

GRADUATION: DRESS AT CONGREGATIONS

OFFICERS AT THE SENATE HOUSE WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO TAKE YOUR DEGREE UNLESS YOU ABIDE BY THESE REGULATIONS.

Academical Dress

(1)

If you are proceeding to your first Cambridge degree (i.e. you are not a Cambridge graduate of any sort) you should wear the gown of your existing status, and the hood of the (highest) degree you are about to take. Note the difference.

For undergraduates, the gown is your Sidney undergraduate gown. Affiliated students are undergraduates and wear the undergraduate gown. BTh students are also undergraduates and wear the undergraduate gown; (very exceptionally, they may be a Cambridge graduate; if so, see (2) below).

For postgraduate students, about to receive a graduate degree, the gown is a BA status gown if you are under 24 years of age, or an MA status gown if you are 24 or older. (The BA and MA status gowns differ from the full BA/MA gown in not having the 'strings' (ribbons) hanging inside the facings at the front. The strings may be tucked away, if necessary, to transform the full gown into a status gown.)

Graduate students are not permitted to wear the academical dress of another University.

(2)

If you already hold a Cambridge degree, you should wear the gown and hood of the highest Cambridge degree you hold.

(3)

If you are still unsure, see the accompanying **Flowchart and/or ask the Praelector for guidance.**

Hoods and gowns (together with dress bow-ties, bands and other formal wear) can be hired from the following shops, where staff will (usually) also be happy to advise you:

Ryder & Amies
22 King's Parade
Tel: 01223 350371
www.ryderamies.co.uk

A E Clothier
5a Pembroke Street
Tel: 01223 354339
www.aeclothier.co.uk

Ede & Ravenscroft
71-72 Trumpington Street
Tel: 01223 350048
www.edeandravenscroft.co.uk

Common infringements of academical dress include wrong gown for affiliated/BTh students; MB graduands wearing BA not BChir hood/gown; or confusing the MB hood/gown with the BChir (very similar looking);

Non-academical Dress

You must also pay attention to your non-academical clothing and appearance, as it is not possible to present candidates for degrees unless they are correctly dressed. Graduation is a formal occasion, at which persons are admitted into a particular degree of standing within the University. It is a corporate occasion of the collegiate university, and is not appropriate for marked individualism. **Black and white**, and consistency of appearance among all the graduands being presented, are of the essence.

The particular requirements for women and men are outlined below. But all graduands should note that, if worn at all, jewellery and hair fixings must be small, light in weight, dark in colour and very discreet. Exaggerated hairstyles and/or hair colouring must be avoided. Long hair should be neatly tied back off the face.

Women Graduands

Please wear:

- a plain, long-sleeved **black** dress; OR
- a plain **black** suit (a jacket with trousers or a skirt) with a plain, long-sleeved white traditional high-buttoned collared shirt (to the neck); OR
- a plain **black** skirt (or trousers) and a plain, long-sleeved white shirt (as above), with or without a plain black cardigan (with buttons to the waist);

plus

- black, unpatterned socks (with trousers); or
- black (preferably, or natural), unpatterned tights or stockings, whatever the temperature (with skirts or dresses – bare legs are absolutely not allowed).

plus

- **formal black** shoes, with a low heel - **NOT** boots, open-toe shoes, sling-backs, or sandals.

Plain black means **plain black**: not grey or blue, and with no pinstripe.

High-necked means no low or plunging neck-lines. This is for practical reasons: your hood attaches to your shirt at the level of your collar bone – the shirt must therefore be substantial enough to take the weight, and reach high enough for the hood to be positioned correctly. If possible, wear a black jacket with buttons as hoods attach much better to jackets than to shirts. When attached to inappropriate clothing, the hood pulls the entire outfit into disarray and/or falls over the shoulders and away.

Hem lines should reach close to the knee. Skirts and dresses should not be tight clinging. This is for practical reasons: the ceremony involves kneeling and rising again, individually, in the middle of the Senate-House, in full and close view of the Officers and the Congregation. Unsuitable clothing causes embarrassment to all.

Formal black shoes means **plain** and **completely black**, with no buckles or decorations. Shoes should have a small heel, no more than 2 inches high. This is for practical reasons: there is a great deal of standing and waiting during the day's proceedings. High heels are very tiring. The floor of the Senate-House is marble, and wood, and very slippery. You will be kneeling and rising, stepping backwards on an old carpet and then negotiating two curving wooden steps onto a dais before leaving the Senate-House down a flight of stairs. It is unpleasant and embarrassing to slip, trip or fall.

Male Graduands

Please wear:

- a plain **black** suit (a dinner suit/tuxedo is ideal), with a plain white, unpatterned shirt;

plus

- a white dress bow-tie and bands (with or without a wing collar);

plus

- black, unpatterned socks.

plus

- **formal black** shoes - **NOT** boots or sandals.

Plain black means **plain black**: not grey or blue, and with no pinstripe.

Common infringements of appropriate dress include flimsy blouses; women's short-sleeved shirts (three-quarter sleeves are too short); no tights; patterned socks/tights; light-coloured socks; pinstripe suits; shoes with buckles or other decorations; men failing to wear jackets; heavy jewellery or hair ornaments.

If you are still unsure, please consult the Praelector as soon as possible. It is essential that you are correctly dressed at the start of the day.