

	POLICY	Motion No.	AASS 1017-2024
	Graduation Honors and the Use of Academic Adornments at Commencement	Effective Date	12/17/2024
		Responsible Department	Academic Affairs/Student Services
		Reviewed by an attorney	N/A

As an official function of Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, commencement ceremonies convey the scholarly tradition and formal tone befitting of an academic ceremony. This policy sets forth standards related to possible academic honors bestowed upon graduates and the academic adornments worn at commencement ceremonies by students, as well as the process by which student organizations may seek approval to add an adornment to the regalia to signify a student's membership in a registered student organization. Adornments include any addition to the issued traditional academic regalia such as cords, stoles, and medallions.

Academic Honors

Students who meet the minimum requirements for graduation and have earned a minimum of 30 credits in a certificate, diploma, or degree program and have graduated with at least a 3.5 grade point average will be eligible for academic honors at graduation unless the student has documented violations of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Students who graduate with an overall GPA of:

- 4.0 will graduate Summa Cum Laude (highest honors)
- 3.75-3.99 will graduate Magna Cum Laude (high honors)
- 3.5-3.74 will graduate Cum Laude (honors).

Graduation Cords - a graduation cord is a token consisting of twisted cords with tassels on either end. Their wearing signifies specific academic achievement or membership in a recognized academic honor group or society. By tradition, more than one cord may be worn at the same time.

- Honor Cords shall represent graduates who have distinguished themselves with overall GPAs ranging from 3.5-4.0. The College provides Honor Cords to graduates at no cost.
- Cords shall represent academic and leadership-based, College-recognized, honor societies.

Graduation Stole - a graduation stole is a decorative vestment worn by students who are members of college organizations for the purpose of recognizing achievement. A stole takes the form of a cloth, scarf-like garment worn over the shoulders and adorned with the organization's colors and/or insignia.

- Stoles may be worn by College-recognized honor societies and student organizations that are registered with and recognized by the Student Activities Office and with approval of the Vice President of Student Services.
- A graduating student may wear no more than two stoles of their choosing.
- The student is responsible for the cost of any graduation stole. The Student Activities Office can assist students with the ordering of graduation stoles.
- For a complete list of registered student organizations, please see the Activities tab on myPeak.

Medallions – medallions may be worn at graduation for academic honors only. For example, medallions that represent the All-Pennsylvania Academic Team may be worn. Students are responsible for obtaining their medallions via the honoring organization or group.

Effective Date	Motion Number	Document Author	Description of Change
12/17/2024	AASS 1017-2024	Academic Affairs/ Student Services	Merged Graduation Honor Policy and Use of Cords and Stoles at Commencement
04/24/2018	AASS 1019-2018	Academic Affairs / Student Services	Initial Release