

The Edinburgh Seven will be recognised with posthumous degrees today

Seven students who blazed a trail for women's access to higher education will be awarded posthumous honorary degrees at a graduation ceremony today, 150 years after beginning their studies.

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. The degrees will be collected on their behalf by a group of current students at Edinburgh Medical School.



Pictured at McEwan Hall, seven current students at Edinburgh

Medical School will collect the degrees on behalf of the women. Left to right, Izzie Dighero, Mei Yen Liew, Hikari Sakurai, Caitlin Taylor, Violet Borkowska, Megan Cameron and Simran Piya. (Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY)

The women faced a great deal of resistance from their male peers and were ultimately prevented from graduating and qualifying as doctors.

Their campaign against such treatment gained national attention and many supporters, including Charles Darwin. It resulted in legislation in 1877 to ensure women could study at university.



Pictured outside 15 Buccleuch Place where the women lived, seven current students at Edinburgh Medical School will collect the degrees on behalf of the women. Left to right, Simran Piya, Megan Cameron, Hikari Sakurai, Violet Borkowska, Mei Yen Liew, Izzie Dighero and Caitlin Taylor. (Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY)

Mary Anderson, Emily Bovell, Matilda Chaplin, Helen Evans, Sophia Jex-Blake, Edith Pechey and Isabel Thorne will be awarded the posthumous honorary MBChB at the University of

Edinburgh's McEwan Hall this afternoon. The degrees will be collected on their behalf by a group of current students at Edinburgh Medical School.

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."

Third-year medical student Simran Paya, who will collect an honorary degree on behalf of Sophia Jex-Blake, said: "We are honoured to accept these degrees on behalf of our predecessors, who are an inspiration to us all."



Pictured at Old College, seven current students at Edinburgh Medical School will collect the degrees on behalf of the women. Left to right, Violet Borkowska, Hikari Sakurai, Megan

Cameron, Simran Piya, Caitlin Taylor, Izzie Dighero and Mei Yen Liew. (Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY)