

Information for Graduands

Admission to Degrees

The University came into existence over 800 years ago and today's ceremony is amongst its oldest traditions. The conferment of each Degree is still an act of the whole University, approved by a resolution of the governing body, the Regent House, at a Congregation. Graduands are presented by their Colleges to the Vice-Chancellor or a deputy, in the presence of the two Proctors or their deputies (the elected Officers of the Regent House) and of the Registry (the head of the University's administration) or a deputy. Congregations are held throughout the year for the conferral of degrees, but four days each summer are set aside for what is called General Admission to Degrees, at which most undergraduates proceed to their first Degrees at the end of their final term.

The Senate-House and the Old Schools

The Senate-House was built between 1722 and 1730 to designs by James Gibbs. Originally Congregations were held in the University Church of Great St. Mary's opposite the Senate-House, and later in the Old Schools in what is now the University Combination Room. The Old Schools, immediately to the west of the Senate-House, are the original buildings of the University, incorporating much of the 14th century "schools" of the University, built on a site given to the University in 1278.

Order of Proceedings

Graduands assemble in their College under the direction of the College's Praelector, who leads them in procession to the Senate-House. Those from King's, Trinity, and St John's Colleges are, by custom, presented first, followed by other Colleges in order of their foundation or recognition by the University, although Darwin College and Clare Hall have no candidates at General Admission.

Conferment of Degrees

The Vice-Chancellor's deputy (who is normally the Head or another senior figure from the College in the session) enters the Senate-House preceded by the two Esquire Bedells carrying maces given by the Duke of Buckingham, Chancellor 1626-28 and followed by the University Marshal, carrying another mace given by the Earl of Holland, also Chancellor.

After the Vice-Chancellor's deputy has been seated, the two Proctors, standing on the dais alongside their Statute Books, open the proceedings with a brief welcome. The first session of each day starts with the Senior Proctor delivering the following resolution to the Regent House: *Supplicanti reverentibus vestris viri mulieresque quorum nomina juxta senaculum in porticu proposuit hodie Registraria nec delevit Procancellarius ut gradum quisque quem rite petivit assequatur* ('Those men and women whose names the Registry has today posted in the arcade beside the Senate-House, beg your reverences that they may proceed to the degree for which each has properly applied'). Any member of the Regent House may call for a vote by saying *Non placet*, so there is a brief pause before the Junior Proctor says, *Placet* ('it pleases'). At the start of later sessions, a variation is used by the Senior Proctor to report the earlier approval of the degrees and mentioning the College present in the House by name, but there is no *Placet* from the Junior Proctor.

Candidates are then presented to the Vice-Chancellor's deputy in small groups by their Praelector. Before the first candidates for each degree or pair of degrees go forward, an Esquire Bedell names the degree or degrees to be conferred and the Praelector says *Dignissime/a domine/a Domine/a Procancellarie/a et tota Academia, praesento vobis hos viros et has mulieres quos scio tam moribus quam doctrina esse idoneos ad gradum assequendum (title of degree); idque tibi fide mea praesto totique Academiae* ('Most worthy, Vice-Chancellor, and the whole University, I present to you these men and women, whom I know to be suitable both by character and learning to proceed to the degree of (title of degree); for which I pledge my faith to you and to the whole University').

Each candidate is then called forward by the Esquire Bedell to stand before the Vice-Chancellor's deputy, who uses the words *Auctoritate mihi commissa admitto te ad gradum (title of degree)* ('by the authority committed to me I admit you to the degree of ...') to confer the degree and the new graduate then leaves the Senate-House. Abbreviated formulae are then used, so *Hos/has etiam praesento et de his idem vobis praesto* ('These also I present, and of them I give you the same pledge') and in response *Te etiam admitto ad eundem gradum* ('I admit you also to the same degree').

At the end of each session, the Senior Proctor announces an adjournment and the Vice-Chancellor's deputy leaves in procession, led by an Esquire Bedell, accompanied by the Registry and followed by

the University Marshal and the Proctors. At the end of the day, an Esquire Bedell first calls the Congregation to order with the word *Magistri* (meaning members of the Regent House) and the Vice-Chancellor's deputy says *Nos dissolvimus hanc Congregationem* ('We dissolve this Congregation') before the Senior Proctor announces that the Congregation is dissolved and the procession leaves.

Academical Dress

General Admission is restricted to candidates for just a few of the University's degrees. In addition to the B.A., the primary degree awarded to undergraduates regardless of subjects studied, the following degrees may also be conferred (the Master's degrees always in combination with the BA):

M.Math. (*Master of Mathematics*)
M.Eng. (*Master of Engineering*)
M.Sci. (*Master of Natural Science*)

Vet. M.B. (*Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine*)
B.Th. (*Bachelor of Theology for Ministry*)

The University's academical costume at graduation consists of a gown and a hood to denote either the wearer's existing Cambridge degree (not the one they are receiving) or instead if not an existing graduate their current status, e.g. as an undergraduate, with the hood of the degree they are about to receive, and a cap (although these are optional and most do not use them). The hoods worn by graduands at General Admission are (in order of precedence):

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Description</i>
Master of Mathematics	black cloth lined with slate blue silk
Master of Engineering	black cloth lined with bronze silk
Master of Natural Sciences	black corded silk lined with pink silk shot with light blue
Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine	the hood and tippet of mid-cherry silk, the hood part-lined with white fur and the tippet edged with 2 inches of white fur
Bachelor of Arts	black stuff, part-lined with white fur, the tippet edged with white fur
Bachelor of Theology for Ministry	black stuff, lined with black silk, the tippet edged with white fur

(The 'fur' used is now made of synthetic material).

Certificates, Photography and Toilets

Degree certificates are handed to graduates after they leave the Senate-House and return to Senate-House Yard, a framing service for certificates is also available.

The proceedings are filmed on video and made available both as a live-stream and for a period of two months afterwards. Although personal photography is not allowed during Congregations, Tempest Photography takes pictures of all candidates as they are admitted to their degree and also provide posed studio photography afterwards on request. For further information please visit www.tempest-events.co.uk for ceremony photographs and www.tempest-graduations.co.uk for studio photography.

There are accessible toilets in the Old Schools - please ask one of the University Constables for help if needed.