

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Convocation
NO.:	ADMIN-241
RESPONSIBILITY:	Executive Director/Registrar
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
EFFECTIVE DATE:	May 2019
REVISED DATE(S):	
REVIEW DATE:	May 2022

1. Introduction

The convocation ceremony is the culmination of a student's successful completion of their program of study. The College celebrates the achievements of its graduates with the awarding of Durham College credentials. This recognition takes place at spring and fall convocation ceremonies in accordance with the practices outlined in this policy.

2. Purpose

This policy and procedure is intended to ensure the consistency of practices when conducting convocation exercises and to define various aspects of the convocation ceremonies held by Durham College.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. Convocation exercises at Durham College will be held in the spring and fall.
- 4.2. Only students who have successfully completed all of the requirements of their programs of study may participate in convocation exercises.
- 4.3. Graduates from any Durham College post-secondary or apprenticeship program approved by Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) or any Durham College program that meets or exceeds the minimum course hour requirements will be invited to participate (205 hours).
- 4.4. An honorary credential may be awarded once per calendar year at the spring or fall convocation ceremonies, in accordance with the Durham College Honorary Credential policy and procedure ADMIN-224.
- 4.5. Employee emeritus awards may be awarded at the spring or fall convocation ceremonies, in accordance with the Durham College Employee Emeritus policy and procedure EMPL-302.

- 4.6. Alumni of Durham College may be awarded an Alumnus of Distinction award at spring or fall convocation ceremonies.
- 4.7. Credentials will be produced with the student's legal full name (first, middle and last) as it appears on their College records. Exceptions will be handled by Strategic Enrolment Services (SES) on an individual basis.
- 4.8. If a graduate requires a record of the completion of their credential for employment or admission purposes prior to their convocation ceremony, arrangements can be made through SES.
- 4.9. If a graduate requires a reprint of their original credential, the document will be produced using the most recent template, but with a notation of program completion and the date that the credential was reproduced.

5. Procedure

5.1. Scheduling of convocation

Convocation ceremonies will take place in the spring and fall each year. In consultation with the Durham College Leadership Team, the dates for convocation are determined five years in advance in order to ensure maximum attendance.

5.2. Ceremonies

SES is responsible for determining the appropriate number of ceremonies at the spring and fall convocation ceremonies. SES is also responsible for assigning the academic schools to each ceremony, ensuring that the number of graduates per ceremony is as balanced as possible. Convocation ceremonies should be no more than two hours in duration.

5.3. Eligibility to participate in convocation

As detailed in the Graduation policy and procedure ADMIN-209, only those students who have satisfied all the requirements of their program of study can participate in convocation ceremonies.

5.4. Guests

Graduates are encouraged to invite as many guests as they wish to celebrate their graduation ceremony.

5.5. Invitations

5.5.1. The Communications and Marketing department is responsible for the creation and distribution of electronic invitations for convocation. Invitations are sent to:

- Members of the College Board of Governors;
- Platform party guests;
- Faculty; and
- VIPs

For planning purposes, these invitees are asked to confirm their attendance at convocation.

5.5.2. The Indigenous coaches in the First Peoples Indigenous Centre will communicate with the Traditional Knowledge Keeper to invite and coordinate their attendance at convocation.

5.6. Elements of the convocation ceremony

Each convocation ceremony will consist of the following elements:

- Procession
- Playing of 'O Canada'
- Land acknowledgement
- Presentation of tobacco tie
- Welcome from the president
- Board remarks
- Greetings from the Alumni Association
- Guest speaker
- Conferring of credentials
- Adjournment of convocation
- Recession

5.7. Procession and recession

The convocation ceremony begins with the procession of faculty, graduates and the platform party. Faculty enter the convocation floor first and form an honor guard along the center aisle. Graduates enter the ceremony and are led to their seats. The platform party then enters the ceremony and convenes on the stage. At the conclusion of the ceremony, these groups exit the venue in the reverse order.

5.8. Platform Party

The platform party will consist of the following members:

- President
- Chair, Board of Governors
- Members of the Board of Governors
- Chief Administrative Officer
- Vice-President, Academic
- Associate Vice-president, Academic
- Chief Financial Officer
- Academic deans
- Traditional Knowledge Keeper
- President Emeritus
- President, UOIT
- Vice-president, Office of Development and Alumni Affairs
- Executive Director/Registrar
- President, Durham College Alumni Association or designate
- President, Durham College Students Inc. (DCSI) (outgoing president for spring convocation, current president for fall convocation) or designate as determined by the Durham College Leadership Team
- Special award recipients (honorary credential, alumni of distinction, faculty or staff emeritus)
- Guest speaker

5.9. Roles of the platform party

The following individuals play an active role in the convocation ceremony:

- a) The Vice-president, Student Affairs (or designate) serves as the master of ceremonies for all convocation events.
- b) The Chair of the Board of Governors brings greetings on behalf of the board.
- c) The President of the Durham College Alumni Association (or designate) offers congratulations to all new alumni.
- d) The President of Durham College presents a tobacco tie to the Traditional Knowledge Keeper and also addresses the graduating class.
- e) The Vice-President, Academic introduces the graduating class and initiates the conferring of credentials.
- f) The Executive Dean/Dean (or designate) is the first individual to greet each graduate as they cross the stage.
- g) The Executive Director/Registrar hands the convocation folders to the Executive Dean/Dean.

5.10. Role of the Associate Dean

The Associate Dean (or designate) is responsible for leading graduates from their school into the convocation ceremony. They are also responsible for placing the graduation collar on the graduate just prior to crossing the stage.

5.11. Faculty/staff participation

All members of the College community are encouraged to attend convocation and participate in the convocation ceremonies. Employees from the academic schools in attendance participate in the graduate honour guard and sit in designated areas on the floor of the event.

5.12. Awarding of credentials to family members by Durham College staff

Any Durham College employee who is an immediate family member (such as a spouse, mother, father, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle) to a graduate may present their credential to them. Prior recipients of emeritus awards, as well as former Board Chairs are also granted this privilege.

The College community is notified of this opportunity several months prior to the convocation ceremony and must notify SES if they wish to participate.

5.13. Guest speaker(s)

Graduates will be addressed by a guest speaker at each convocation ceremony. Guest speakers will be determined by the Office of the President and Communications and Marketing. Guest speakers may be an Alumnus of Distinction winner, an honorary credential recipient, or someone from the community who has demonstrated – in their careers and personal lives – the core values of post-secondary education and the College.

5.14. Presentation of major awards

Major awards are acknowledged at the spring convocation ceremonies. Awards include:

- Governor General's Academic Medal and W. Bruce Affleck Memorial Scholarship;
- One Durham College Medal for the highest-ranking graduate in each of the following:
 - One-year post-secondary program;
 - Two-year post-secondary program;
 - Three-year post-secondary program; and
 - Any apprenticeship program;
- The Doris and Gordon Willey Founder's Cup for Excellence; and
- President's Award of Excellence in Student Leadership.

5.15. Photography

- 5.15.1. A professional photographer will be hired to take pictures of graduates before, during, and after they cross the stage. These photographs will be available for graduates to order online after the convocation ceremony.
- 5.15.2. The photographer is also responsible for taking pictures of the platform party, major award winners, guest speakers and faculty prior to the convocation ceremonies.
- 5.15.3. The recipients of The Doris and Gordon Willey Founder's Cup for Excellence and the President's Award of Excellence in Student Leadership have their picture taken on stage with the President.

5.16. Webcasting

A professional webcasting company will be hired to broadcast each convocation ceremony via the internet. A recording of the webcast will be made available for viewing and/or downloading, free of charge after convocation.

5.17. American Sign Language Interpreters

In order to ensure a more accessible event, professional interpreters will be hired for each convocation ceremony. Furthermore, these interpreters are shown on screen at each event.

5.18. Regalia

- 5.18.1. The President, Board Chair, Vice-President, Academic, and Vice-President, Student Affairs will wear gowns designed for the event.
- 5.18.2. The Traditional Knowledge Keeper will wear their traditional regalia.
- 5.18.3. All other members of the platform party as well as faculty and staff participating in the ceremony will wear black robes and Durham College colours. Any of these participants wishing to wear the colours of their alma mater are encouraged to do so, but are individually responsible for bringing these items to convocation.
- 5.18.4. Graduates will wear black robes and carry their graduation collar into the ceremony on their left arm. Exceptions include:
 - Indigenous students who may opt to wear their traditional regalia; and
 - Active military personnel who may opt to wear their dress uniform.

5.18.5. Graduates are discouraged from:

- Wearing hats, unless they are part of their traditional Regalia ;
- Pinning anything to their gown; and
- Carrying purses, food or drinks onto the ceremony floor.

Graduates will be informed of ceremony expectations prior to convocation. Graduates who refuse to comply with the dress code will not be allowed to participate in the convocation ceremony.

5.19. Graduation collars

When it is time for graduates to cross the stage, they will be led to the stage by the Associate Dean (or designate) for their academic school. The Associate Dean will take the collar from the graduate in turn and place it over the graduate's head. The graduate will then be called by the convocation readers and cross the stage to be congratulated by the Executive Dean/Dean (or designate), Vice-President, Academic, Vice-President, Student Affairs, President and Chair of the Board of Governors.

5.20. Convocation program

Working closely with SES, the printed program is prepared by the Communications and Marketing department and serves as a memento of convocation. At a minimum, the convocation program will contain:

- Members of the Board of Governors;
- Message from the President;
- Message from the Board Chair;
- Order of ceremonies;
- Biography of Honorary Credential recipient (if applicable);
- Biographies of guest speaker(s);
- Durham College Award recipients;
- Scholarship award recipients;
- DCAA Leaders of the Future award recipients;
- Land acknowledgement;
- Explanation of symbolism of tobacco tie;
- Graduates, listed alphabetically by ceremony and program;
- Message from the Alumni Association;
- Biographies of Alumni of Distinction (if applicable);
- Biographies of Faculty and Staff Emeritus award recipients (if applicable);
- Full-time staff listing; and
- Full-time faculty listing.

5.21. Publicity

The Communications and Marketing department will arrange for media coverage of the ceremonies and the events surrounding it.

5.22. Honorary credentials

An honorary credential may be awarded once per year at the spring or fall convocation ceremonies. The process for selecting the honorary credential recipient is outlined in the Honorary Credential policy and procedure (ADMIN-224).

5.23. Posthumous Credentials

If a deceased student had completed 75% of their program of study at the time of their passing, a posthumous credential will be granted. The process will be as follows:

- Upon notification of a student's passing, SES will review all academic records to determine eligibility.
- If eligible, the vice-president, Student Affairs will contact the immediate family of the student and extend an invitation to attend convocation.
- If the family is interested in attending, SES will connect with them to advise of the ceremony details and what their role is during the ceremony.
- When all credentials have been conferred to the graduates of an academic school, a designate of the deceased student will cross to greet members of the platform party.
- If the family is not interested in attending convocation, arrangements will be made for the posthumous credential to be couriered to them.

5.24. Alumnus of Distinction

The Alumnus of Distinction Award honours the extraordinary contributions Durham College graduates make to society while achieving career success. Alumnus of Distinction awards are selected by the Alumni Association Board of Directors and are presented at the spring or fall convocation ceremonies.

5.25. Faculty and Staff Emeritus recipients

As detailed in the Faculty and Staff Emeritus policy and procedure (EMPL-302), outstanding contributions by retired faculty and staff members may be recognized at convocation through the presentation of the honorary designation of Emeritus.

5.26. Gonfalons

Gonfalons bearing the name of each academic school will be carried into the ceremony by one of the student advisors (or designate) for the school. This individual, along with the associate dean, leads the graduates into the convocation ceremony and places the gonfalon on the stage.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director/Registrar to ensure that this policy and procedure is fully implemented.
- 6.2. It is the role of the Communications and Marketing department to assist SES in the planning and execution of all convocation events.

7. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Accessibility Plan (ADMIN-203).
- Any participants in the convocation ceremonies (graduates, faculty, staff, and members of the platform party) indicating that they require special services will be accommodated.
- Interpreters are available for all convocation ceremonies to accommodate the hearing impaired. Interpreters are displayed on the video display wall during the ceremony.
- The name of each graduate, along with their academic program is displayed on the video display wall as they cross the stage.

8. Non-compliance implications

- 8.1. Convocation is the public recognition of the graduating students of Durham College. As such, it is critical that ceremonies are planned and executed with the highest degree of professionalism.
- 8.2. It is also essential that only those students who have successfully completed the requirements of their program of study be allowed to participate in convocation exercises. Failure to ensure this may have a negative impact on the reputation of the College.

9. Communications plan

- A message will be posted on ICE alerting employees when new or revised policies and procedures are added to ICE.
- A message will be posted on MyCampus alerting students when new or revised policies and procedures are added.

10. Related forms, legislation or external resources

None.