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The Academic Dress of the University of York

By Nicholas Groves

The University of York was one of the seven universities founded from scratch in England in the early 1960s.¹ As with the other six, it was sited on a green-field campus on the edge of the city. It has been a collegiate university from the start, though the colleges work differently from those of Oxford and Cambridge in that they are not autonomous financially, nor are they responsible for admission of students or appointment of staff. However, they differ from halls of residence in other universities in that teaching is carried on in them, and each has a Junior and a Senior Common Room. There were just two colleges to start with—Derwent and Langwith—with Alcuin and Vanbrugh following in 1965, Goodricke in 1968, and Wentworth in 1972. James was founded in 1990, Halifax in 2002, and Constantine in 2014. The two most recent colleges are Anne Lister and David Kato, founded in 2021 and 2022 respectively.² Wentworth is a purely postgraduate college; the others accept undergraduates and postgraduates. Every student, whether full-time or distance, becomes, and remains, a member of a college.

The form of the nascent university was set by its first Vice-Chancellor, Eric James (from 1959, Lord James of Rusholme), eponym of the 1990 college. He was a graduate of The Queen's College, Oxford, and he transferred a number of Oxford features to York. For example, he stressed that at least half the students should live on the campus, and he housed them in separate colleges which were conceived not simply as halls of residence, but as the centres of the University's social and academic life. To create the closest possible relationship between teacher and taught, tutors as well as students were given rooms in the colleges; and the tutorial became the basic form of instruction. With James's Oxford background it is not surprising that a number of Oxford characteristics appear in the academic dress.

I am grateful to Dr Nicholas Jackson, BA (York), MSc, PhD (Warwick), FBS, for assistance with this article. My own connexion is that I hold a Postgraduate Diploma.

¹ Sussex (1961); East Anglia, York (1963); Essex, Lancaster (1964); Warwick, Kent (1965). There was one in Ireland (New University of Ulster, 1968) and one in Scotland (Stirling, 1964). There were also a number that were 'upgraded' from College of Advanced Technology (CAT) or University College status: Newcastle (1961), Keele (1962), Strathclyde (1964), Aston (1966), Bath (1966), Bradford (1966), Brunel (1966), City (1966), Surrey (1966), Loughborough (1966), Heriot-Watt (1966), Salford (1967), Dundee (1967). The CNAA was set up in 1965 to validate awards at the polytechnics and other colleges, and the Open University in 1969. Cranfield was granted degree-awarding powers in 1969, but did not gain the university title until 1993. A fruitful decade for spotters and designers of academic dress!

² More information on the colleges is to be found in the Wikipedia entry <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colleges_of_the_University_of_York> and on the University's website <www.york.ac.uk/colleges/>.

Early information on the scheme of dress is very limited. All that has come to light from the University's archives are two entries in the minutes of the General Academic Board, and one from those of the Academic Dress Committee.³

The robes are noted for the use of grey—not only for the shells of the hoods, but for the gowns also. This was a great innovation in the 1960s, though East Anglia (also founded in 1963) chose dark blue gowns instead of black ones.⁴ This is frequently stated to be a reflection of the Quaker heritage of York, Quakers tending to dress in subdued shades such as grey, but, given the lack of primary sources, this cannot be proven.⁵ Grey damask is also used for the officers' robes.

The Academic Dress Committee met on 3 January 1966. It consisted of the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, Dr B. M. Hamilton, and Mrs E. Salter. It approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 1964, then decided to appoint Ede & Ravenscroft as the official robemakers. The third item of business was to dissolve itself: 'The Committee, having completed its work, agreed to recommend to the General Academic Board that it should now be dissolved.'⁶

The General Academic Board met on 11 January 1966, when it was noted that undergraduates about to graduate could hire a gown and hood from Ede & Ravenscroft at 30 shillings a time—or 'from any firm who wished to hold a stock for the purpose'. (An interesting fact, given the fierce rivalry between robemakers these days.)

It also met on 8 March 1966,⁷ when the sample robes were 'demonstrated'. The very vague descriptions are:

Degree ⁸	Gown	Hood
BA	Grey gown	Grey hood with white edging
BPhil	Grey gown	Grey hood with red edging
MPhil	Grey gown	Red hood with grey edging
DPhil	Grey gown 'with a red flash on the sleeves'	Red hood fully lined with grey
DUniv	Grey gown	Red silk hood fully lined with grey

'In reply to a question it was reported that the headgear would be in either black or, more probably, grey velvet'.

The total lack of detail (materials, exact shades) will be noted, as also the casual attitude to the headgear. One assumes that, with the reference to velvet, it applies to the DPhil; possibly it was assumed that other graduates would wear a standard black square cap. It is far from clear what the 'red flash' for the DPhil was meant to be, either.

3 I am very grateful to Dr Jackson for passing these on to me. It is particularly annoying that no correspondence from Charles Franklyn has survived: it is fairly certain that he wrote to ask for the job of designing the robes.

4 UEA's robes were designed by Cecil Beaton. The dark blue is probably taken from the undergraduate gown of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, the 'Norfolk' college.

5 The same is said of Lancaster, which uses grey to line its bachelors' hoods, and for the body of the PhD robe. Red plays a much greater part in their robes than white does in those of York.

6 Minute 66/3, meeting of 3 January 1966.

7 UOY/M/GAB/1/3.

8 This restricted set of awards was paralleled by the Open University in 1969: it, too, awarded the BA as the sole undergraduate award, with the BPhil, MPhil, and PhD as postgraduate awards. The use of the Oxford 'DPhil' and not 'PhD' will be noted.



Fig. 1. The York PhD/DPhil gown, identifiable by the red cord and button on each sleeve.

Chris Williams/Burgon Society

It is unclear whether the DUniv was indeed to wear a plain grey gown, or if in fact there was to be some other, but unrecorded, difference. The use of material to distinguish between the DPhil and DUniv hoods is worth noting, also.

It would seem that the idea was to use a limited palette—basically grey and red, with the addition of white for the BA—but as will be seen, this has not survived the introduction of more degrees. It would be interesting to know why these three colours were chosen, but again, the records are lacking. The University's armorial colours (often chosen as the basis for robes at other places) are blue and gold,⁹ and the greater use of red (Lancastrian) as opposed to white (Yorkist) is interesting.

The robes were approved, and the Committee 'congratulated on their choice'.

Gowns

These have proved to be the most unaltered item. The University uses just two gowns. For bachelors, integrated master, and sub-degree awards, it is the basic bachelor [b1] in grey stuff, and for all others the basic master [m10] with inverted-T armhole, also in grey.

For the DPhil, it is marked out merely by the addition of a red twisted cord applied to each sleeve, running vertically for about six inches from the top of the upright cut (Fig. 1), with a red button at the top. Whether this is the 'red flash' referred to in the 1966 minutes, or whether that was something else, is unclear. Why the DPhil should have such a plain gown is also unknown. At this date, Doctors of Philosophy were

⁹ The arms are: Azure, on a chevron ermine three books fessewise, each with two clasps downwards, or. Crest: on a wreath or and azure, out of a mural crown argent, masoned sable, two keys in saltire or and silver, wards upward and outward, surmounted by a rose also argent, barbed and seeded proper. The current version shows the books as pale brown.

mostly wearing either doctoral-style robes in various shades of red (blue at St Andrews and green at Leeds), or MA gowns with coloured facings.¹⁰ Edinburgh was the exception: its PhD wore the plain black MA gown until 1991. Certain it is that the distinguishing red cord and button on the sleeve are not always immediately visible. Oxford of course, which might have been expected to inform the choice, gives the DPhil full scarlet: the York choice is even stingier than Cambridge's black MA gown with scarlet facings. Given that the degree abbreviation is (presumably) taken from Oxford, one has to wonder why it was not similarly treated sartorially. In a crowd of PhDs, the York one can hold its own, along with the wide variety of other colours; in a crowd of York graduates, it vanishes. What we cannot know now is what influences in terms of academic dress experience were at play on the members of the committee.

Higher doctors also wear a gown of this pattern, but with facings of red silk, and with the lower part of the sleeve (from the armhole down) covered in red. This style of gown is paralleled exactly by the old Victoria University doctoral gown, which was scarlet with gold facings, so one can but wonder if this was the inspiration.¹¹

There has never been an undergraduate gown. Of the other five universities founded at this time, only Sussex, East Anglia, and Lancaster ever specified one, though some of the former Colleges of Advanced Technology seem to have carried their use over—e.g., Loughborough. None appears to have been worn with any frequency, if at all.¹²

Hoods

The University awarded a very limited range of degrees at first. All undergraduates were awarded a BA, possibly following Oxbridge practice.¹³ As noted above, there were three earned higher degrees: BPhil, MPhil, and DPhil.¹⁴ The BPhil was the equivalent of a taught MA/MSc elsewhere, awarded after a one-year taught course; the MPhil and DPhil were research degrees.¹⁵ There was a fairly logical scheme of hoods.

10 Some of the other 1960s universities broke with tradition for their PhDs: Brunel chose brown, Loughborough purple, Sussex and Strathclyde blue, Lancaster grey, the Open royal blue. Dundee followed Edinburgh and used the plain black MA gown—which is odd, as it was the 'daughter' of St Andrews, and adopted fur for bachelors—so they were worse off than the York DPhils.

11 It is a style unused otherwise except at the co-eval City, where the higher doctors have a maroon MA gown with the lower part of the sleeve faced in gold. It was next adopted by Portsmouth in 1992 for its PhD. The exact (and probably unintentional) origins of the Victoria doctoral robe have been covered by Philip Lowe, 'The Origins and Development of Academical Dress at the Victoria University of Manchester', *Burton Society Annual*, 2001, pp. 25–32 (p. 30).

12 It is quite certain that almost all undergraduates at UEA have never had any idea that there is an undergraduate gown. It was revived for a short time for use by holders of undergraduate certificates.

13 Lancaster did the same. It is also a collegiate university. Kent, which is also collegiate, has always awarded the BSc. The Open University also awarded a BA only, but its degrees were originally general ones, and 'single honours' is a late development. It too now has a BSc (and LLB and BEng).

14 Sussex also used the form DPhil. Both York and Sussex have now changed the designation to PhD as it is, apparently, more easily recognized.

15 Again, the rationale for this is not known. Where it was awarded elsewhere, the BPhil was usually a one-year research-based degree.

The hoods are all of the CNAAs shape [a1].¹⁶ It is unclear why this was chosen: the usual reason stated has always been that it is cheap to produce in large numbers, hence its adoption by the CNAAs, but it is unlikely that York was going to need vast numbers of hoods—at least at the outset. Of the other universities founded at this time, the shapes chosen were:

- Sussex** (1961): own version of simple [s8].
- East Anglia** (1963): own shape [a4].
- York** (1963): CNAAs [a1].
- Strathclyde** (1964): Cambridge [f1].
- Stirling** (1964): Edinburgh [s4].
- Essex** (1964): Oxford simple [s1] for bachelors; Cambridge [f1] for all others.
- Lancaster** (1964): Burgon [s2] for bachelors; Cambridge [f1] for all others.
- Warwick** (1965): Burgon [s2] for bachelors; CNAAs [a1] for all others.
- Kent** (1965): own shape [a3].
- CNAAs** (1965): CNAAs [a1]—a version of the Aberdeen shape.
- Bath** (1966): Oxford simple [s1].
- Bradford** (1966): Cambridge [f1].
- Brunel** (1966): Edinburgh [s4] for bachelors; Cambridge [f1] for all others.
- City** (1966): Oxford simple [s1] for bachelors; Cambridge [f1] for all others.
- Surrey** (1966): own version of simple for bachelors [s10]; CNAAs [a1] for all others.
- Loughborough** (1966): Cambridge [f1]—carried over from the old College scheme.
- Aston** (1966): own version of simple [s10].
- Heriot-Watt** (1966): Cambridge [f1].
- Dundee** (1967): own version of CNAAs [a6].
- Salford** (1967): CNAAs [a1].
- Ulster** (1968): Cambridge [f1].
- Open** (1969): Oxford simple [s1] for bachelors; Cambridge [f1] for all others.

So, unlike many of the 1992 creations, the [a1] shape was not widely taken on: just five examples out of twenty-two foundations, and only Salford, York and Dundee use it for all degrees, and, despite its classificatory name, it seems to have been first used at York.¹⁷

So far as the earned degrees were concerned, the hoods were:

- BA**: grey stuff lined grey silk, the cowl bordered 3" white silk.
- BPhil**: grey stuff lined grey silk, the cowl bordered 3" red silk.
- MPhil**: red stuff lined red silk, the cowl bordered 3" grey silk.
- DPhil**: red stuff lined grey silk.

This established what was to become the pattern for bachelors' hoods: grey stuff lined grey silk, with a 3" border of degree colour. The grey silk lining is all too often overlooked by other writers. The underlying pattern for the hood would seem to be the

¹⁶ It was deliberately invented by the University of Aberdeen when they reintroduced hoods in 1860, so as to distinguish them from those of Oxford and Cambridge. Although the cape of the Aberdeen version now has a pear-shape, [a7], it is quite clear from old hoods that the original form had straight sides as on the [a1] pattern.

¹⁷ The reason I gave the [a1] the designation 'CNAAs' and not 'York' is that I was under a misapprehension that the CNAAs had been set up in 1963. It is, of course, possibly too late to correct the error now!

London bachelor—shell lined silk, bordered 3” colour. The fact that the BPhil gets a bachelor-style hood, while being of masters’ level, is interesting: clearly the title is the determining factor. It is unclear which gown it wore: the University is not in ‘Shaw I’ (1966), and the degree had ceased by ‘Shaw II’ (1992). It is listed in Hugh Smith’s 1970 book, where he states it wore the BA gown. This might have an Oxford parallel also: at this date, Oxford awarded a BLitt and BSc, which were higher degrees, equivalent to MA and MSc elsewhere,¹⁸ but they wore a BA-style hood, of blue with fur—though they had a different style of gown, the one used by the other post-BA bachelors, the BM and BCL. The MPhil hood is also worth noting. It is a reduced DPhil hood, not an enhanced BPhil one (which would be grey fully lined red—but see the MA hood below), and follows the bachelors’ pattern.

Three higher doctorates—DLitt, DSc, DMus—were later added.

A letter I received from the Senior Assistant Registrar, David Foster, dated 10 October 1978, gives a list of hoods:

DLitt: red with grey lining.

DSc: as DLitt, but with blue lining and edging.

DMus: as DLitt, but with white lining and edging.

BA: grey with white edging.

MA: grey with red lining.

MSc: grey with blue lining.

MSW: grey with white lining.

MPhil: red with grey edging.

DPhil: red with grey lining.

The BPhil has gone—replaced by the MA and MSc.¹⁹ It will be noted that the silk linings of the BA (grey) and MPhil (red) hoods are not mentioned. It is not totally clear whether the DLitt was lined and bound (‘edged’) as the other two, but it is known that the difference between the DLitt and DPhil is that the DLitt has a silk shell, while the DPhil has a stuff one. The DUniv seems to have gone into abeyance by 1978, possibly in favour of the more traditional DLitt, DSc, and DMus, but it reappears by 1990.

A new colour has been introduced for the Science degrees: blue. The shade used is in fact a very light blue, although it is always called just ‘blue’ and this may well have been taken from the arms: the official form of the arms uses a light blue for the field.

What is more interesting is what is happening to the degree colours. The pattern for taught masters has now been established as grey lined with degree colour, and the Science degrees follow it through. But in that case, why is the MA lined red and not white, which goes to the MSW? One is tempted to see this as another Oxford influence. If we read the white silk as replacing the fur on the BA, then the MA has the red lining. This, of course, would be the logical MPhil hood, save that it already has its own. (It will be noticed that at doctoral level, the white then sidesteps again, and goes to the DMus, going BA > MSW > DMus.) It is interesting that it was seen as necessary to differentiate by faculty. There would have been a perfectly good argument for developing a grade-hood system instead, with all bachelors wearing the BA hood, and all taught

¹⁸ They were redesignated MSc and MLitt, and a new hood invented for them. The gown was unaltered. The Oxford BPhil (later MPhil) did not conform to this pattern.

¹⁹ It was still being awarded in 1974, as Canon Jeremy Haselock received one in that year.



Chris Williams/Burton Society

Fig. 2. York hoods for the BA, left, in grey with white edging, and for the DUniv, right, in red with grey lining.

masters the old BPhil or possibly what became the MA (lined red) or MSW (lined white) hood.²⁰

Another letter, dated 17 November 1990, from the Assistant Registrar, John Nash, enclosed a photocopy of the dress regulations. A good number of new awards had been added. It is, again, far from precise: under ‘Gowns’ it merely says ‘grey’ for all, except that the DUniv and MUniv are ‘grey with red bands’, by which we must, presumably, understand facings.

As usual, no hood shapes are given, presumably as the [a1] shape has been established across the board, and the self-colour linings of the bachelors’ and MPhil hoods are again omitted—but it is listed for the EngDip:

- BA:** grey with white edging.
- BSc:** grey with blue edging.
- BEng:** grey with dark blue edging.
- MEng:** grey with dark blue lining.
- EngDip:** red, lined red, with dark blue edging.
- MA:** grey with red lining.
- MSc:** grey with blue lining.
- MPhil:** red with grey edging.
- MSW:** grey with white lining.
- DPhil:** red with grey lining.
- DSc:** red lined and edged blue ‘all round cape and band’.
- DLitt:** red lined and edged grey ‘all round cape and band’.
- DMus:** red lined and edged white ‘all round cape and band’.
- DUniv:** red with grey lining.
- MUniv:** red with grey edging.

²⁰ The Open University has done just that, with all bachelors wearing the well-known BA hood of light blue bordered gold. Lancaster took the BA hood (black, lined grey, bordered 0.5” red) and added extra bands of faculty colour beside the red border—the BSc, for example, is black lined grey, bordered 0.5” red, and 0.5” gold set 1” away.

The covering note says that the Engineering degrees are new, and that dark blue has been introduced as their colour. This may acknowledge the links between Science and Engineering. When the BEng was set up, it was intended as a four-year integrated degree, with the MEng as a one-year extension, but undergraduates were, apparently, reluctant to sign up for a four-year bachelor degree, so the BEng was redesignated MEng, and the extension year EngDip.²¹ Its status was marked by giving it an MPhil-style hood (though it was of lesser standing), but with a border of Engineering dark blue. It was worn with the MA gown. It was phased out and the hood assigned to the EngD.

The DLitt is here clearly stated to be lined and bound. The DUniv, which has reappeared, seems to share the DPhil hood, and the new award of MUniv that for the MPhil, but as noted above, the Philosophy degrees have stuff shells, while the honorary ones have silk shells.

The BSc was introduced in the late 1970s or early 1980s, apparently as a result of graduate pressure: the scientists did not appreciate being Bachelors of Arts—another development followed at Lancaster and the Open.

Later additions have been minimal, and slotted in easily. Degrees in Laws (LLB, LLM) follow the scheme established by Science with a border (LLB) or lining (LLM) of purple silk; there is (thus far) no LLD, but it would be red silk, lined and bound purple. The rationale for the colour is unclear. It was used for Laws degrees at the Victoria University of Manchester, and is also the faculty colour for Laws at Wales (shot with red), Exeter (until 1986, where it was partnered with grey), and Warwick.

Integrated masters have all been given the MEng hood, with dark blue lining, and the bachelors' gown.²² This seems to be a common practice at universities which otherwise have degree-specific hoods. The number of these degrees increases regularly, and to have individual colours for each would stretch resources.

The Master of Research (MRes) has a master's outfit, with a hood lining of gold—again, possibly from the armorial bearings.

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) was not given its own hood, but shares the MA one.

In 2017, robes were introduced for Postgraduate Diplomas (PGDip) and Certificates (PGCert/PGCE). Both wear the masters' gown, with a master-style hood, in grey, fully lined 'aqua' for PGDip,²³ and dark green for PGCert, thus appearing as full masters.²⁴

Two undergraduate awards have hoods specified. The DipHE was given an unlined grey hood, bound on all edges for 1" with Science light blue, possibly as it was originally available in science subjects only. The later Foundation Degree (FdSc, FdA,

21 The BEng then became the usual three-year degree. From <www.cs.york.ac.uk/depthistory/programmes.html> [accessed 14 November 2019, but the page is no longer accessible].

22 In 2019: MBiochem, MBiomedsci, MBiol, MChem, MEng, MEnv, MMath, MNurs, MPhys, and MPsychol.

23 This seems in fact to be Hull turquoise.

24 The lack of uniform treatment of these awards across the various universities is as varied as that of the PhD. There is still a small number of universities that do not have robes for them. The invention of robes for them has come about as recipients are now invited to attend graduation ceremonies—something of very recent introduction. Previously the diploma was merely sent through the post.

FdEng) was given the same hood, but bound on the cowl only: an odd choice, as the Foundation Degree is of higher academic standing than the DipHE. It is unclear why the FdA does not have a white, and the FdEng a dark blue, binding. Both are worn with the bachelors' gown.

The only professional doctorate is the EngD, which wears the PhD gown, and the old EngDip hood. Whether the pattern for the integrated masters, which all wear the MEng hood, will be followed for other professional doctors, remains to be seen.

The only awards that have no robes at present are the Graduate Certificate (Grad-Cert) and Diploma (GradDip), and the Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE). It might be possible to accommodate them by giving them bachelor-pattern hoods: GradCert a grey hood lined grey, bordered 3" dark green (from the PGCert) and the GradDip a similar hood, but bordered 'aqua' (from the PGDip). The CertHE is less easy, but possibly a grey unlined hood, bound 0.5" pale blue on the cape only.

Hats

All bachelors and masters have always worn a grey square cap (mortar-board): this was extended to the DipHE, FD, PGDip, and PGCert.

The 1990 list says that the higher doctors (DLitt, DSc, DMus, DUniv) wore a 'soft red cap', but it is not clear what this was: a bonnet, or a John Knox cap? It is unclear if it was ever used: certainly the grey velvet bonnet has been in use for many years.

Summary

The full scheme as it stood in 2021 is:

Degree	Gown	Hood shell	Hood lining	Hood border	Hat
DipHE	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	none	bound 1" light blue silk (all edges)	grey stuff mortar-board
Foundation degree	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	none	bound 1" light blue silk (cowl only)	
BA	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	grey silk	3" white silk	
BSc	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	grey silk	3" light blue silk	
BEng	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	grey silk	3" dark blue silk	
LLB	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	grey silk	3" purple silk	
PGCert	grey stuff [m10]	grey stuff	dark green silk	none	
PGDip	grey stuff [m10]	grey stuff	turquoise silk	none	
Integrated master	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	dark blue silk	none	
MA	grey stuff [m10]	grey stuff	red silk	none	
MSc	grey stuff [m10]	grey stuff	light blue silk	none	
LLM	grey stuff [m10]	grey stuff	purple silk	none	
MRes	grey stuff [m10]	grey stuff	gold silk	none	
MPhil	grey stuff [m10]	red stuff	red silk	grey silk	
EngD	grey stuff [m10] with red cord	red stuff	red silk	dark blue silk	grey velvet bonnet
PhD	grey stuff [m10] with red cord	red stuff	grey silk	none	
DLitt	grey stuff [m10] with red facings and lower sleeves	red silk	grey silk	lining bound over 1"	
DSc		red silk	light blue silk		
DMus		red silk	white silk		
DUniv		red silk	grey silk	none	
Obsolete awards					
BPhil	grey stuff [b1]	grey stuff	grey silk	3" red silk	grey stuff mortar-board
MSW*	grey stuff [m10]	grey stuff	white silk	none	
EngDip†	grey stuff [b1]	red stuff	red silk	dark blue silk	

* the logical MA robes

† reassigned to EngD

This gives a mixed scheme of degree-specific and grade-specific hoods:

Degree-specific:

BA, BSc, LLB, BEng, MA, MSc, LLM, MRes, MPhil, EngD, PhD, DLitt, DSc, DMus, DUniv.

Grade-specific:

DipHE, Foundation degrees, Integrated masters, PGDip, PGCert—of which only the two last have their own colour, the others borrowing existing faculty colours.

Faculty colours

Arts: white (BA), red (MA)

Science: light blue

Engineering: dark blue

Laws: purple

Research: gold

Philosophy: grey (but also DLitt)

Grade colours

Sub-degree awards: light blue (as Science)

Integrated master: dark blue (as Engineering)

PGCert: dark green

PGDip: turquoise

Post-scriptum: Degrees in Medicine

These degrees (BMedSci, BSc (MedSci), MB,BS, MSc, MPhil, PhD, MD) are awarded jointly with Hull via the Hull York Medical School (HYMS). They have their own hoods, and the two doctorates have their own robes, but the bachelors' and masters' gowns are determined by which of the two universities hosts the ceremony—it alternates each year. In those years when it is at York, they are worn with the grey York gowns; when at Hull, the black Hull ones are used.

The hoods use a combination of turquoise, dark blue, and orange in black shells for the bachelors and masters, and maroon shells for the MPhil and PhD. The turquoise references Hull, as do the black and maroon shells, but it is hard to see where the orange comes from.²⁵ Dark blue is York's colour for engineering, so York is either not referenced in the hoods at all, or it is by an odd choice of colour; one might have expected grey to feature.

²⁵ The original University scarf for York was divided equally into three, with an orange centre between two brown outer sections. Might this be the source? It is unlikely to be Charles Franklyn's original suggestion for the 'university silk' at Hull, which was a rich orange.

University of York hoods as at November 2021

