

*Graduating from college is a big achievement, and there will be enough happening on this special day without wardrobe worries getting in your way. With the weeks of finals and presentations, planning parties, saying goodbyes and getting ready to move out, choosing what you will wear to graduation should not be burdensome. Keeping a few simple guidelines in mind as you shop or search through your closets will help you put together something appropriate to wear under that graduation gown.*

## Keep It Cool

- Graduation gowns are made of a rather stifling material, and you will start to heat up after sitting underneath one for a few hours. To try to stay comfortable under the weight of the gown, wear breathable fabrics that are loose fitting to allow some air to circulate. Women have the advantage in this category, as skirts and dresses are appropriate graduation attire that will allow them to stay relatively cool. Dress pants are also appropriate but may not be as comfortable.
- Men, on the other hand, are not as lucky. College graduation is a little different from high-school graduation in that jeans and polo shirts are not acceptable attire. Dress pants or slacks, a dress shirt with a collar and a tie are appropriate and expected graduate attire for men. While dressy attire is not necessarily the most comfortable, a loose-fitting shirt and with the sleeves rolled up will help with the heat.
- Your graduation gown will arrive folded. Be sure to remove your gown from its original package and steam the wrinkles/folds; do not use an iron as it may run the material.

## On the Feet

- Men's footwear is simple: black or brown dress shoes. Sandals are not acceptable footwear.
- Women's footwear, on the other hand, can be quite complicated. Many women prefer to wear heels for a dressy effect, and either a closed toe or an open toe is acceptable. While women's shoes are not limited to brown and black, they should not clash with the color of the robe; for example, bright red pumps would not be suitable to wear with a purple gown. Black, brown, navy blue, gold and silver are good neutral choices. Pay attention to your heel height as well. If you are not comfortable and used to wearing a higher heel, it is not recommended that you attempt wearing high heels during your graduation ceremony.

## On the Head

- The cap should be placed on a shelf or level surface so that it will not develop creases, and will fit the head properly during the ceremony. There should be directions on the crown of the cap to help you determine the front from the back. When the cap is placed on the head, the mortarboard should be completely level, without going to the back or side of the head. The crown of the cap should rest about 1 inch above the eyebrow.
- Traditionally, the moving of the tassel at graduation is called, "turning the tassel" or "the turning of the tassel ceremony." It symbolizes one's transition from candidate to graduate. Standard protocol in the US dictates that the tassel be worn on the right side of one's mortarboard at commencement and then, during the ceremony, moved to the left side.
- **Mortarboards cannot be decorated or embellished. You will be asked to remove all decorations, embellishments, flowers, feathers etc... prior to walking in the ceremony. Please keep in mind that you may need to purchase a new cap if your decorations cannot be removed.**

## Appropriateness

- Keep your attire appropriate, as it will not be hidden under the graduation gown all day. This point refers mainly to women's attire, as sometimes dresses or skirts can be too short, or tops a bit too low-cut. Women should ask themselves whether they would be comfortable wearing their outfits around their grandmothers or if they'd be more likely to wear these clothes out to a club on Friday night. As a rule of thumb, dresses should be knee length or just above the knee.

## What Not to Wear

- All graduates should avoid wearing crop tops, tee-shirts, tight-fitting clothes, jeans, shorts, ripped clothing, sneakers and casual shoes like flip flops. Your style of dress should show respect for the occasion.