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Gowning the Golden Eagle: A Brief Review of Academic Dress in Romania

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Abstract

This article offers a brief survey of academic dress in Romanian universities, tracing its development from the founding of modern Romanian higher education to documented twenty-first-century practice. Working from limited sources currently available, the article distinguishes between what is directly documented and what requires future archival research. The historical and institutional context shaping Romanian higher education is presented in summary form, alongside the international influences on the system, with the impact of these circumstances on academic dress demonstrated through the limited evidence available. Further archival research is required before any definitive account can be written.

Romania presents a particular case for a study on academic dress. Its modern university system was established in 1860 with inauguration of the University of Iași, yet its founding scholars had already spent years at Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Giessen.[1] The dynamics of whatever academic ceremonial culture they encountered there, and whether they brought any of it back, has never been fully explored.

This paper provides a preliminary survey of current academic dress in Romania, based on available material, mainly graduation ceremonies and other events involving academic dress, along with formal university documents concerning academic dress and its use and composition. The visual data is set against the historical and social developments in Romania, in an attempt to establish an initial understanding of the development of academic dress in Romania.

Historical context

The principalities of Moldavia and Walachia were brought together under Alexandru Ioan Cuza in 1859. Cuza introduced French-inspired civil and penal codes among other reforms. Independence from the Ottoman Empire was secured in 1877, and Carol I was crowned king in 1881.[2] Transylvania, situated within the Hungarian half of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy from 1867,[3] was united with Romania in 1918 and the formal incorporation of the former Royal Hungarian Franz Joseph University into

1 Romfilatelia, 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, 160 Years', online at <https://romfilatelia.ro/en/alexandru-ioan-cuza-university-of-iasi-160-years-2/> [retrieved 13 April 2026]. Romfilatelia acknowledges documentary support from the Iași branch of the Romanian National Archives (Arhivele Naționale, filiala Iași).

2 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, online at <www.britannica.com/biography/Alexandru-Ioan-Cuza> [retrieved 12 April 2026]; 'Carol I', ibid., online at <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carol-I> [retrieved 12 April 2026].

3 'Transylvania', ibid., online via search at www.britannica.com; 'Ausgleich', ibid.

the Romanian system was decreed in 1919.[4] The four universities of interwar Greater Romania, namely Iași (1860), Bucharest (1864), Cluj (reconstituted 1919–20), and Cernăuți (founded 1875, entering the Romanian system in 1918), together formed the higher education system in the modern state.[5]

The Second World War years brought much turmoil, with the formation of the National Legionary State (September 1940–February 1941) under Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard, the abdication of King Carol II, and Romania's alignment with the Axis powers, all of which affected universities, students, and staff. Soviet occupation in 1944 was followed by the proclamation of the Romanian People's Republic on 30 December 1947 and decades of Communist rule, culminating in the Ceaușescu dictatorship and its overthrow in the 1989 revolution. The 1991 constitution restored a democratic and pluralist system, and Romania subsequently joined NATO (2004) and the European Union (2007).[6]

The Romanian higher education system is currently governed by Higher Education Law no. 199/2023, adopted on 4 July 2023,[7] with public and private accredited institutions coordinated by the Ministry of National Education.[8] For 2024–25, there were fifty-two accredited state institutions and thirty-four private ones,[9] operating un-

4 'Transylvania', ibid. For the Treaty of Trianon, 4 June 1920: 'Treaty of Trianon', ibid., online via search at www.britannica.com/. Babeș-Bolyai University, 'Short History', online at <www.ubbcluj.ro/en/despre/prezentare/istoric> [retrieved 14 April 2026]. 'Romania', *CIA World Factbook*, online at <www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/romania/> [retrieved April 2026]: 'National holiday: Unification Day (unification of Romania and Transylvania)', 1 December [1918].

5 'Romania', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (summary). For the University of Iași (founded 1860), the University of Cluj (reconstituted 1919–20), and the University of Bucharest (founded 1864): Romfilatelia, art. cit. For: Babeș-Bolyai University, 'Short History'. For the University of Cernăuți (founded 1875 as the Franz Joseph University of Czernowitz, entering the Romanian system 1918): the history of this institution falls outside the scope of this article; its entry into the Romanian system is documented in the broader context of the Great Union by *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Romania'.

6 'Romania–Political Process', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. NATO, 'Member Countries,' <https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/organization/nato-member-countries> [retrieved 13 April 2026]. European Commission, 'Romania and the Euro', Economy and Finance, <https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/euro/eu-countries-and-euro/romania-and-euro_en> [retrieved 13 April 2026]: 'Romania joined the European Union on 1 January 2007'. The Treaty of Accession was signed on 25 April 2005: EUR-Lex, 'Romania', <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=legissum:e01108> [retrieved April 2026].

7 Legea nr. 199/2023 a învățământului superior, Monitorul Oficial al României, Partea I, Nr. 614, 5 July 2023, <https://edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2023/Legi_educatie_Romania_educata/legi_monitor/Legea_invatamantului_superior_nr_199.pdf> [retrieved online 11 April 2026].

8 CNRED, 'Education System in Romania', <https://cnred.edu.ro/en/education-system-in-romania/> [retrieved 12 April 2026].

9 Ministerul Educației, Raport privind starea învățământului superior din România 2022–2023 (București: Ministerul Educației, 2023), p. 1, <https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2023/Transparenta/Rapoarte_sistem/Raport-Starea-invatamantului-superior-2022-2023.pdf> [retrieved 13 April 2026] [în română]. Edupedu.ro, 'Lista: 19 specializări de la 16 facultăți din România se desființează', July 2024, <https://www.edupedu.ro/lista-19-specializari-de-la-16-facultati-din-romania-se-desfiinteaza-incepand-din-toamna

der the Bologna three-cycle framework adopted in 2004.[10] University study is modelled on the French system,[11] typically a three-year bachelor's, two-year master's, and three-year doctorate, with longer combined programmes in fields such as medicine and architecture.[12] Doctoral education is conducted in fifty-four accredited Institutions Organizing Doctoral University Studies, plus the Romanian Academy.[13] Public universities emerged in the 1860s; private universities (other than a handful of theological seminaries) date from after the 1989 Revolution.[14]

The earliest precursors of Romanian higher education were the Vasilian Academy (Academia Vasiliană) in 1640 and the Princely Academy of Iași (Academia Domnească din Iași) in 1707.[15] The Michaelian Academy (Academia Mihăileană) founded by Gheorghe Asachi in 1835 with the support of Prince Mihail Sturdza was the first Moldavian institution to operate faculties of Law and Philosophy.[16] The Academia Mihăileană issued certificates rather than academic degrees.[17] Neveu observes that the French *grands établissements* that lay outside the University system and conferred no degrees never formally adopted academic dress of their own.[18] The Academia Mihăileană, which issued certificates rather than degrees, would similarly have had little occasion for academic dress. No primary source documenting ceremonial dress at the Academia Mihăileană has been located. Contemporary photographs show students and teachers in suits and dresses rather than academic dress. The University of Iași was inaugurated on 26 October 1860 by decree of Prince Cuza, taking over the staff and programmes of the Academia Mihăileană. The University of Bucharest followed in 1864.[19]

Origins of academic dress in Romania: The French connection

Until the eighteenth century, Greek and Latin were the languages of Romania's upper class, with French replacing them as Romanians gradually adopted French culture and the values of Enlightenment which resonated with Romanian nobility. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the majority of Romanians who could afford schooling were educated in French institutions, and an increasing proportion of the aristocracy and intelligentsia had become essentially Francophile.[20] Furthermore, the two universities

-anului-2024/> [retrieved 14 April 2026] [în română]. The numbers cited derive from the government decision on study programmes for 2024–2025 as reported in the article.

10 CNRED, 'Education System in Romania': 'Since 2004, the Bologna process has been implemented in Romania.'

11 'Romania–Political Process', art. cit.

12 'Education in Romania,' Wikipedia, citing Ministry of Education data.

13 Ministerul Educației, Raport 2022–2023, art. cit. (în română).

14 'List of Universities in Romania', Wikipedia [retrieved 12 April 2026].

15 Romfilatelia, art. cit.

16 Ibid.

17 Academia Mihăileană, Wikipedia [retrieved 13 April 2026].

18 Bruno Neveu, 'French University Dress: Regulations and Custom', *Burgon Society Annual*, 2 (2002), pp. 17–29 (p. 29). doi.org/10.4148/2475-7799.1009

19 Romfilatelia, art. cit. Permanent Representation of Romania to the Council of Europe, '24 January 1859: A Glimpse on the Union of Romanian Principalities', online at <coe.mae.ro/en/local-news/1628> [retrieved 13 April 2026].

20 Mihai Scobotovici and Anca Sprenger, 'The Birth of the Abolitionist Movement in 19th-century Romania, under the Influence of French Revolutionary Discourse', *Brigham Young University Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 1 (2016), Article 129, online at <scholarsarchive

founded under Cuza in the nineteenth century, Iași and Bucharest, were organized in the French model of faculties.[21]

The scholars who played key roles in establishing Romanian universities were educated at European institutions and had attended formal academic occasions there. That dynamic had influenced the traditions instilled in Romanian universities, including those related to academic dress. The list of prominent Romanian academics educated abroad is extensive.

An illustrative example is that of Spiru Haret. As Romania lacked leading mathematical experts, anyone wishing to pursue advanced studies in the field had to train abroad, and so did Spiru Haret.[22] Haret earned a mathematics diploma at the Sorbonne in 1875 and a physics diploma in 1876.[23] In January 1878 he became the first Romanian to obtain a PhD in Paris.[24] Haret served as Minister of Education in three governments and ran a complete reform of Romanian education.[25]

The academic training by leading Romanian academics involved in the establishment of the national higher education system does show that the founders of Romanian universities had direct personal experience of academic life at European universities, such as the Sorbonne (Haret)[26] and the Universities of Giessen, Paris, Berlin, Vienna (Maiorescu).[27]

In the absence of clear photographic or other visual evidence, or a formal government or institutional decree, it is impossible to state with confidence whether any specific Romanian university formally adopted any academic dress system by statute, and which robes were actually worn at Romanian university ceremonies in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. These questions require archival research.

The interwar period saw no reduction in French cultural influence on Romanian higher education. The system remained strongly oriented towards cultural values, art, literature, history, democracy, and philosophy. During the period 1930–44, the German school had a significant impact on Romanian higher education, especially in technical fields. After the Second World War, Romanian universities were influenced by the Soviet school, with its values and expertise in exact sciences. Currently, Romanian universities are influenced by American and English schools. Thus, they have a strong orientation towards research. Northwestern European influences, such as the Finnish school's emphasis on innovative teaching, are also evident.[28]

.byu.edu/jur/vol2016/iss1/129> [retrieved 16 April 2026].

21 Cristina Maria Pescaru, 'The Idea of University in the Romanian Culture: National Aspirations and European Models (1848–1918)', *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 76 (2013), pp. 630–32. doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.04.177

22 'Spiru Haret', in MacTutor History of Mathematics, The University of St Andrews, online at <mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Haret/> [retrieved 10 April 2026].

23 ScientificLib, 'Spiru Haret', <https://www.scientificlib.com/en/Mathematics/Biographies/SpiruHaret.html> [retrieved 10 April 2026].

24 Spiru Haret, Wikipedia [retrieved 10 April 2026], citing Mathematics Genealogy Project, MGP ID 196373, <https://www.mathgenealogy.org/id.php?id=196373>.

25 ScientificLib, 'Spiru Haret'.

26 Spiru Haret, Wikipedia.

27 Radio Romania International, 'Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917) ', <https://www.rri.ro/en/features-and-reports/rri-encyclopaedia/titu-maiorescu-1840-1917-id832234.html> [retrieved 13 April 2026].

28 Constantin Anghelache, Iordan Petrescu, Mădălina Gabriela Anghel, and Emilia Gogu, *Evoluția centenară a învățământului în România* (București: Editura Economică,

The personal connections between Romanian scholars and French universities, combined with the broader institutional orientation of Romanian higher education towards France in their foundational stage, make the French toge the most plausible model for Romanian university academic dress in the constitutional monarchical period. In addition, the Romanian terminology (*robă, tocă*) corresponds directly to French academic vocabulary (*robe, toque*).

The French toge, as documented by Neveu, comprises a long black gown with coloured facings or vertical bands (*simarres*) identifying the faculty, and the épitoge on the left shoulder carrying white fur stripes (three for doctorates, two for a master's, one for a bachelor's) in two versions, the *grand costume* and the *petit costume*.[29] The faculty colour system codified in the decree of 17 March 1808, organizing the five faculties of the Imperial University, assigned scarlet red for Law, daffodil yellow for Letters and Arts, amaranth for Science, redcurrant for Medicine, and violet for Theology; university rectors wore violet regardless of faculty.[30] Whether Romanian universities adopted these assignments, adapted them, or chose different colours cannot be established without Romanian archival sources.

The interwar period and academic tradition under Communist rule

The unification of Greater Romania in 1918 brought within a single national university system the institutions at Iași, Bucharest, Cluj, and Cernăuți.[31] No published source has been located that documents what was actually worn at Romanian academic ceremonies during the interwar period. Any description beyond the probable French-toge framework would be speculative.

In 1948 the Law of Educational Reform was promulgated and the Soviet model of higher education was grafted on. As a consequence, the major reorganization of the University of Bucharest began, with the Faculties of Theology, Human Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine separated from the University.[32]

Romanian academic institutions were altered to have them conform with the pattern of the Soviet Union.[33] No Romanian primary source documenting the formal cessation of use of academic dress has been located. The Rīga Stradiņš University (Latvia) exhibition provides comparative Eastern European evidence, stating that there was no tradition of wearing academic robes in the Soviet era, and that the rector first wore an academic gown in 1990.[34]

2018), available at <https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Evolutia_centenara_a_invatamantului_in_romania_2018.pdf> [retrieved 16 April 2026], p.17.

29 Bruno Neveu, pp. 18–20, 24.

30 Ibid.

31 Babeș-Bolyai University, 'Short History', <https://www.ubbcluj.ro/en/despre/prezentare/istoric> [retrieved 11 April 2026].

32 Universitatea din București, Wikipedia (în română), <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universitatea_din_Bucure%C8%99ti> [retrieved 14 April 2026].

33 Jan Sadlak, 'The Use and Abuse of the University: Higher Education in Romania, 1860–1990', available at Academia.edu, <https://www.academia.edu/104867267> [retrieved 14 April 2026].

34 Rīga Stradiņš University, 'Exhibition: Why Does the Rector Wear an Academic Gown?' 26 August 2023, <https://www.rsu.lv/en/events/exhibition-why-does-rector-wear-academic-gown> [retrieved 15 April 2026].

A shift to a less ceremonial and more utilitarian view of academics and education can be seen from the profile of taught subjects. Ceaușescu's ideological priorities had led by 1988 to a situation with 74 per cent of Romanian students enrolled in engineering and agricultural schools.[35]

Current academic dress

Law nr. 199/2023 and university charters

Romania's current Higher Education Law grants universities full autonomy over their ceremonial identity. Article 11(2) states that 'University autonomy gives the academic community the right to establish its own mission, institutional strategy, structure, activities, organization, and functioning.'[36]

Consequently, no national standard for academic dress exists and each university determines its own. The University of Bucharest's charter states in Article 2(b) that 'the emblem, seal, flag, and ceremonial dress (*ținuta de ceremonie*), [are] established by the University Senate.'[37] The same document details the composition of the ceremonial dress of the university, as follows.

> The ceremonial dress of the University consists of a gown and an epitoge.[38] The gown is of black woollen cloth, with black satin borders (*orfrois*) and lapels, with the University's emblem on the chest on the left side and with the epitoge on the right side. The epitoge is decorated with chevrons pointing downwards, as follows: one for a bachelor's graduate; two for a master's graduate; three for a doctor. For students, the chevrons are of light blue textile fabric. For academic staff, the chevrons are of fur, in the following colours: navy blue for teaching staff; yellow for deans; red for pro-rectors; green for the President of the Senate; white for the Rector.[39]

The Romanian text uses the term borders or edges (*bordure*) and adds the term *orfrois* in parentheses, denoting the French term for borders on a gown's front opening. The Romanian term *atlaz* is used (translated as 'satin') and means a smooth, glossy woven fabric. The chevrons point downwards, indicating an inverted V-shaped chevrons in the French tradition.

The University of Oradea charter states to the same effect: 'the University of Oradea identifies itself through emblem, seal, flag, logo, and ceremonial dress (gown and mortar-board), established by the Senate.'[40]

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35 StateUniversity.com, 'Romania—History Background,' at <https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1254/Romania-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html> [retrieved 14 April 2026].

36 Legea nr. 199/2023, Art. 11(2).

37 Carta Universității din București (2023), Art. 2(b), p. 2, <https://unibuc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Carta-UB_2023_armonizare-L199_2023_Final.pdf> [retrieved 15 April 2026].

38 The Romanian charter (ibid.) writes *epitoge* in its translation, so this paper uses *épitoge* only when referring to the French original, and *epitoge* when quoting or summarizing Romanian sources.

39 Ibid., p. 54.

40 ARACIS, Accreditation Report for the University of Oradea, <https://www.uoradea.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UO_Raport-Departament.pdf> [retrieved 13 April 2026]. p. 11.

The Universitatea Agora din Oradea, a private institution, similarly lists among its identifying elements: ceremonial dress: gown and mortar-board (*ţinută de ceremonie: robă și tocă*).[41]

Similar statements including the terms *robă și tocă* (gown and mortar-board) appear in the charters of the following universities: Universitatea 'Valahia' din Târgoviște,[42] Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism 'Ion Mincu' din București,[43] Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca,[44] Universitatea 'Lucian Blaga' din Sibiu.[45] Universitatea Politehnica București charter includes the terms 'ceremonial dress' only.[46]

A significant institutional document regarding academic dress was issued by the Universitatea de Medicină, Farmacie, Științe și Tehnologie 'George Emil Palade' din Târgu Mureș (UMFST). The document is dedicated to regulations governing institutional insignia and academic dress.[47] In the document, academic ceremonial dress is detailed as follows:

> Art. 12: Gown (*robă*)—Black gown with vertical anterior insert in the faculty colour; rank markings on sleeves, one stripe for pro-deans, two for deans, three for pro-rectors and senate president, four for rector. Dean and pro-dean stripes in faculty colour; pro-rector stripes dark blue (bleumarin); rector stripes claret (roșu bordeaux); faculty logo embroidered left side for deans/pro-deans, university logo for rector/pro-rectors/senate president.
>
> Art. 12: Mortar-board (*tocă*)—Black, with gold tassel.
>
> Art. 12: Rectoral chain (*colanul de ceremonie*)—Worn by rector; carries university logo as medallion, faculty logos on further medallions inserted in chain, names of each previous rector on banners inserted in chain; transmissible to each successive rector.
>
> Art. 12: Students—Faculty-specific sash (*eșarfă*) for graduation ceremonies; each faculty sets its own colours for each degree programme; graduation mortar-board may be inscribed with faculty symbol.

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41 Universitatea Agora din Oradea, 'Despre UAO', <https://www.univagora.ro/universitate/despre-uao/> [retrieved 15 April 2026].

42 Universitatea 'Valahia' din Târgoviște, Carta Universitară 2023, published 26 January 2024, p. 3 <https://www.valahia.ro/wp-content/uploads/Carta-universitara-editia-2023-publicata-26.01.2024.pdf> [retrieved 16 April 2026].

43 Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism 'Ion Mincu' din București—Carta 2019, p. 5. (Art. 1(8)(c)) <https://old.crs.ccs.ro/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/01/Universitatea-de-Arhitectura-si-Urbanism-ION-MINCU-Carta-2019.pdf> [retrieved 16 April 2026].

44 Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca—Carta 2024, p. 4 (Art. 2(c).) <https://www.ubbcluj.ro/ro/infoubb/documente_publice/files/CartaUBB_2024.pdf> [retrieved 16 April 2026].

45 Universitatea 'Lucian Blaga' din Sibiu—Carta 2025 (Project), p. 3 (Art. 2(1)(c)) <https://www.ulbsibiu.ro/wp-content/uploads/documents/generale/Carta%20ULBS%202025_Proiect.pdf> [retrieved 16 April 2026].

46 Universitatea Politehnica București (UPB/POLITEHNICA)—Carta 2025, p. 2 (Art. 2 (b)) <https://upb.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CARTA_POLITEHNCA-Bucuresti_2025.pdf> [retrieved 16 April 2026].

47 Universitatea de Medicină, Farmacie, Științe și Tehnologie 'George Emil Palade' din Târgu Mureș—Regulament UMFST-REG-94 (2019), <https://arhiva.umfst.ro/fileadmin/documente_oficiale/regulamente/UMFST-REG-94.pdf>, pp. 2–3 [retrieved 16 April 2026].

Art. 13: Doctor *honoris causa*—Same dress as above but without rank stripes on sleeves; vertical insert in purple; black mortar-board.

Art. 14: Occasions—closing ceremony of the academic year; opening ceremony of the academic year; DHC conferral ceremony; attendance at similar ceremonies at other universities, if local protocol permits.

Art. 9: Faculty colours—Medicine: royal blue; Medicine (taught in English): peacock blue; Dentistry: light blue; Pharmacy: blue-violet; Engineering and IT: kelly green; Petru Maior Faculty (Sciences and Letters): yellow; Economics and Law: orange.

The terms *robă și tocă* appear to be standard across Romanian university charters in the context of academic dress.

There are several universities whose charters do not include mentions to academic dress, including: Universitatea din Petroșani,[48] Universitatea Tehnică 'Gheorghe Asachi' din Iași[49] and the Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie 'Carol Davila' din București.[50]

A notable case regarding academic dress in Romania is the 2010 proposal by the University of Oradea to reform its ceremonial dress. A Romanian newspaper article details the motivation and notes deficiencies in the prior standard. 'Tired of the heavy black material gowns, too hot in summer, the representatives of the University of Oradea proposed changing the ceremonial academic dress. The black gowns will be replaced with blue ones, their design conceived by students at the Faculty of Arts.'[51]

According to the proposed design, the rector will wear at ceremonies a blue gown with gold details; the pro-rectors and the scientific secretary of the Senate will wear blue gowns with silver details, and the deans' attire will have bronze details. Doctor *honoris causa* honorands will wear blue gowns with claret details.[52] The proposed academic dress was meant to be worn by the members of the Senate Bureau at ceremonies of conferral of the honorary degrees and at the opening of the academic year.[53] The visual rendering of the proposed design included three stripes on the sleeves, in the American style. That design was not adopted by the University.

48 Universitatea din Petroșani, Carta Universitară, Ediția 2023, <https://www.upet.ro/documente/2024/Carta%20UPET%20editia%202023.pdf> p. 3, Art. 4 [retrieved 15 April 2026].

49 Universitatea Tehnică 'Gheorghe Asachi' din Iași, Carta Universitară, Ediția 4, Revizia 4, adopted by the University Senate 15 December 2023 (Iași: Universitatea Tehnică 'Gheorghe Asachi', 2023), p. 5, Art. 3 <https://www.tuiasi.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Carta-TUIASI-15.12.2023_final_adoptata.pdf> [retrieved 15 April 2026].

50 Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie 'Carol Davila' din București, Carta Universității, Versiunea a VII-a, <https://umfcd.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Carta-Universitatii-Versiunea-VII.pdf > [retrieved 15 April 2026].

51 *Adevărul*, 'Începând cu acest an, Universitatea Oradea va avea o altă ținută academică, mai comodă,' 25 February 2010, <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/oradea/incepand-cu-acest-an-universitatea-oradea-va-avea-841344.html> [retrieved 9 April 2026].

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

Survey of individual universities

The descriptions below are drawn from publicly available videos and photographs of university ceremonies (graduations, honorary doctorate conferrals, academic year opening) cited for each institution. To facilitate comparison, each entry follows the same template and fields were omitted where data was not located.

UNIVERSITATEA DIN BUCUREȘTI

Sources: *Honoris causa* ceremony 2026,[54] Graduation ceremony, 2021, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work.[55]

Staff and honorary doctorate gown: Black gown with satin facings and sleeves; three dark fur chevrons on the side of the gown. Staff gowns have the same fur chevrons but in different colours, indicating academic rank.

Rector and senior staff distinction: Rank indicated by the colour of the fur chevrons (per the charter quoted above: navy blue for teaching staff, yellow for deans, red for pro-rectors, green for the president of the Senate, white for the rector).

Headwear: Black mortar-board for graduates, with a tassel matching the satin scarf.

Student and graduate dress: Undergraduate gowns are black with corresponding black mortar-board. Graduates wear a satin scarf according to their academic discipline with the University emblem. Doctoral gowns are black with three satin chevrons.

UNIVERSITATEA DE ARTĂ ȘI DESIGN DIN CLUJ-NAPOCA

Source: Honoris causa 2024.[56]

Staff and honorary doctorate gown: Dark blue with grey sleeves; a section with multiple overlapping horizontal light-grey stripes covers the top-left breast section.

Rector and senior staff distinction: The same academic dress as staff.

Headwear: Grey mortar-board for staff and honorary doctorates.

UNIVERSITATEA POLITEHNICA DIN BUCUREȘTI

Source: Graduation ceremony, Faculty of Automation and Computing, 10 July 2025.[57]

Rector / senior staff distinction: Deans distinguished by satin white facings and wide sleeves on an open black gown.

Headwear: Black mortar-board with a blue satin edge, with decoration on top, according to discipline.

Student and graduate dress: Undergraduates wear a black gown and a blue silk scarf with the University emblem.

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54 <https://www.facebook.com/unibuc.ro/posts/1372610101573006?ref=embed_post>.

55 <https://www2.sas.unibuc.ro/ceremonie-absolventi-2021>.

56 <romaniancreativeweek.ro/newsroom/irina-schrotter-a-primit-titlul-de-doctor-honoris-causa-din-partea-uad-cluj-napoca-organizatoarea-romanian-creative-week-sper-ca-acest-moment-sa-inspire-multi-antreprenori-sa-investeasca-in-educatia/>.

57 Graduation ceremony, Faculty of Automation and Computing, Universitatea POLITEHNICA din București, 10 July 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/UPB1818/posts/-festivitatea-de-absolvire-a-facult%C4%83%C8%9Bii-de-automatic%C4%83-%C8%99i-calculatoare-promo%C8%9Bia-2/1054585020125574> [retrieved 16 April 2026].

UNIVERSITATEA DE MEDICINĂ ŞI FARMACIE 'CAROL DAVILA'

Sources: 2022 promoţie a Facultăţii de Medicină Dentară,[58] 2025 graduation ceremony,[59] 2025 graduation ceremony.[60]

Staff and honorary doctorate gown: Dress newly designed in 2025, a dark blue gown with white facings bearing the University emblem on the right facing. An over-the-shoulder epitoge in alternating white and dark blue with University emblem. Three American style stripes on the sleeves.

Rector and senior staff distinction: In previous years, deans and the rector wore a burgundy gown with golden front sections bearing the University emblem and four American-style stripes on each sleeve. The 2025 redesign shifts the colour palette to dark blue and white gown and includes the following ranking system of stripes on the sleeves: the rector has four stripes with gold edges; the president of the academic senate has four stripes with silver edges on the sleeves. Deans have two stripes on their sleeves.

Headwear: Black mortar-board with green satin edge for dental graduates. Medical graduates have a white edge on their mortar-board.

Student and graduate dress: Dental graduates wear a black gown with green satin scarf. Medical graduates wear a white scarf.

UNIVERSITATEA OVIDIUS DIN CONSTANȚA

Source: 2023 *Honoris causa*.[61]

Staff and honorary doctorate gown: Honorary doctorate academic dress is the same as that of staff and is made of satin: blue with golden facings, sleeve edges blue on the inside and golden on the bottom half, and four golden satin chevrons on the left breast section.

Headwear: Blue mortar-board with gold edge and golden tassel.

UNIVERSITATEA 'ȘTEFAN CEL MARE' DIN SUCEAVA

Sources: Honorary doctorate ceremony 2024,[62] University 2025 Facebook account.[63]

Honorary doctorate gown: Honorary doctoral gowns are black with breast-length satin facings in the same colour of the gown, with white edges. Corresponding satin rhombus affixed in the centre of the gown under the collar. Satin sleeve bottom sections with golden edges. University emblem in white on left sleeve.

58 <umfcd.ro/general/ceremonia-de-absolvire-a-facultatii-de-medicina-dentara-promotia-2022/>.

59 <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=816591274224481&set=pcb.816592410891034>.

60 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JLGmpz3wJI>.

61 <umfcd.ro/general/ceremonia-de-acordare-a-titlului-de-doctor-honoris-causa-profesorului-universitar-doctor-viorel-jinga-rectorul-umfcd-de-catre-universitatea-constanta/>.

62 <sanatatea.tv/rectorul-umf-carol-davila-prof-univ-dr-viorel-jinga-a-primit-titlul-de-doctor-honoris-causa-al-univeristatii-stefan-cel-mare-din-suceava/>.

63 <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1233565501546002&set=pb.100046776925959.-2207520000&type=3>.

Rector and senior staff distinction: The satin sections are bordered with coloured thread corresponding to academic rank. Red for the rector, green for less senior university officials.

Headwear: Mortar-board in corresponding colour to the gown with satin stripe and tassel corresponding to academic rank.

Student and graduate dress: At the main University-wide graduation ceremony, deans of faculties and graduates do not wear academic dress. The rector is in full academic dress, as is one graduate from each faculty (the highest-achieving graduate of each faculty).[64] Those students wear dark blue gowns with breast-length satin facings in the same colour of the gown, with golden edges. Corresponding satin rhombus affixed in the centre of the gown under the collar with golden edges. Satin sleeve bottom sections with golden edges. University emblem in white on left sleeve. At the faculty ceremonies, students are in black gowns and the now-common satin scarves corresponding to academic discipline. The gowns have square sleeves (and not pointed) and have no yoke, with the gowns' front and back being joined at the top.[65]

UNIVERSITATEA DIN ORADEA

Source: Honorary degree ceremony 2023.[66]

Staff and honorary doctorate gown: Honorary doctoral academic dress is the same as that worn by staff: French-style black gown with burgundy satin facings and sleeve edges.

Rector and senior staff distinction: The rector's gown is the same in cut but with golden elements instead of burgundy.

Headwear: Round cap with satin stripe encircling its base and adorned with University emblem, corresponding to academic rank (burgundy for staff; golden for rector).

UNIVERSITATEA PETROL-GAZE DIN PLOIEȘTI

Source: Honorary degree ceremony 2026.[67]

Staff and honorary doctorate gown: Staff gowns are black with satin front facings and sleeve edges and three golden satin chevrons on the left breast section. Honorary doctoral academic dress is the same except it is blue and not black, including the mortar-board.

Headwear: Black mortar-board with black tassel and golden edge (blue for honorary doctorates).

64 University graduation ceremony 5 June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSSG4iFLkAc> [retrieved 10 May 2026].

65 Faculty of Physical Education and Sports graduation ceremony 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsx9zwt75as> [retrieved 28 May 2026]. Monitorul de Suceava, Marriage proposal during graduation ceremony, 19 May 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EISOTYQ-Ng> [retrieved 28 May 2026].

66 <umfcd.ro/general/acordarea-titlului-de-doctor-honoris-causa-prof-univ-dr-viorel-jinga-rectorul-universitatii-de-medicina-si-farmacie-carol-davila-din-bucuresti-de-catre-universitatea-din-oradea/>.

67 <https://www.facebook.com/pguploiesti/posts/%C3%AEn-data-de-5-martie-2026-la-sediul-universit%C4%83%C8%9Bii-petrol-gaze-din-ploie%C8%99ti-a-avut/1452133203365465/>.

Sources: Honorary degree ceremony 2025,[68] honorary degree ceremony 2026,[69] masters' graduation 2025,[70] bachelors' and masters' graduation ceremony in physics 2025.[71]

Staff and honorary doctorate gown: Doctoral robes, including those of staff and honorary doctorates, are black, made of woollen fabric with satin sleeves. A satin collar with medal adorns the gown, decorated with the heraldic pall pattern from the University emblem. The pall itself does not appear on the academic cape, just the white background covered in heraldic ermine tails stemming from the University's arms which include a pall ermine (that is, black ermine tails or spots on white).

Rector and senior staff distinction: Senior staff have three golden stripes on an opening on the sleeve, and the rector has four such golden stripes.

Headwear: Mortar-board with satin edge and tassel corresponding in colour to the field of study; the top of the mortar-board may be personalized.

Student and graduate dress: Bachelors' and masters' gowns are black with sleeves that have a satin band around their edges with the pattern derived from the University emblem. Graduates wear a satin scarf with the University emblem in the colour corresponding to their discipline.

Comparative overview

There are several visual influences noticeable in Romanian academic dress. A French influence can be identified by the chevrons or stripes on the gown (University of Bucharest), Ovidius Constanța (four golden satin chevrons on the left breast), Petrol-Gaze Ploiești (three golden satin chevrons on the left breast), and the UMFST Târgu Mureș regulation (one to four sleeve stripes by rank).

Black is the predominant base colour for staff and graduate gowns. Where deviation occurs, the institutional colours serve as inspiration for the palette. At most institutions reviewed, academic dress is worn by all graduates, but at Ștefan cel Mare University in Suceava only the rector and the highest-ranked graduate of each faculty wear it during graduation.

The use of faculty-specific colours, codified in detail at UMFST, is paralleled by the satin scarf or sash systems at the University of Bucharest, POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Carol Davila, and Alexandru Ioan Cuza, where graduate scarves take the colour of the discipline.

American-style sleeve stripes appear in two documented cases: staff of Carol Davila wear three such stripes on each sleeve, and at Alexandru Ioan Cuza senior staff wear three and the rector four golden stripes on a sleeve opening. The 2010 University of Oradea reform proposal also included three sleeve stripes 'in the American style' but was not adopted. The use of satin scarves in graduations with University emblem and colour corresponding to academic discipline is prevalent in many institutions, as is the use of mortar-boards.

68 <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1136723331812981&set=pcb.1136746455144002>.

69 <https://www.instagram.com/p/DV8f9u-DNL2/?img_index=1>.

70 <https://www.instagram.com/p/DOgD0Y2jQF6/?img_index=4>.

71 <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1263130248850138&set=pcb.1263130528850110>.

Romanian universities indicate academic rank by using stripes on the sleeves or chevrons on the gowns and colours as indicators. The University of Bucharest uses the colour of fur chevrons (white for the rector). UMFST Târgu Mureș uses the number of sleeve stripes (four for the rector) together with stripe colour and a transmissible rectoral chain. Carol Davila distinguishes the rector, president of the senate and deans by the number of stripes and their edges. Oradea swaps the burgundy facings of the staff gown for golden ones on the rector's gown. Alexandru Ioan Cuza relies on the count of golden sleeve stripes (three for senior staff, four for the rector). Suceava uses coloured thread bordering the satin sections.

Headwear is most commonly a black mortar-board, often with a coloured edge or tassel matching the graduate's discipline (University of Bucharest, POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Carol Davila, Petrol-Gaze Ploiești staff, Alexandru Ioan Cuza). Ovidius Constanța uses a blue mortar-board with gold edge and golden tassel; the University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca uses a grey mortar-board; the University of Oradea uses a round cap with a burgundy stripe rather than a square mortar-board.

In the universities surveyed, honorary doctoral dress is nearly always identical or nearly-identical to the staff gown of the awarding institution (the University of Bucharest, Ștefan cel Mare Suceava, Oradea, Ovidius Constanța, and Alexandru Ioan Cuza all follow this pattern). Petrol-Gaze Ploiești is the documented exception, using the same design but in blue rather than black for honorary doctorate recipients. UMFST Târgu Mureș takes a different approach by regulation, using the staff gown but without rank stripes and with a purple vertical insert.

The comparison demonstrates that there is no clearly defined Romanian style of academic dress. French-derived elements (epitoge, chevrons, faculty colours) coexist with American-style scarves, mortar-boards, sleeve stripes and with locally distinctive choices of colour.

Conclusion

Academic dress in Romania has, until now, received no sustained scholarly analysis. This article has attempted a brief review. Conducting a comprehensive survey of academic dress in Romania is a daunting task. There are dozens of institutions and online resources are surprisingly limited. Future archival research is required to provide definitive answers regarding the early development of academic dress in Romania, shifting the debate from plausible to certain. The issue of academic dress under Communism could benefit from archival research as well. Examples from other countries, and photographic evidence from other types of organizations make the assertion that academic dress was not prevalent during communist rule plausible, but a definitive answer in the Romanian context requires photographic evidence.

The challenges of researching the development of academic dress in Romania encompass terminology as well. As mentioned, the Romanian terminology (*robă, tocă*) corresponds directly to French academic vocabulary (*robe, toque*). Yet Latin versions of this same terminology (*roba, toga*) were also used in England for the academic dress regulations at Oxford and Cambridge.

The development of a Romanian national identity was not without struggle. As the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, many of the Greek elites fled to Italy and to the regions of Muntenia and Moldova, gradually gaining influence in the region.

The Greek language was officially introduced in the Romanian church, in addition to the Slavonic, and by the early nineteenth century Greek would become the dominant language,[72] being the official language of the court, administration, and high society.

Latin, along with Old Slavonic, was an official language of the Church and administration in Romanian principalities. The Transylvanian School in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries promoted the Latin origin of the Romanian language, seeking to re-connect Romania with Western values and Roman culture to differentiate themselves from neighbouring Slavic or Ottoman influences. The nineteenth-century elite reinforced the Latin character of Romanian by borrowing many words directly from Latin, Italian, and French,[73] until eventually giving way to the French influence in full.

This amalgam of influence, seen in Romania's higher education system as well, is evident in its academic dress. While there are universities with academic dress influenced by the French style, others are not. The same is true for the use of epitoge-like items and gowns, whereas many institutions use mortar-boards and scarves in North American style. The wide variety of academic dress surveyed, despite the limited number of institutions compared to the total operating in Romania, suggests there is no Romanian style of academic dress, with influences varying according to each institution.

Current academic dress in Romania is used in the opening of the academic year, during graduation ceremonies and special events involving the institution. The French style appears to be the prevalent, with some local modifications. Academic dress does appear to be evolving, with mortar-boards with personalized design being prevalent, and satin scarves making them more modern. The decoration on top of the mortar-board makes academic dress a living component in academic ceremonial life, with two types detected: one is a mortar-board with a message given to graduates by the university, usually words of encouragement or a reference to their field of study. The other, handcrafted decorations made by the graduates, in a variety of styles. These can be seen on social media when searched as Toca Personalizata Absolvire (personalized mortar-board for graduation).

Romania has experienced shifts in government systems and political life. Those were mirrored in academic dress and more broadly in its higher education system. The dynamics between foreign traditions and their influence on Romanian universities and academic dress show how intertwined and complex historical developments are in the field of higher education and national policy, and how they can be seen through the prism of academic dress.

The author

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72 Theodore Andrica, *Romanian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland* (Cleveland: MSL Academic Endeavors, 2020), <pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/romanian-americans-and-their-communities-of-cleveland/>, chapter 3, 'The Romanian Language' [retrieved 10 May 2026].

73 Department of Slavic, East European & Eurasian Languages & Cultures, UCLA, 'Background Information', UCLA Slavic, East European & Eurasian Languages & Cultures <slavic.ucla.edu/languages/romanian/background-info/> [retrieved 10 May 2026].