

Posthumous degrees awarded to the Edinburgh Seven

Seven students who blazed a trail for women's access to higher education were awarded posthumous honorary degrees, 150 years after beginning their studies at University of Edinburgh.

The group – known as the Edinburgh Seven – were among the first women admitted to a UK university when they enrolled to study medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1869. Due to opposition from their male peers they were prevented from graduating as doctors.

Mary Anderson, Emily Bovell, Matilda Chaplin, Helen Evans, Sophia Jex-Blake, Edith Pechey and Isabel Thorne were awarded the posthumous honorary MBChB at the University of Edinburgh's McEwan Hall on Saturday.



Photos Douglas Robertson

Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor at the University of Edinburgh, said: "We are delighted to confer the degrees rightfully owed to this incredible group of women. The segregation and discrimination that the Edinburgh Seven faced might belong to history, but barriers still exist that deter too many talented young people from succeeding at university. We must learn from these women and strive to widen access for all who have the potential to succeed."