

# Graduation Gown Care and Etiquette

## Texas Tech University Graduate Student Advisory Council

The fact that you are graduating with your Masters or Doctoral degree is a big deal and means that you have done things right! Now we are here to help you survive the graduation ceremony... mostly by helping you wear your gown, mortar, tassel, and the hood the right way!

In this brief guide we will tell you about caring for your graduation gown, about the graduation etiquette, and a little bit about our gown donation program. If at the end of the graduating ceremony you see us holding "Gown Donations" sign please consider donating any regalia that you no longer need. Those gowns will help future generation of Grad Red Raiders.

### Caring For Your Gown

#### The "natural way"

Remove the gown and place on a hanger to allow the folds to fall out, and hang your gown in a high humidity area. A bathroom after a hot shower may be good location.

#### The "steamy way"

Consider steaming your gown to remove any wrinkles and freshen it up. Please note that all gowns that the Graduate Student Advisory Council rents out have been previously steam-cleaned.

#### The "not recommended way"

If you wish to press your gown, turn it inside out and press with a warm, but not hot iron. Always iron exclusive of any decoration a gown may have.

#### The "I am really busy way #1"

Your friendly neighborhood dry cleaner can steam the gown for you. Please note that it may be expensive, we would say about \$10.

#### The "I am really busy way #2"

If you are considering dry cleaning your gown you may want to ask your dry-cleaner to use "green" cleaning agents. Some of the traditional dry-cleaning chemicals have been linked to cancer. Odds are that smaller neighborhood dry cleaners may not be using eco-friendly cleaners unless specifically requested.

gsac@ttu.edu

www.gsac.ttu.edu



1: Hand wash or  
machine wash normal cycle  
105 °F (40 °C)



2: Hand wash or  
machine wash normal cycle  
105 °F (40 °C)



3: Do not bleach

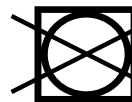


4: Low heat iron inside out

Please note that many doctoral gowns should not be ironed. They can only be dry cleaned or steamed. Always follow cleaning instructions provided with your gown.



5: Dry clean if desired



6: Do not tumble dry

## *Wearing Your Regalia*

### *Gown*

In order to look sharp for those pictures that will haunt you for years to come make sure to prepare your gown the day before. We recommend steaming it or dry-cleaning it to remove any wrinkles. A well-fit gown will end midway between the knee and ankle.



7: Graduation gown

### *Hood*

The hood should be worn draped around your neck with the largest portion of the hood hanging down your back. The velvet border, which indicates your specific field of study, should be showing on the outside. The velvet should fold under on the lower back to allow the colors of your College or University to show. To keep your hood from being too tight against your neck, there is a cord on the front to help secure it to a shirt button, or pin to a blouse or dress. Many hoods also have a cord and button in the back to prevent your hood from slipping off of your shoulders.



8: Putting a hood can be tricky but don't worry, we will have someone on the floor of the practice court who will help you make it right!

### *Mortarboard (fancy way of saying a graduation cap!)*

Contrary to common belief your graduation cap should be worn flat on your head and not tilted on the back of your head. The front of the cap should be marked on the inside of your cap. While men are expected to remove their caps during the school song and the National Anthem, women can keep their caps on.



9: Wear your graduation cap flat on your head.

### *Tassel*

Tassels are usually worn on the right side and shifted to the left at the end of the graduation ceremony when your degree is officially conferred. Graduation speaker will generally tell you when it is okay to shift your tassel from right to left.



10: Tassel worn to the right before your degree is conferred

### *Dress Code*

In dressing for the graduation it is important to balance dress requirements and comfort. We recommend at least a business casual dress but also ask that you dress to minimize discomfort. Remember you will not only sit, stand, and walk during the graduation ceremony itself, but also for about two hours during the practice phase.



11: Tassel worn to the left after your degree is conferred

*Women Dress Code*

We recommend wearing dark bottoms: slacks, dress, or skirt, and a light-colored top: dress blouse or dress shirt. We recommend wearing dark shoes: flats or pumps. High heels are not recommended out of concern for your safety and comfort. Sandals and tennis shoes should be avoided. Please make sure not to bring anything with you that will not fit in your pockets. Purses will not be allowed in the graduation court.



12: No purses, bags, or backpacks are allowed in the graduation court.

*Men Dress Code*

We recommend wearing dark bottoms: trousers or khakis and ironed or pressed light-colored dress shirt with a dark tie. We recommend wearing dark dress shoes and dark socks. Jeans, shorts, sandals and tennis shoes should be avoided.



13: No backpacks are allowed in the graduation court.

*Returning or Donating Your Regalia*

We will be present after at the graduation arena and you will be able to return or donate your regalia to us as you are walking out and for another hour. Alternatively, you can return or donate your gown the following week by dropping it off by the Graduate School in the Administration Building room 328. It is the third floor of the east wing of the administration building.

The free graduation gown rental program is only possible due to generous donations from graduate students like you!!! We make donating gowns as easy and as painless as possible and offer several flexible donation options:

*On-site* We will be present at the graduation. You can leave your gown with us after the ceremony!

*Pick-up* If you send us an email to [gsac@ttu.edu](mailto:gsac@ttu.edu) we will be glad to pick up the gown from any Lubbock location!

*Drop-off* Regalia can be donated at the front desk in the Graduate School, Administration Building, room 328.

*Mail-in* If you are based outside of Lubbock please feel free to mail your gown to us. If you would like to we can email you a prepaid shipping label. Simply send us an email to [gsac@ttu.edu](mailto:gsac@ttu.edu).

**Drop-off Address:**

Texas Tech University  
Graduate School  
Administration Building. Room 328  
(3rd Floor, East Wing)  
Lubbock, TX 79409-1030

**Postal address:**

Graduate Student Advisory Council  
Texas Tech University  
Mail Stop 1030  
Lubbock, TX 79409-1030

**Courier delivery (FedEx, UPS):**

Texas Tech GSAC  
Boston Ave. at Akron Ave.  
Administration Bldg. Room 328  
Lubbock, TX 79409-1030

# *Congratulations and Thank You!!!*

The gown for the master's degree has an oblong sleeve, open at the wrist, like the others. The sleeve base hangs down in the traditional manner. The rear part of its oblong shape is square cut, and the front part has an arc cut away. The gown is so designed and supplied with fasteners that it may be worn open or closed. The gown for the doctor's degree has bell-shaped sleeves. It is so designed and supplied with fasteners that it may be worn open or closed. master's degrees are untrimmed. For the doctor's degree, the gown is faced down the front with black velvet; three bars of velvet are used across the sleeves. These facings and crossbars may be of velvet of the color distinctive of the disciplines to which the degree pertains, thus agreeing in color with the binding or edging of the hood appropriate to the particular doctor's degree in every instance.

For all academic purposes, including trimmings of doctors' gowns, edging of hoods, and tassels of caps, the colors associated with the different disciplines are as follows:

#### Hoods

Pattern As usually followed by American colleges and universities, but following the specifications listed below.

Material In all cases the material must be the same as that of the gown.

Color Black in all cases.

Length The length of the hood worn for the bachelor's degree must be three feet, for the master's degree three and one-half feet, and for the doctor's degree, four feet. The hood worn for the doctor's degree only shall have panels at the sides.

Linings The hoods are to be lined with the official color or colors of the college or university conferring the degree; more than one color is shown by division of the field color in a variety of ways, chevron or chevrons, equal division, etc. The various academic costume companies maintain complete files on the approved colors for various institutions.

Trimmings The binding or edging of the hood is to be velvet or velveteen, two inches, three inches, and five inches wide for the bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees, respectively; the color should be indicative of the subject to which the degree pertains (see above). For example, the trimming for the degree of Master of Science in Agriculture should be maize, representing agriculture, rather than golden yellow, representing science. No academic hood should ever have its border divided to represent more than a single degree.

In the case of the Doctor of Philosophy degree, the dark blue color is used to represent the mastery of the discipline of learning and scholarship in any field that is attested to by the awarding of this degree and is not intended to represent the field of philosophy.

Agriculture	Maize
Arts and Humanities	White
Business	Drab
Economics	Copper
Education	Light Blue
Engineering	Orange
Fine Arts	Brown
Architecture	Brown
Journalism	Crimson
Music	Pink
Philosophy	Dark Blue
Physical Education	Sage Green
Public Administration	Peacock Blue
Science	Golden Yellow
Social Work	Citron

The custom of wearing academic gowns, hoods, and caps dates back to about the 12th century, when most scholars belonged to a religious order.

Long gowns and hoods were standard dress for medieval clergy, who often studied and taught in cold buildings. The style and coloring of the robe, hood, and, sometimes, skull cap denoted an educated individual. From the end of the 16th century to the present, members of the clergy, law professionals, and academics have worn robes.

Sometime in the 14th century, English universities began to use the dress to distinguish levels of education. Modeled on the English system, the American Academic Costume Code was established in 1895 by a commission of delegates from the Ivy League and New York universities.

The Costume Code calls for three types of gowns: doctoral, master's, and bachelor's. The doctoral gown is the most elaborate, with front-facing velvet and three velvet bars on each of the full, billowing sleeves. The velvet can be black, PhD blue, or the academic color to which the degree corresponds. The master's gown is distinctive for its extremely long, closed sleeves, the arms protruding through a slit at the elbow. The bachelor's gown is the simplest of the three, a plain gown with long, pointed sleeves.

Doctoral and master's degrees are also indicated by a hood, distinctive in shape, size, and color. The doctor's hood is easily recognizable, with wide velvet edging that indicates the degree earned and full exposure of the lining. The master's hood is the same length as the doctor's hood but does not fully expose the lining, and the velvet edging is not as wide. For both hoods, the lining indicates the colors of the institution conferring the degree.

Mortarboards, the distinctive four-pointed caps, are worn by academics at all levels. In recent years, doctors have taken to wearing a soft velvet tam instead.