

Academical Dress

Cambridge is a friendly place, and most times you are free to dress comfortably and casually. But there are some formal occasions when smart dress is required.

“[Academical dress](#)” is required for graduation ceremonies, or any other formal University ceremony held in the Senate-House or University Church.

In College, it is worn for official events such as your college matriculation and for formal meals in Hall. It is also customary (but not compulsory) to wear gowns when attending services in Chapel.

“Academical dress” means wearing the correct **gown** for your status as a student. It is not necessary to wear a square cap (“mortarboard”) or any other head-dress.

- **Undergraduates**

The gown for undergraduates is the **Girton College pattern**, i.e. the standard pattern but with the sleeve sewn up, for a length of eight inches from the shoulder.

- **Affiliated Students**

Affiliated students have undergraduate status in Cambridge. They are therefore required to wear the Girton undergraduate gown. Gowns of other universities may not be worn, except on “scarlet” occasions.

- **Research Students**

Research students who are graduates of other universities and are under 24, have the status of B.A. and wear the Cambridge B.A. gown but without the strings.

Research students who are graduates of other universities and are 24 or older, have the status of M.A. They wear the Cambridge M.A. gown without strings.

(The “strings” are black ribbons attached inside the shoulders of the gown.)

Clothes worn with Academical Dress

Whenever academical dress is required, students are expected to wear appropriate clothing with the gown. At graduation ceremonies, special University [dress regulations](#) apply. At other times you should wear suitably smart clothes, such as:

- Lounge suit with collared shirt, tie and formal, smart shoes
- Smart, tailored skirt or trousers and jacket, with a shirt or blouse and formal, smart shoes
- Smart dress, preferably with sleeves, worn with formal, smart shoes

Please note that jeans or trainers of any type or colour are not acceptable.

Although Cambridge these days is much more informal than it used to be, most students, during their time here, attend some formal occasions and at least two formal dinners. Dinner suits (“black tie”) or a suitable evening dress are preferred for formal dinners but an ordinary dark suit and tie, skirt suit or trouser suit will normally be adequate. It is therefore a good idea to bring a smart outfit with you to College, though there may also be ways to borrow or buy (new or second-hand) appropriate clothing in Cambridge.

If you have questions about formal dress, feel free to get in touch with the College Praelectors, Matt Neal and Seb Falk: praelector@girton.cam.ac.uk.