GRADUATION: DRESS AT CONGREGATIONS

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

(1) **Academical Dress**

Either:

(A) If you are proceeding to your first Cambridge degree (i.e. you are not at this moment 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. So what about this gown …?

(a) For current undergraduates the gown is your Sidney undergraduate gown (short in length, with open sleeves and chevrons above the sleeves).

Affiliated students and BTh students are undergraduates and wear the Sidney undergraduate gown (very exceptionally, a BTh student may be a Cambridge graduate - if so, see (B), below).

(b) For current graduate students 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. (A ‘status’ gown is a BA/MA gown with no strings hanging down inside the front, or with them fully tucked away.)

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

Or:

(B) If you have already graduated, in Cambridge, and had a Cambridge degree conferred on you

You should wear the gown and hood of the highest Cambridge degree you hold.

Only YOU know what the highest Cambridge degree is that you hold. The Praelector’s Secretary cannot ascertain this, with the necessary certainty, from University records, and she should not be asked to try. The Praelector’s webpage gives a list of Cambridge degrees, in order of seniority.

Candidates for the MA degree should note that they DO NOT wear the Sidney undergraduate gown which they wore (as above) when taking their BA degrees.

If you are still unsure, see the Dress 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

(2) **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, is of the essence.
There are two options, outlined below. 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.

**Option One:**
- a skirt suit, or informal trouser suit, or skirt w/out cardigan or a long-sleeved dress – **all plain black**
- a plain, long-sleeved, collared white shirt - unless a dress is worn (no bare arms)
- plain black un-patterned socks (with trousers) or black un-patterned tights/stockings (no bare legs)
- formal black shoes, with a low heel - NOT boots, open-toe shoes, sling-backs, or sandals.
- white dress bow-tie and bands (optional)

**Option Two:**
- a plain black formal lounge suit or dinner suit (including a tuxedo, satin stripe on leg is acceptable)
- a plain, long-sleeved, collared white shirt (wing or plain collar)
- black un-patterned socks
- formal black shoes - NOT boots or sandals
- a white dress bow-tie and bands (compulsory)

**Plain black** means **plain black**.
**White** means white, and NOT cream or ivory.
**A collared shirt** means no low or plunging neck-lines. This is for practical reasons: your hood hangs over your shoulders from the level of your collar bone – a standard collared shirt is substantial enough to take the weight, and reaches high enough for the hood to be positioned correctly. A non-standard shirt will almost certainly be both uncomfortable and inelegant when worn with the hood.
**Dresses** should generally be avoided, for the same practical reasons. If worn, they must also avoid low or plunging neck-lines, and hoods are likely to need pinning to the dress.
**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, alone, in the middle of the Senate-House. Unsuitable clothing is always awkward and sometimes embarrassing.
**Formal shoes** means plain, with no coloured soles, buckles or other decorations. Any heel should be no more than 2 inches high. This is for practical reasons: high heels are very tiring across a long day. And the floor of the Senate-House is marble, and wood, and quite slippery, especially to new soles. Best not to slip, trip or fall!

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.