



DARWIN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

RECEIVING YOUR DEGREE

Approval by the examiners means that you have completed your course, but it does not mean that you have graduated and received your degree. Before you can receive your degree and have a certificate, it must be conferred at a Congregation (formal meeting) of the Regent House, the University's Governing Body, which is normally held in the Senate-House. Degrees can be received 'in absence', without attendance, but students are encouraged to experience the ceremony, and nearly all find the day both enjoyable and memorable. **Please note that if you choose to graduate 'in absence', it is final, and you cannot attend later 'in person'.**

The only exception is that if you received a degree 'in absence' during the Covid-19 Pandemic when 'in person' graduation was unavailable, attendance at a Congregation to 'celebrate' the degree is currently possible. The ceremonial is identical to actual graduation apart from the Latin formulae used.

WHEN CAN I GRADUATE?

Congregations are held monthly from October to July (but not December), although like many Colleges, **Darwin does not present candidates in person at every Congregation and January is for 'in absence' graduation only for all Colleges. There is a maximum number of students Darwin can host and present 'in person' on any occasion. Please do not make any travel arrangements until the Deanery Office has confirmed your booking.**

To avoid disappointment, book as early as possible. The College cannot take responsibility for matters outside our control; for example, if you need a degree certificate for employment or are arranging for your family or friends to visit Cambridge, you must check with the Deanery Office that it will be possible for you to graduate on a particular date before making plans.

APPLYING TO PROCEED TO YOUR DEGREE

Please see below for a list of future Congregations at which you can proceed to your degree along with further particulars. Any queries should in the first instance be addressed to the Deanery Office: deanery@darwin.cam.ac.uk Please note that if because of a clearly established cultural or religious observance you cannot attend any Congregation in person on a Saturday, it may be possible to present you instead to graduate on a Friday in October or in May or on either a Thursday or a Friday in July. Permission for this must be obtained from the University's Proctors by the College before you can make any booking. It will not be possible to offer College hospitality on these days as on a Saturday, but the same guest tickets for the Congregation will be available if permission to attend is granted.

Easter Term & Long Vacation 2026

Saturday 2 May
Saturday 23 May
Saturday 25 July **

Michaelmas Term 2026

Saturday 24 October
Saturday 28 November

Lent Term 2027

Friday 29 January (in absence degrees only)
Saturday 27 February (in absence degrees only)
Saturday 3 April

Easter Term & Long Vacation 2027

Saturday 1 May
Saturday 22 May
Saturday 24 July **

**** (Darwin will be the first College to graduate in the morning which means an early start to the day. Please take this into consideration when booking).**

REQUIREMENTS TO GRADUATE IN PERSON

- Bookings for graduation can only be made using the form available either from the Deanery Office or the College website: <https://www.darwin.cam.ac.uk/graduation/>
- Anyone experiencing difficulties with downloading this form should email the Deanery Office: deanery@darwin.cam.ac.uk
- Once forms are received, places will be allocated in the order in which they are received and bookings confirmed via email. **If you do not receive an acknowledgement within five working days, then please contact the Deanery Office.**
- Confirmation of your entitlement to graduate must have been received by the College from the Student Registry at least three weeks before the event. However, you may book in 'subject to final approval' if you anticipate being able to submit both your hard-bound and electronic copy of your thesis.
- **You must be clear of College debt.** Like other colleges, Darwin declines to present those in debt to the College. Contact the Accounts Office, phone (01223) 335665 or email accounts@darwin.cam.ac.uk to ensure that you have settled all bills before planning to proceed to your degree.
- **Contacts:** make sure your details on CamSIS are correct and up to date so that we can send you necessary information, deal with any queries and issue urgent updates, so for example if the

University has to make changes to a Congregation in response to unforeseen circumstances. It is also useful to add any alternative permanent contact details (first destination etc.). It is particularly important that those who have completed study a while ago ensure the College has their current contacts.

- **Primary name:** all graduands should check that this is correct in CamSIS when completing the booking form. We can, time permitting, edit the name that appears on the certificate and degree list (Degree name), but this will not affect the name that will appear on your transcript. If you need to make a change to your Primary name this will need to be done by the Student Registry: studentregistrydesk@offices.admin.cam.ac.uk

GRADUATION *IN ABSENCE*

You must still book with the College to have your degree conferred, confirmation of entitlement to graduate must have been received from Student Registry and you must be clear of debt.

CERTIFICATES AND OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

You will receive your degree certificate when leaving the Senate-House. If you graduate 'in absence' the College will usually POST your degree certificate to you once it has been forwarded by the University, approximately 1-2 weeks afterwards. Should you wish to have it sent via courier you should **organise this independently and also indicate this on your booking form so we may contact you as soon as the documents are available.**

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THOSE ATTENDING A CONGREGATION *IN PERSON*

Timing: The timetable for each Congregation is decided by the University and is notified to Colleges two weeks before each ceremony. In July, however, Darwin's session is always at the start of the day with a very early check-in before 08.00 in the morning, while at other Congregations our session may be late morning or mid-afternoon. Once we have the precise time, we endeavour to let you have the timetable for the whole day's events by email, usually on the Monday beforehand.

Guests at the Congregation: Normally a student is entitled to two (free) guest tickets giving access to the Congregation. These guest numbers are fixed by the University and not the College. On the odd occasion that we do have spare tickets, these are distributed by ballot.

Guests at the College Reception: This is free for students receiving or celebrating a degree, but any guests attending (maximum of three per student) cost £20.00 each (adults) or £10 (10 to 16 years). Children under 10 are free. You must indicate when booking if there are any special dietary requirements. **Please note the payment for all guests must be settled at least two weeks before the Congregation.**

Please note the College policy on children on site: <https://www.darwin.cam.ac.uk/governance-and-policies/#children-on-site>

Payment can be made by bank transfer/internet banking:

Account name: Darwin College – Bursar’s Account
Account number: 00298972
Sort code: 20 17 68
Barclays Bank Plc, 9-11 St Andrew’s Street, Cambridge CB2 3AX
IBAN: GB55 BARC 2017 6800 2989 72
Swift: BARCGB22

Booking reference: College account number/surname/graduation

ACADEMICAL DRESS

The College DOES NOT provide this. You **must** make arrangements to obtain the items you need in good time once you know which Congregation you will be attending, **or you risk finding that there is nothing left to hire, particularly in July or October**. Gowns and hoods and other items can be hired or purchased from robemakers in Cambridge, such as the two firms whose websites are given below. Items must be collected from these suppliers; **they DO NOT deliver to the College**.

Ryder & Amies, 22 King’s Parade, Cambridge CB2 1SP.

Phone: 01223 350371

e-mail: sales@ryderamies.co.uk

website: <https://www.ryderamies.co.uk>

Ede & Ravenscroft, 71-72 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 QRJ.

Phone: 01223 350048;

e-mail: cambridgeshop@edeandravenscroft.com

website: <https://www.edeandravenscroft.com>

You must wear the correct gown and hood for your status and the degree you are about to take or have celebrated and wear the correct clothes underneath. The gowns or hoods of any other University cannot be used. There will be a dress inspection and a full-dress rehearsal with the College Praelector or Deputy before each Congregation. Unless you are correctly dressed, you may not be admitted to the Senate-House. The guidance given here should enable you to dress correctly - please **ask the Deanery Office if you are in any doubt**.

WHICH GOWN AND HOOD SHOULD BE WORN? – Please also see the flow chart on the final page

- Anyone who **already holds** the PhD (or any other Cambridge doctorate) must wear the **black ‘undress’ gown** for that degree and **not** the special ‘festal’ version (which for PhDs has red facings).
- The square cap (‘mortar board’) is optional and may be worn outside of the Senate-House if you wish but must be removed inside at the Congregation and placed under the left arm. Those graduating to the PhD or any other doctorate, or having a doctorate celebrated can also use the square cap.

- *The round velvet bonnet with gold cord and tassels and the special ‘festal’ gowns for Doctors **cannot** be worn at any Congregations which Darwin attends (they may be used during private photography sessions afterwards if you wish).*

WHAT TO WEAR UNDER THE GOWN AND HOOD?

The University requirements are given as ‘Dress Options One and Two’ which are considered to constitute the traditional ‘dark clothes’ used at graduation in Cambridge. You can choose either option, but you must choose **a single option**; you cannot mix the two, so please make a clear choice. **The overall effect should be formal, smart and sober.** In certain circumstances it may be possible to wear recognised national, religious or military dress instead of these Dress Options, **but this can only be done with permission from the University’s Proctors**, which must be obtained well in advance by the College Praelector and certain conditions must be met for permission to be given. Please contact the Praelector shortly after booking if you wish to explore this option.

Option One

- A plain black, **dark** grey or **dark** blue evening dress suit or ‘business’ suit of matching jacket and trousers.
- A plain, long-sleeved, white shirt with a collar. A white bow-tie and bands **must** be worn with this.
- Formal black shoes without obvious decoration such as big metal buckles. Sandals with open toes and heavy boots are not suitable.
- Plain black or **dark** grey socks so that legs and feet are fully covered.

Option Two

- A plain black, **dark** grey or **dark** blue skirt suit or trouser suit with a plain, long-sleeved white shirt, OR
- A plain black, **dark** grey or **dark** blue skirt with a plain, long-sleeved white shirt, OR
- A plain black or **dark** grey or **dark** blue, long-sleeved dress.
- In addition, a black cardigan may be worn. The dress, jacket or cardigan must have **long sleeves** that reach below the elbow. Skirts or dresses should be near knee-length or longer as the graduation procedure normally involves kneeling and getting up again, so shorter lengths are unsuitable.
- Formal black shoes without obvious decoration such as big metal buckles. Sandals with open toes or heavy boots are not suitable. Very high heels are not appropriate as there is a lot of standing and walking involved and they may also catch in the hem of your gown when kneeling.
- Plain black, nearly-black, or natural stockings/tights or black socks (with trousers) must be worn so that legs and feet are fully covered.
- A white bow-tie and bands (optional) can be worn with Option Two, but only if a white shirt that has a proper collar and which could be worn with an ordinary tie is also worn.

With either option

- Jewellery (apart from small finger-rings or ear-rings) or obvious hair accessories should not be worn and hair should be neat and tidy. Those who wish to cover their hair for religious or cultural reasons should use a plain covering (black, grey, blue or white if possible) in keeping with the general requirements for dress.
- Students graduating should not carry bags of any kind into the Congregation and these should be given to guests before leaving College.

PHOTOGRAPHY, LATIN FORMULAE AND GETTING FROM DARWIN TO THE CONGREGATION

Degree Congregations in the Senate-House are videoed and available both as a livestream and on a catch-up basis for a limited period. The livestream is provided on the understanding that it is a private recording, not to be shared on social media or in any public forum. Private photography or recording are not permitted inside the Senate-House. Photographs are taken automatically by the University's official photographer (Tempest Photography) at the Senate-House when each graduand is admitted to their degree.

These can be purchased from them immediately after the ceremony (card payments only) but there is usually a long queue. For ease, these can also be purchased online. They will appear on the [Tempest website](https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/degree-ceremonies/photography) approximately seven days after graduation and will remain online for six months. Further information can be found on: <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/degree-ceremonies/photography>

Private photography by family or friends attending as guests is permitted outside the Senate-House, but commercial photographers hired by students or their families to take pictures cannot enter Senate-House Yard.

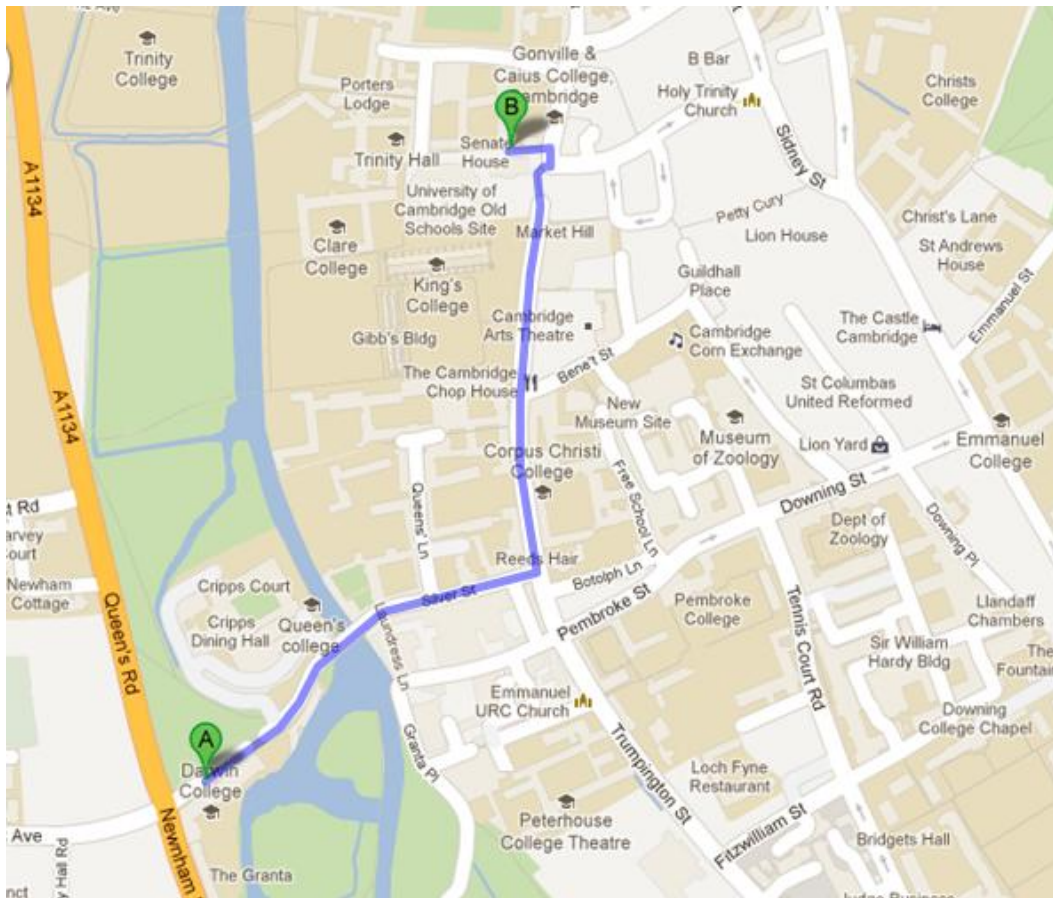
In keeping with the non-religious constitution of Darwin, whenever the Master deputises for the Vice-Chancellor and presides at Congregations, traditional religious references in the Latin formulae **will not be used**. If the Vice-Chancellor or another deputy presides when Darwin presents its candidates, then they may use the references to the Christian Trinity or to God. **If you object to these being used**, you should indicate this on the booking form so that they can be omitted

Alternatively, degrees may be conferred using a Latin formula referring to the Christian Trinity, *in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti* (in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit) or, if requested, *in nomine Dei* (in the name of God) or all religious reference may be omitted. Degrees already conferred 'in absence' are 'celebrated' using a slightly different Latin formula. It is traditional to kneel while the formula is spoken, but those with an objection to this on religious, conscientious or health grounds may choose not to.

Graduands are led by the College Praelector in procession from the College to the **SENATE-HOUSE, KING'S PARADE, CAMBRIDGE CB2 1TS**. Please ensure that your guests know the route to get there. It will take approximately 10-15 minutes walking from Darwin and those who walk slowly should allow more time. Guests with tickets for the Senate-House **MUST BE ALREADY OUTSIDE THE COLLEGE WHEN THE COLLEGE PROCESSION LEAVES** and we suggest that if they want to take photographs of the procession leaving Darwin, they wait on the pavement by Queens' College/opposite the Granary Gate and then follow immediately behind the procession.

Guests without tickets will not be allowed into Senate-House Yard and if guests are late arriving, they may miss your ceremony as it will not be delayed because guests are missing.

It may be possible for academic staff and friends who are members of the University (including alumni) to access the House without a guest ticket if space is available to watch your session. They **must** wear gowns (but do not need hoods) and sit in the spaces reserved for University members. This access is strictly limited and not only for Darwin members. Access by this route is never guaranteed and those hoping to use this arrangement are advised to consult the Deanery Office in advance.



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WHICH GOWN AND HOOD SHOULD BE WORN

