



Records survey report

This report looks at the main series of student records created by the University of Edinburgh since its foundation, identifying their content.

Lists and indexes

Both *A Catalogue of the Graduates in the Faculties of Arts, Divinity, and Law, of the University of Edinburgh* and *Alphabetical list of graduates of the University of Edinburgh from 1859 to 1888* have been OCR scanned and put online at archive.org. While full of character-recognition errors, these still have some utility and editing this rather than keying from scratch might be a more cost effective means of achieving a comprehensive list of non-Medical graduates pre 1858 and all graduates from then until 1888.

That leaves the pre-1858 Medical graduates, for which there is also a published volume. Regular checks should be made of archive.org to see if it also appears. Otherwise it could be keyed from 'scratch'.

Thereafter there are the card indexes. As these are handwritten and known to be incomplete (especially for early women graduates), they are poor candidates for any keying operation.

Matriculation Albums

Although not beginning until 1627 these provide the most comprehensive record of enrolled students.

Typically contain:

- matriculation number
- name
- faculty
- place of origin

Manual index (sheaf binders) of names up to 1858 has not been assessed for accuracy/completeness, nor does it include the matriculation number (which may serve as a master control number for the individual student identity). It would seem more beneficial to key directly from images of the original records.

A general overview of changes in content over time follows:

1786:

- A-Z listing within class groupings

1807:

- Completely A-Z with no class groupings

1811:

- Form-based
- Matriculation numbers begin with names in numerical order
- Place of origin
- Faculty and year of study



- 1865:
 - Age next birthday added
- 1869:
 - Age next birthday replaces above
- 1898:
 - Home address added
- 1923
 - Degree/Diploma added

First Matriculations

Beginning in 1869, these are the most comprehensive records of student enrolment from then on. These form-based schedules are tied to the Matriculation Albums via the matriculation number but (normally) only cover the first year of a student's study in any one course. In subsequent years of study, students were given a new matriculation number each year.

Content is hugely significant in understanding a student's background and analysis thereof. Such analysis would require the keying of most of these records in their entirety.

Alternatively, an initial phase of creating an index from the Matriculation Albums and indexing images of First Matriculations solely by matriculation albums might offer a more scaleable approach, where subsets of First Matriculations could be identified for keying, based on and linked to specific research questions (and specific funding).

These are also one of the records series most of use to the genealogical community, and where revenue could be generated by providing high quality images (simply linking each image to the Matriculation Album index would be sufficient to achieve this).

A general overview of changes in content over time follows:

From 1869/70:

- *Name in full*
- *Birthplace*
- *Age last birthday*
- *Faculty/Faculties of proposed study*
- *School education*
- *Previous medical education* (3 categories)
- *Previous university education* (4 categories)

(page annotated with matriculation number but not within form)

In addition from 1873/74:

- Matriculation number integrated with rest of form as *Number of signature in album*

In addition from 1875/76:

- *Previous medical education* changed to *Previous medical education other than University education* (still with 4 categories)

In addition from 1884/85:

- *Of what country*

HARR project *Historic Alumni Research Resource*



In addition from 1894/95:

- (*nationality*) appended to *Of what country*

In addition from 1898/99:

- *Number of signature in album* becomes *Matriculation number*

In addition from 1918/19:

- *Of what religious denomination* added
- *Birthplace* becomes *Birthplace (Town or parish etc.)*

1920-21 - various changes, resulting in:

1. *Matriculation number (number of signature in album)*
2. *Name in full*
3. *Addresses – Edinburgh; Permanent*
4. *Name and address of nearest relative and relationship*
5. *Birthplace (Town or parish)*
6. *Of what country (nationality)*
7. *Of what religious denomination*
8. *Age last birthday*
9. *Faculty or Faculties of proposed study (if Science, state dept.)*
10. *Date and number of Scottish Universities Entrance Board cert.*
11. *School Education*
12. *Previous University Education* (4 categories)
13. *Previous medical (other than University) education*

In addition from 1921/22:

- Previous OTC training (continues until 1930/31)

In addition from 1928/29:

- Various questions relating to sports and sporting achievements (continues until 1930/31)

(General and Medical) Matriculation Index and class lists

Volumes numbered wrongly

- General: 1,2,3,5 run consecutively, 1791-1810
- Medical 1,2,3,4,5 run consecutively, 1783-1810
- Thereafter General and Medical in the same volumes, numbered 6 –

Content over time:

- A-Z within classes
- Matriculation number from 1811
- Index to volume from 1836
- Solely an index from 1894



Laureation and Degrees Albums

Recording no more than the student's name (signature) at the time of graduation, these have little contextual value but are the only record of graduation until the more detailed schedules appear at various points during the 19th century.

The earliest volume is the earliest University record and is of national significance. It has been fully digitised and has a date index to allow easy navigation through its non-chronological order.

These are by no means complete records of graduates. The tendency of Arts students in particular not to go through the official graduation process means that their names are frequently absent. It is therefore necessary to check the Senatus minutes for such individuals.

Due to their 'incompleteness', further digitisation of further volumes in this series would be a low priority.

Graduation Schedules

These begin at various dates from 1833 onwards and contain the detail of the student's academic achievement. This includes examinations passed and also the principal academics they studied under.

The only link with the matriculation records is by name and year, meaning that there is no unique identifier (such as the matriculation number) present in each record, so no mechanised way of being able to tie the records together other than by 'likely matching'.

The published indexes for the early period and the card indexes subsequently provide a means of easily identifying graduates, though with the qualifications given above.

Because not all matriculated students completed their course of study, the number of students in these records will always be a subset of the whole. As such, their digitisation would only be realistic after an architecture based on the matriculations is in place.

Records identified but beyond the scope of this project but with value for future consideration

- Registers of extra-mural and extra-academical students
- Class lists
- Library matriculation and laureation accounts
- Library borrowing records
- Records of non-graduating students
- Records of related bodies (e.g. Royal Dick, Veterinary College, Moray House Institute of Education, Polish School of Medicine, Edinburgh College of Art)
- Schoolmaster's Diploma
- Licentiate and Fellowship records of the three main medical colleges, RCSE, RCPE and RCPSG