

Buffalo State University Commencement Honors Cords and Accessories Policy

Date Established: April 2015

Categories: Commencement Ceremonies

Responsible Offices: Academic Affairs

Date Last Revised: December 2019

General Policy

The Commencement Committee of Buffalo State University supports the wearing of honors cords, medallions, stoles, and insignia at Commencement ceremonies by students who have earned these privileges through achieving academic honors, completing honors programs, as recipients of designated academic scholarship funds, academic unit or departmental honors, military service, induction into the university-recognized honors societies, athletic distinction, or membership in good standing in the university-recognized professional or service organizations, as well as students with an international affiliation.

Specifically:

- **Gold cords:** Reserved for students graduating with academic distinction (3.50–4.0 GPA, i.e., the gold honors cord). An eligibility list is provided at the point of sale for student regalia (bookstore) where students may purchase the gold cords. Notification to eligible students is provided by the Academic Affairs Office in March. There is no honors designation for graduate level students.
- **Gold tassels (on mortar boards):** Reserved for students graduating from the Muriel A. Howard Honors Program. The Honors Program administers the distribution of the gold tassels.
- **Red/white/blue cord:** Reserved to recognize honorably discharged U.S. veteran students, current students serving in the U.S. military (active duty, National Guard, Reserves), and Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) students commissioned upon graduation. Veteran's and military services in the Continuing Professional Studies Office administers the distribution of this cord.
- **Medals:** Students winning the President's Medal will receive the medal during the Commencement ceremony. Students winning the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence will receive their medals in Albany during the spring prior to Commencement and will be honored during the Commencement ceremony. Only these students may wear medals/medallions at Commencement.

Cords and stoles are appropriate Commencement accessories for university-sanctioned academic programs and organizations not mentioned above.* Medals, medallions, and special tassels are reserved for the highest academic honors: President's Medal, SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, and Muriel A. Howard Honors Program. Cords are specific to academic achievement or honor societies.

*Avoid adopting gold cords (designates baccalaureate honors).

**Programs should consider distributing pins to recognize student success as an alternative to cords and stoles, as a student can then wear pins on various occasions in their professional lives. It is more convenient for graduates to wear multiple pins on their white Buffalo State stole or their gowns at commencement than multiple and competing honors cords and stoles.

Appropriateness

Questions regarding appropriateness of an honors cord or accessory may be directed to Commencement, Academic Affairs Office, CLEV 519, (716) 878-5550 and the Honors Program (honors@buffalostate.edu).

Programs, departments, honors societies, and campus organizations may contact the bookstore for assistance in identifying the appropriate color cord or accessory signifying the specific academic achievement or honor.

Administrative and Financial Support

Funding for honors cords and accessories is the responsibility of the individual student or the sponsoring program, honor society, office, or organization, as deemed appropriate by that program. Any honors program/society, scholarship fund, or recognized student professional or service organization that wishes to incorporate accessories into its program for students to wear during Commencement must administer the process for ordering, distributing, and identify funding sources.

Master's Degree and Certificate of Advanced Study Students

Master's degree graduates are responsible for purchasing their discipline-appropriate hoods, and certificate of advanced study (C.A.S.) graduates are responsible for purchasing their stoles, typically through the bookstore.

The same policies regarding regalia accessories for bachelor's graduates pertains to master's degree and C.A.S. graduates.

Programs and organizations may distribute and award honors certificates, regalia, and accessories during their individual ceremonies and meetings as they choose. The above guidelines identify which honors cords, medals, medallions, and accessories are sanctioned for wearing during the Commencement ceremony.

Contact Information

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