



DEGREE CEREMONY

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



The degrees currently conferred by the University are:		
	DD	<i>Doctor of Divinity, scarlet cloth lined with black silk</i>
	BD	<i>Bachelor of Divinity, black silk lined with a lightweight black silk</i>
	DCL	<i>Doctor of Civil Law, scarlet cloth lined with scarlet silk</i>
	BCL	<i>Bachelor of Civil Law, blue poplin, art silk or silk half lined and edged with white fur fabric</i>
	MJur	<i>Magister Juris, blue poplin, art silk or silk half lined and edged with white fur fabric</i>
	DM	<i>Doctor of Medicine, scarlet cloth lined with scarlet silk</i>
	MCh	<i>Master of Surgery, black silk lined and bound with blue silk</i>
	BM	<i>Bachelor of Medicine, blue poplin, art silk or silk half lined and edged with white fur fabric</i>
	DLitt	<i>Doctor of Letters, scarlet cloth lined with neutral grey silk</i>
	DSc	<i>Doctor of Science, scarlet cloth lined with neutral grey silk</i>
	DMus	<i>Doctor of Music, cream satin brocade of silk or art silk lined with cherry-coloured silk</i>
	DPhil	<i>Doctor of Philosophy, scarlet cloth lined with navy blue silk</i>
	DClinPsych	<i>Doctor of Clinical Psychology, blue silk or art silk edged and lined with scarlet silk or art silk</i>
	DEng	<i>Doctor of Engineering, red silk or art silk edged with grey and lined with petrol blue silk</i>
	MA	<i>Master of Arts, black silk lined with crimson or shot crimson silk or art silk</i>
	MSc	<i>Master of Science, blue silk or art silk edged and lined with grey silk</i>
	MLitt	<i>Master of Letters, blue silk or art silk edged and lined with grey silk</i>
	MPhil	<i>Master of Philosophy, dark blue art silk or silk lined with white silk</i>
	MSt	<i>Master of Studies, deep green silk or art silk lined with white silk or art silk</i>
	MTh	<i>Master of Theology, black silk or art silk lined with magenta silk</i>
	MBA	<i>Master of Business Administration, claret silk or art silk lined with dark grey silk</i>
	MFA	<i>Master of Fine Art, gold silk or art silk edged and lined with white silk or art silk</i>
	BMus	<i>Bachelor of Music, lilac silk or art silk half lined and edged with white fur fabric</i>
	BPhil	<i>Bachelor of Philosophy, dark blue art silk or silk lined with white silk</i>
	MBiochem	<i>Master of Biochemistry, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MChem	<i>Master of Chemistry, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MCompSci	<i>Master of Computer Science, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MEarthSci	<i>Master of Earth Sciences, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MEng	<i>Master of Engineering, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MMath&Phys	<i>Master of Mathematics and Physics, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MMath&Comp	<i>Master of Mathematics and Computer Science, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MMath	<i>Master of Mathematics, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MPhys	<i>Master of Physics, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	MPhys&Phil	<i>Master of Physics and Philosophy, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	BA	<i>Bachelor of Arts, black poplin, art silk or silk trimmed with white fur fabric</i>
	BFA	<i>Bachelor of Fine Art, black silk or art silk with a narrow band of gold silk inside</i>
	BTh	<i>Bachelor of Theology, black silk or art silk with a narrow band of magenta silk inside</i>

FOREWORD BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



*The Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Andrew Hamilton*

Today's ceremony is a time when the University recognises and celebrates the achievements of its graduates. It marks simultaneously the end of one chapter and the beginning of another – for the University, of course, but especially in the lives of our former students who are here today. It is also a special occasion for all those who have supported and encouraged our graduates during their time here in Oxford, and we are particularly pleased to be able to welcome their families and friends to our celebrations.

For the collegiate University, this is a time when the students with whom we have worked closely for a number of years move on to the next stage of their careers. The skills they have developed in Oxford, the knowledge that they have gained and the contacts they have made will stand them in good stead. So although we say our farewells to many students at today's ceremony, we wish them every success with their chosen paths and look forward to maintaining a warm and close relationship with them in the years to come.

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of our graduates on their outstanding individual achievements.

Andrew D. Hamilton

THE CEREMONY

Academic degrees date from the second half of the twelfth century. The present ceremony retains all the essential features of its ancient predecessors, including the fact that the proceedings are conducted in Latin.

Participants wear full academic dress appropriate to their present status in the University.

The candidates are seated, in order of their presentation, on both sides of the building. In front of them are the professors and college deans who have candidates to present. At the start of the ceremony the Vice-Chancellor (or, in his absence, a Pro-Vice-Chancellor) enters, preceded by the Bedels, and followed by the Proctors and the Registrar (or deputy). The Vice-Chancellor makes an introductory speech in English and then opens the proceedings with a Latin formula:

Causa huius Congregationis est ut Gratiae concedantur, ut gradus conferantur, necnon ut alia peragantur, quae ad hanc Venerabilem Domum spectant.

The reason for this Congregation is that Graces be granted and Degrees be conferred, and that other business which concerns this Venerable House be transacted.

The Registrar or deputy testifies that all the candidates have received the permission of their colleges to take their degrees, and that he has verified their qualifications.

Ego Registraria Adjutrix testor omnibus candidatis, quorum nomina vel Venerabili Domui a Procuratoribus statim submittentur vel in schedulis a Registraria rite publicata erant, gratias a Collegiis vel Societatibus suis pro gradibus quaesitis concessas fuisse, et easdem mihi satisfecisse.

I, the Registrar, certify that all the candidates, whose names either will be immediately submitted to the Venerable House by the Proctors or have been published by the Registrar, have been granted Graces by their colleges or societies for the degrees asked, and that they have satisfied me.

The degree ceremony usually follows the order described below. However, this order will be varied slightly on those occasions when a small number of colleges present their candidates for a more limited range of degrees.

HIGHER DEGREES

Supplication

The proctors rise and the Senior Proctor reads the names of candidates who are 'supplicating' for 'higher' degrees.

The order in which candidates are presented depends on the level of the degree: the oldest, or 'highest' degrees – the DD, DCL and DM – are conferred first. The other 'higher' degrees are the DLitt, the DSc, the DMus, the DPhil, the DClinPsych, the DEng, the MCh, the BD, the BCL, the MJur and the BM.

Supplicant venerabili Congregationi Doctorum et Magistrorum regentium A, B, C, D, e Collegio E, qui compleverunt omnia quae per Statuta requiruntur (nisi quatenus cum eo dispensatum fuerit); ut haec sufficiant, quo admittantur ad Gradum enumeratum.

A, B, C, D, of E College, who have completed all that is required by the Statutes, except in so far as dispensation has been granted, ask the Venerable Congregation of Doctors and Regent Masters that these things may suffice for admission to the following degree.

The Senior Proctor also reads out the supplication for candidates who are not present at the ceremony, but who wish to be admitted to their degrees.

Once the supplications have been read, the proctors walk up and down in front of the deans who, by their silence, indicate their vote in favour of the candidates. This is the customary manner of voting in the University, and would once have been the opportunity for a public objection to any particular candidate being admitted to a degree. When the vote has been taken, the proctors return to their places and the Senior Proctor announces that the leave of the House has been granted.

Hae Gratiae concessae sunt et sic pronuntiamus concessas.

These Graces have been granted and we so pronounce them granted.

Degrees in absentia

The Vice-Chancellor then rises and admits all those who supplicated in their absence.

Ego Vice-Cancellarius, auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis, admitto ad eum gradum quem quisque petat eos quibus etiam in absentia supplicare





licuit ut per schedulas rite a Registraria publicatas satis apparet.

I, in virtue of my own authority and that of the whole University, admit to their degree all those who have been permitted to supplicate in absence as was set forth in the Registrar's lists.

Presentation

Candidates are presented to the Vice-Chancellor and proctors by a presenter, not according to their college, but in groups according to the degree they are to receive. The bedel calls out the title of the presenter for the highest degree for which there is any candidate. Presenters stand to the left of their candidates and, taking the right hand of the nearest candidate, they recite the formula of presentation to the Vice-Chancellor and the proctors, to each of whom presenter and candidates bow in turn.

Insignissime Vice-Cancellarie, vosque egregii Procuratores, praesento vobis hos meos scholares in facultate Artium, ut admittantur ad Gradum Doctoris in Philosophia.

Most Distinguished Vice-Chancellor, and you, most excellent Proctors, I present to you these my scholars in the faculty of Arts, that they may be admitted to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Candidates for higher degrees are presented as follows:

- The DD and BD
by the Regius Professor of Divinity, or deputy
- The DCL, BCL and MJur
by the Regius Professor of Civil Law, or deputy
- The DM, MCh and BM
by the Regius Professor of Medicine, or deputy
- The DLitt
by the Regius Professor of Greek, or deputy
- The DSc
by the Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy, or deputy
- The DMus
by the Professor of Music, or deputy
- The DPhil
by the College Deans of Degrees
- The DCLinPsych, The DEng
by the Principal of Harris Manchester College, or deputy

Admission

Candidates stand in front of the Junior Proctor. The DD, DCL, DM and MCh candidates swear an oath binding them to be loyal, obedient and faithful to the University and its interests, and to comport themselves circumspectly at elections to University offices.

Domini Doctores (Magistri vel Domini), vos dabitis fidem ad observandum statuta, privilegia, consuetudines et libertates istius Universitatis. Item quod quum admissi fueritis in domum Congregationis et in domum Convocationis, in iisdem bene et fideliter, ad honorem et profectum Universitatis, vos geretis. Et specialiter quod in negotiis quae ad Gratias et Gradus spectant, non impedietis dignos, nec indignos promovebitis. Item quod in electionibus habendis unum tantum semel et non amplius in singulis scrutiniis scribetis et nominabit; et quod neminem nominabit nisi quem habilem et idoneum certo sciveritis vel firmiter credideritis.

Doctors (Masters or Sirs), you shall swear to observe the statutes, privileges, customs and liberties of this University. Also when you shall have been admitted to the House of Congregation and to the House of Convocation you shall bear yourselves in them well and faithfully to the honour and profit of the University. And especially in those matters which concern Degrees and Graces you shall

not impede the worthy or put forward the unworthy. Also at elections you shall record and nominate one only at one time and no more in each scrutiny, and nominate no one unless you know of a certainty or firmly believe that he is fit and proper.

The candidates reply; *Do fidem (I swear)*. Candidates for other higher degrees are charged by the Junior Proctor:

Vos dabitis fidem ad observandum omnia statuta, privilegia, consuetudines et libertates istius Universitatis, quatenus ad vos spectent.

You shall swear to observe the statutes, privileges, customs and liberties of the University, as far as they concern you.

The candidates reply: *Do fidem (I swear)*.

Candidates for degrees of DD, DCL, DM and MCh

Candidates stand in front of the Vice-Chancellor, who admits them, reciting the formula,

Ad honorem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et ad profectum Sacrosanctae Matris Ecclesiae et studii, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis do vobis licentiam incipiendi in Facultate Artium (vel facultate Chirurgiae, Medicinae, Juris, Sacra Theologiae) legendi, disputandi, et caetera omnia faciendi, quae ad statum Magistri (vel Doctoris) in eadem facultate pertinent,



cum ea completa sint quae per statuta requiruntur: in nomine Domini, Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.

To the honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the profit of our holy Mother Church, and of learning, I, by my own authority and that of the whole University, give you licence to incept [begin to teach] in the Faculty of Arts (or Faculty of Surgery, Medicine, Law or Theology) to lecture, to dispute and to do all the other things that pertain to the rank of Master (or Doctor) in the same Faculty when those things are completed which the Statutes require, in the name of the Lord, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

In groups of four or fewer, those candidates who profess the Christian faith then kneel in front of the Vice-Chancellor, who touches each one on the head with a Testament, admitting them 'In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'. Candidates taking the MA, DD, DCL, DM or MCh may request in advance to have the option of a non-Christian formula at the degree ceremony.

Candidates for degrees of DLitt, DSc, DMus, DPhil, DCLinPsych, DEng, BD, MJur, BCL and BM

Candidates are admitted standing, the Vice-Chancellor reciting the formula, of which the following is a translation:

'In virtue of my own authority and that of the whole University, I give you permission to incept in the Faculty of Music'; or:

'I admit you to the degree of Doctor of Letters (or Science or Philosophy or Clinical Psychology)'; or:

'I admit you to the degree of Bachelor of Divinity (or Civil Law or Medicine)'; or:

'I admit you to the degree of Magister Juris.'

Admitted candidates leave by the door to their right to put on the robes of their new degree. Later in the proceedings, the new graduates return by the door facing the Vice-Chancellor, preceded by a bedel. The Vice-Chancellor shakes hands with each new doctor in turn, and they then take their seats in the semi-circle behind the Vice-Chancellor and proctors. Candidates for the other degrees bow to the Vice-Chancellor and proctors.

MASTER DEGREES

Supplication

The Senior Proctor reads the names of candidates who are supplicating for the degree of MA, as well as MSc, MLitt, MPhil, MSt, MTh, MBA, MFA, MBiochem, MChem, MEarthSci, MEng, MMath, MMath&Phys, MPhys, MPhys&Phil, BMus and BPhil. The proctors take votes, as with higher degrees, and the Senior Proctor announces that the leave of the House has been granted.

Candidates for the degree of MA Presentation

College deans of degrees who have candidates are called upon by the bedel to present them to the Vice-Chancellor in the same manner as a professor presenting candidates for a higher degree.

Admission

Standing in front of the Junior Proctor in groups of about 30, candidates swear an oath (*Do fidem*) binding them to be loyal, obedient and faithful to the University and its interests, and to comport themselves circumspectly at elections to University offices.

MA candidates are admitted by the Vice-Chancellor, using the same formula as for the degrees of DD, DCL, DM and MCh.

After admission, candidates leave the House by the door to their right to robe as MAs. Later in the proceedings they return in a procession of fours headed by a bedel. The new MAs bow or curtsy to the Vice-Chancellor, before leaving by the door to their right.

Candidates for the degrees of MSc, MLitt, MPhil, MSt, MTh, MBA, MFA, MBiochem, MCompSci, MChem, MEarthSci, MEng, MMath, MMath&Phys, MPhys, MPhys&Phil, BMus, BPhil

The candidates for these degrees are then presented in groups by the Senior Dean, charged by the Junior Proctor and admitted by the Vice-Chancellor (without kneeling).



OTHER BACHELOR DEGREES

Supplication

The Junior Proctor reads the names of candidates who are supplicating for the degrees of BA, BFA and BTh. The proctors take votes, as with higher and master degrees, and the Senior Proctor announces that the leave of the House has been granted.

Candidates for degrees of BA, BFA and BTh Presentation

BA candidates from each college are presented by its dean of degrees.

Insignissime Vice-Cancellarie, vosque egregii Procuratores, praesento vobis hos meos scholares in Facultate Artium, ut admittantur ad Gradum Baccalaurei in Artibus.

Most distinguished Vice-Chancellor, and you, most excellent Proctors, I present to you these my scholars in the Faculty of Arts, that they may be admitted to the Degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Admission

The Junior Proctor recites the oath to groups of about 30 at a time, after which they reply *Do fidem* (I swear) and are admitted to the degree by the Vice-Chancellor, who recites the formula,

Domini, ego admitto vos ad Gradum Baccalaurei in Artibus; insuper auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis, do vobis potestatem legendi, et reliqua omnia faciendi, quae ad eundem Gradum spectant.

Ladies and gentlemen, I admit you to the degree of Bachelor of Arts: further by my own authority and that of the whole University, I give you the power of lecturing, and of doing all the other things which concern the said degree.

After admission, the candidates bow to the Vice-Chancellor and leave by the door to their right.

Candidates for degrees of BFA and BTh are presented by the college deans, and charged and admitted as for BA candidates, except that the formula of admission by the Vice-Chancellor is: 'I admit you to the degree of Bachelor of Fine Art (or Theology, as the case may be).'

At this point, all new graduates who have not already done so return in order of admission to bow to the Vice-Chancellor.



GLOSSARY

Congregation: The University's Parliament.

Council: The Council is the executive governing body of the University, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, including the proctors, four external members and elected members from Congregation.

Vice-Chancellor: The Vice-Chancellor, who is elected by Congregation, is effectively the chief executive officer of the University.

Proctors: The two proctors, elected annually, have the role of the University's own internal ombudsmen or women and look after discipline and administration. Their office dates from the thirteenth century.

Registrar: The Registrar is the principal administrator of the University.

College deans of degrees: Fellows who present the students from each respective college.

Bedel: There are five bedels (four titled Divinity, Law, Medicine, Arts) who attend the Vice-Chancellor at degree ceremonies, at Congregation and on other occasions. Their office is one of the oldest in the University, dating back to the thirteenth century.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Instructions for candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts

1. After the supplicat has been read by the Senior Proctor candidates should be ready to file out quietly from their seats when the name of their society is announced by the bedel, and stand on the right of their college dean or presenter, if necessary in more than one row.
2. When presented to the Vice-Chancellor and proctors, candidates should bow to the Vice-Chancellor, to the Senior Proctor on the Vice-Chancellor's right and to the Junior Proctor on his or her left.
3. After presentation, candidates receive the charge from the Junior Proctor in groups of about 30. Those who have to wait before being charged, until candidates from other colleges have been presented, will be asked by the bedels to move back, after presentation, towards the main door of the building (leave room for others to pass) until candidates from the last college of their group have been presented. When called by the bedel, they then come forward to the Junior Proctor

in rows of four to hear the charge. When this has been delivered the candidates reply *Do fidem* (*I swear*).

4. After taking the oath, candidates must face the Vice-Chancellor who will then admit the candidates. They must kneel in groups of four when instructed by the bedels.
5. Members of each group, after admission, pass through the East door, i.e. the small door on their right, don their MA gowns and hoods, and re-assemble at the south door. They later come back, again in rows of four, with the bedel leading the procession. On being stopped by the bedel the front four will bow (women may curtsy) to the Vice-Chancellor only, and retire once more through the East door. The second row will at once move into the place of the first group, bow and retire, and so on.

Instructions for candidates for the Degree of Master of Biochemistry, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Engineering, Mathematics, Mathematics and Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics, Physics and Philosophy, and Physics

1. After the supplicat has been read by the Senior Proctor and the proctors' walk has taken place, candidates for the Master's degrees will be presented by the Senior Dean. Candidates should be ready to file out quietly from their seats when the name of their society is announced by the bedel, and stand to the right of the Senior Dean, if necessary in more than one row.
2. When presented to the Vice-Chancellor and proctors candidates should bow to the Vice-Chancellor, to the Senior Proctor on the Vice-Chancellor's right, and to the Junior Proctor on his or her left.
3. After presentation, the Junior Proctor reads the oath to candidates, who reply *Do fidem* (*I swear*) and bow to the Junior Proctor.
4. The Vice-Chancellor then admits candidates to their degrees. When he or she has finished speaking,

candidates should bow to the Vice-Chancellor and leave the Sheldonian Theatre via the door on their right. Outside, candidates should don their new gowns and hoods, and re-assemble with other Masters in rows of four at the South door. They then come back with the bedel leading the procession. On being stopped by the bedel the front row will bow (women may curtsy) to the Vice-Chancellor only, and retire once more via the door on their right. The second row will then come forward, bow and retire; followed by the remaining rows in turn.

Instructions for candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

1. After the supplicat has been read by the Junior Proctor and the proctors' walk has taken place, candidates should be ready to file out quietly from their seats when the name of their society is announced by the bedel, and stand on the right of their college dean or presenter, if necessary in more than one row.
2. When presented to the Vice-Chancellor and proctors, candidates should bow to the Vice-Chancellor, to the Senior Proctor on the Vice-Chancellor's right, and to the Junior Proctor on his or her left.
3. After presentation, candidates receive the charge from the Junior Proctor and are admitted by the Vice-Chancellor in groups of about 30. Those who have to wait before being charged, until candidates from other colleges have been presented, will be asked by the bedels to move back, after presentation, towards the main door of the building (leave room for others to pass) until candidates from the last college of their group have been presented. They are then required to come forward to the Junior Proctor to hear the charge. When this has been delivered they must reply *Do fidem* (*I swear*), bow to the Junior Proctor and turn towards the Vice-Chancellor, who formally admits them to the degree.
4. The newly admitted Bachelors of Arts then leave the Sheldonian Theatre through the East door, i.e.



the small door on their right, don their BA gowns and hoods, and re-assemble in rows of four at the south door. They then come back with the bedel leading the procession. On being stopped by the bedel, the first row will bow (women may curtsy) to the Vice-Chancellor only, and retire once more through the East door. The second row will at once move into the place of the first row, bow and retire, and so on.

Other degrees

For other candidates the ceremony is basically the same as that for Bachelors of Arts. Those admitted to the degrees of DD, DCL, DM and MCh will be asked to kneel in front of the Vice-Chancellor.

Dress

When being presented for a degree, a candidate wears full academic dress with subfusc clothing. For men, dark suit, dark socks and dark footwear, a white shirt, white collar and white bow tie. For women, a white blouse, black tie, dark skirt or trousers, dark stockings, dark footwear and, if desired, a dark coat. Dress for each sex should be such as might be appropriate for formal occasions. Men must remove their caps on entering the Sheldonian Theatre.

Candidates serving in HM forces are permitted to wear uniform together with a gown. (The uniform cap is worn in the street and carried when indoors.)



A BRIEF HISTORY OF ACADEMIC DRESS



Academic dress is obligatory at all formal University ceremonies. It is also to be worn, generally, in the presence of the Chancellor or the Vice-Chancellor, for University examinations, as well as at some official meetings. Subfusc clothing (dark suit, white shirt and bow tie for men; dark skirt or trousers, white shirt and black tie for women) is worn with full academic dress.

The form of academic robes may be traced back to medieval Europe, when dress marked out the rank and profession of the wearer. In fact, the dress worn today at Oxford is very much the same as that worn in medieval times. The last main modifications were made during the sixteenth century. The common roots can be seen, for example, in the striking similarity between the formal undergraduate dress of Portugal's oldest University, Coimbra, founded in 1290, and the subfusc worn by Oxford undergraduates.

Although styles evolved differently in the various European countries, the key difference is in the headdress, which was added after the hood ceased to be operational. Thus the so-called 'mortarboard' or square cap is, in Europe, mainly worn in Britain. In Spain and Italy, Doctors sport a fez-shaped hat, often completely covered with tassels. In France, they wear a tucked and fluted 'pillbox', while in Scandinavia Doctors opt for a tucked top hat. Different versions of the flat bonnet are worn by Doctors in Holland and various countries in Central Europe. In Oxford, those holding DCL, DM and DMus degrees also wear different versions of the bonnet.

In many other parts of the world, academic dress tends to follow styles worn by those European universities to which they were most closely linked at the time. Of course, modifications based on local tradition or history are also usually apparent. The older forms of academic dress adopt colours which were easily available in the past. Thus strong primary colours such as red, blue or yellow are common alongside black, white and purple.

One crucial aim is for the academic dress to be distinctive enough to be linked to a single institution. But there are no universal rules. All universities strive for distinction, but differences appear to be less marked as the number of universities increases. However, it is also apparent that some newer universities are opting to move right away from the traditional, historical form of academic dress to achieve such distinction.



The colour, indeed the flamboyance, of academic dress undoubtedly adds to the sense of occasion at academic ceremonies. But as the late Sir Richard Southwood, a former Vice-Chancellor (1989–93) observed, historical roots exemplify a much deeper significance. They are an outward sign of the universality of universities, of their responsibility for certain timeless values essential to the freedom of enquiry: tolerance of alternative views and courage in maintaining one's own. The new graduate also has the responsibility of maintaining and upholding these ideals, which in Oxford are incorporated in the 'charge' which the Junior Proctor reads to candidates on their admission to graduate status.

These fundamentals of academic freedom have not been threatened in this country for more than 300 years, but Sir Richard was much impressed by the importance attached to the wearing of traditional academic dress by colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War. Wearing

academic dress became a symbol of their refusal to be dominated completely by political forces and the state, and of their persistent links to the worldwide community of scholars.

In short, the wearing of academic dress should be seen not simply as a sign of achievement, but as a collective symbol of the responsibility which falls on all members of universities.

Based on the Foreword to *Academic Dress of the University of Oxford*.



Above, left to right: MTh graduate, BM graduate, BA graduate
Left: DPhil graduate awaiting entry to the Sheldonian.
Below, left to right: MFA graduate, MSt graduate, MA graduate



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SHELDONIAN

The Sheldonian Theatre is the principal assembly room of the University, and the regular meeting place of Congregation, the body which controls the University's affairs. All public ceremonies of the University are performed here, notably the annual Encaenia, or commemoration.

The University acquired the site soon after the Restoration, and in 1664–7 the present theatre was erected. Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury and a former Warden of All Souls, met the entire cost of £12,000 and so gave his name to the building.

The architect was a young Christopher Wren, then Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, with as yet little practical experience of building. Inspired by drawings of Roman theatres, he adopted their D-shaped plan. However, the open arena of Rome, unsuited to the English climate, had to be covered. To do this without introducing load-bearing columns into the central space, which would ruin the resemblance to an ancient theatre, Wren designed a roof truss able to span the required 70 feet, a technical achievement which gained him great credit in scientific and architectural circles and made the roof of the Sheldonian a landmark in roof construction.

From below, this technical ingenuity was, however, concealed from view by the painted ceiling. The painter of the ceiling, Robert Streater, adapted

his ambitious baroque composition to Wren's conception of the building as a Roman theatre open to the sky. The theatres of antiquity were protected from the sun and rain by a large awning supported by a network of cords. In the Sheldonian these cords are lavishly gilded and in high relief. From them, putti roll back a vast crimson awning, revealing the triumph of the Arts and Sciences over Envy, Rapine and 'brutish scoffing Ignorance'.

In planning the interior, Wren made another deviation from his Roman original. There is no stage against the flat southern wall, and the focus of attention is the Chancellor's chair in the middle of the semicircular end. Thus the functions of the auditorium and stage are reversed and, however Roman the plan may be, it has been freely adapted for academic purposes by an architect who never allowed his deference to classical prototypes to degenerate into pedantry. The two elaborately carved and gilded boxes which face each other across the auditorium were intended to be occupied on ceremonial occasions by the two proctors of the University (these are no longer used). On the front of the boxes, the 'fasces', or bundles of rods bound round an axe, protrude from lions' heads. These were Roman symbols of authority, here representing that of the proctors.

It is probable that Wren intended his treatment of the flat façade facing

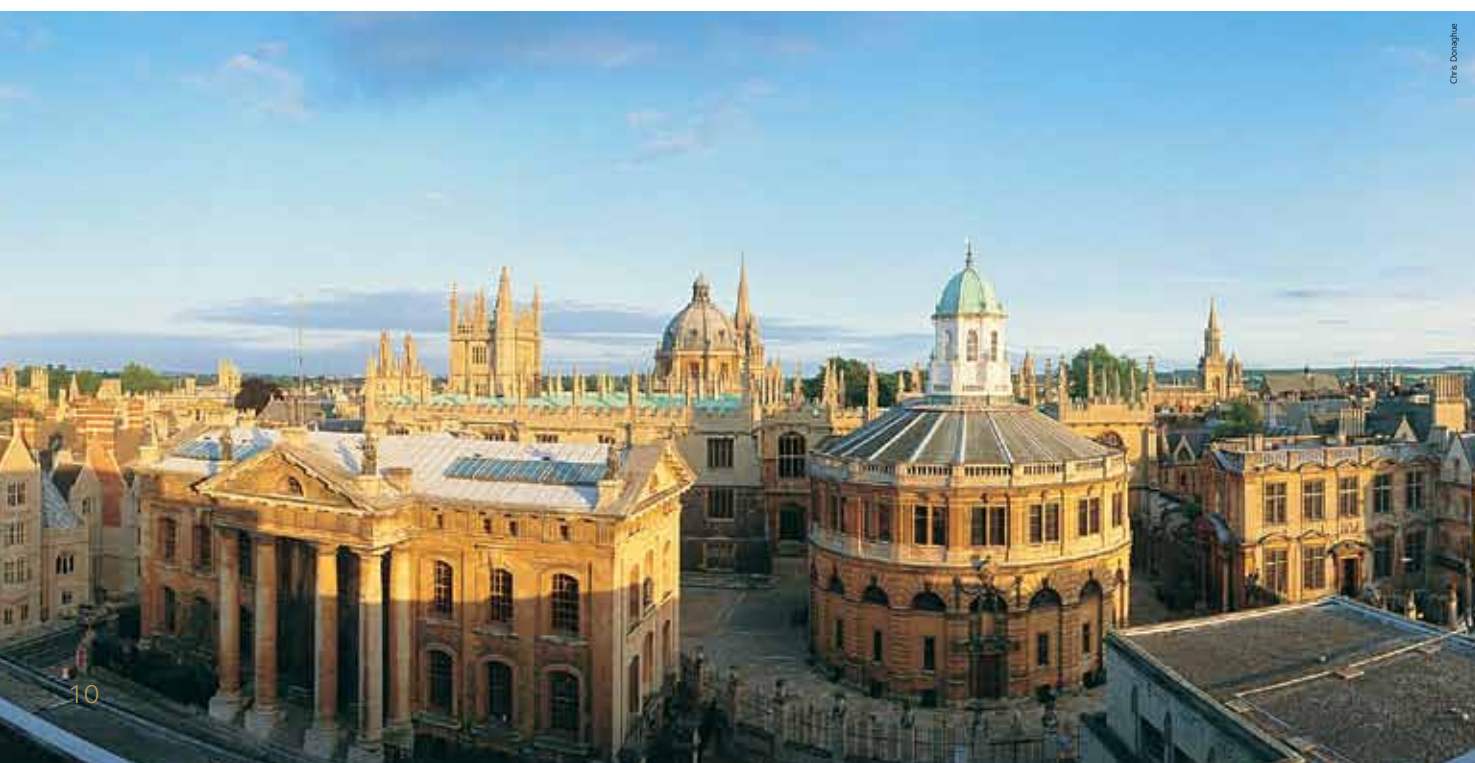
the Divinity School, with columns on the lower storey and pilasters on the storey above, to be carried on round the polygonal exterior of the building, but this proved to be beyond Archbishop Sheldon's purse and classical display had to be restricted to the southern wall.

Reproduced with kind permission of the author, Sir Howard Colvin, from *The Sheldonian Theatre and the Divinity School*.



The newly restored Sheldonian ceiling

Restoration work has been continuing for some years in the Sheldonian. For information about the Sheldonian and its restoration visit: www.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian



FAMOUS ALUMNI



Christopher Wren
Architect
Wadham College



Samuel Johnson
Writer and lexicographer
Pembroke College



Dorothy Hodgkin
Nobel Prize-winning chemist
Somerville College



Dr Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister of India
Nuffield College



Alan Bennet
Playwright
Exeter College



Aung San Suu Kyi
Nobel Laureate in Peace
St Hugh's College



Robert Peston
Journalist
Balliol College



Dr Susan Rice
US Ambassador to the United Nations
New College



Aravind Adiga
Man Booker prize-winning novelist
Magdalen College

Many graduates from the University of Oxford have gone on to make major contributions to the world. Oxford's graduates count among their numbers 25 British prime ministers as well as the present and former heads of state of many other countries. In addition 25 Nobel Prize winners have graduated from the University and the successes of many others took place while at Oxford.

Other alumni have achieved eminence in business, the professions, politics and the arts. Oxford graduates also take a lead in the teaching and research of universities throughout the world.



LIFE AFTER OXFORD

Attending your graduation ceremony may feel like the last step in your Oxford education, but your connection with the University doesn't have to end here. As part of our 180,000-strong alumni community, you can take advantage of our varied alumni programme to stay involved. Whether your interests lie in further study, building a career, travel, or something else, Oxford's alumni programme has something to offer everyone.

In order to recognise and support the unique situation of recent graduates in particular, we've introduced Oxford10, a special programme dedicated to helping alumni up to ten years out. Run by a volunteer committee, Oxford10 has a comprehensive events programme from New2London networking, to speaker events and cultural activities.

To become a member of Oxford10, simply visit www.oxford10.com to join the mailing list and keep up-to-date with relevant news and information for members. Membership is free and open to all alumni who have graduated in the last ten years, irrespective of whether you were an undergraduate or postgraduate student.

Benefits

Oxford10 members are eligible for the full range of Oxford alumni benefits, including:

- Opportunities to network with other alumni in your employment sector at one of our careers events, or sign-up for a course with the University's Continuing Professional Development, or Executive Education programmes;
- Access to the alumni community, wherever you are in the world, through one of our 140 volunteer-run groups or branches. These alumni groups organise a variety of events and activities open to all Oxford alumni;
- The award-winning alumni magazine, *Oxford Today*, and our monthly electronic newsletter, ePidge to keep you up-to-date with Oxford news;
- An alumni email service;
- The Oxford Alumni Card, identifying you as a member of the Oxford alumni community and giving you access to more than 50 offers on everything from books to meals out;
- Taking advantage of our exclusive Travel Programme, with small-group holidays to a range of destinations from Borneo to the Antarctic, accompanied by an Oxford scholar.

Full details of all aspects of the programme are available from our website at www.alumni.ox.ac.uk.

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Lisa Wiggins
Public Affairs Directorate
Media Production Unit
University of Oxford, 5 Worcester Street
Oxford, OX1 2BX
Tel: +44 (0)1865 289980
Email: lisa.wiggins@admin.ox.ac.uk



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