

Academic Dress of the University of Leicester¹

by Clifford Dunkley

Leicester lies on the cusp between traditional and innovative styles of academic dress. It received its Charter in 1957 and existing students were given the option of continuing to read for London degrees or transferring to Leicester degrees. The first Leicester graduates therefore emerged at the midsummer degree congregations of 1958. Leicester was the last of the twentieth century university colleges that started under the tutelage of the University of London before obtaining full independence and degree-awarding powers. This process gathered momentum in the years following World War 2, starting with Nottingham (in 1948) and followed by Southampton (1952), Hull² (1954) and Exeter (1955). These four universities all adopted a fairly traditional style of academic dress, with Hull and Southampton adopting the London design for their bachelors' gowns. Exeter departed from tradition in taking dove grey as its basic university colour and incorporating it into all its hoods. (This was not totally innovative: Bristol and Sheffield had established a precedent with the use of a specific red and green respectively for the outer surfaces of their hoods.)

Leicester's academic dress represents a mixture of the traditional with, in some cases, fairly radical innovations. However, it was left to the 'plate glass' universities of the early 1960s to strike out with some really quite startling creations: coloured gowns at York and East Anglia, the Kent cape replacing the hood, the Sussex squares of fur, continental-style doctoral robes and the cylindrical pileus.

It is not known who was responsible for the designs finally adopted by Leicester: documents that might throw light on this are missing. A radical 'weeding' and reorganisation of the University archives took place in the 1980s and the Registrar's correspondence for 1956 cannot be found. Also, Ede & Ravenscroft cannot locate any relevant papers in their Chancery Lane archives. This is particularly regrettable, since the designs eventually adopted depart significantly from the specifications laid down by the committee originally charged with drawing up a scheme.

The University College

Few matters concerning academic dress arose in the University College era since all conferment ceremonies took place in London. (Devolved ceremonies were still a thing of the future.) The two main exceptions were undergraduate gowns and the robe of the Principal.

¹ Through 2005.

² See Richard Baker, 'The Academic Dress of the University of Hull from 1954 to the Present Day, Including the Hull-York Medical School from 2003', *TBS*, 11 (2011), pp. 30–58.

Undergraduate Gowns

Undergraduate gowns were knee-length, with open forearm sleeves and of the Birmingham pattern. They were worn for lectures. Clothing was rationed during the Second World War, but the situation for academic dress was confused.³ Initially, undergraduate gowns were thought to require eight clothing coupons, but Ede & Ravenscroft subsequently ascertained that coupons did not apply. There was, however, a severe shortage of material and when 20 gowns were ordered by the College in 1941 (for onward sale to students), only 16 could be delivered. On the other hand, it is not obvious how much difficulty this caused since there were few students during the war years in any case. (In 1943, incidentally, students paid 45s for a gown.) In 1944, continuing difficulties with the supply of material meant only blue was available, which had to be dyed black.

Following the war, conditions eased and responsibility for the supply of undergraduate gowns was transferred to Knight's, a men's outfitters in Granby Street, Leicester. The gowns were bought in (though from where is not known) and the labels bore the name of Knight's.

Principal's Robe

In December 1945, the Registrar began correspondence with Ede & Ravenscroft about an official robe for the Principal. Until then, the then Principal, Mr F. L. Attenborough⁴ had worn his Cambridge MA gown on ceremonial occasions. The robe was to be of black silk and gold lace, based on a design used at Hull: lace on the facings and round a gathered yoke, pointed sleeves with gathers held up by two gold buttons and cords on each sleeve. The original estimate (December 1945) was for 30 guineas plus 22½ guineas purchase tax. By January 1946—the date of delivery—it had increased to 35 guineas plus £27 11s 3d purchase tax. From the description given, it seems a fairly modest creation, resembling present-day Leicester Pro-Vice-Chancellors' robes. In any event, it was deemed to be insufficiently grand to be adopted as the robe of the Vice-Chancellor of the new university (see below). In the absence of degree ceremonies, there were few occasions on which such a robe could be worn. The only ceremonial occasion of note in the 1940s and early 1950s was the annual service in Leicester Cathedral at the beginning of each autumn term.

New University

The next reference in the archives to academic dress is by the University College's Charter Committee in 1955–56. This committee drew up the regulations, ordinances and statutes for the forthcoming university. The minutes of these meetings are extensive.

The Charter Committee set up a Working Group on academic dress and ceremonies which, from the record, seems to have met once only at Knighton Hall (residence of the Principal).⁵

The membership of the group had an Oxonian and Glaswegian bias: the Principal,

3 Details in this section come from the Registrar's correspondence of the 1940s in the University archives: correspondence of Messrs LM Sear (Registrar 1929-1947) and HB Martin (Registrar 1947-1973).

4 Father of the better-known Richard and David Attenborough.

5 University College, Leicester: Charter Committee 4 September 1956.

Charles Wilson, was a Glasgow graduate who subsequently became a history don at Corpus Christi College, Oxford and had served as Junior Proctor; Mr (later Professor) HPR Finberg, Head of the Department of English Local History, was an Oxonian; Professor AR Humphreys, Head of the Department of English, was from Cambridge; but Professor J Simmons, Head of the Department of History was also an Oxonian. Professor CJ Fordyce of Glasgow was invited to attend to give advice.

General Principles

The notes from the Registrar, who serviced the Working Group, offer considerable insight into the group's discussions. Firstly, two general principles were agreed:

That the 'single-silk' principle, adopted under the influence of Dr Franklyn at Southampton, Hull, and Exeter, should not be followed at Leicester. If some kind of distinguishing mark is required for the hoods of Leicester degrees, it should be achieved in some other way.

and

That it would be worthwhile to consider seriously seeking the advice of a dress designer, as well as that of a robe maker, before deciding on the specifications and cut of the gowns, hoods, etc, to be adopted for the University.

Both these are of clear interest. We know Franklyn was active elsewhere at this period. In the absence of a written record, it is not known whether the advice of a dress designer was sought. Given the originality of some of the designs, it is certainly not impossible. Kent, East Anglia and Sussex did enjoy the services of a dress designer.

Undergraduates

It was agreed that the colour of undergraduates' gowns should not necessarily be black and that dark red (either 'Cardinal Red' or 'Guardsmen Red') should be considered instead. It seems likely that the influence of Wilson and Fordyce from Glasgow can be detected here. Ultimately, the red wasn't chosen. However, a deep cherry shade ('University red') was to be chosen as the 'signature' colour of all hoods and doctoral robes.

The undergraduate gown, however, did have one feature rather more subtle than colour that is very unusual: it is ruched. The description in the first regulations of 1958 is

Gown of black stuff, of a shape and material as prescribed by the University, being with ruched back and sleeve-head, with cape sleeves and ordinary yoke.

Shaw (1966 and 1995) describes this as

A black gabardine gown of the Oxford scholars' shape, with the forearm seam left open. The sleeves and back are ruched, but not pleated in the usual way.



FIG. 1 Leicester undergraduate gown with ruched yoke.



FIG. 1A Leicester undergraduate gown.

and then (in his blue pages) refers to the figure of a Scottish undergraduate gown. The Burgon Society has recently come into possession of a Leicester undergraduate gown and this is shown in Figures 1 and 1A.

Though the square cap was considered satisfactory, the soft cap worn by women in 'most' English universities was not and the Group thought it desirable, that undergraduates—both men and women—should either be required to wear the square cap or no headgear at all. In the event, the cap for women did appear in the original regulations, only to be replaced by the square cap in the 1980s.

BA and MA

It was agreed that the gowns for the degrees of BA and MA should be black and that the linings of the hoods should be of silk, not of cloth. The relative merits of the 'full' and 'simple' hood were discussed. It was felt that this would have to be examined further, with a number of examples available, and that the final decision might

be affected by a material difference in cost between the two types.

Doctors

The Group agreed that the robes should be made full (i.e. to meet down the front) and that a substitute be found for the bonnet. Departure from conventional academic head-dress chimed with the mood of the times (cf Sussex and East Anglia) and this is an example of Leicester leading the way.

Two modes of doctoral dress were considered: full dress and undress (both with hood). It was suggested that it might be possible to dispense with the hood for doctors, but that this would make 'undress' impossible for them; no agreement was reached on the point. This comment seems to suggest that an enhanced undress was being discussed (i.e. hood and black gown), distinct from festal dress which itself was to be worn without a hood as at Oxford. The subsequent prescription for academic dress for senior members of the University at inaugural lectures (see below) also suggests this.

For the PhD, it was suggested that the MA gown be used, but 'differenced' slightly by the addition of a little black velvet or braid on the sleeve or shoulder. If a gown was required for higher doctors, a similar, but more elaborate, differencing might be adopted.

The 'Cambridge' view of the PhD was adopted: a scarlet—or even claret—full dress robe was withheld and instead decorative features superimposed on a Master's style gown. In the event, Birmingham Doctors' braid, but coloured University red, was chosen to cover the facings and the yoke for the full dress PhD gown. At the time of its inception, Leicester's use of coloured braid for a full dress gown was a novelty. It would also have been a radical departure to make doctoral robes meet at the front (like US robes and gowns or like the Oxford Convocation habit), but this suggestion was not pursued.

Doctorates

Extensive discussion led to a general feeling that the traditional scarlet not be used. Two suggestions were made: gold silk; and a silk of the Cardinal or Guardsman Red that had been suggested for the (cloth) gowns of undergraduates.

Consideration was limited to the degrees of PhD, DLitt and DSc, but Professor Fordyce pointed out that, were there to be a degree of LL.D for honorary purposes only before a Faculty of Law was created, then there was a useful precedent at St Andrews.

The idea of gold silk was quickly forgotten, with University red being chosen, and panama substituted for silk for the main body of both robes and hoods.

Senior Officers

Robes were to be provided for the chancellor, the two pro-chancellors and the vice-chancellor. It was not felt necessary to provide robes for the pro-vice-chancellor, though some distinguishing mark might be given to his ordinary academic dress. It was further agreed that the existing principal's robe (lacking applied decoration) would not be satisfactory for the vice-chancellor.

Although the possibility of using colours other than black as the ground for these robes was discussed, it was generally felt that black, combined with gold, would be the most suitable for these official robes. It was also felt that the black silk should be figured and that particular care should be taken with the design of the sleeves, which showed a tendency to become smaller to the detriment of the whole dress.

The initial lowly status of the pro-vice-chancellor was subsequently raised to one deserving a black and gold robe in common with the other senior officers. The design was borrowed from that for the existing Principal's robe.

Implementation of the Scheme

With no documentation concerning advice either solicited or given in the period between the original recommendations (September 1956) and their approval by the University College Senate (July 1957), it is not possible to find the rationale underlying the scheme as it did eventually appear. Instead, only its progress through the legislative processes of the University College can be charted.

Shortly after the initial meeting (see above), the question of academic dress was raised officially by the Senate⁶ when it appointed a Special Committee of the three members of the original Working Party 'to consider and make recommendations on University Ceremonies and Academic Dress'.

This committee issued its report in July 1957: 'The Principal introduced the report of the Ceremonies Committee, and referred to the steps which the Committee had taken to secure expert advice on a number of subjects.'⁷

After discussion of some of the Committee's recommendations, the Senate adjourned to see specimen gowns, hoods and caps, which had been prepared to illustrate the Committee's proposals. This viewing took the form of a 'mannequin parade' by one of the Registrar's colleagues and the Warden of the Women's Hall of Residence.

6 On 16 Oct. 1956.

7 Senate Minute 111 of 2 July 1957.

Underdress

Graduands were required to wear *subfusc* below their academic dress; further details of this are given below.

Admission

Briefly, each graduand, with hood folded over left arm, was to be presented to the Vice-Chancellor by the appropriate dean who would ask for the graduand to be admitted to some degree. (For honorary graduands, the Orator was to take the place of the dean and pronounce a speech before presentation.) After the Vice-Chancellor had uttered the relevant formula, the graduand would be hooded, bow and move away. New bachelors would have to take their hats with them and it took no part in the ceremony. Others, however, were handed their hats by the Vice-Chancellor.

Occasions for Wear

Senior members of the University were to wear academic dress at meetings of the Court, Senate and its Committees, Faculties and Faculty Boards and when giving lectures (black gown only); at inaugural lectures (black gowns and hoods) and at all other official ceremonies (full academic dress).

Junior members were to wear their dress at lectures and classes (except in laboratories); on official visits to members of the staff; at University ceremonies; and on such other occasions as might be prescribed. It was also to be worn in halls of residence as prescribed by wardens.

Robemaker

The University was to continue its relationship with Ede & Ravenscroft, by appointing them its official robe-makers.

Comments of the Committee

The Committee noted that it had taken into account the following:

- a The relationship between the Leicester scheme of dress and those of other British universities must be borne in mind.
- b The gowns, hoods and robes must form a coherent and logical scheme as a whole.
- c Their colours must blend, so as to make a University ceremony a satisfactory spectacle.
- d There must be economy in their design and making, so far as this is consistent with the use of seemly materials, well cut.

In order to fulfil (a), (b) and (c), the Committee recommended the adoption of a standard red (midway between a scarlet and a crimson) to be used as the University colour throughout: for undergraduates' gowns; for the outsides of hoods (lined in different 'faculty' colours); and for the robes of doctors (again with appropriate trimming in 'faculty' colours).

As an example of its attention to (d), it proposed the same gown for Masters, Doctors of Philosophy and Higher Doctors (in undress) with differences of degree being marked by braiding and the addition of a collar.

The concluding item of Senate Minute 111 stated 'That the Committee's proposals

concerning the style and colour of graduates' gowns, hoods and caps be generally approved, subject to such modification of style as now suggested and as the Committee may feel desirable, in light of the discussion.' This, however, was preceded by a paragraph specifying 'That the undergraduate gown be of black material in the style proposed.' So the red quasi-Scottish toga was stillborn.

The details of the discussion or the modifications suggested are not known.

Comments on the Scheme as Implemented

The first official descriptions of the scheme of dress, as finally adopted, occur in Regulations for Academic Dress in the University Calendar of 1958.

University Red

The choice of 'University red' as the base colour for hoods and robes lent an air of distinctiveness to the Leicester scheme. The only disadvantage of this choice is the incompatibility of red with certain other colours, e.g. brown, orange, terracotta and pink, thereby limiting the choice of silks for lining.⁸ This was not a problem in the early days of the University, when there were relatively few types of degree, but now the range of usable colours is close to its limit.

Faculty Colours and Degree Colours

Even from the outset there was some confusion between the idea of 'Faculty' colours and 'Degree' colours for the linings of hoods. This was apparent in paragraph 28 from the Ceremonies Committee, where the word 'Faculty' appears in quotation marks. The concept of 'Faculty'⁹ colours is enshrined in early versions of the 'Regulations for Academic Dress', and this usage was not rectified until the mid-1970s, when the descriptor was changed from Faculty to Degree colour. The Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of the Social Sciences shared the same colour from the outset—silver grey for BA degrees. If the first degree in the Faculty of the Social Sciences had been given its own title, e.g. 'Bachelor of Social Sciences', it would have been allocated a distinctive colour, and there would have been no grounds for the confusion engendered by awarding a BA with the same colour lining in the two different Faculties. The situation with the MPhil degree is somewhat anomalous in that there is no categorical reason why the multi-faculty MPhil grey lining should be derived from the Arts Faculty, other than that Arts is regarded by written precedent as the senior faculty within the University. This decision served only to cast doubt upon the concept of Faculty colours.

The changeover from Faculty to Degree colours was no doubt precipitated by the emergence in the 1970s of the degrees of BSc Economics and BSc Sociology within the Faculty of the Social Sciences, when the first such graduates wore BSc hoods with blue linings, thereby further undermining the concept of silver grey as a Social Sciences Faculty colour.

⁸ The author acknowledges that such colour combinations are in use at other universities e.g. London DLit (scarlet and brown) and Birmingham DMus (scarlet and tangerine).

⁹ 'Faculty' has come to have two possible meanings: an administrative unit; and area of study of a degree e.g. medicine for a Bachelor of Medicine. The problem could have been overcome if first degrees in the Faculty of the Social Sciences had been labelled 'Bachelor of Social Sciences' (as at Birmingham and Exeter) and a distinctive colour chosen.

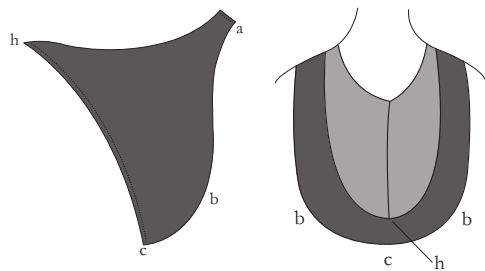


FIG. 2 Master's hood [s6].

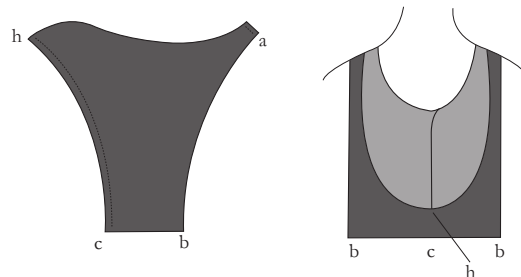


FIG. 3 Doctor's hood [a2].

Shape and Colour of Hoods

The designs adopted, particularly for hoods, were unique at the time. The Bachelor's hood is of a simple shape, quite small, and with only a vestigial liripipe [s6]. A particular feature is that the lining is folded outwards for a couple of inches, with a permanent crease reinforced by concealed stitching to preserve the fold and thereby maximise the display of lining (see Fig. 2). This is also the case with Leeds hoods [s7].

Since Bachelors' hoods are fully lined, differentiation from Masters' hoods is achieved by use of a contrasting shape rather than additional features. The shape chosen for Leicester Masters [a2] is an exaggerated version of the Aberdeen shape (i.e. no liripipe) with a very considerable fold-back of the lining (once again perma-creased and secured) and still of fairly small overall dimensions (see Fig. 3).

Hoods for higher doctors receive a quite original treatment, by reversing the colour scheme of the analogous Master's degree, but with a square cape. This principle of reversal of colours was also adopted by Loughborough. So, for example, the MA hood is red, lined silver-grey and the DLitt is silver-grey lined red. In order to prevent mis-wearing of the doctoral hood inside out, a cord of the degree colour extends at mid-height across the inside surface of the hood. The principle of reversal applies only to the higher doctorates: the body of the PhD hood is University red, lined with a lighter shade of University red in watered taffeta. Moreover, the PhD hood uses the [a5] Master's shape (see Fig. 4).

FIG. 4 Bachelor's hood [a5].

Gowns

The design of gowns did not show the same degree of radicalism as hoods. Bachelors wear what has come to be regarded as the basic Bachelor shape [b1], i.e. Oxford BA with pointed wing sleeves, except that the plain-fronted forearm seam reaches to the elbow only, rather than to the wrist. The Master's gown has bag sleeves with an inverted-T armhole,

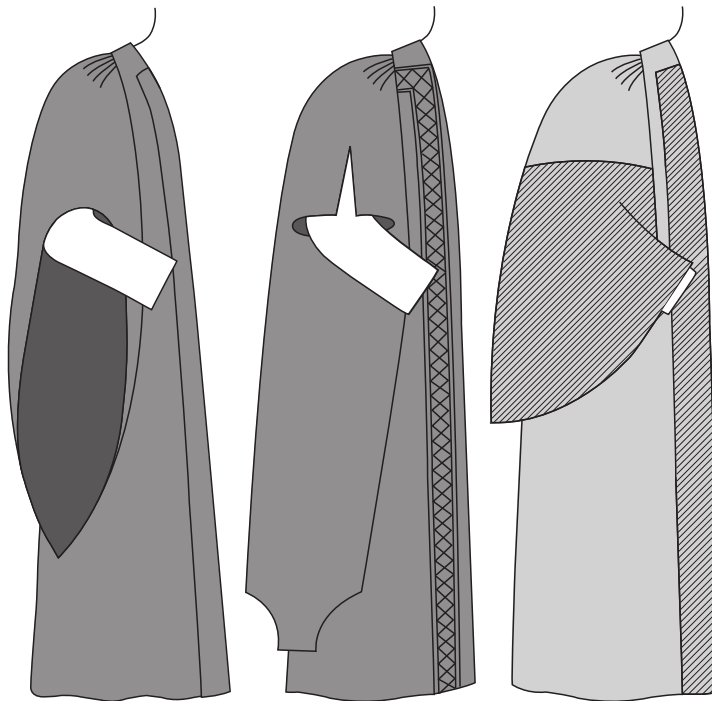


FIG. 5 Bachelor's gown.

FIG 6 LEFT Bachelor's [b1].

FIG 7 CENTRE PhD [m8].

FIG 8 RIGHT Doctor's [d2].



DIAGRAMS BY KATE DOUGLAS, SHAW'S ACADEMICAL DRESS 3RD EDITION

with a quarter-circle indentation on either side of the base of the sleeve¹⁰ [m8] (see Fig. 5). While there are specifications for undress gowns for PhDs (Master's gown with black braid trimmings) and higher doctorates (the same, but substituting a flap collar), these gowns are virtually never seen.¹¹ This can partly be ascribed to the general lapse in the wearing of gowns on non-festive occasions (i.e. lecturing, examining, committee meetings) and, in particular, to the abandonment of the rule that hoods and black gowns be worn by the audience at inaugural lectures: the sense of a special occasion evaporated once such lectures were re-scheduled from 8 pm to 5.15 pm.¹² As has already been mentioned, the PhD dress gown is decorated with University red braid. Higher Doctors wear the Oxford shape (bell-sleeved) robe [d2] in (lightweight) University red cloth, with facings and cuffs of silk in the degree colour.

Head-dress

All graduates wear a black cloth trencher (mortar-board), except that higher Doctors' full dress specifies a black velvet John Knox shaped doctoral cap. Though officially described as a 'modified biretta', this does not convey an impression that is easy to visualise:

¹⁰ This is also a feature of Leeds and Lampeter sleeves.

¹¹ During 33 years' service at Leicester, this author has never seen either garment worn.

¹² Originally an energy-conservation measure during the power cuts of the early 1970s.

the crown is low and the pointed corners extend outwards, the overall effect being that of a Reformation-era cleric.

Dress worn below Academic Dress

Leicester has eclectic academic dress with items drawn from Oxford (Bachelors, Higher Doctorates), Scotland (modified Aberdeen shape hood, doctoral cap) and Cambridge (PhD robe), in addition to some original features (hood sizes and shapes, Master/Doctor reverse colour schemes). The overall 'feel' might be said to be Oxonian; this also applies to some aspects of associated ceremonial.

From the outset, candidates were required to wear what was, for all practical purposes, Oxford *sub fusc* when being presented for degrees. Men were to wear a dark suit, white shirt, white collar, white dress tie and black shoes, and women a dark skirt or suit, plain white blouse and black or navy blue shoes. They were to wear stockings¹³ of a neutral colour and neither handbags nor gloves could be carried. This persisted until 1984, when the General Purposes Board¹⁴ considered representations from the Staff-Student Council raising 'objections to the cost of certain items which students might not ordinarily possess'. Particular reference was made to white bow-ties and dark suits and skirts. The question of permitting women to wear the mortar-board instead of the soft cap was also raised.

The Board recommended to the Senate that the regulations be amended to substitute 'a plain white shirt, suit and tie of a sober colour and pattern, and dark shoes' for men and 'a plain white blouse, suit or skirt of a sober colour and pattern and dark shoes' for women. The Board also clarified the position of service dress: 'serving members of HM Forces may wear dress uniform' and 'service caps will not be worn during the ceremony'. It was further agreed that, as for men, women should carry the mortar board during the proceedings. In a post-script, the Board expressed the hope that members of staff would be encouraged to conform to similar standards of dress at degree congregations—an injunction not always followed.

White ties had always been compulsory for the University Officers of cancellarial status (Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors and Pro-Vice-Chancellors), but they were not uniform attire for Deans of Faculties and Public Orators. An informal, but successful, campaign¹⁵ was run to encourage all staff with speaking parts at degree ceremonies to wear white bow ties. (This was sometimes reinforced by the purchase of ties and their presentation to those concerned.) The same result was achieved at University College, Northampton (students of which read for Leicester degrees until 1994), when devolved degree ceremonies began to be held in Northampton in the mid-1980s.

University College, Northampton

Leicester did not influence the system of academic dress adopted by University College, Northampton when it received authority to award taught degrees. Northampton chose London-style Bachelor gowns (a mirror-image of Southampton, perhaps!). The only direct

¹³ The only relaxation therefore being permission for women to wear stockings of a neutral colour rather than black.

¹⁴ Minute 3.1 of 21 Feb. 1984.

¹⁵ This campaign was run by the present author, who was involved in the organisation of degree congregations.

connection was the design by the present writer of a (pre-degree-awarding status) robe for the Director of the College in the College colours of blue and green. This has now been superseded by black and gold robes for all those of Rectorial status.

Early Changes

The 1960s and 1970s saw changes in ceremonial from degree congregations that used Oxonian Latin formulae to ceremonies conducted entirely in English. At the same time, there were changes in academic dress. Wearing undergraduate gowns, for instance, faded away during the mid-1960s to vanishing point by the late 1960s.

The practice of 'hooding' candidates for Bachelors' degrees¹⁶ was abandoned in 1962 as a result of rapidly increasing numbers and substituted with a handshake. (In turn, this was replaced for Bachelors with a quick bow.) At the same time handing over of caps and bonnets to candidates for Master's and Doctor's degrees was dispensed with.

Although honorary doctorates in law were conferred at the very first degree congregation in 1958, the first undergraduates in law did not arrive until 1966 and they were then placed in the Faculty of the Social Sciences. So much for the idea of 'Faculty Colours', with black-lined LLB's in the grey-lined Faculty of the Social Sciences! (Law was to become a separate Faculty in its own right in 1973.)

Cream brocade was specified at the outset for degrees in Music, but a BMus degree was never created.¹⁷ So far, four honorary degrees of Master of Music have been conferred, and 25 doctorates, including such luminaries as Benjamin Britten, Yehudi Menuhin and Michael Tippett.

Leicester is an entirely secular University and has no faculty of Theology; clerics worthy of honorary degrees have to be content with an honorary LLD.

Developments since the mid-1960s

As at many universities, the creation of new degrees caused the main changes to academic dress regulations.

Social Science

Before the incorporation of the University, there had been attempts to institute a Bachelor of Social Science degree. Though proposed by leading members of the Departments of Sociology, Economic History and Politics, it was rejected.¹⁸ The Social Sciences Faculty had to be content with a BA for its first degree, and this could to some extent be considered a contributory factor to the 'Faculty colours' confusion (see above): two Faculties (Arts and Social Sciences) having a BA degree, both with a hood lining of silver grey. Social Sciences got its own BSc degrees in 1968, when increasing emphasis on quantitative methods led to the creation of the BSc Economics and the BSc Sociology degrees. Once again, colour was conflated with degree title, and these two degrees were allocated the blue lining of the Faculty of Science BSc hood.

¹⁶ Article 9 of the Appendix to the 1957 Senate Minute.

¹⁷ The nearest approach to a BMus was Music being a subject within the BA Combined Studies degree. (The School of Music was subsequently closed in the early 1980s.)

¹⁸ By 11 votes to 6. Senate Minute 47 of 22 Jan. 1957.

Education

The BEd degree was introduced in 1968 following the government's decision to make school teaching an all-graduate profession. The degree was available only to students of the three teacher-training establishments affiliated to the University (there being no internal first-degree Education students) viz the City of Leicester College of Education (subsequently absorbed into Leicester Polytechnic, which in turn became De Montfort University), Nene College, Northampton (which subsequently became University College Northampton) and St Paul's College,¹⁹ Newbold Revel, near Rugby. Internal degrees in Education had been available at Master's level since the early days of the University and hence tartan green had appeared in the first set of academic dress regulations as the colour for Education. It was therefore only necessary to add the green lining to the Bachelor's hood to produce the academic dress for the BEd.

Taught Masters

Taught Masters' courses began to appear in the mid-1960s and it was thought desirable to differentiate between these and Masters' research degrees. At that time, the latter were entitled MA or MSc; the MPhil degree was introduced to supplant such old-style research Masters. At Leicester, Science led the way in 1973 with the MPhil, having for some time run MSc courses in Experimental Space Physics and in Mining Geology and Mineral Exploration. The Arts and Social Sciences followed in 1976. The Faculty/Degree colours issue raised its head again, leading to a missed opportunity. For reasons that are not altogether clear, it was decided to adopt the existing MA hood for the MPhil, despite the first MPhil graduates coming from the Faculty of Science. The decision appears to have been taken by administrative fiat. Here was a case for a new and distinctive colour for a hood lining encompassing all Faculties, by analogy with, or deriving from, the PhD hood.

Medicine

Following the separation in 1973 of the Faculty of Law from within the Faculty of the Social Sciences, 1974 saw the development of another faculty, Medicine, in the light of the Todd report on medical education that proposed a significant increase in provision. Leicester and Nottingham were the successful candidates for brand new medical schools. The range of principal colours suitable for combination with the University red hood exterior was beginning to narrow, and the eventual choice was a pale turquoise, its blue constituent showing some affinity with its sister Faculty of Science (The closeness of the two Faculties was underlined by the decision in 1998 to detach the School of Biological Sciences with its renown in such cell-based disciplines as Genetics and Biochemistry, and merge it with the Faculty of Medicine.)

Faculty Colours

It should at this point be pointed out that many decisions on degree colours and academic dress designs in this period were taken by a body known as The Officers' Meeting. This group, founded in the late 1960s by the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Fraser Noble, consisted of him, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Academic

¹⁹ One of the monotechnic training colleges closed in the 1980s.

Registrar, the Estates Bursar and the Finance Officer, and met every Monday morning in term-time to discuss matters of policy. It was not until the mid-1980s that its decisions were minuted (though not for onward transmission). The Group's successor body, with a somewhat different composition, still exists today, with the rather more formal title of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee.

The issue of 'Faculty' colours was resolved in 1978. A new Registrar, Michael Baatz, appointed in 1973, saw the illogicality of the system as it had developed and, in 1977, persuaded the Officers' meeting to agree to definitions in terms of degree, and not Faculty colours.

Registrar's Robe

James Walmsley, the successor to Registrar Baatz, did not have an academic background, and it was therefore necessary to devise suitable attire for him on ceremonial and official occasions. (The previous two Registrars had worn the robes of their own degrees.) Accordingly, the General Purposes Board agreed to recommend the following addition to the regulations for official dress:²⁰

THE REGISTRAR A robe of black corded silk, trimmed with silver braid on the front.
A trencher of black velvet with a black tassel.

The shape was that of a Master's gown, with the Leicester double indentation or lunation at the base of the sleeve. There was also an undress version, again in a Master's shape, but of black stuff and with half length box-ended sleeves.²¹

Business Administration

For some years, the Faculty of the Social Sciences had been nurturing a School of Management, which really took off in the late 1980s, leading to the need for a Master of Business Administration degree, instituted in 1989. Growth in this field was phenomenal, with a pioneering distance-learning approach. The degree is particularly popular with students from overseas, and so it was an inspired move to choose gold, with its connotations of esteem and quality, as the colour of the lining for the MBA hood.

Hybrid Degrees

The early 1990s²² saw the advent of what might be called 'hybrid' degrees, a hybridisation reflected in their academic dress. In 1992, the Faculty of Education created its own version of the MBA degree, focussing on educational management, and a variant of the MBA hood was designed: the gold lining bordered and edged with Education tartan green.

At the same time, a similar approach was taken to the new degree of BPhil (Educa-

²⁰ Minute 7 of 18 Oct. 1983.

²¹ This gown, being surplus to Registrar Bernbaum's requirements (since he held a London BSc Econ degree) was donated by him to a colleague for her inaugural professorial lecture and was retained by her into her retirement. It is, therefore, no longer viewable.

²² The present author became professionally involved in new designs for items of academic dress at this time.

tion): this was a first degree, but based on the accumulation of taught modules from the continuing professional development programme for practising teachers. In this case, seeing that the MPhil had some years ago adopted the MA hood, the BPhil (Ed) was assigned the BA hood, with Education green border and edging.

The Faculty of Medicine had for some time been seeking a certificated stopping-off point for MB, ChB students who decided to pursue a career other than that of medical practitioner, while nevertheless earning recognition for what they had undertaken in their MB, ChB studies. In 1992, the third 'hybrid' degree was created, that of Bachelor of Medical Science, for which the turquoise lining of was complemented by Science Faculty blue edging and binding.

New Robe for Registrar

Registrar Walmsley (see above) left in 1987 and an interim arrangement, in which the majority of his functions was undertaken by one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, was perpetuated by the latter's designation as Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Registrar, but with enhanced responsibilities from this reallocation of duties devolving on the Financial Secretary. The specially selected Registrar's robe, therefore, became redundant, as the Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor retained his cancellarial robe for ceremonial occasions. This arrangement continued until 1993, when the post-holder left. This was followed by a reversion to tradition on the successor appointment of Mr Keith Julian, a professional administrator, as Registrar and Secretary. The old Registrar robe, if resurrected, would have required extensive alteration to suit the new incumbent, in addition to being a one-off creation which did not accord with the prevailing 'tone' of the suite of official robes. It was, therefore, decided to design a new robe. This borrowed the essential features of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor robe—open pointed sleeves, stiffened yoke, with gathers on the sleeve front secured by a pair of cords and buttons—but with University red braid substituted for gold on the facings and a red instead of gold tassel attached to the black velvet trencher. This was not the first use of red trimming on an office-holder's attire: the mace-bearer wears an Oxford bedel-style outfit (round bonnet and flap collar gown), where the black velvet facings and collar are trimmed with University red piping and the bonnet decorated with a red cord.

Taught Doctorates

The next significant development was the 'taught doctorate' in 1994, for which the research topic undertaken is related to advanced courses taken. The taught element was felt to place this doctorate below the conventional PhD so that, while the PhD dress robe was retained, the Master's degree hood from the appropriate Faculty was substituted for the PhD hood. The Doctor of Education (EdD) was accorded a green-lined MEd hood. Similarly, the Doctor of Clinical Psychology uses the MSc blue-lined hood.²³

Four-Year Undergraduate Courses

In common with other universities, Leicester had instituted a four-year course in engineering in 1987 for high-fliers, with its own distinctive nomenclature: BEng instead of BSc Engineering. Once again, a colour with affinity to the Science blue was chosen, the

²³ The University of East Anglia in some cases also uses Masters' hoods for doctorates.

blue-red of purple (cf the blue-green of Medicine).

This trend to four-year undergraduate courses became a national movement in the sciences and in 1994 the University introduced four-year degrees in Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics and Physics, all designated by Master. At the same time, the existing four-year BEng was upgraded to MEng. Though the length of the course and the enhanced level of attainment were denoted by the title of Master, these were not Masters' degrees in the traditional understanding of academic terminology. It was, therefore, decided that such graduates (MChem, MGeol, MMath, MPhysics) should wear BSc robes (Bachelor gown and blue-lined hood), but with the addition of white piping on the edge of the cowl, and a similar adornment being applied to the purple-lined BEng hood to raise it to the status of MEng.

Master of Research

With 'new name, new colour' firmly entrenched, it was relatively simple in 1996 to select a lining for the new degree of Master of Research. This was created for students in Science and in Medicine and Biological Sciences wanting a certificate for their contribution to collaborative research, which could not satisfy the PhD criterion of unaided originality. Mauve was not too distant from Science blue in the spectrum and was, therefore, chosen for the lining of the MRes hood.

Foundation Degrees

Two-year first degrees were introduced in 2002 and called FdA (Foundation Degree in Arts) for students in Arts, in Social Science and in Education, and FdSc for scientists (the latter not yet activated). To differentiate such degrees from traditional three-year Bachelors' courses, an unlined Bachelor's hood with a single stripe of either grey (FdA) or blue (FdSc) running down the middle of the perma-crease fold at the back of the cowl has been adopted.

Non-Degree Awards

The newest hood (2003) is that for non-degree awards. Such a development had not been resisted, so much as not considered from the earliest days of the University's foundation, but the issue arose in relation to University awards conferred on students in Associated Colleges. Students of Grosseteste College, Lincoln and Newman College, Birmingham follow certain courses validated by the University of Leicester, in particular the Graduate Certificate in Education. The internal Leicester PGCE²⁴ has never been the subject of an award ceremony, and the Leicester PGCE awarded to students of the former Nene College in Northampton did not occasion special attire for conferment ceremonies, students wearing the dress appropriate to their first degree. However, it was thought that it would be preferable if Grosseteste and Newman students attending devolved conferment ceremonies in Lincoln and Birmingham were to be presented in attire specific to the award gained. The options considered were: gown and hood; gown and stole (instead of a hood); gown alone, but with some form of coloured trimming. The simplest of the options was chosen: gown plus unlined hood in University red. The intention is to use such a hood for any other non-degree awards (Diploma/Certificate) where pressure develops for a conferment ceremony. As a coda to these developments in relation to Associated Colleges, it was agreed that de-

²⁴ Postgraduate Certificate of Education.

grees conferred at devolved Leicester ceremonies held at the colleges should be marked by a hood piped round the edge of the cowl with the College colours.²⁵

Distinguished Honorary Fellow

A new form of honorific designation came into effect at the degree congregations of July 2005 when the title of Distinguished Honorary Fellow was conferred upon two individuals, Frank May and Helen Scott, who already held Leicester honorary degrees, in recognition of the length and extent of their service to the University. The dress for such persons is a cream brocade robe (of the Oxford/Leicester doctoral pattern) with University red figured damask sleeves and facings and the higher Doctor's Martin Knox cap, also in red figured damask. There is no hood, as the title is not a degree.

Conclusion

The development of Leicester's academic dress over half a century has proceeded at a steady pace, responding as required to needs arising principally from the establishment of new degrees and, to a lesser extent, from social changes, eg relaxation of dress codes for graduates. By not choosing to use fur, a controversy has been avoided: the only hint of discontent arose during the 1968/1969 'troubles', which afflicted all universities to a greater or lesser degree. For the most part, the Leicester scheme could still be said to match the criteria laid down by the Ceremonies Committee in 1957:

a The relationship between the Leicester scheme of dress and those of other universities must be borne in mind.

This holds true in that, while Leicester's attire is distinctive in the use of University red as the external colouration of its hoods and in some of the shapes adopted, it is not shockingly out of line with what was the general practice of universities at the time of the award of Leicester's charter.

b The gowns, hoods and robes must form a coherent and logical scheme as a whole.

This is perhaps where Leicester is on less certain ground: while the underlying principles are reasonably sound, earlier years were clouded by the issue of 'Faculty' colours, which could have been solved by choosing at the outset a different title (and a different colour) for first degrees in the Faculty of the Social Sciences. However, as has already been pointed out, there was definitely a missed opportunity with the MPhil hood in 1973, which only served to confuse matters even more.

c Their colours must blend, so as to make a University ceremony a satisfactory spectacle.

This tenet has been faithfully adhered to. Unfortunately, red does not go well with every colour, and the palette of remaining suitable colours has been somewhat diminished by the introduction of new degrees, and the list of options for future use is brief.

25 The hoods for Leicester graduates from Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln are decorated on the outer edge of the cowl with triple twist cord in the College colours of gold, pale blue and dark green.

d There must be economy in their design and making, so far as is consistent with the use of seemly materials, well cut.

Economy has been achieved by the relative simplicity of colour combinations, the brevity of the cut (no full shapes for hoods and either an abbreviated or absent liripipe) and the absence of appliqué features on gowns (except for the PhD). The novelty of some features is counterbalanced by traditional approaches in other areas and the overall effect can be said to be one of seamliness.

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