



POLICY: GRADUATION CEREMONIES

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Division/Unit/Department	Central Academic Administration
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For the purpose of this policy, 'Faculty' includes the 'College of Business and Economics - CBE' and the Johannesburg Business School (JBS).

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1. PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg's commitment to distinguished scholarship, excellence in teaching and reputable research and innovation is universally/publicly acknowledged at its graduation ceremonies. Compliance with the principles of sound corporate governance ensures the integrity of the graduation processes, procedures and protocols.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to:

- 2.1 provide directives regarding the organisational/logistical issues pertaining to the graduation ceremony;
- 2.2 establish a clear set of directives, guidelines and procedures that address:
 - 2.2.1 student graduation requirements,
 - 2.2.2 verification/validation of qualification requirements,
 - 2.2.3 academic awards,
 - 2.2.4 ceremonial protocols;
- 2.3 identify the role and function of divisions and role-players;
- 2.4 integrate, align and coordinate relevant regulations and processes across all faculties, responsible divisions and role-players.

3. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all graduation ceremonies of the University of Johannesburg.

4. PRINCIPLES

The policy reflects the tenets of risk management regarding the integrity of the graduation process and includes the following:

- 4.1 generally accepted principles of good governance;
- 4.2 uniformity of processes and usage across all divisions responsible for the management of the graduation process;
- 4.3 explicit identification of responsible divisions and role-players;
- 4.4 accountability.

5. GRADUATION CEREMONIES

- 5.1 Three cycles of graduation ceremonies are held per annum during the months of March/April/May - Autumn, May/June - Winter and September/October - Spring.

- 5.2 All graduation ceremonies take place on the Auckland Park Kingsway (APK) Campus. Alternative venues, like the Soweto Campus Imbizo may be used if approved by the Registrar in consultation with MEC.
- 5.3 Graduation sessions are allocated by Central Academic Administration on the basis of the total graduates per qualification provided by faculties in accordance with the following criteria:
 - 5.3.1 maximum of 230 candidates per session for the main auditorium on APK which can seat approximately 1000 people. Alternative venues to be approved by the Graduation Committee.
 - 5.3.2 maximum of ten (10) doctoral candidates per session, unless approved by the Registrar;
 - 5.3.3 maximum of five (5) guests per candidate for doctoral qualifications. Additional guests may be permitted for smaller sessions provided adequate space is available in the venue, unless approved by the Registrar;
 - 5.3.4 maximum of three (3) guests per candidate for undergraduate and postgraduate (other than doctoral) candidates, unless approved by the Registrar.

6. STUDENT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 All subsidised and non-subsidised academic programmes generating 240 credits or more are conferred or awarded at an official ceremony within the three cycles of graduation ceremonies of the University. An exception to this ruling is online qualifications below Master's level. These students will not be invited to a centrally coordinated graduation ceremony. The Registrar may approve requests to include some online qualifications in an official graduation ceremony, based on merit, and feasibility, as motivated by the Executive Dean.
- 6.2 (See also Section 5). Students qualify to graduate if:
 - 6.2.1 they successfully comply with all the requirements of the programme for which they are registered as approved by Senate and contained in the Faculty Rules and Regulations;
 - 6.2.2 all University fees are paid and any other financial obligations fulfilled.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding compliance with 6.1 above, students on academic or disciplinary probation will not be permitted to graduate.
- 6.4 Faculties may invite and handover certificates to candidates who completed an academic programme which generated less than 240 credits.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF GRADUATES

- 7.1 All eligible students who qualify to graduate will be identified by the relevant faculty and notified accordingly.
- 7.2 Students who complied with the requirements for an assessment-based and credit-bearing qualification of at least 240 credits will be invited to a graduation ceremony (*cf.* 6.1).
- 7.3 Students eligible to graduate may choose to graduate "in absentia". Only in exceptional circumstances (legitimate reasons), with the written

approval of the Registrar, will a student be allowed to participate in a future graduation ceremony for the same qualification.

- 7.4 Names of diplomats/graduates who do not attend the graduation ceremony are not announced. An exception to this ruling is the conferment of posthumous honorary degrees, only with the written approval of the Registrar.
- 7.5 All students participating in the graduation ceremony are required to wear the proper graduation regalia.
- 7.6 In the event that a candidate is able to prove that she/he did not receive notification of the time and date of the relevant graduation ceremony, she/he may appeal to the Head: Faculty Administration, in consultation with the Registrar, to approve requests such as crossing the stage at the next session.
- 7.7 The name printed on all certificates will appear exactly as reflected in the University's official records and will not be re-printed or re-issued for name changes (e.g. maiden name changes after marriage).

8. THE GRADUATION CEREMONY PROGRAMME

- 8.1 The programme of each graduation ceremony is the official audited document on the basis of which qualifications are conferred or awarded by the University.
- 8.2 The procedures for the verification of the eligibility of candidates who graduated are contained in the university's academic certification policy.
- 8.3 A hard as well as an electronic copy of every graduation programme for each graduation ceremony, complete with all deletions and additions supported by the written requests from the Head of Faculty Administration, will be stored by Central Academic Administration in a fire- and water-resistant safe where operationally possible for future verification.

9. PLANNING PROCESSES AND ASSOCIATED RESPONSIBILITIES

The following designated divisions and persons are responsible for processes and functions integral to seamless and coordinated arrangements for a ceremony that represents the public face of the University.

- 9.1 Central Academic Administration:
 - 9.1.1 Central Academic Administration is responsible for the following:
 - (a) advance publication and notification to Heads of Faculty Administration of due dates for submission of candidate lists by faculties;
 - (b) compilation and storage of graduation programmes;
 - (c) printing of certificates;
 - (d) issuing of digital certificates;
 - (e) compilation of the invitation letter template;
 - (f) e-mailing of invitation letters to students;
 - (g) honorary degrees;
 - (h) arrangements for hiring academic attire at graduations.

- (i) printing and distribution of tickets for university-specific guests;
- (j) provision and distribution of cards, viz.
 - (i) cue cards for functionaries,
 - (ii) head cards,
 - (iii) prize-winners' cards.

9.2 Head: Faculty Administration:

9.2.1 Heads of the respective faculty administration are responsible for the following:

- (a) identification and compilation of candidate lists and submission to Central Academic Administration in accordance with dates as published in advance;
- (b) identification of prize winners;
- (c) mailing of invitation letters, as compiled by Central Academic Administration, to candidates;
- (d) provision of doctoral introduction cards;
- (e) provision of folders for doctoral certificates;
- (f) provision of seating cards for candidates;
- (g) issuing of seating cards on the day of the ceremony, verifying the identity of graduates at graduations and assisting in the auditorium with the graduation ceremony;
- (h) provision and distribution of cards, viz.
 - (i) head cards,
 - (ii) prize-winners' cards.

9.3 Division: Events (within University Relations)

9.3.1 Events Coordinators within University Relations are responsible for the following:

- (a) compilation and constitution of academic procession and protocols;
- (b) arrangements for hiring academic attire at graduations;
- (c) organising academic attire for functionaries/academic procession;
- (d) logistical arrangements for conferment of honorary doctoral degrees;
- (e) ordering of faculty/chancellor medals;
- (f) printing and distribution of tickets for university-specific guests;
- (g) photographic arrangements;
- (h) catering arrangements;
- (i) approval of event by Regional Government;
- (j) provision and distribution of cue cards for functionaries.

10. AWARDS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The University acknowledges academic excellence by means of the following awards:

- 10.1 One prize may be awarded per faculty (annually) to the top achiever at their graduation ceremony. This candidate will be identified by the concerned faculty, based on academic excellence.

- 10.2 One Chancellor's medal may be awarded per faculty (annually) for their most meritorious master's study. This candidate will be identified by the concerned faculty, based on academic excellence.

11. PROTOCOLS

11.1 Language Medium

11.1.1 The graduation proceedings are conducted mainly in English although Afrikaans, IsiZulu and SeSotho Sa Leboa will be included as far as is practically feasible.

11.1.2 The preferred language of doctoral students is taken into account in the presentation of his/her laudations and curricula vitae.

11.2 Sequence of Awarding/Conferring Certificates:

Certificates are awarded in sequence from the lowest to the highest National Qualification Framework level.

11.3 Programmes Passed with Distinction:

A pass "with distinction" is indicated on the introduction card of a candidate and is announced directly after the candidate has been introduced. The subjects/modules passed with distinction are not named. A pass "with distinction" is also indicated next to the name of the student in the programme.

12. VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY

The university may constitute virtual graduation ceremonies under certain circumstances to confer qualifications.

13 DEVIATION FROM THE POLICY

Any deviation from this policy must be approved by the Registrar in consultation with the Graduation Committee.

14 POLICY REVIEW

Regular review of the policy will be done in line with the approved University Policy on Policy Development. This takes place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at management and institutional level under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy namely the Registrar to ensure that the policy remains valid and current in the light of changing circumstances. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, the policy will be formally reviewed within the five-year University review cycle.

PREPARATION AND STORAGE PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF ACADEMIC CERTIFICATION

1. Faculty Executive Deans and designated faculty staff authorise qualifications to students who have complied with the requirements. The Executive Dean is responsible for the signing off of the qualifications, after which senior faculty staff are authorised by the abovementioned to capture the particulars of the awards electronically on the student management system.
2. Each Head: Faculty Administration provides the relevant electronic control list of the qualification awarded as captured on the student management system to the authorised faculty officer.
3. After confirmation per lists signed by faculties that the relevant particulars of all the students who have complied with the qualification requirements are captured correctly on the ITS, the programme certificates of such students are prepared by the Central Academic Administration division, namely by a senior person in the division who has been designated for this purpose by the Registrar, or an alternative person authorised to do so by the Registrar.
4. The relevant particulars for certificates are extracted from the student management system and stored in the digital certificates system. Only the staff member who is duly authorised by the Registrar has access to such information.
5. Certificate particulars are reworked programmatically for the relevant size of the certificate (A4 for all programmes).
6. After all certificates have been captured electronically, they are printed on a special printer in the Central Academic Administration division, which seals every certificate with a silicon layer making falsification more difficult. Certificates are stored in a fire- and water-resistant safe in the Central Academic Administration division until collected and signed off by an authorised person appointed by each faculty.
7. Blank certificate paper as well as the printing and issuing of certificates are controlled by the staff member in the Central Academic Administration division appointed to do so. No blank certificate is allocated to any other office or division of the University, nor to any external person or body.
8. Every Head: Faculty Administration designates a member of faculty staff to collect the printed certificates from the authorised member of the Central Academic Administration division and to sign for them. The graduation ceremony programme, compiled in terms of the student management system particulars, is used to sign off the certificates per candidate who qualifies for a certificate.
9. Signed control lists whereby the authorised staff member of a faculty acknowledges receipt of the certificates (including certificates in respect of non-subsidised programmes) are secured in a fire- and water-resistant safe where operationally possible in the Central Academic Administration division for a period of fifty (50) years, or for a period decided by the Executive Management of the University.

10. Should a mistake (for example the incorrect spelling of a name) be identified on a certificate after conferment on a student, the latter must submit it to the Executive Dean's office of the faculty concerned, after which it is submitted to the authorised person in the Central Academic Administration division with full control of all the particulars. The student concerned must produce an ID document/passport to the authorised person in the Central Academic Administration division before the corrected certificate is issued by the latter, and the student must sign for the receipt thereof. The ID document/passport should be submitted to the Biographical division for rectification of the relevant incorrect particulars in the University records. A driver's license is also accepted for this purpose.
11. Incorrect certificates for which corrected certificates are issued are saved for auditing purposes. If the auditors are satisfied with their audit on such certificates, the incorrect certificates are destroyed and signed off by the authorised senior staff member in the Central Academic Administration division.
12. Hard as well as electronic copies of all programmes of ceremonies during which certificates are handed to successful students are stored in a fire- and water-resistant safe in the Central Academic Administration division. A full set is also filed in the University library.

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