

The Academic Robes of Graduates of the University of Cambridge from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day

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The aim of this article is to examine the developments in the academic dress of the graduates of the University of Cambridge from the end of the eighteenth century (where Hargreaves-Mawdsley ended his account)¹ to the present day.² (Undergraduate dress has been largely a matter for college regulation at Cambridge, and thus does not come within our remit.) Without doubt, the most important development was the complete revision of the scheme in 1934, of which a very biased account is to be found in Franklyn's *Academical Dress* of 1970;³ it does however have useful transcripts of the various Reports of the Council of Senate. This article will concentrate on the colours of the hoods and robes, and to an extent on the styles of the black gowns, but will not enter into discussion of the variations in the hood shape. We ignore also the 'business' or Congregation dress of doctors, as by about 1880 it had virtually disappeared from ordinary use.⁴

Degrees awarded

In 1800, the degrees awarded were: Bachelor and Doctor of Divinity (BD, DD); Bachelor and Doctor of Laws (LL.B, LL.D);⁵ Bachelor and Doctor of Medicine (MB, MD); Bachelor and Master of Surgery (BChir, MChir);⁶ Bachelor and Master of Arts (BA, MA); and Bach-

1 W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academical Dress in Europe until the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

2 The authors are very grateful to Mr Timothy Milner, MA (Cambridge and Wales), FBS, University Ceremonial Officer and Additional Pro-Proctor for Ceremonial in the University for a number of corrections, but of course any opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors alone.

3 Charles A. H. Franklyn, *Academical Dress from the Middle Ages to the Present Day, Including Lambeth Degrees* (Lewes: Baxter, 1970).

4 *Cambridge University Reporter* (hereafter *CUR*), 20 May 1889, p. 714. It is stated that, by this date, the versions of this dress used by the LL.D and MD had become assimilated to that of the DD, now surviving as the 'cope' used by the Vice-Chancellor and their deputies and certain others at degree ceremonies. Its virtual disuse as regular wear by 1889 is highlighted by the suggestion that the University should provide a cope for the use of those presenting for degrees, to save expense on the part of doctors who might need one. Oxford has, in contrast, retained the regular use of Convocation dress.

5 Although the title implies degrees in Laws (plural; i.e. Civil and Canon), the degrees were awarded in Civil Law alone once Canon Law had been abolished, and were thus properly BCL/DCL until the mid-nineteenth century, when Common Law was added to the syllabus (*Notes & Queries*) (hereafter *N&Q*), 2nd ser., 6, No. 147 (23 Oct. 1858), p. 337. The specific degrees in Canon Law or Decretals (BCanL, DCanL or DecB, DecD) were abolished in 1545.

6 The abbreviation for Master of Surgery nationally was originally MC, but was, apparently,

elor and Doctor of Music (MusB, MusD).⁷ There was also the status of Student in Civil Law (SCL), which paralleled the same status at Oxford, but is far less well-known.⁸

To these in the nineteenth century were added doctorates in Letters (LittD, 1878) and in Science (ScD, 1878), and masterships in Laws (LL.M, 1854)⁹ and in Music (MusM, 1893).¹⁰ The twentieth century saw the addition of doctorates in Philosophy (PhD, 1919); and in Veterinary Medicine (VetMD, 1999); masterships in Letters (MLitt, 1921); in Science (MSc, 1921);¹¹ in Philosophy (MPhil, 1966); in Engineering (MEng, 1989); in Business Administration (MBA, 1990); in Education (MEd, 1991); in Natural Science (MSci, 1994); and in Studies (MSt, 1994); and bacclaureates in Veterinary Medicine (VetMB, 1949); in Education (BEd, 1966); and in Theology for Ministry (BTh, 1995). Since 2000, doctorates in Engineering (EngD, 2001); and Education (EdD, 2010); masterships in Finance (MFin, 2007); in Research (MRes, 2008); in Mathematics (MMath, 2009); in Advanced Study (MASt, 2009);¹² in Corporate Law (MCL, 2010); and in Music (specifically, Choral Studies; MMus, 2009—see note 10 *supra*). have been added. In 2012, a reorganization of the higher medical doctorate was undertaken, resulting in the addition of a doctorate in Medical Science (MedScD) from 2014.

Research degrees and Doctors of Philosophy (PhD)

The PhD degree was introduced at Cambridge in 1919—in the teeth of fierce opposition ‘from those who scorned, or perhaps feared, comparison with German and American universities’.¹³ The actual reason for introducing it seems to have been that, without it, re-

changed when the Military Cross was conferred on so many soldiers in the Great War.

7 The abbreviations for the music degrees have varied over time, and may be seen as MusB/MusD, BMus/DMus, or MusBac/MusDoc. We use here the current forms of MusB and MusD throughout for convenience.

8 It is not listed in T. W. Wood, *Ecclesiastical and Academical Colours* (London: Bemrose, 1875), so must have disappeared before then; it is, however, listed by several clergy in *Crockford's* until late in the nineteenth century. Venn does not acknowledge it (John Venn and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 10 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922–54)).

9 The LL.M is mentioned in Wood's book of 1875 as having ‘no distinctive hood’ (p. 45), but it is not listed in ‘University Hoods and How to Make Them’, *Girl's Own Paper*, 1, no. 35 (25 Aug. 1880), pp. 564–66. It was originally awarded to LL.Bs after three years, exactly as the MA is awarded to BAs. After 1 October 1982, admission to the LL.B ceased, and the course was renamed LL.M. Existing LL.Bs could ask to be redesignated as LL.M, but it was not compulsory. Likewise, although ‘University Hoods’, *Boy's Own Paper*, 26, no. 25 (19 March 1904), pp. 413–14. lists the MChir, the *Girl's Own Paper* does not—even though it lists other MCh degrees.

10 This degree has had a shadowy existence. Apparently, it was awarded twice only, so far as can be ascertained, and was abolished in 1982. It was revived as a ‘primary degree’ (i.e. open to non-Cambridge graduates), ranking between MMath and MASt, and redesignated MMus, in 2009 (*CUR*, 21 Oct. 2009). The previous dress is to be used.

11 Cambridge has always designated these degrees as masters, unlike Oxford, which had them as BLitt and BSc until they were upgraded in 1977 and 1975 respectively. The MSc and MLitt had been mooted as early as 1916 (*CUR*, 16 Oct. 1920, p. 179).

12 Those passing Part III of the Mathematics Tripos will become Masters of Mathematics if they have already taken the first three years of that Tripos, or Masters of Advanced Study if taking Part III alone.

13 Elisabeth Leedham-Green, *A Concise History of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 195. Oxford introduced the degree (designated DPhil) in 1917, and gave it full doctoral robes.

search students would not come to Cambridge to pursue graduate study, as the degree had become indispensable for teaching in higher education in America. There had been research courses, but they led to the Research BA¹⁴—at least, for non-Cambridge graduates; those who were already BA (or MA) received no further distinction, and so there was also some internal pressure for such a degree.¹⁵ There was opposition to the title, and the designation ‘Doctor in Arts’ was suggested instead, although this was quashed on the grounds that everywhere else used the designation Doctor of Philosophy.¹⁶ The *Reporter* noted which other universities were already giving, or proposing to give, the PhD in 1918: Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Dublin, Edinburgh, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Oxford, and Sheffield; and those which proposed to award a doctoral degree, but which had not decided on the title: Durham and Wales.¹⁷ A third list gives those ‘which had resolved not to establish a new doctorate’: Aberdeen, St Andrews, Glasgow, London, and the National University of Ireland: this was because they already made their existing doctorates (LL.D, DLitt, etc.) available after three or four years’ study (two, in the case of NUI).¹⁸

The style chosen for the robes (see below) seems to reflect its status as a lower doctorate: the LittD and ScD were awarded ‘upon a judgment of the riper work of the candidates’, whereas the PhD ‘must necessarily be of a considerably lower standard ... [it] could not and ought not to be much higher than the present standard of the BA research degree’, as the work was undertaken at the start of the academic career.¹⁹

Despite this stricture, its standard was set high, and it was recognized that a number of applicants would not reach it, either as their work would not be up to the mark, or because they could not afford the requisite three-year residence. It was recognized that in other universities ‘the ordinary remedy is a Master’s Degree taken in a shorter period, generally two years.’²⁰ (It was noted that this option might be especially attractive to schoolmasters and industrial scientists.) While other universities used the MA for this purpose, it was felt that, given the nature of the Cambridge MA, it was better to adopt the MLitt and MSc. These degrees had been made moot in 1916, and approval given the following year,²¹ and so authority was given to implement them in 1920.²² One might wonder why the idea

14 Thus there were two ways of gaining the BA: either by taking the Tripos examinations after study, or by research, which elsewhere led to a further degree—e.g. MA/MSc. See note 22 *infra*.

15 Oxford had, in 1895, instituted the degrees of BLitt and BSc for this purpose. They were followed by the relevant doctorates in 1900. All four were, and are, degrees in the Faculty of Arts, however (which is why the DLitt and DSc at Oxford wear a square cap, and not a bonnet). The possibility of Cambridge having the BLitt and BSc had been raised earlier, and the 1904 *Boy’s Own Paper* chart actually lists a BSc hood: it is, as would be logical at the time, the same as BA.

16 *CUR*, 4 Feb. 1919, p. 435.

17 This is slightly hard to understand, as (see following paragraph) Wales was awarding a DPhil in 1912.

18 *CUR*, 26 July 1918, p. 821. Some of these were in fact awarding a DPhil, and giving it full scarlet; when they changed the designation to PhD, they were ‘downgraded’ to crimson or similar.

19 *CUR*, 4 Feb. 1919, p. 435. This is still largely true, although nowadays many mature and highly experienced students undertake a PhD—and occasionally a second one.

20 *CUR*, 26 Oct. 1920, p. 179.

21 *CUR*, 10 Feb. 1917, p. 525.

22 The Research BA was also suggested for this purpose, but ruled out for the same reason as given for the PhD: that with a BA Cambridge men would gain no extra degree for their work.

of the MPhil (or even PhM) did not suggest itself: maybe the thinking was the MLitt and MSc would eventually go on to their relevant doctorates rather than to the PhD.²³

Robes used from c. 1800 until 1934

Hoods

As might be expected, the robes remained remarkably stable over this period. The main differences are in the shades of silk used to line the doctors' hoods, and in the hoods assigned to the LL.B, MB, and MusB. Table 1 summarizes the hoods as given in the various sources. For the earliest records, Hargreaves-Mawdsley has been consulted, and he relied on the series of plates produced from drawings by Richard Harraden (1803)²⁴ and Thomas Uwins (1815).²⁵ Subsequent sources, which list the hoods only, are J. W. G. Gutch's table, in *Notes & Queries*, 11 Sept. 1858, p. 211; T. W. Wood's *Ecclesiastical and Academical Colours* (1875; this largely follows Gutch, and reproduces several of his errors); the article 'University hoods and How to Make Them' in *The Girl's Own Paper* (1880); Wood's second book, *The Degrees, Gowns, and Hoods of the British, Colonial, Indian, and American Universities and Colleges* (London: Thomas Pratt, 1882, which incorporates many corrections); *Whitaker's Almanack* (1885, *passim*); a coloured pull-out chart from *The Boy's Own Paper* (1904);²⁶ and a list at the end of the article 'Universities' in the 1911 edition of *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The final column gives the hoods as recorded in the second edition of Frank W. Haycraft's *Degrees and Hoods of the World's Universities and Colleges* (London: Cheshunt Press, 1924). To an extent, these sources are interdependent, and an error in one source will be repeated in those which depend on it. An example is the blue and black MusB hood listed by Gutch, which appears in a number of subsequent sources, but which appears to have had no existence.

²³ The MPhil did not in fact appear in England until the 1960s, when it was introduced by Sussex.

²⁴ In his *Costume of the Various Orders in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: the artist, 1805).

²⁵ In William Combe, *History of the University of Cambridge* (London: Ackermann, 1815).

²⁶ This source has to be used with care, as it is not entirely accurate, and in some cases does not take note of developments before 1904. Also, as it is pictorial, the materials are not stated.

Table 1: Cambridge hoods as given in the various sources.

Degree	c. 1800 Hargreaves-Mawdsley	1858 Gutch: Notes & Queries	1875 Wood, Eccl. & Acad. Colours	1880 Girl's Own Paper
BD	black black	black black	black black	black black
DD	scarlet : salmon (1803); pink shot (1815)	scarlet rose-colour	scarlet pink	scarlet 'dull pink'
LL.B	black black	'all black silk'	black black	black black
LL.M	[not awarded]	[not listed]	'no distinctive hood'	[not listed]
LL.D	scarlet miniver	scarlet 'white ermine'	scarlet pink	scarlet pink
MB	black black	black black	black black	black black
MD	'same as LL.D'	scarlet rose-colour	scarlet pink	scarlet pink
BChir	'always held with MB.'	[not listed]	[not listed]	[not listed]
MChir	[not listed]	[not listed]	[not listed]	[not listed]
BA	black fur	black white fur	black fur	black fur
MA	black white (<i>regent</i>); black black (<i>non-reg.</i>)	black white (<i>regent</i>) black black (<i>non-reg.</i>)	black white	black white
MusB	black black	blue black, 'or, ac- cording to some', white cerise	blue black	black fur
MusM	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]
MusD	white damask crimson	buff cerise	buff silk cerise	maroon silk white
LittD	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not listed]
MLitt	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]
ScD	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not listed]
MSc	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]
[BSc]*	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]
PhD	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]
SCL	black fur	[not listed]	[not listed]	[not listed]

*The BSc (but not BLitt) seems to have been mooted along the lines of the Oxford one, i.e. a post-BA degree, but was never formalized. The BA hood would have been the appropriate one in the pre-1934 scheme.

	1882 Wood, Degrees, Gowns ...	1890 Whitaker's Almanack ¹	1904 Boy's Own Paper	1911 Encyclopædia Brittanica	1924 Haycraft, Degrees and Hoods 2
BD	black silk I black silk	'plain black silk'	black I black	black I black	black silk I black
DD	scarlet cloth I pink silk	scarlet cloth I 'silk shot with pink and violet'	scarlet I pink	scarlet I pink shot violet	scarlet I pink shot violet
LL.B	black silk I fur	'same as BA'	black I fur	black I fur	black I fur
LL.M	black silk I fur	'same as MA'	black I white	black I white	black silk I white
LL.D	scarlet cloth I pink silk	'silk of a light cherry colour' **	scarlet I pink	scarlet I pink	scarlet I pink
MB	black silk I fur	black silk I 'pink silk of a dark cherry colour'	black I cerise	black I fur	black I mid-cherry
MD	scarlet cloth I pink silk	scarlet cloth 'with dark cherry-coloured silk lining'	scarlet I cerise	scarlet I dark cherry	scarlet I mid-cherry
BChir	[not listed]	'same as BA'	[not listed]	[not listed]	as MB
MChir	[not listed]	'same as MA'	black I white	[not listed]	black I scarlet silk
BA	black stuff I fur	black, 'with double fur edging'	black I fur	black I fur	black I fur
MA	black silk I white silk	black silk I white silk	black I white	black I white	black I white
MusB	black stuff I fur	dark cherry I fur	dark cherry I fur	dark cherry I fur	dark cherry I fur
MusM	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not listed]	[not listed]	black silk I white
MusD	'red puce silk lined white silk'	'cream-coloured figured silk I cherry-coloured silk'	cream damask I cherry	cream damask I cherry	cream damask I cherry
LittD	[not listed]	scarlet cloth I scarlet silk	scarlet I pink	scarlet I scarlet	scarlet I scarlet
MLitt	[not listed]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	black cloth I white
ScD	[not listed]	scarlet cloth I 'silk shot with pink and light blue'	scarlet I pink shot light blue	scarlet I pink shot light blue	scarlet I pink shot light blue
MSc	[not listed]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	black cloth I white
[BSc]*	[not listed]	[not awarded]	as BA	[not listed]	as BA
PhD	[not listed]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	[not awarded]	black silk I scarlet cloth
SCL	[not listed]	[not listed]	[not listed]	[not listed]	[obsolete]

** The scarlet shell is not noted, which must be an oversight.

We are extremely grateful to Dr Alex Kerr for searching the series of copies of Whitaker in the Bodleian Library for us.

Higher doctors

The miniver lining for the LL.D hood had become all but obsolete by 1858, being used only by a new LL.D at his creation; after that, he wore the same hood as the DD.²⁷

Leaving aside the Doctors of Music, who had had special robes since the sixteenth century, doctors all wore scarlet lined with pink, but by the end of the nineteenth century, the shades of the linings had become sufficiently differentiated to be regarded as being degree-specific: dove-colour shot for DD, pink for LL.D, and crimson for MD.²⁸ So, when the LittD and ScD were introduced in 1878, they were allowed to choose the colour of silk that would line their hoods and robes. The musicians had retained their link with the medics in keeping their lining the same colour,²⁹ but eventually these too became differentiated, with the medics having a lighter shade than the musicians.

The dove-colour shot silk of the DD may have had its origin in London, where the robemakers (as opposed to the Cambridge ones) 'substitute for the rose-colour of the higher degrees ... a very pretty *shot* silk (*light blue shot with crimson, I think*) without the smallest authority':³⁰ why they did so remains a mystery. The exact shade of this shot silk is vexed. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*'s 'pink shot violet' describes the effect only. It seems to have been rose shot turquoise for a good while, and thus the *N&Q* correspondent's 'crimson shot light blue' is nearer. As used now, it is restricted to the DD, and is described either as 'dove-colour shot' or 'opal'. It is certainly not a pink shade. Eventually it became the officially specified lining: a prime example of regulation following practice. But it is clear from the sources that the DD originally shared the scarlet and pink hood of the other doctors.

The MusD hood appears to present a mystery. It is well known that in the sixteenth century the Doctors of Music in both universities adopted hoods and robes of cream brocade, lined with crimson silk.³¹ What Gutch may be describing is in fact just this, and that the 'cream' of the hood he saw was a dark shade,³² which could easily be construed as 'buff'. The *Girl's Own Paper* listing may simply be recording a hood worn inside-out.

Bachelors and Masters of Arts (BA, MA)

For the lower degrees, an interesting situation had developed: they wore the robes of their standing within the faculty of Arts—i.e. BA or MA, and thus there were only three hoods in use: black and fur, black lined white silk, and black lined black silk.³³ The first is proper to the BA, and the other two to the MA. The difference in the MA hoods was that the hood with white silk lining³⁴ was worn by regent MAs (i.e. MAs in the first five years after being

²⁷ *N&Q*, 2nd ser., 6, no. 147 (23 Oct, 1858), p. 337.

²⁸ Officially, these colours are 'light cherry' (Laws), 'mid-cherry' (Medicine) and 'dark cherry' (Music), but pink, magenta, and maroon describe the shades far better.

²⁹ When the MusD was introduced around 1550, it adopted the robes of the MD, as being the junior lay faculty.

³⁰ *N&Q*, 2nd ser., 5, no. 12 (19 June 1858), p. 502. This implies it was used for all three senior doctorates by the London makers, though not for the MusD. This further informs us that all three higher doctorates were still using the same rose colour silk as late as 1858. (*Italics original.*)

³¹ Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 119. The reason for their choosing (or being given) cream brocade in place of the scarlet cloth remains obscure. The only parallel is the gown of a nobleman, which was of silk brocade of any colour he chose.

³² Probably because the hood he saw was aged and discoloured.

³³ Is this the rationale behind the 'grade-hood' systems of Bristol (1909) and Reading (1926)?

³⁴ The white silk is generally held to represent the white miniver that lined the hood originally: cf. the Oxford Proctors, who still wear a miniver hood as a remnant of the original MA hood.

admitted to the degree), and they then removed the white silk, becoming non-regent. (It is not quite clear whether the hood should have been worn unlined, or with black silk lining: the general practice appears to have been to line it. Certainly the eighteenth-century Norwich church inventories all have their black hoods lined with black silk.³⁵) The distinction between regent and non-regent was abolished in 1858,³⁶ and from then on all MAs then wore the black hood with white silk lining—as they still do. This change of hood from regent to non-regent may explain why the pattern for the MA in the *Girl's Own Paper* article is not fully lined, but bordered inside the cowl for about 12" and inside the cape edges for about 3", with white silk: it would have made it easy to remove it on becoming a non-regent.³⁷ (See Fig. 1.³⁸) If so, this is a fossil, as by the time that article was compiled in 1880,³⁹ the distinction had been abolished; most probably the robemakers continued to make MA hoods in this way because they always had.⁴⁰ The *Boy's Own Paper* chart clearly shows the MA as having this part-lining, while all the others appear to be fully lined.

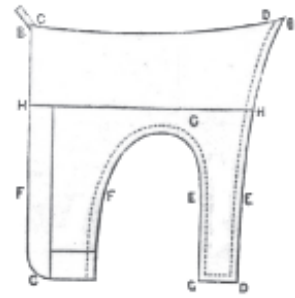


FIG. 1 Cambridge MA hood from the *Girl's Own Paper* article (slightly amended). The extent of the white silk is indicated by the solid lines.

Bachelors of Laws and of Divinity (LL.B, BD)

The non-regent hood was worn by the LL.B as denoting his status in the Faculty of Arts; there was thus technically no hood for this degree. Somewhere around 1885, the LL.B was demoted to the BA hood, which, despite the changes in the MB and MusB hoods, the LL.B

35 Nicholas Groves, 'A Hood for the Minister: Some Thoughts on Academic Hoods as Recorded in Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century Church Inventories', *TBS*, 5 (2005), pp. 59–63 (p. 59). On the other hand, the correspondent 'DCL Cantab' in *N&Q*, 2nd ser., 6, no. 147 (23 Oct. 1858), p. 337, said that the BD, BCL, MB, and non-regent MA hoods were made unlined.

36 The division of the Senate into the Regent House (not to be confused with the contemporary body of that name) and the Non-Regent House was ended in 1858 by the Statutory Commissioners for the University of Cambridge. The previous year they had made it plain they were going to insist on the change, but on 5 Nov. the Senate heavily defeated in both houses a Grace that would have made the change voluntarily. As everyone had been told that the Commissioners would from 1 January 1858 have the power to make new Statutes without the University's agreement, it was a rather pointless gesture. From 1858 the University had a unitary Senate comprising all MAs, and a partly elected/partly ex-officio Council of the Senate which had the job of vetting Graces. At that point regency and non-regency vanished, and with it the non-regent hood. (We are grateful to the Revd Dr Alec McGuire for this information, communicated by e-mail.)

37 It is worth noting that the MA hoods worn by the MA and the Proctor in Loggan's *Cantabrigia illustrata* plate of 1690 appear to show this part-lining: the edge of the cape is turned back, and can be seen to be bordered.

38 Note the rounded corners to the cape. 'DCL Cantab' in *N&Q*, 2nd ser., 5, no. 129 (19 June 1858), p. 502, decries these as an innovation of the Cambridge tailors, and says (pace Franklyn) that they should be square. The version illustrated here was fossilized in the London shape [f3].

39 There remains, of course, the possibility that the *Girl's Own Paper* author was working from an old pre-1858 hood.

40 It is worth noting that all Glasgow hoods, which changed to a full shape in 1891, although stated to be 'lined' are in fact part-lined in exactly this manner. The Glasgow hood shape [f9], may well preserve a version of the Cambridge shape as it was at that time (or an older one which had found its way to Glasgow), just as the Edinburgh shape [s4] preserves the contemporary Oxford shape.

retained it until the 1934 revision. Some sources note that the LL.B hoods were of black *silk*, while the BA was of black *stuff*, thus marking the difference, but it is not clear to what extent this was carried out. The MB, which had shared the LL.B robes, gained its own robes in 1889, as did the MusB (see below). This left only the BD with the old non-regent MA hood, which it still wears, having now become the BD hood by default.

Bachelors of Music (MusB)

The MusB wore the BA hood, too, even though a BA was originally not necessary to take the degree. The correspondent 'Aul: Trin;' in *Notes & Queries* stated that he thought that MusB had no hood, but wore the non-regent MA by courtesy.⁴¹ Certainly by 1880 the degree had been demoted to the BA hood. Gutch's blue and black hood seems to be without foundation: had he maybe seen a MusB wearing a non-regent MA hood where the black outer had discoloured?⁴² The further qualification 'according to some' implies that these hoods were not common within the University, most holders of the MusB and MusD being non-resident; those who were resident quite certainly held the MA or a higher doctorate, and wore those robes. However, the status of music degrees was changing at this point. William Sterndale Bennett (Professor of Music 1853–66) had instituted definite examinations for both MusB and MusD in 1857, and in 1893 Charles Villiers Stanford (Professor 1887–1924) made it requisite for candidates to be undergraduates. The University Calendar of 1903–04 indicates that MusBs had to have kept at least nine terms as well as pass the MusB examination, and that MusD candidates were required to be graduates in some Faculty of the University and at least thirty years of age in order to submit work for the degree. By that stage both MusDs and MusMs were members of the Senate, although MusBs were, and still are, not so. (This clarification of status may have been prompted by the introduction of the LittD and ScD.)

The change in status is what prompted the change in hood, and it was led by Stanford. The *Reporter* stated that 'when he met the representatives of the Committee some considerable time ago, he made representation about the hood worn by Bachelors of Music'⁴³ It seems there had been confusion caused by the BA and MusB using the same hood, 'Cambridge being the only one of the three chief universities which had made no difference between the one hood and other.'⁴⁴ He went on to say:

Many Bachelors of Music of Cambridge were organists, and their hood was a conspicuous object when worn with a surplice at the Organ during services in Church. The standard of knowledge required for proceeding to the degree of Bachelor of Music was that of a high Honour degree, whereas a Bachelor of Arts need not mean more than a mere pass. The Bachelor of

41 *N&Q*, 2nd ser., 5, no. 129 (19 June 1858), p. 501. Loggan in 1690 did not show a Bachelor of Music at Cambridge, though he did at Oxford.

42 This blue and black hood cannot be traced back beyond Gutch's table, which was often inaccurate, although it seems to have been merrily followed by several other writers. The hood is therefore ignored for the purposes of this article, except to note that it appears in some published sources. The white and cerise hood he gives as an alternative is clearly the MusD hood.

43 *CUR*, 4 June 1889, p. 815. It is not clear exactly what this committee was.

44 *Ibid.* He refers, of course, to Oxford (BMus hood, lilac and fur) and Dublin (MusB hood, pale blue and fur), both with black and fur BA hoods.

Music having passed what was practically a Tripos examination, and having thus acquired a sort of 'power to practise', his clients might think him not really entitled to use the letters which he wrote after his name if they saw him habitually wearing the ordinary Bachelor of Arts hood.⁴⁵

A Mr Cobb then pressed for a special MusB hood, and Professor Browne⁴⁶ said that he had suggested 'at the meeting to which Dr Stanford referred' that the 'hood for these persons should be made of silk of the same colour as the lining of the Doctor of Music's gown, lined with lamb's wool'.⁴⁷ The Vice-Chancellor concurred, opining that 'persons who had obtained that distinction should be able to show their honours'. It was approved on 10 June 1889: 'made of satin of the same colour as that used for the lining of the hood of the Doctor of Music and lined in the same manner as a Bachelor of Arts hood'.⁴⁸ Thus the 'faculty colour + fur' hood for bachelors was born, and which was to become the model for revisions in 1934. MusBs appear to have continued to wear the BA gown until the 1934 revision.

Bachelors of Medicine and of Surgery (MB, BChir)

If the MusB hood was born of a desire to distinguish the degree from the BA, then the MB robes were born from a confusion. In 1889 the MB gained a hood and gown of its own: the hood was black, lined with the MD mid-cherry. The *Reporter* of 15 October 1889 has the following:

Supplementary Report of the Council on Robes, October 14 1889

The Council have been informed that there is some uncertainty as to the proper gown and hood to be worn by Bachelors of Medicine. They understand that in recent years Bachelors of Medicine who are not graduates in Arts have been accustomed to wear the MA gown and hood. They think it, however, desirable, that a distinctive academical dress should be prescribed, and after consultation with the Regius Professor of Physic, recommend that in future:

The gown to be worn by Bachelors of Medicine shall be a black silk or stuff gown of the same shape as the scarlet gown of Doctors of Medicine, and the hood of black silk lined with pink silk of the colour approved for the lining of the scarlet gown of Doctors of Medicine.⁴⁹

The underlying cause of the change thus appears to be the use of the MA robes by MBs who did not hold that degree. It was indeed difficult to know what they should wear, for, as noted above, both the MB and LL.B were using the non-regent MA robes by virtue of holding that degree, and thus neither degree technically had robes of its own. (Interesting-

⁴⁵ Ibid. This is an interesting comment on the ability of the general public of the day to 'read' hoods.

⁴⁶ Edward Harold Browne, MA, DD, Norrisonian Professor of Divinity 1854–64, although in 1873 he had become Bishop of Winchester (previously Bishop of Ely).

⁴⁷ To what extent lamb's wool was still used for BA hoods at this time is unknown; it was the historic lining for BAs until replaced by rabbit fur. Possibly it was suggested as a further difference from the BA.

⁴⁸ *CUR*, 10 June 1889, p. 960, 'That the Amended Report of the Council of the Senate on Doctors' Robes, etc., dated June 10 1889 be confirmed'.

⁴⁹ *CUR*, 15 Oct. 1889, p. 62. The new robes were confirmed by a Grace of 11 November 1889.

ly, the question seems not to have arisen for LL.Bs who did not have an MA, who wore the BA robes until 1934.)

This passage stands alone, with no previous or subsequent discussion, so the rationale for the choice of the style of hood (or, indeed, the festal robe as the pattern for the gown), remains unknown. The hood may have been based on the BD hood, the old non-regent MA hood, but now seen as a model for post-BA bachelors, or possibly to equate it with the MA.

The BChir seems to have had no robes of its own at all until the 1934 revision. With the exception of Durham/Newcastle, Cambridge is the only English university to grant it separate robes from the MB. This is because at Cambridge, the BChir is awarded before the MB, whereas at other places the two degrees are awarded together.⁵⁰ As those graduating MB already hold the BChir, they appear dressed in those robes. However, by a Grace of 5 February 1954 (recorded as a footnote to the Dress at Graduation Ordinance), permission was given for them to wear the BA robes. This was revoked in 2002 as

the purpose of the footnote was to avoid the necessity of such a person buying the B.Chir. gown and hood for the Congregation. This dispensation is no longer necessary as it is now common practice to hire gowns and hoods for the appropriate degree for the Congregation.⁵¹

This is an interesting note on changing practice with regard to buying one's academic dress.

Later additions

Later additions (LL.M, 1854, and MChir⁵²) were assigned the non-regent MA hood, although in 1921 the MChir acquired its own hood of black silk lined with scarlet silk.⁵³ The impetus for this hood appears to have come from within the Faculty of Medicine, 'as giving to Masters of Surgery some visible token of the high distinction of their degree'. Was it in emulation of the MB robes of 1889? And was the scarlet silk to indicate a quasi-doctoral status? It was already in use (see below) as the lining of the LittD. The MLitt, together with the MSc, was made to share the black and white MA hood. But their hoods were in fact black *cloth* lined white silk, the cloth signifying, as it still does for masters' degrees, a higher standing (semi-doctoral?) and thus strictly not MA hoods at all, the MA having a black *silk* shell. So a new hood had crept in.

It is not known where the cloth shells came from, but it is clear that they were introduced to mark the MLitt and MSc as being of higher status than other masters. They survive in the current MLitt and MSc hoods. They are used also those for the newer degrees

⁵⁰ On successful completion of the Final MB examination, the candidates' names are posted, and this constitutes the conferment of BChir upon them. They are then admitted to the MB at a later Congregation. Franklyn (p. 176) says 'Luckily, the ridiculous and always crazy BCh [sic] degree has been virtually abolished ...', which has led some to think it has been done away with totally.

⁵¹ Grace of 15 Nov. 2002, *CUR*, 6 Nov. 2002. Ryder & Amies inform us that graduating MBs now indeed hire the BChir gown and hood—the hood famously excoriated by Franklyn as 'the foolish incomplete BChir hood'. However, if one did buy the BChir robes, they could easily be converted to MB ones by removing two of the cords on each sleeve, and sewing fur round the cape.

⁵² It has not proved possible to pinpoint the exact date when this degree was instituted. Hargreaves-Mawdsley (p. 123) says that there is no record of the dress of the degree before the early nineteenth century.

⁵³ *CUR*, 8 Feb. 1921, p. 605. It has not been possible to elicit further information about the hood.

of MPhil, MRes, MMath, and MAST, all other masters' hoods being of black silk. It is not easy to see to what logic is at play behind these later choices, as black cloth is now no longer associated solely with higher standing.

The new 1875 doctors, LittD and ScD, were permitted to choose the colours that would line their robes and hoods, although the choice was not confirmed until 1889.⁵⁴ The LittDs chose a scarlet silk, which matches the scarlet cloth of the robe and hood. The ScDs use what seems to be a variant on the DD silk, being pink shot light blue: it is described as 'iris' in a discussion recorded in the Reporter of 1933,⁵⁵ although this description does not appear elsewhere. The resultant colour is a shade of mauve-grey. Whether Oxford, in choosing 'French grey' for their DSc and DLitt, intended to replicate this is open to question.

To summarize, in 1933 the hoods in use were:

DD scarlet cloth lined dove shot silk.
LL.D scarlet cloth lined light cherry silk.
MD scarlet cloth lined mid-cherry silk.
MusD cream silk brocade lined dark cherry satin.
LittD scarlet cloth lined scarlet silk.
ScD scarlet cloth lined light blue shot pink silk.
PhD black silk lined scarlet cloth.
MChir black silk lined scarlet silk.
MLitt black cloth lined white silk.
MSc black cloth lined white silk.
LL.M black silk lined white silk.
MusM black silk lined white silk.
MA black silk lined white silk.
BD black silk lined black silk.
LL.B black silk lined fur.
MB black silk lined mid-cherry silk.
BChir black stuff lined fur.
BA black stuff lined fur.
MusB dark cherry satin lined fur.

Robes used from c. 1800 until 1934: Gowns and festal robes

These are relatively simply dealt with. The four original doctors' festal robes were made of scarlet cloth (cream brocade for MusD) and lined with silk of the same colour as lines the hood, and this was carried forward with the introduction of the LittD and ScD. The use of black cords and buttons (as opposed to scarlet ones) to loop up the DD sleeves seems to go back to the eighteenth century—certainly they had become part of the robe by 1800.

⁵⁴ 'The resident Doctors of Science and of Letters, having been invited by the Vice-Chancellor to suggest colours for the lining of the scarlet gowns worn by Doctors in those faculties ...' *CUR*, 20 May 1889, p. 714. On p. 815, 4 June 1889, it is stated that the Vice-Chancellor had invited them to a conference to decide on the colours, as they 'wished for authority for the academical dress they were to wear'.

⁵⁵ *CUR*, 30 May 1933. '... it was extremely difficult to make any difference between the dove colour worn by a DD and the peculiar combination of colours, the livelier iris, worn by a Doctor of Science.' John Horton saw one in 2009 which was a decided mauve shade.

Doctors' undress

The undress gowns were also differentiated by degree. In 1800, Doctors of Divinity wore a black gown⁵⁶ with pudding sleeves although they might also wear their MA gown, with cassock, sash, and scarf.⁵⁷ Doctors of Laws wore the same gown as they do now, the black 'flap-collar' gown [d4], and the Doctors of Medicine also wore it, but with black braid on the sleeves, facings, and collar. Doctors of Music were permitted to use the MA gown, though by grace and not by right, and, oddly, they wore the non-regent MA hood with it, not the MusD hood, which was worn only with the festal robe.

Doctors of Philosophy (PhD)

The Cambridge PhD robes are a strange amalgam of elements of the MA and doctoral robes and so far as is known, were without precedent at the time, at least for a doctor.⁵⁸ The festal robe is the MA gown, but in black silk, and with facings of doctoral scarlet cloth; it is worn with the lay doctoral bonnet. The hood is the black silk MA hood, but lined with scarlet cloth instead of white silk. Its undress gown is the ScD undress gown, but with the amount of lace over the armhole reduced, and moved upwards. (Why the ScD and not the LittD?) These robes were decided upon in 1921, and announced in the *Reporter*, but no rationale was given for their design.⁵⁹

The current situation so far as the gown is concerned is rather complicated. Originally the undress gown was to be the MA gown in stuff or silk with the lace over the armhole, while the dress robe was to be the MA gown in silk, with scarlet facings, but without lace. However, owing to the cost of obtaining two effectively similar gowns, PhDs started to wear the stuff undress (laced) gown with scarlet facings, which were detachable. This was officially recognized in the Ordinances in 2005. Thus the PhD undress gown can now be correct in both silk and stuff with lace, and the festal robe correct both in silk with or without lace, or in stuff with, but not without, lace.

Masters of Arts (MA)

Masters of Arts, both regent and non-regent, wore a black stuff or silk gown⁶⁰ of much the same pattern it has now [m2], and this was used also by holders of the other degrees that used the MA hood. The silk gown may have been intended as a festal gown, although no such difference is made now.⁶¹

⁵⁶ The material for the DD, LL.D, MD, and MusD undress gown has never been specified, so may presumably be stuff or silk.

⁵⁷ This latter would seem to be the true DD undress, and the pudding-sleeved gown to be an eighteenth-century introduction. See *CUR*, 30 May 1933, p. 1150.

⁵⁸ Black gowns with coloured facings had been around for some time, however, especially for medical and musical diplomas.

⁵⁹ *CUR*, 8 Feb. 1921, p. 605. There may well be further information on the design of the PhD robes to be discovered.

⁶⁰ The option of silk goes back at least to the eighteenth century.

⁶¹ This may be the reason the PhD was originally given a silk MA gown as its dress robe.

Diagrammatic representations of cords, buttons, and lace on black gowns.

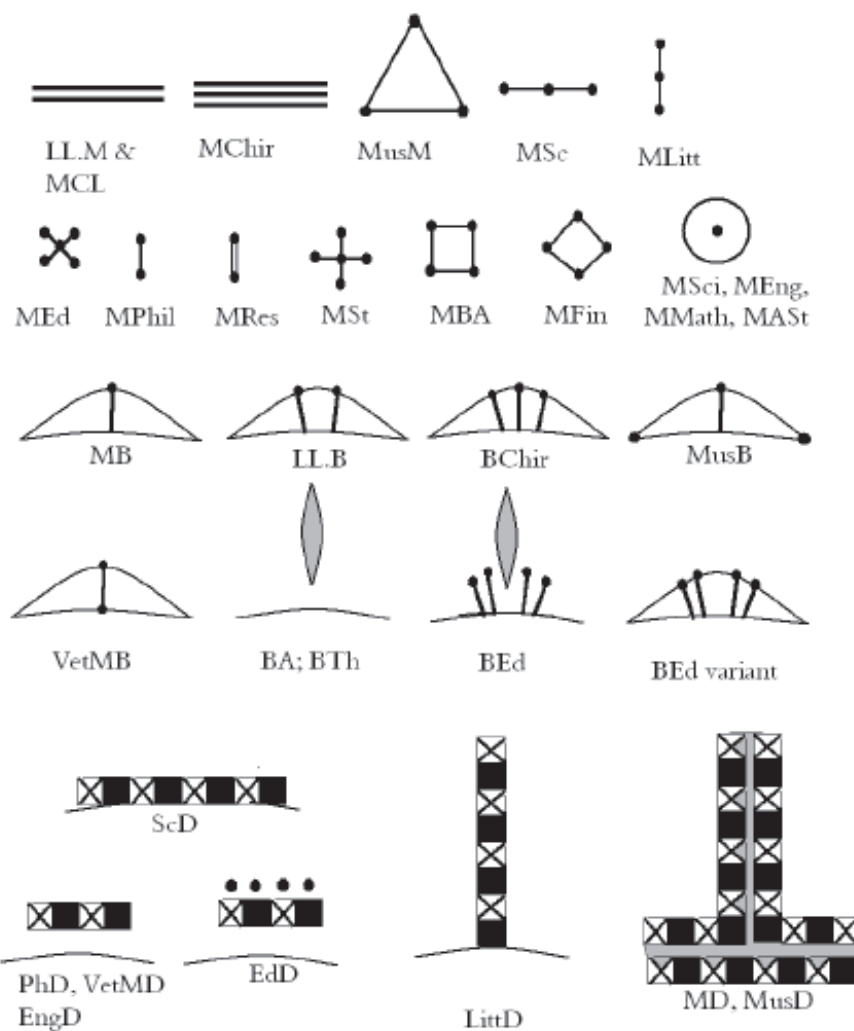


FIG. 2 Trim used on the black gowns of Cambridge.

Bachelors of Arts (BA)

Bachelors of Arts, and those who shared this hood (LL.B and MusB), wore a black stuff gown of the same pattern it has now [b2]. (It is probable that the MusB kept the BA gown with the new hood of 1890.)

Bachelors of Medicine and of Surgery (MB, BChir)

Although in 1815 the MBs were wearing the MA gown,⁶² as already noted above they came to have a gown, introduced in 1889, of the same pattern as the doctors' festal robe, but made in black silk or stuff, and unlined.⁶³ Soon after its introduction 'it appeared with a red loop', and official action was taken to ensure the loop was black;⁶⁴ this explains why the regulations stated until recently that the cords on the sleeves are to be 'black, not red'. It eventually came to be made as it is now, with sleeves more like BA sleeves in size [b3].⁶⁵ This gown, at least in its original form, quite certainly acknowledges the MB's quasi-doctoral status.⁶⁶ It is worth noting that the gowns of the Royal College of Surgeons are of this pattern, and indeed are meant to be made in the [d1] pattern, though they too have shrunk to the [b3] size.⁶⁷ The FRCS gown (of the same pattern as the Cambridge MB gown, but with crimson satin facings and sleeve-loops)⁶⁸ seems to have come in with the Fellowship diploma in 1843, while the MRCS gown was not approved by Council until December 1899. It was to be based on the FRCS gown, but with an unlooped sleeve, and narrower facings.⁶⁹ Was the 1889 MB gown based on the FRCS gown—and did that explain the aberrant red sleeve loop?

As noted above, the BChir did not have its own robes until 1934.

The 1934 revision

The Council of Senate appointed a Committee to look into the question of the academic dress, and in 1932 it reported back.⁷⁰ It stated that it had the following principles in mind:

⁶² Hargreaves-Mawdsley, p. 126.

⁶³ Franklyn, p. 185. He refers to 'the Ordinance (p. 379), which lays down that the MB should wear a gown of the same cut as the MD's scarlet gown'. The 'Ordinance' is presumably that of 1932 or 1933, which is when he was writing.

⁶⁴ A. G. Almond, *Gowns and Gossip* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1925), p. 24.

⁶⁵ Certainly by 1909, when Almond's *Cambridge Robes* booklet (p. 22) shows it as such. Franklyn (p. 185) notes that, for economy, robemakers were merely looping the sleeves of the BA gown (made without the slit) and, and not making the MB gown correctly. It is this abbreviated form that, as result of its being approved in 1934, is now the correct one for the MB gown, and those based on it. A return to the 1889 original is much to be desired. This gown was also adopted, with black cord binding on the sleeve edges, by the Royal College of Art—though they appear to use a Cambridge BA gown now.

⁶⁶ Indeed, one wonders why it was not granted to the PhD in 1919.

⁶⁷ See John Brennan, 'The Robes of the Medical Royal Colleges and Other Societies: Medical Education outside the Universities', *TBS*, 7 (2007), pp.75–105 (p. 92).

⁶⁸ And we might wonder if the crimson was chosen as the colour as it was, in 1843, to be found as the lining in the hoods of the MDs of Oxford and Cambridge.

⁶⁹ At the same time, it was stipulated that the FRCS is not to be faced more than 6", and the MRCS 2". Members had been agitating for a gown since at least 1898—see correspondence in *The Lancet*. We are grateful to Ms Kate Tyte, Project Archivist at the RCS for this information, communicated by e-mail.

⁷⁰ We have used Franklyn's transcription on pp. 177–78 of *Academical Dress*.

1. To alter as little as possible, to make necessary alterations in the rarer and newer degrees only, and to introduce no new colours or stuffs;

2. To establish some consistency of design by which the grades of Doctor, Master, and Bachelor should each have common features while each faculty should be distinguished by a special colour appearing in its hoods and Doctors' festal gowns and by a special feature common to its black gowns;

To make it easy for a hood or gown to be adapted when its owner proceeds to another degree.

In other words, it saw the linings of the various doctors' hoods as faculty colours (an idea pioneered by London in 1844), and decided that the masters' and bachelors' hoods should conform. (No colour was assigned to Arts, however.) They suggested as follows:

Research degrees. These use cloth either for the shell or for the lining of the hood. The MSc and MLitt thus were to keep their black cloth shells, while being lined with pink shot blue or scarlet silk borrowed from their respective doctors. (The notion of faculty colours was thus already explicit.) The PhD was to remain unchanged, wearing a black silk shell lined with scarlet cloth.⁷¹

Non-research masters. These were all wearing the (non-regent) MA hood, and they were now to keep their black silk shells, and line them with the 'faculty silk' (pink for LL.M, maroon for MusM). The MChir had acquired a scarlet-lined hood which was abolished;⁷² the MChir was given the hood hitherto worn by the MB.

Bachelors. It was recognized that 'the tippet⁷³ edged with fur is the general sign of the bachelor', and the hood was furthermore of stuff, not silk. Thus the LL.B, MB, and MusB were to wear black stuff hoods, lined with their faculty silks, and have their capes bound with fur. The BChir was to wear the MB hood, but with fur on the cowl edge also.⁷⁴ The BA and BD were left with their historic hoods.

Bachelors' gowns (except those for BA and BD) were to be based on the abbreviated MB gown, with the various cords and buttons which are still in use, and masters' gowns on the MA gown, with corresponding cords and buttons added.⁷⁵ The BD was to add a cord and button to the yoke of the MA gown, by analogy with the DD undress gown.⁷⁶ In other words, doctors' robes were untouched, but otherwise only the BA, MA, and PhD escaped without new gowns.

The third notion, that of making it 'easy for a hood or gown to be adapted when its owner proceeds to another degree' was wishful thinking, of course. An MA gown could be adapted if the owner proceeded MLitt or PhD, or even LittD, but not if he⁷⁷ proceeded MD or MusD, nor if he did so from the relevant bachelor's degree, MB or MusB. Likewise, the BA gown could not be adapted for any master's or doctor's degree at all. Equally, it did not

71 The MPhil was another thirty years down the line, otherwise things might have been different so far as the PhD was concerned.

72 Cambridge has thus had three hoods of black lined scarlet: (i) silk lined silk: MChir until 1934; (ii) silk lined cloth: PhD; (iii) cloth lined silk: MLitt after 1934.

73 Cambridge always uses 'tippet' where common usage has 'cape'.

74 More fur = lower status.

75 There were slight differences in the proposals from those that were eventually adopted.

76 Presumably from the pudding-sleeved gown, and not the MA gown, which does not have one.

77 We should recall that Cambridge did not fully admit women to degrees until 1948.

work with hoods. An MA could have his white silk replaced by scarlet cloth if he proceeded PhD, or, *mutatis mutandis*, to another master's degree, but that was about the sum of it.

The Council of Senate decided to give 'general approval' to the Report. Although, as just seen, some of the gowns could be adapted on proceeding to a new degree at the same level, the hoods could not. It ought to have been enough to remove the fur when proceeding (say) LL.B to LL.M, but as the bachelors' hoods were to be of stuff, and the masters' of silk, this could not happen. It is also interesting that the bachelors' hoods were to be bound with fur on the cape only: this style had been in use at Durham for many years, but nowhere else.

Charles Franklyn had, as we might expect, a good deal to say about these proposals, and his correspondence with the University is published in his *Academical Dress* of 1970.⁷⁸ As so often with Franklyn, his prejudices and preconceptions are allowed to influence his thinking, and his lack of grasp of historical principles (at least when it suited his case) is astonishing. This is particularly plain on page 176, when he fulminates about the MusM, MSc, MLitt, and LL.M all wearing the MA hood.⁷⁹ He seems not to have understood that they wore this in virtue of their standing as MAs: 'Thus, one hood, the MA, did duty for MA, LL.M, MusM, MLitt, MSc, etc., a truly amazing state of affairs!' It is interesting to note that, twenty years later, he caused precisely the same to happen at Hull, where all the masters use the same hood, of black silk lined with turquoise silk.

The 1933 Reports of the Council acknowledged the receipt of 'certain criticisms', without specifying their source, and said they had been 'carefully considered', but that they did not see their way to modifying their proposals, 'save in two matters'. These were that bachelors should have a hood of faculty silk, lined and bound with fur after the style of the BA. This appears to have been initiated by the Faculty of Music, which stated that the MusB hood (dark cherry satin lined and bound fur) was 'perhaps the most beautiful of all academic decorations',⁸⁰ and thus the LL.B and MB hoods were to be brought into line with it. This was a pity, as it would have enabled an easy distinction between baccalaureates which ranked above the BA (black lined faculty colour, the cape edged fur), and those which ranked below it (faculty colour, half-lined and bound fur).⁸¹ The other matter was that there were minor revisions to the sleeve-decorations of some of the gowns.

Franklyn also brought his wrath to bear upon the PhD robes ('an anomaly'; 'a freak'; 'a niggardliness, and an unwillingness to grant PhDs a proper Doctor's outfit'; 'a nasty joke'.) Obviously in despair of getting Cambridge to alter its mind on this matter, he finally contented himself with saying that it would be better to go to Oxford and read for their DPhil 'where one is properly and fairly treated'.⁸² In fairness, in 1934 Cambridge was alone in England in not granting its PhD doctoral-style robes; in Scotland, Edinburgh and Glasgow did not do so.

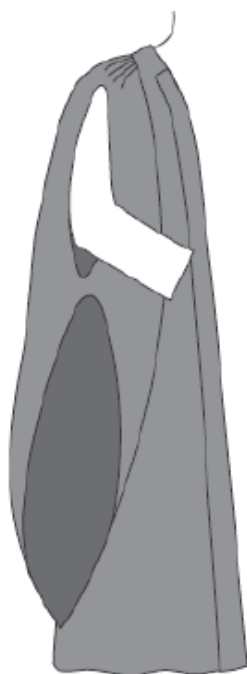
⁷⁸ The correspondence is on pp. 176–98.

⁷⁹ As noted above, the MLitt and MSc did not in fact wear the black silk hood of an MA, but a black cloth one, with the white silk lining.

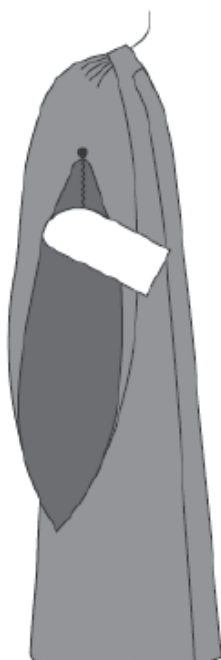
⁸⁰ Despite the acknowledged source, is it too fanciful to hear Franklyn speaking through it?

⁸¹ This would thus have solved the problem of the EdB and BTh, being respectively light blue silk half-lined and bound fur, and either black silk or, more likely, dove shot silk, half-lined and bound fur.

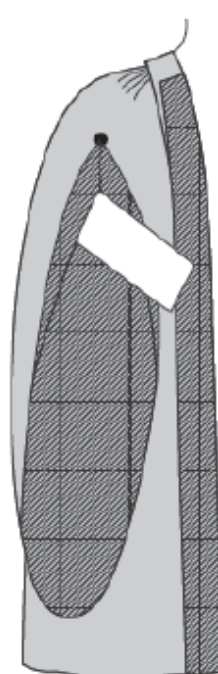
⁸² Oxford has of course since more than made up for this with the robes of the new DEng and DClinPsy, which have no full dress robe at all, and masters' style hoods.



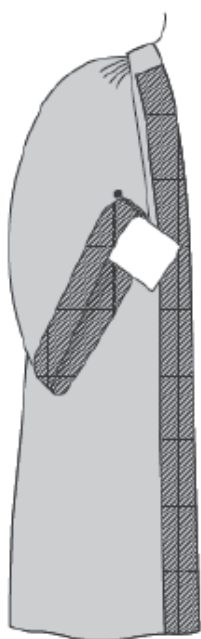
BA [b2]



MB [b3]



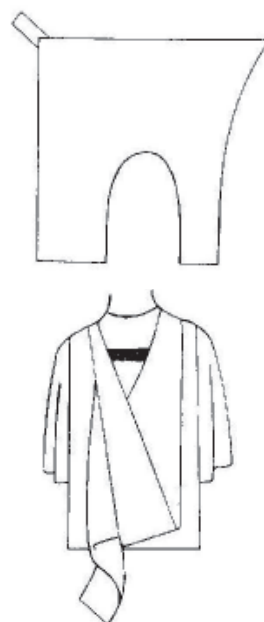
Doctors [d1]



MusD [d3]



MA [m2]



Pattern of Cambridge hood [f1] as currently used.

FIG. 3 Cambridge gowns and hood, identified by the Groves Classification.

Thus, the 1934 hoods were (new hoods marked *):

DD Scarlet cloth lined dove shot silk.
LL.D Scarlet cloth lined light cherry silk.
MD Scarlet cloth lined mid-cherry silk.
MusD Cream silk brocade lined dark cherry satin.
LittD Scarlet cloth lined scarlet silk.
ScD Scarlet cloth lined light blue shot pink silk.
PhD Black silk lined scarlet cloth.
MChir Black silk lined mid-cherry silk (transferred from MB).
MLitt Black cloth lined scarlet silk.*
MSc Black cloth lined light blue shot pink silk.*
LL.M Black silk lined light cherry silk.*
MusM Black silk lined dark cherry satin.*
MA Black silk lined white silk.
BD Black silk lined black silk.
LL.B Light cherry silk lined fur.*
MB Mid-cherry silk lined fur.*
BChir Mid-cherry silk lined fur (cape not furred).*
BA Black stuff lined fur.
MusB Dark cherry satin lined fur.

There seems to have been a fashion at various times for binding the hoods with the lining silk (as is still done at Wales and London, for example), and likewise the neckbands. This was forbidden in 1934, and neckbands are now made of a double thickness of the same material as forms the shell of the hood—scarlet cloth for doctors, the relevant shade of cherry silk for MB, BChir, VetMB, LL.B, and MusB, and black silk, stuff, or cloth for others.

Developments since 1934

There have been no major revisions to the scheme since 1934, although a number of new degrees (principally masterships) have been added. These have been fitted into the existing scheme fairly easily, and the masters' hoods now exhibit the full range of spectrum colours, where previously they had been restricted to black, white, and shades of red. The problems have arisen with the professional doctorates.

Masters of Philosophy and of Education (MPhil, MEd)

The sole exception to the faculty silk rule is the MPhil and MEd hoods. The BEd, introduced in 1966, was given a dark blue lining, and the MPhil, introduced in the same year, was originally to have a lighter blue.⁸³ However, this became much the same shade as the BEd blue, and the MEd when introduced was given a very light blue. It is not clear why the BEd was not revised to bring it in line, but as the degree is no longer awarded, the discrepancy is not noticeable.

83 Letter from Ryder & Amies to Nicholas Groves, 8 Feb. 1978, with sample of silk attached.

Masters of Corporate Law (MCL), Business Administration (MBA), Finance (MFin), and Advanced Study (MASt)

A new departure came with the introduction of the MCL in 2011. This stands for Master of Corporate Law, not, as elsewhere, Master in Civil Law. Holders of the LL.M who specialize in commercial law are permitted to add a small (*c*) to the designation: LL.M(*c*), whereas the MCL is entirely based on corporate law. Despite a great desire to distance the degree from the LL.M,⁸⁴ its dress has remained very close to it. It keeps the LL.M gown (breaking the principle of one degree, one gown, though this had already been breached by the MSci, MMath, etc.) and wears the LL.M hood, but with an additional border of 4" white silk inside the cowl. This hood appears to be predicated on the professional doctors model (see below), but whereas in those the scarlet cloth signifies a doctor, it is hard to see what the white silk signifies here: it is the colour of the MA, but would seem to imply a higher (or lower) standing than the LL.M.

It thus breaks with precedent, insofar as hitherto all new masters have been given a black hood lined with a single colour. The MFin, which grew from the MBA in much the same way as the MCL from the LL.M, was given the MBA hood but lined with a lighter green, and also has its own, but related, gown (the MBA's square becomes a diamond). Likewise, the MASt has the MSt hood, but lined with old gold—a darker version of the MSt yellow—and the quincunx becomes a double circle. A more logical set of robes for the MCL would be the hood lined with a very pale or very dark pink,⁸⁵ therefore, and the LL.M gown, but with the two rows of cord running vertically. Part of the problem may lie in the definition of the Laws colour as 'light cherry'. If instead it is acknowledged as pink (which it is) then a whole gamut of shades of pink is open for use, from the Sheffield Arts 'crushed strawberry', to a pale pink such as is used by the MusD of East Anglia.

Professional doctorates (EngD, VetMD, EdD, MD)

The 'professional doctorates' of EngD and VetMD caused a problem. They are clearly not higher doctorates, and the answer has been to allow them to use the PhD dress robe and black gown (thus breaking the tradition that each degree should have its own gown and festal robe as well as hood), but the hoods have created a further division. Cambridge has now done something unique in doctoral hoods: it has identified four levels of doctorate. There is the well-recognized higher doctorate (scarlet shell with silk lining, *mutatis mutandis* for the MusD) and the equally well-recognized PhD (black silk shell with scarlet cloth lining). Clustering close to, but either side of, the PhD are two new classes. Above it is the doctorate that is 'more doctoral' than a PhD and this is indicated with a scarlet lining that has a border of the subject colour (PhD hood + difference); below it is something that is 'less doctoral', and has mainly subject lining but with a border of doctoral scarlet (master's hood + difference). Initially, there was only one degree in each of these three classes (PhD, VetMD and EngD respectively). The Council claimed not to be creating numerous new doctorates when creating the degree of VetMD—not that this prevented it creating the EngD soon afterwards. However, there was almost certainly no intention of inventing this classification (and the relevant Discussions bear this out); it arose out of various practicali-

84 See, e.g., *CUR*, 17 Nov. 2010.

85 Or some suitable alternative—perhaps a watered or even a shot pink silk (as used by Fellows of the Burgon Society)?

ties to do with the weight of materials,⁸⁶ and the positions of the two new doctorates in the ‘Seniority of Graduates’ (see Appendix).

Then in 2010, a fourth doctorate, in Education (EdD), was approved, and was apparently ranked with the EngD, by being given the MEd hood with three-inch border of scarlet cloth. But a further distinction has arisen in the gown. As with the EngD and VetMD, it wears the PhD undress gown, but it has also four black buttons in a row set over the lace.⁸⁷ Its dress robe is the undress gown (i.e. in stuff, not silk) with scarlet cloth facings. So the ‘sub-PhD’ class of doctors now is two strong—EdD and EngD—but with the EdD ranking below the EngD, as marked by its gown. (It is just possible that the addition of facings to the undress gown was intended simply to recognize current practice with the PhD,⁸⁸ but if so, by formalizing it in this manner, a further distinction has been unintentionally created.)

In 2011, the doctorate in Medicine (MD) was reviewed.⁸⁹ It was possible to obtain it in one of two ways: either by submitting work published over a number of years, similar to the other higher doctorates, or by writing a dissertation shortly after gaining the MB, which was more similar to the PhD. The result was that, from March 2014, the MD designation will be kept for the dissertation route, and it will become a ‘primary’ degree— i.e. a previous Cambridge degree is not required to take it, while the other will lead to the degree of Doctor of Medical Science (MedScD).⁹⁰ The latter will use the former MD robes of scarlet and mid-cherry, while the MD will share the robes of the VetMD.⁹¹ While there are examples of the sharing of gowns, particularly at this level, this is the first time a hood has been shared. Thus anyone seeing the black silk hood lined with scarlet cloth with a cherry border will be unable to say if the person wearing it is qualified to practise on humans or on animals without using a ruler!

First-degree masters (MEng, MSci, MMath)

The new concept of four-year first-degree masters has been accommodated by awarding them masters’ robes; the degrees are awarded with a BA, and thus all holders proceed MA in due course.⁹² The three degrees concerned (MEng, MSci, MMath) thus have the MA gown, but all three degrees share the same differencing—a button in the centre of a circle of cord—again breaking the rule of one degree, one gown.

86 The original (and more logical) suggestion was for the VetMD to wear a hood of cherry silk, lined with scarlet cloth, on the analogy of the PhD. This was rejected, as the cherry silk was said to be not stout enough to bear a cloth lining. One has to wonder why, as it happily bears the fur of the MB and VetMB, and black silk copes with the scarlet cloth for the PhD.

87 Taken, presumably, from the four buttons on the BEd gown.

88 This is now permitted by the regulations.

89 *CUR*, 7 Dec. 2011.

90 It should be noted that a number of universities have recognized that the MD is on a level with the PhD, and either ‘downgraded’ its robes (e.g. Glasgow, NUI), or if newly introducing the degree, given it PhD-style robes from the start (e.g. East Anglia, Keele). Others have not done so (e.g. London, Oxford), and the MD continues to appear as a higher doctor.

91 There appears to be a minor difference in the hoods, in that the MD has a 4” border of crimson silk, while the VetMD has one of but 3”.

92 Strictly, the student qualifies for the BA at the end of three years as normal, and for the MEng (or whatever) at the end of a fourth year, but admission to the BA is held back until the end of the fourth year. This arrangement is dictated by funding requirements. This seems a pity, as otherwise Cambridge would have a considerable population of resident BAs.

Bachelors of Education and of Theology (BEd, BTh)

There are two degrees that rank below the BA: the Bachelor of Education (BEd) and the Bachelor of Theology for Ministry (BTh).⁹³ The BEd (no longer awarded) was given a hood about which the Ordinances are remarkably imprecise: 'part-lined with blue silk, and an edging of white fur, the tippet edged with white fur'. A hood lined with (say) six or seven inches of dark blue silk, and bound 1" fur on all edges would appear to fit the requirements, but the hood as usually supplied is the BA hood, with the cowl fur reduced to a six-inch border, but also lined with dark blue silk. If folded the right way, it can be mistaken for the BA hood, so the first version described may have been what was intended.

Again, there is some uncertainty about the gown. The Ordinances say it is the BA gown with four cords and buttons added to each sleeve, two either side of the slit, but as usually supplied, it was the MB gown with four cords and buttons. It was of course never worn for graduation, and probably in most cases rarely thereafter, and so was hardly ever encountered—at least in Cambridge. As the degree is now obsolescent, the question is of academic interest only.

It might have been expected that the BTh hood would follow the pattern of that of the BEd, with dove-colour silk replacing the blue, but this is not so. A number of suggestions were made for the BTh hood—black lined DD silk, bound fur; black lined black fur—but it is interesting to note that the hood that was chosen returns to the 1932 ideal, of a stuff hood lined with faculty silk (the BD's black was chosen, rather than the DD's dove shot) with the cape alone (and not the cowl) bound with fur. It has the BA gown, but with a cord and button on the yoke, which is presumably seen as a clerical marker, as it is intended to be used to anchor the scarf, and borrowed from the BD gown.

BA and MA status

Since members of the University of Cambridge cannot fulfil their university obligation to wear Cambridge academical dress by wearing the dress of other universities (except on scarlet days), graduate students who are not already Cambridge graduates would presumably be required to wear undergraduate gowns (as well as be treated as undergraduates in certain other ways), but for the fact that allowance is made for their situation. Those under the age of 24 are granted BA status and those over that age MA status. One of the benefits of holding one status or the other is entitlement to wear the BA status or MA status gown. These are simply BA and MA gowns without the strings. These strings are broad ribbons that hang from the inside of the front of all Cambridge graduate gowns at shoulder level reaching to about the waist. (They are black for black gowns and scarlet for scarlet gowns except the full-dress MusD has maroon strings, and the DD black ones.)⁹⁴

Strings are generally not visible and, in practice, their absence is not noticeable. Though formally, therefore, such persons are wearing different gowns from those of their contemporaries who are already Cambridge graduates, the difference is actually negligible—a nice compromise. The origin of this practice is not known, but it was sufficiently well established by 1934 for the revision of that year to note that Research Students were to

⁹³ The MusB did until late in the twentieth century, but now ranks above the BA.

⁹⁴ Their original purpose would seem to be that they are to pass under the arms and be tied in the small of the back to stop the gown slipping downwards.

continue using the BA gown without strings. No hood is worn with either gown. The status lapses, and thus the right to the gown, once the course is complete.

BA—a wartime provision

It should be noted that, during the second World War, BAs were permitted for reasons of cost to have their hoods trimmed with white cloth in place of fur. This is still permitted (see Fig. 4), and it appears in the Regulations as ‘until further order’. Further order has never been taken, and while some Proctors (and others) might be puzzled by it were anyone to wear it, they could not object to it.⁹⁵

Diplomas and certificates

Cambridge has never prescribed robes for holders of the various diplomas and certificates it awards, although their common abbreviations are often used as post-nominal letters—PGCE, DipCrim, *etc.*

The only non-degree hoods in use are those of the two theological colleges, Westcott House and Ridley Hall, and thus not university hoods at all, though we include them for completeness. Both are of Cambridge shape [f1], black stuff lined black rayon, with two 1” ribbons set inside the cowl, 1” apart. For Westcott they are maroon and silver; for Ridley red and green. When a gown is required a BA gown is supplied.⁹⁶



FIG. 4 Alternative BA hood.

Conclusion

By 1800, the Cambridge system had developed into a rudimentary ‘grade-hood’ system (one hood per academic grade: bachelor, master, doctor). The bachelors’ and masters’ hoods were those of the BA and the MA, and doctors had a common hood.⁹⁷ Once the 1934 revision had taken effect, it had made the transition to a full faculty-colour based system. The root cause of this lies in the gradual differentiation of the doctoral lining silk from a uniform rose-colour to a range of ‘cherry’ colours—and the official adoption of the ‘illicit’ dove colour for the DD. So firmly had these colours become associated with the various degrees that the new LittD and ScD were allowed to choose their lining colours. The 1934 revision extended these colours to the lower degrees, and thus the ‘faculty colours’ of Cambridge came into being.⁹⁸

At the same time, various cords, buttons, and strips of lace were sewn onto the black gowns so that each degree should have its own unique gown, and be identifiable without

⁹⁵ It appears not to have applied to the other bachelors as well, nor is it clear why advantage was not taken of this clause by those who objected to real fur in their BA hoods, but who insist instead on substituting nylon fur. The Burgon Society’s Wardrobe possesses one of these cloth-trimmed hoods. The cowl is bordered with about 5” white cloth, and the cape is bound 2”. One could wonder if this is the basis for the Exeter bachelors’ hood, in a scheme which has very heavy Cambridge influence.

⁹⁶ Pers. comm., Tony Chamberlain, Ryder & Amies.

⁹⁷ One might wonder to what extent this scheme influenced the hoods at Bristol (1909) and Reading (1926), the first two universities to use the grade-hood system. The Bristol masters’ hood is lined with white silk.

⁹⁸ They are possibly more accurately designated ‘discipline colours’, as Cambridge has faculties which do not have named degrees—e.g. History.

the hood; this, however, has started to break down, with the use of the same gown by several degrees. That each degree should have a unique gown—thus making it possible to identify the degree of all graduates wearing a black gown (even without hood)—was a unique feature of the Cambridge system and an interesting one. With black gowns still worn frequently, it was not just a theoretical system, but one that worked in practice. With the MEng and MSci (and now the MMath) sharing the same gown, this came to an end. One wonders why Cambridge went to the trouble of degrees with different names when the gowns are the same. After all, if widely different subjects can share the degree of Bachelor of Arts, why not four-year masters? Alternatively, having separate gowns for the different degrees would go some way to restoring the system. Oddly, the MBA and MFin are deemed to be sufficiently different (even though the MFin is a spin-off from the MBA) to require different sleeve decoration, while the similarly-related LL.M and MCL are not.

The PhD robes are the result of the University not being quite sure exactly what kind of degree it is, and they reflect the perception that it was more than a master but less than a full doctor. This style of robe—the black MA gown with coloured facings—was unique at the time, but was later to be copied by a number of other universities for their PhD robes: the first to do so was Exeter (chartered 1957), which shows heavy Cambridge influence all through its scheme of robes. With the benefit of hindsight, we can now say that the PhD festal gown is (in the memorable word of Charles Franklyn) ‘freakish’. However, the early years of the twentieth century were heady times: no-one really knew what the degree of Doctor of Philosophy would turn out to be. This can even be seen in the academic dress prescribed for it; some universities chose full scarlet, some a darker shade of red that, though not scarlet, was used for the entire gown, and some partial scarlet. These were all attempts to interpret this new doctorate sartorially.

The 1934 scheme has worked well, but is struggling to accommodate new levels of degree, such as the professional doctorates. The expansion of the number of named masters’ degrees has also required the introduction of hood linings of new colours: Cambridge had confined itself to black, white, and shades of red, but the full spectrum is now represented, with the exception (at the time of writing) of purple.

Appendix

Table of Cambridge robes as at 2014. Degrees are listed in order of academical precedence. The year is that of introduction of the degree; those without one date from the Middle Ages.

Degree	Dress robe	Black gown	Hood
DD	scarlet cloth, facings and sleeves of turquoise shot rose silk ('dove')	pudding-sleeved gown in black, or MA gown in black with cord and button on yoke, and black scarf	scarlet cloth lined turquoise shot rose silk ('dove')
LL.D	scarlet cloth, facings and sleeves of 'light cherry' silk (pink)	flap-collar gown in black	scarlet cloth lined 'light cherry' silk (pink)
MD until 2014; MedScD from 2014	scarlet cloth, facings and sleeves of 'mid-cherry' silk (crimson)	flap-collar gown in black, with black lace on the facings, sleeves, and collar	scarlet cloth lined 'mid-cherry' silk (crimson)
LittD 1878	scarlet cloth, facings and sleeves of scarlet silk	MA gown in black silk or stuff, with a vertical row of black lace over the armhole	scarlet cloth lined scarlet silk
ScD 1878	scarlet cloth, facings and sleeves of pink shot light blue silk ('iris')	MA gown in black silk or stuff, with a horizontal row of black lace over the armhole	scarlet cloth lined pink shot light blue silk
MusD	cream damask, facings and sleeves of 'dark cherry' satin (maroon)	flap-collar gown in black, with black lace on the facings, sleeves, and two rows on the collar	cream damask, lined 'dark cherry' satin (maroon)
BD	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff, with cord and button on yoke	black silk lined black silk
MD (from 2014)	<i>Either</i> MA gown in black silk, with facings of scarlet cloth, with or without lace as on undress gown; <i>or</i> MA gown in black stuff with facings of scarlet cloth, and with lace as on undress gown	MA gown in black silk or stuff, with 3" horizontal lace over the armhole	black silk lined scarlet cloth, bordered 4" 'mid-cherry' silk (crimson)
VetMD 1999			black silk lined scarlet cloth, bordered 3" 'mid-cherry' silk (crimson)
PhD 1919			black silk lined scarlet cloth
EngD 2001			black silk lined bronze silk, bordered 3" scarlet cloth
EdD 2011	as undress, with facings of scarlet cloth	MA gown in black stuff, with 3" lace over the armhole, and four black buttons above that.	black silk lined pale blue silk, bordered 3" scarlet cloth
MChir	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with a treble row of black cord over the armhole	black silk lined 'mid-cherry' silk (crimson)
MA	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff	black silk lined white silk

Degree	Dress robe	Black gown	Hood
LL.M 1854	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with a double row of black cord over the armhole	black silk lined 'light cherry' silk
MCL 2010	[none]	same as LL.M	black silk lined 'light cherry' silk, bordered 4" white silk
MusM 1893-2008; MMus 2010	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with a cord and button triangle over the armhole	black silk lined 'dark cherry' silk
MLitt 1921	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with 3 buttons vertically over the armhole joined by twisted cords	black cloth lined scarlet silk
MSc 1921	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with 3 buttons horizontally over the armhole joined by twisted cords	black cloth lined pink shot light blue silk
MRes 2008	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with 2 buttons vertically over the armhole joined by two cords	black cloth lined plum red silk
MPhil 1961	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with 2 buttons vertically over the armhole joined by twisted cords	black cloth lined dark blue silk
MEng 1989	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with a circle of black cord with a button in the centre	black silk lined bronze silk
MBA 1990	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with 4 buttons joined by cords to form a square over the armhole	black silk lined grass green silk
MFin 2008	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff, with 4 buttons joined by cords to form a lozenge over the armhole	black silk lined pale green silk
MEd 1991	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with 5 buttons joined by cords to form a saltire over the armhole	black silk lined light blue silk
MSci 1994	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with a circle of black cord with a button in the centre	black silk lined pink shot light blue silk
MMath 2009	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with a circle of black cord with a button in the centre	black cloth lined slate blue silk
MASt 2009	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff, with a double circle of black cord with a button in the centre	black cloth lined old gold silk
MSt 1994	[none]	MA gown in black silk or stuff with 5 buttons joined by cords to form a cross over the armhole	black silk lined yellow silk

Degree	Dress robe	Black gown	Hood
MB	[none]	MB gown in black silk or stuff	'mid-cherry' silk half lined and the cape bound 1" fur
BChir	[none]	MB gown in black silk or stuff, but with three cords and buttons	'mid-cherry' silk half lined fur; the cape not bound
LL.B	[none]	MB gown in black silk or stuff, but with two cords and buttons	'light cherry' silk half lined and the cape bound fur
VetMB 1949	[none]	MB gown in black silk or stuff, but with a button at each end of the cord	'mid-cherry' silk. half lined and the cape bound 2" fur
MusB	[none]	MB gown in black silk or stuff, but with an extra button at each lower angle of the turnback	'dark cherry' satin half lined and the cape bound fur
BA	[none]	BA gown in black stuff	black stuff, half lined and the cape bound fur
BEd 1966	[none]	BA gown in black stuff, but with four cords and buttons on each sleeve*	black stuff part-lined dark blue silk, and an edging of fur, the cape bound fur*
BTh 1995	[none]	BA gown in black stuff, with cord and button on the yoke	black stuff lined black silk, the cape bound fur

*BEd: these are the published specifications. See above for what was usually supplied.