**Events Team**

**Marshal’s Briefing Notes**

**Role – Final Check of Students – Bottom of Stairs**

**Purpose of the Role**

* To ensure that the students in Block A are seated in their correct seat in line with the script.
* To ensure that all absentees are noted and yellow absentee card issued to the student to be presented immediately before the absentee on the script.
* To ensure that all students at the bottom of the stairs immediately prior to presentation are in correct ceremony order and yellow absentee cards issued to the person immediately prior to the absentee in presentation order on the script.

**Prior to the start of ceremony.**

* You should go to Meeting Room 2, Ground Floor, Octagon Centre. The door is marked “Assistant Marshals and Stewards”.
* You will find a file with your name on. This contains all the information you need for the ceremony. Most important documents in the file is the Script (list of student names and seat number) and seating plan of the graduands’ block. You will also find “Marshal Task List” in the file. This is an important document which will have your name against all the tasks and timings. You should follow this carefully.
* Select a robe – plain burgundy – with no gold trim and a black velvet hat with burgundy cord. The robe should be around mid-calf length.
* Pick up a supply of yellow cards headed “Absent Student Card”.
* Make sure you go up to the main hall at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.

Checking graduands:

* Students will start to enter the hall and take their seats around 40 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. They will have been allocated seats in either Block A or Block B. You, along with a colleague, will have been allocated one block to check – Block A.
* Around 30 minutes to the start of the ceremony, start checking that students are seated in line with the script in your folder. It is useful to liaise with your colleague also checking the block and agree on how you will check together (ie one person start at front of block and the other at the back and meet in the middle, or take a side each and work from edge of row to middle. This is your personal preference and whatever works best for you and your partner is fine).
* Take note that the presentation order for Block A is front of the block to the rear.
* As you check students, make sure that they are all seated in their correct seats and note any absents on your script. Encourage students to sit in their seat if they are not already doing so.
* Around 10 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony, start to write out the yellow absentee cards for any missing students. Write the full name of the missing student and their seat number clearly on the card. Hand the card to the student immediately preceding the missing student on the script. Advise the student to make sure they take the card with them when they go onto the platform and give it to the Marshal at the top of the stairs. However, if the late student arrives after the card has been issued, advise the student with the card to dispose of the yellow card under their seat. If you can manage to get the yellow card back and destroy it, all the better.
* Once you have checked all candidates in the block, check with your colleague on any absentees, etc.
* Around 5 minutes before ceremony is about to start, ensure that you have checked your Marshals Instructions. You may or may not be required to join the staff procession – this depends on whether there is an Honorary Graduand receiving an Honorary Degree at the ceremony.
* If your instructions indicate that you should join the procession, go to the bar, take a wand from the bar and stand in position in the procession as advised on your Marshals Instructions. Once the procession starts you should follow it around the hall and up the central aisle. As you reach the central steps onto the platform, do not go up the stairs to the platform. You should peel off to the left and put your wand in the stand by the steps. You should then take a seat by the stairs when the Presiding Officer invites the audience to sit.
* If your instructions do not indicate that you should join the procession, you should take your seat by the steps. You will note that there will be a wand in the stand by the steps. This will be used for the procession of graduates at the end of the ceremony.

During the ceremony

* As soon as the students from Block A are directed to the steps by the Marshal, check that students are in the correct order following your script. Ensure that there is a yellow absentee card for any student who has not turned up at the ceremony and that the person being presented before the absentee has the card. The card should have the absentee’s full name as shown on the script and their seat number. Advise the student with the card to ensure that they pass it to the Marshal on duty at the top of the steps.
* It is best to check the students as they join the queue waiting to be presented, ensuring that you have around 10-15 students queuing who have already been checked. This will allow you enough time to move any student who may be in the wrong place or write a yellow absentee card if this has been missed as the blocks were checked.
* Once all students from Block A have been presented, students will be guided from Block B, starting at the back and working to the front.
* Be aware, however, that there could be a Honorary Graduand break at some stage. This will be marked on your script. As soon as you have checked the last student prior to the Honorary Graduand break, you should take your seat by the steps as before.
* Most, but not all, Honorary Graduands give a short reply following their award. This will be marked on the script. Following the Honorary Graduate’s brief reply, students will start to be guided by the Marshal at the relevant block to the steps ready for presentation. You should check the students as before, ensuring they are in the correct presentation order, that yellow absentee cards have been issued, etc
* When the last student has been presented you should return to your seat for the speech by the Presiding Officer. He or she will then declare the congregation closed.
* As the processions are leaving the platform, you should take the wand from the stand and move to the central aisle and stand by the steps ready to lead the procession of graduates out of the hall.
* When the Officers and staff processions have moved down the central aisle there will be a short wait as VIP guests are ushered out of their seats from Block C.
* Once all VIP’s have joined the procession, the Presenter will announce that the graduands will process from the hall. This is your prompt.
* You should start to move down the central aisle, right to the back of the hall. You should then turn right and lead the graduates around the hall to the entrance.
* Don’t worry about checking that the students are following you. They will be briefed prior to the ceremony and Events Team staff will be there to prompt them.
* When you have led the graduates to the Octagon foyer, please ensure that you return the wand in the Octagon bar before going down to Meeting Room 2 to leave your robe, hat and folder.