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Hood Neckbands in New Zealand

By Paul Fielder

Abstract

Although much detail is available about hood design for academic institutions around the world, very little is mentioned about the neckbands associated with them, especially in official regulations. This is rather an anomaly, since often this is the only part visible in photographs taken from the front and hence identification is difficult. This article is a contribution towards reducing the gap for hoods currently in use in New Zealand.

There are many challenges facing robemakers, not the least of which is the tendency of fabric manufacturers to produce material according to the dictates of fashion and with very little regard to the British Colour Council Dictionary of Colour Standards Second Edition of 1951! This is understandable; academic dress has to be considered a niche market from a manufacturing point of view. Another challenge, however, is the fact that in many of the regulations of academic institutions, and also in much of the great quantity of excellent literature on the subject, although the main body of the hoods is well covered, the details of the neckbands tend to be sadly neglected. This is rather ironic, since unless one spends time following behind processions, the neckband is often the only part that can be seen from looking at frontal photographs. And a plethora of different designs exists, including shapes, colours, lengths, orientation, and sometimes no neckband at all. It may be of interest to describe some of the many different neckband designs currently used in New Zealand, with the hope of perhaps inspiring some ardent academic dress enthusiast to compile a more ambitious reference work on a more international level, which would sit well alongside Smith and Sheard, Shaw, Groves, Goff, et al. This compilation does not attempt to cover all New Zealand universities and colleges, but has included the major ones as well as some of particular interest.

Something which frequently intrudes on tying down the details of academic dress is that the regulations were set down early in the history of the institutions. Subsequently the turnover of staff as well as the passage of time has led to the result that nobody is left who remembers the rationale behind the original design or the various changes that were made since then. If several robemakers have made up hoods over the years using their own manufacturing techniques there is often a wide range of slightly differing designs in evidence.

Beginning with the universities, which are arranged in alphabetical order:

The University of Auckland

New Zealand's largest University, the University of Auckland's regulations state that the hood is as for the Cambridge MA. In fact it is more similar to the London hoods (but without the rounded corners to the cape) in that the liripipe is not as long as the cape. Auckland hoods use a V-shaped neckband, attached at an angle to the main body. There is no detail for it in the Regulations, but for the bachelors' and masters' hoods the backing of the neckband is of a satin the same as the hood lining; in other words the colour dictated by the subject, and it is folded over to the front to form a strip either side of a black cloth central insert. Depending on the weight of the fabrics, they may have an interlining fabric fused[1] to the back of them.

Doctoral hood neckbands are the same basic shape but the front and back are both of satin, of the colour indicated by the subject, and there is no black insert on the front.

There is an age-old problem of how to hold the hood in place, and different approaches have been taken by different people and the hiring organizations depending a lot on how the hood is to be worn. If it is worn with the neckband aligned central to the neck, then safety pins or special brooches are often used. Sometimes it is worn off one shoulder, which helps to show the colour of the lining from the front, but it puts a great strain on the neckband.

An earlier way of making the neckband was to sew it in a straight rectangle, fold it to a V-shape and sew down the folds. This is very strong, but not very elegant. A later way was devised having a seam down the centre, which is more difficult to cut and sew and not as strong but much more refined. It is a balance that has to be decided, bearing in mind that hoods are not generally worn for long, and sometimes only once in the owner's life, rather less frequently than the photos are seen!

Auckland University of Technology

Étude Classique Ltd was appointed the Official Robemakers to Auckland University of Technology in 2000, and drafted the academic dress descriptions included in its regulations. The bachelors' and masters' hoods are of a special design loosely based on the Oxford simple shape [s1], with a broad curved neckband originally in bone-coloured satin. Over the years the light colour of the neckbands proved to be a problem with maintenance, the neckbands of hired hoods discoloured easily with cosmetics and were difficult to clean. A decision was taken to move to black cloth neckbands, and the transition is being made as new hoods are manufactured.

Doctoral hoods are (as is common in New Zealand) of the Cambridge pattern but with the liripipe shorter than the cape, and the neckbands of a curved shape similar to those of Massey University (see below). The doctoral hoods have satin outer shell and lining and so have the neckbands in the same configuration, and fused with interlining for strength and body. Additional regalia for higher doctorates was designed by Scott Pilkington, FBS, and added to the regulations in 2021, but the neckbands remain the same as for other doctorates.

1 Fusing is the process in which a backing fabric, sometimes known as interlining and coated with a temperature-sensitive adhesive, is ironed onto the back of the fabric to give it extra body and rigidity.



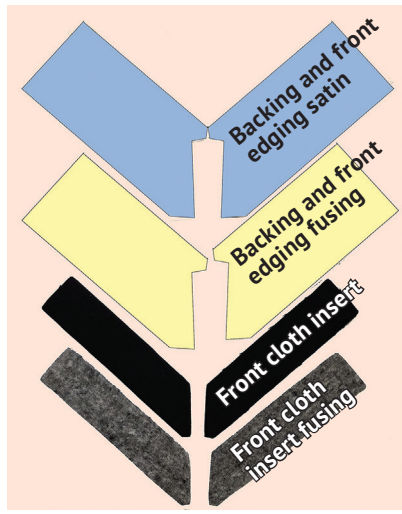


Fig. 1 (left). University of Auckland bachelor's hood neckband.
Fig. 2 (right). University of Auckland MD hood neckband



Fig. 3 (above). A hood worn off the shoulder.

Fig. 4 (right). Neckband pieces for neater version, showing damage that can result, far right, from wearing it off the shoulder.





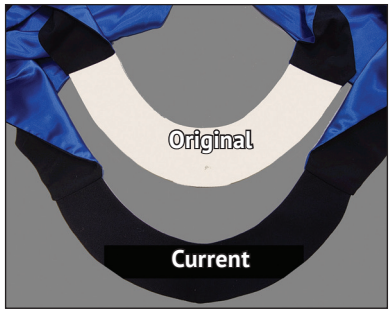


Fig. 5A (above). Previous and current Auckland University of Technology bachelor's and master's neckbands.

Fig. 5B (right). The current Auckland University of Technology bachelor's hood neckband in 2026, for engineering.





Fig. 6. A selection of University of Canterbury hoods

University of Canterbury and Lincoln University

These two universities have similar academic dress, and the hoods differ from other universities in New Zealand. The regulations of both state that the hoods should be 'of the same size and shape and material as the standard pattern maintained by the Registrar', and although they have a cowl and cape like many other hoods, they are of a different size and shape.

The regulations do not go into any detail about the neckbands, but having stated that the hoods are of the standard pattern maintained by the Registrar (which is actually a unique shape) they don't need to, and in fact they are very different and complicated! The neckbands are long and V-shaped, and terminate at the bottom with a built-in button loop. They are attached to the body of the hood in such a way that when the neckband is worn flat against the chest, the outer shell of the hood rests on the right shoulder and the lining of the hood on the left shoulder. For Canterbury the whole neckband is grey cloth for bachelors, for masters the front facing part is satin of a colour the same as the lining with a grey cloth underside, for PhD a peony red satin front facing with a slate grey satin underside.

Other doctoral hoods have outer shells, linings and neckbands all in slate grey satin. For Lincoln, bachelors' and masters' hoods are the same as for Canterbury, but for the PhD's they have a yellow satin front facing with a blue satin underside. In all cases the button loop, which is the full width of the squared-off bottom of the neckband, is the front facing colour. They are tricky hoods to make, and hold many pitfalls for unaccredited makers; errors are immediately obvious!

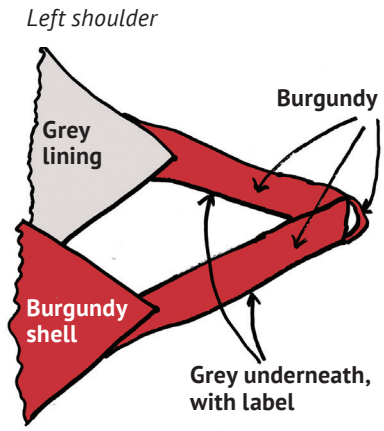


Fig. 7. PhD Canterbury neckband configuration.



Fig. 8. Massey PhD hood/stole.

Massey University

Like the University of Auckland's, Massey University regulations state that the hood is as for the Cambridge MA but in fact is more similar to the London hoods (but without the rounded corners to the cape) in that the liripipe is not as long as the cape. Once again there is no detail for the neckband, but in practice it is a simple curved shape in 'University blue' (BCC 90) cloth for masters and bachelors, and attached to the body of the hood at an angle like the Cambridge hoods.The PhD regalia has undergone some practical adjustments recently. Traditionally the gown had scarlet facings like Cambridge PhD gowns, and was accompanied by a PhD hood. Although no changes have yet been made to the regulations, for practical reasons this was changed to using a standard plain master's gown without facings, and a combined hood and stole[2] with-

2 A stole or scarf is a separate garment worn over the gown and hangs down over the front of the gown in the manner of gown facings. It may or may not have a yoke hanging down the back, and the fronts frequently have colours or embroidery indicating the institution and level of qualification. They are 'used by some universities for non-degree awards', as described in *Shaw's Academical Dress of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: The Burgon Society, 2011–14), Vol. I: *Universities and Other Degree-Awarding Bodies* (2011), p. 17.

out a back yoke, sewn together, was then attached to the gown as one unit using Velcro. This obviated the need for any neckband to the hood at all. Experience proved that the satin of the hood/stoles was easily damaged when removing them from the gown, so the current practice is to attach them to the gown with press-studs instead of Velcro.

The University of Otago

Otago is New Zealand's oldest university. Similar to the University of Auckland, the regulations state that the hood is as for the Cambridge MA, and no mention is made of the neckband. In fact unlike the Cambridge hoods the edge of the cowl is slightly curved and the bottom of the liripipe is cut with a double angle to form a blunt point. For this kind of hood most robemakers do not take the lining of the hood into the liripipe, but Otago insists that the lining extends right to the bottom of the liripipe, using more fabric but providing a convenient place to leave open for 'bagging it out'.[3]

The neckband is a fairly long single curve, black cloth both sides for the bachelors' and masters' hood and appropriate coloured satin for doctoral hoods. Like the University of Auckland neckbands, they have interlining fused to the back of the pieces, producing perhaps the strongest neckband of all as there is no centre seam. But unusually, they are not connected with the main body of the hood at 45 degrees, instead following the straight edge of the end of the cowl.

Victoria University of Wellington

As for most of the other New Zealand universities, the regulations state that the hood is as for the Cambridge MA but is more similar to the London hoods (without the rounded corners to the cape) in that the liripipe is not as long as the cape. Details for the neckbands are not given, but for many years they have been made in a long simple V-shape in black cloth for bachelor's and master's hoods and a shorter neckband in the same format as for the University of Auckland in the appropriate colour satin for doctoral hoods. For some master's degrees, and also for the PhD, Victoria University Wellington doesn't use a hood at all, but just a stole with a fairly substantial rectangular back yoke which counterbalances the front drops, and no neckband.

University of Waikato

Waikato has made things simple by having all bachelor hoods the same irrespective of subject (black cloth outer shell with gold satin lining). Likewise, all masters' hoods are the same (gold satin outer shell and lining) and all doctoral hoods are the same regardless of discipline (scarlet satin outer shell and lining). And all of the hoods have identical neckbands, which are V-shaped in black cloth back and front but with a narrow gold strip in the front centre of the V.

Moving on from the universities to the polytechnics, things have been rather complicated in the last few years. In 2020, largely due to financial problems many of them

3 'Bagging out' means that the two halves of fabric are sewn together with the 'wrong' side out, leaving an opening through which the garment can be turned inside out so that the 'right' side is seen and the seam sewing them together is not visible. The opening through which the fabric is turned then has to be sewn closed afterwards, often by hand. It is usually selected to be a part that is not generally seen.

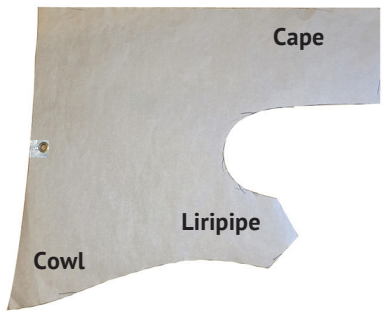


Fig. 9. Otago hood pattern.



Fig. 10 (right). Otago PhD hood neckband, showing how it is connected to the body of the hood.

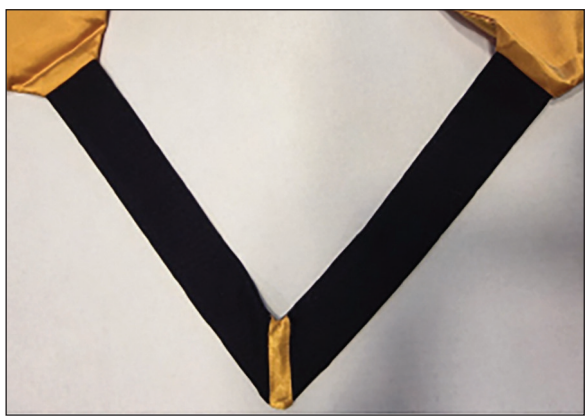


Fig. 11 (left). University of Waikato master's hood.



Fig. 12. Unitec master's hood.



Fig. 13. Unitec half doctoral hood neckband.

were facing, the New Zealand Government merged sixteen Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics into one body called the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (TePūkenga).With a change of government, this was reversed and TePūkenga was dismantled and the institutes became independent again. Notwithstanding this, there were several mergers of colleges and polytechnics, but so far the individual entities have maintained their original academic dress.

Unitec Institute of Technology

Unitec has recently merged with Manukau Institute of Technology. The Unitec hoods are similar to the hoods used by most other universities and colleges in New Zealand except that their linings are in taffeta fabric instead of satin, and the neckbands have very attractive embroidery on the front. They are V-shaped, and the two sides of the V are mirror image, with an off-white embroidered raparapa (a Māori motif) design on a dark green cloth background on the wearer's left side, and the same design embroidered in dark green on an off-white cloth background on the wearer's right side.

In the conclusion of his article 'A Century of PhD Dress in Aotearoa New Zealand', Pilkington suggests that doctoral regalia may continue to evolve by (amongst other things) the adoption of indigenous designs.[4] Unitec is amongst several institutions that anticipated this trend, not only for doctoral regalia. The embroidered front parts are necessarily stiff and the back parts are dark green cloth for masters and black for bachelors to match the hood outer shells (but the backs of the neckbands are not visible anyway) and are fused, making a very rigid neckband.

Doctoral hood neckbands have a satin backing, of the colour of the discipline (red for PhD) which is turned over to form an edging to the front embroidered part in the same way as the Auckland neckbands.

4 *TBS*, 24 (2024), pp. 79–90 (p. 90).



Fig. 14. Manukau Institute of Technology hood neckband.



Fig. 15. Awanuiārangi bachelor hoods showing tapes attachment.

Manukau Institute of Technology

As stated above, Manukau Institute of Technology has recently merged with Unitec. Its hoods have a black cloth outer shell with a narrow jade green ribbon edging along the outside edge of the cowl, which is continued along the top of the neckband which is also in black cloth with a slight curve along the upper edge and a more pronounced curve along the lower edge.

Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi

Naturally there are a number of Māori educational institutions in New Zealand, and also many of the universities and colleges that are not predominantly Māori take a lot of trouble to incorporate the Māori language (*te reo Māori*) in their publications and regulations.[5] Te Whare Wānanga means House of Teaching or Learning, and prefixes many of the titles of Māori colleges. Awanuiārangi's bachelors' and masters' hoods have a fairly long V-shaped neckband in black cloth. A unique solution was developed for hood fixing: the neckband has a vertical button loop at the mitre joint at the back. The tapes of the gown are threaded through it and secured with a bow, which holds both the hood and the gowns in place.

5 <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/maori-at-victoria/rauemi/te-reo-at-university/te-reo-maori-pronunciation-guide>.

Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)

The Wintec hoods are based on an Oxford Simple shape but are interesting for the neckbands. They are a very wide V-shape, the bachelor hoods have a central piece in Wintec Blue (a deep royal blue with a purple content) with a light blue edging and a black cloth backing, and the master's hood neckbands are the same shape but in a scarlet satin with a fairly wide *koru* Māori motif embroidered in dark blue, light blue and white along both edges.

Figure 17 also shows the two special pins sometimes used to fix the hood in place.

Te Wānanga Takiura o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa

Dedicated to the upkeep of the Māori language and traditions, Te Wānanga Takiura o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa is sometimes referred to as TWT. As may be expected, its regalia is rich in cultural annotations. Te Wānanga Takiura is understandably defensive and protective of them. Its gowns have impressive full-length embroidered facings and the hoods are edged with a ribbon screen-printed with a Māori motif and an embroidered crest in the centre of the neckband. A Fellow of the Burgon Society once asked if he could have a sample of the gown for his collection, but permission for this was denied by the college. An interesting feature of the hoods is that they have two buttonholes where they pass over each gown shoulder, and correspondingly two buttons covered in the same fabric as the gown sewn onto each gown shoulder. This very effectively holds the hoods in exactly the right position, and having two on each side protects against a button inadvertently coming off.



Fig. 20. Te Wānanga Takiura hood worn on gown with traditional Maori cloak.

Otago Polytechnic

A similar approach was taken by Otago Polytechnic, except that having opted for buttons on the shoulders they dispensed with the neckband completely. It was designed by Otago Polytechnic Third Year Diploma in Fashion and Design students, and is unique. Some qualifications require both a hood and a stole, and the stoles have slits in the shoulder seams allowing the buttons holding the hood to also pass through the stoles and hold them in place too.



Fig. 21. Otago Polytechnic hood with four gold buttons and no neckband at all.

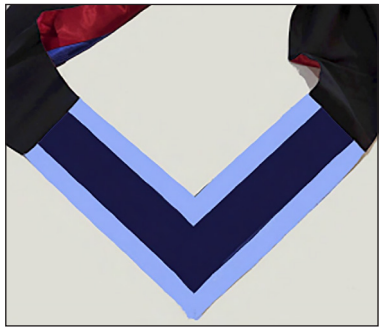


Fig. 16. Wintec BHons hood neckband.



Fig. 17. Wintec master's hood neckband with two pins to hold it in place.



Fig. 18. Te Wānanga Takiura hood neckband (note the two buttonholes on either side of the cowl).



Fig. 19. Te Wānanga Takiura gown with full-length embroidered facings.



Fig. 22. What might have been: Te Wānanga o Aotearoa hood proposal.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

This loosely translates as the University of New Zealand, although it is not one of the eight officially recognized universities in New Zealand and, founded in 1984, it is not derived from the former University of New Zealand, which ceased to exist in 1961. The process of assisting them with their academic dress design came close to incorporating a hood neckband which was based on a screen-printed Māori motif, but in the end it was decided that there was enough of this in evidence in the various gown facings and stoles so a plain black cloth V-shaped neckband was maintained.



Fig. 23. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa gown showing facings with ample cultural insignia.



Fig. 24. Toi Ohomai bachelor hood.

Other notable hoods

Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (Formerly Waiariki Institute of Technology) is another institute that was early in instituting cultural insignia. (Fig. 24.) Different hood neckbands are used at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (Fig. 25) and Whitireia Community Polytechnic (now merged with Weltec) (Fig. 26).

Several New Zealand institutions use hoods that are combined with a stole. Since the weight of the stole fronts counterbalances the weight of the hood hanging down the back, they do not need neckbands at all. Some examples of these includes hoods from New Zealand Tertiary College (Fig. 27) and South Pacific College of Natural Medicine (Fig. 28).

Conclusion and further reading

There exists in New Zealand a variety of hood neckbands that are different, individual and not adequately covered by either official regulations or academic dress literature. The same might be concluded about hoods in the international arena.

Anyone interested in further reading on academic dress in New Zealand should consult:

Noel Cox, 'Academical Dress in New Zealand', *Burgon Society Annual*, 2001, pp. 15–24.

Scott Pilkington, 'History and Development of University Doctoral Dress in Aotearoa New Zealand', *TBS*, 21 (2021), pp. 161–84.

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Fig. 25. Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology hood neckband.



Fig. 27. New Zealand Tertiary College.



Fig. 26. The bachelor hood of Whitireia Community Polytechnic (now merged with Weltec).



Fig. 28. South Pacific College of Natural Medicine.

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The author would like to thank Professors Bruce Christianson and Stephen Wolgast for their ongoing interest and particularly their advice on this article, and also to the hiring organizations attached to the universities and colleges in New Zealand which have provided support over the years. These include Graduate Women Manuwatū (Ainsley Watson), Graduate Women Otago (Julien Gross), Waikato Graduate Women Educational Trust (Bryre Pritchard), The Graduation Place supporting The Kate Edger Foundation (Nina Tomaszyk and Liza Turvey) and GWC Regalia hire.

Recognition is also due to the many unsung heroes of the academic dress fraternity in New Zealand. This encompasses those who hold or have held administrative positions in the many tertiary educational institutions, and have contributed to maintaining standards, evolving regulations when necessary, and generally assisting to ensure that academic regalia remains an important part of the expression of graduates' academic achievements. It also includes the many enthusiastic suppliers who strive to provide materials where the original fabrics are no longer available, and diminishing number of specialists such as tailors, embroiderers, milliners, screen-printers etc. who assist in maintaining the traditions of formal academic apparel.