POLICY ON GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Policy Owner	Registrar
Division/Unit/Department	Central Academic Administration
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Note: *For the purpose of this policy, Faculty includes the College of Business and Economics (CBE) and the Johannesburg Business School (JBS).*

CONTENTS:

1. PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg's (UJ) commitment to distinguished scholarship, excellence in teaching and learning, and reputable research and innovation is widely acknowledged through its graduation ceremonies. Compliance with the principles of sound corporate governance ensures the integrity of the graduation processes, procedures and protocols.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to:

2.1   provide directives regarding the organisational/logistical issues pertaining to the graduation ceremony;

2.2   establish a clear set of directives, guidelines and procedures that address:

    2.2.1   student graduation requirements;

    2.2.2   verification/validation of qualification requirements;

    2.2.3   academic awards;

    2.2.4   ceremonial protocols;

2.3   identify the role and function of divisions and role-players; and

2.4   integrate, align and coordinate relevant regulations and processes across all faculties, responsible divisions and role-players.

3. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all graduation ceremonies of the University of Johannesburg, including those organised by Central Academic Administration (CAA) as well as by faculties/departments.

4. PRINCIPLES

The policy reflects the tenets of risk management regarding the integrity of the graduation process and includes the following:

4.1   generally accepted principles of good governance;

4.2   uniformity of processes and usage across all divisions responsible for the management of the graduation process;

4.3   explicit identification of responsible divisions and role-players; and

4.4   accountability.

5.   GRADUATION CEREMONIES

5.1   Three cycles of graduation ceremonies are held per annum during Autumn, Winter, and Spring.

5.2   All graduation ceremonies take place on the Auckland Park Kingsway (APK) Campus, in the Auditorium. Alternative venues, like the Soweto Campus Imbizo Hall may be used if approved by the Registrar in consultation with MEC.

5.3   Graduation sessions are allocated by Central Academic Administration on the basis of the total graduates per qualification provided by faculties in accordance with the following criteria:

5.3.1   maximum of approximately 230 candidates per session for the main auditorium on APK, which can seat approximately 1 000 people.

5.3.2   maximum of approximately ~~ten~~ fifteen (15) doctoral candidates per session, unless approved by the Registrar;

5.3.3   maximum of five (5) guests per candidate for doctoral qualifications. Additional guests may be permitted for smaller sessions provided adequate space is available in the venue – requests for additional guest tickets must be submitted to the Head of Faculty Administration of the relevant faculty for consideration (in consultation with the CAA (Central Academic Administration) Senior Manager responsible for graduations);

5.3.4   maximum of three (3) guests per candidate for undergraduate and postgraduate (other than doctoral) candidates, unless approved by the Head of Faculty Administration of the relevant faculty, and CAA Senior Manager responsible for graduations.

6.   STUDENT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

6.1   All subsidised and non-subsidised academic programmes generating 240 credits or more for undergraduate programmes and 120 credits or more for postgraduate programmes, irrespective of the mode of offering, are conferred or awarded at an official ceremony within the three cycles of graduation ceremonies. The Registrar may approve requests to include other qualifications in an official graduation ceremony, based on merit and feasibility, as motivated by the Executive Dean.

6.2   Faculties may invite and handover certificates to candidates who completed an academic programme which generated less than the required credits mentioned under point 6.1.

6.3   (Also see Section 5). Students qualify to graduate if:

6.3.1   they successfully comply with all the requirements of the programme for which they are registered as approved by Senate and contained in the Faculty Rules and Regulations;

6.3.2   all University fees are paid and any other financial obligations are fulfilled.

6.4   Notwithstanding compliance with 6.1 and 6.2 above, students on academic or disciplinary probation will not be permitted to attend a graduation ceremony. Where exceptional circumstances exist, the Registrar may approve an exception.

7.   IDENTIFICATION OF GRADUATES

7.1   All eligible students who qualify to graduate will be identified by the relevant faculty and notified accordingly.

7.2   Students who comply with the requirements for credit-bearing qualification will be invited to a graduation ceremony (cf. 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3).

7.3   Students eligible to graduate may choose to graduate "in absentia". Only in exceptional circumstances (legitimate reasons), with the written approval of the Executive Dean or Registrar, will a student be allowed to participate in a future graduation ceremony for the same qualification. The student's name will remain in the original ceremony programme and will not appear in the programme of the future graduation ceremony.

7.4   Names of diplomats/graduates who do not attend the graduation ceremony are not announced. An exception to this ruling is the conferment of posthumous degrees, only with the approval of the Registrar.

7.5   All students participating in the graduation ceremony are required to wear the official university-approved graduation attire.

7.6   In the event that a candidate is able to prove that they did not receive notification of the time and date of the relevant graduation ceremony, the candidate may appeal to the Head: Faculty Administration, in consultation with the Registrar, to approve requests such as crossing the stage at the next session (see 7.3).

7.7   The name printed on all certificates will appear exactly as reflected in the University's official records and will not be re-printed or re-issued for name changes; in exceptional circumstances, the Registrar may approve a name change.

8.   THE GRADUATION CEREMONY PROGRAMME

8.1   The programme of each graduation ceremony is the official audited document on the basis of which qualifications are conferred or awarded by the University.

8.2   The procedures for the verification of the eligibility of candidates who graduated are contained in the University's Academic Certification Policy.

8.3   An electronic copy of every graduation programme for each graduation ceremony, complete with all deletions and additions supported by the written requests from the Head of Faculty Administration, will be stored by Central Academic Administration in a fire- and water-resistant safe where operationally possible for future verification.

9.   PLANNING PROCESSES AND ASSOCIATED RESPONSIBILITIES

The following designated divisions and persons are responsible for processes and functions integral to seamless and coordinated arrangements for a ceremony that represents the public face of the University.

9.1 *Central Academic Administration:*

9.1.1 Central Academic Administration is responsible for the following:

(a) advance publication and notification to Heads of Faculty Administration of due dates for submission of candidate lists by faculties;

(b) compilation and storage of graduation programmes;

(c) printing of certificates;

(d) issuing of digital certificates;

(e) compilation of the invitation letter template;

(f) e-mailing of invitation letters to students;

(g) honorary degrees;

(h) arrangements for hiring academic attire at graduations;

(i) printing and distribution of tickets for university-specific guests; and

(j) provision and distribution of cue cards for functionaries;

9.2 *Head: Faculty Administration:*

9.2.1 Heads of the respective faculty administration are responsible for the following:

(a) identification and compilation of candidate lists and submission to Central Academic Administration in accordance with dates as published in advance;

(b) identification of prize winners;

(c) provision of doctoral introduction cards;

(d) provision of folders for doctoral certificates;

(e) provision of seating cards for candidates;

(f) issuing of seating cards and certificates on the day of the ceremony, verifying the identity of graduates at graduations, and assisting in the auditorium with the graduation ceremony;

(g) provision and distribution of cards, viz.

(i) head cards,

(ii) prize-winners' cards.

9.3 *Division: Events (within University Relations)*

9.3.1 Events Coordinators within University Relations are responsible for the following:

(a) compilation and constitution of academic procession and protocols (these are determined by the Registrar);

(b) organising academic attire for functionaries/academic procession;

(c) logistical arrangements for conferment of honorary doctoral degrees;

(d)   ordering of the vouchers for the faculty/chancellor medal recipients;

(e)   printing and distribution of tickets for university-specific guests;

(f)   photographic arrangements;

(g)   catering arrangements, as and when required;

(h)   approval of events by Regional Government;

(i)   provision and distribution of cue cards for functionaries.

10. AWARDS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The University acknowledges academic excellence by means of the following awards:

10.1 One prize may be awarded per faculty (annually) to the top achiever at their graduation ceremony. This candidate will be identified by the concerned faculty, based on academic excellence.

10.2 One Chancellor's medal may be awarded per faculty (annually) for their most meritorious masters study. This candidate will be identified by the concerned faculty, based on academic excellence.

11. PROTOCOLS

11.1 The graduation proceedings are conducted in English although Afrikaans, isiZulu and Sesotho sa Leboa will be included as far as is practically feasible.

11.2 Certificates are awarded in sequence from the lowest to the highest National Qualification Framework level.

11.3 A pass "with distinction" is indicated on the introduction card of a candidate and is announced directly after the candidate has been introduced. The modules passed with distinction are not named. A pass with distinction is also indicated next to the name of the student in the programme.

12. VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY

The university may constitute virtual graduation ceremonies under certain circumstances to confer qualifications.

13. DEVIATION FROM THE POLICY

Any deviation from this policy must be approved by the Registrar; where required, consultation with the Graduation Committee.

APPENDIX 1

PREPARATION AND STORAGE PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF ACADEMIC CERTIFICATION

1. Faculty Executive Deans and designated faculty staff authorise qualifications to students who have complied with all the requirements. The Executive Dean (or delegated staff member) is responsible for signing off the graduates, after which senior faculty staff are authorised by the abovementioned to capture the particulars of the awards electronically on the student management system.

2. Each Head: Faculty Administration provides the relevant electronic control list of the qualification awarded as captured on the student management system to the authorised faculty officer.

3. After confirmation per lists signed by faculties that the relevant particulars of all the students who have complied with the qualification requirements are captured correctly on student management system, the programme certificates of such students are prepared by Central Academic Administration, namely by a senior person in the division who has been designated for this purpose by the Registrar. The relevant particulars for certificates are extracted from the student management system and stored in the digital certificates system. Only the staff member who is duly authorised by the Registrar has access to such information.

4. Certificate particulars are reworked programmatically for the relevant size of the certificate (A4 for all programmes).

5. After all certificates have been captured electronically, they are printed by Central Academic Administration and sealed with a silicon layer making falsification more difficult. Certificates are stored in a fire- and water-resistant safe by Central Academic Administration until collected and signed off by an authorised person appointed by each faculty.

6. Blank certificate paper as well as the printing and issuing of certificates are controlled by Central Academic Administration. No blank certificate is allocated to any other office or division of the University, nor to any external person or body.

7. Every Head: Faculty Administration designates a member of faculty staff to collect the printed certificates from the authorised member of the Central Academic Administration division (records are kept of these transactions). The graduation ceremony programme, compiled in terms of the student management system particulars, is used to sign off the certificates per candidate who qualifies for a certificate.

8. Signed control lists whereby the authorised staff member of a faculty acknowledges receipt of the certificates (including certificates in respect of non-subsidised programmes) are secured in a fire- and water-resistant safe where operationally possible by Central Academic Administration for a period of fifty (50) years, or for a period decided by the Executive Management of the University (as per the approved retention schedules).

9. Should a mistake (for example, the incorrect spelling of a name) be identified on a certificate after conferment on a student, the latter must submit it to the Executive Dean's office of the faculty concerned, after which it is submitted to the authorised person in

Central Academic Administration. The student concerned must produce an ID document/passport to the authorised person in Central Academic Administration before the corrected certificate is issued by the latter, and the student must sign for the receipt thereof. The ID document/passport should be submitted to the Biographical Division for rectification of the relevant incorrect particulars in the University records. A driver's license is also accepted for this purpose.

10. Incorrect certificates for which corrected certificates are issued are saved for auditing purposes. If the auditors are satisfied with their audit on such certificates, the incorrect certificates are destroyed and signed off by the authorised senior staff member in Central Academic Administration.

11. Electronic copies of all programmes of ceremonies are securely stored by Central Academic Administration and published on the website.

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