade will follow this example:

Jane B. Jones
Colonel, Virginia Militia
(position title)
Virginia Military Institute

Faculty and staff members currently serving in the National Guard or U.S Army Reserve should follow the example for those serving in the Virginia Militia. This should prevent any perception that your service in a Reserve Component of the U.S. Army influences VMI policy or procedures.

Faculty and Staff with a terminal degree may use the following format:

John L. Doe, Ph.D.
Colonel, Virginia Militia
(position title)
Virginia Military Institute

- c. The customs and courtesies outlined in *Wearing the Virginia Militia Uniform and Military Courtesies* should be understood and followed. Simple acts such as properly returning a cadet's or colleague's salute are not only required but expected. Faculty and staff should remember that cadets do indeed notice this and expect these rules to be followed.

10. Civilian Attire: Faculty in positions that do not require a uniform will wear appropriate business casual attire while representing VMI. Appropriate business casual attire is equivalent to the VMI Virginia Militia Class B uniform for daily wear, and The Virginia Military Institute expects employees to dress appropriately in professional business casual attire. Employees are expected to demonstrate good judgement and professional taste. Employees must demonstrate courtesy to other employees and present a professional appearance to the VMI community by dressing in appropriate business attire. Non-Uniformed T&R and A&P faculty shall present a professional appearance in accordance with the following, minimal guidelines:

- a. Men shall wear shoes and socks, not sandals; dress pants, not jeans; and a collared shirt. Beards shall be maintained; otherwise, grooming standards shall be the same as uniformed faculty.
- b. Women shall wear dress pants, a skirt, or a dress. Blouses, tops, and footwear should be appropriate professional attire.
- c. Employees who wear business attire that is deemed inappropriate by their supervisor will be dealt with on an individual basis rather than subjecting all employees to a more stringent dress code for appropriate business attire.

T&R faculty performing summer academic instruction are not required to be in uniform; however, they shall meet the above listed dress standards. This exception does not extend to administrative and professional faculty and staff.

11. Uniformed positions will be determined by the Department Head, by memorandum through Human Resources, with approval from the Superintendent or his designated representative.
12. Uniformed and non-uniformed members of the faculty and staff are expected to adhere to the tenets addressed in this general order. If a member has questions or needs additional instruction, it is incumbent upon them to ask and that support will be provided.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

Gary A. Bissell
Colonel, USAR (Ret.)
Interim Chief of Staff

OPR: Assistant Superintendent Operations & Planning, FS/Auxiliary Services