

First to Admit Women on the Same Basis as Men

In November 1913, the Harvard-MIT School for Health Officers became the first academic program at Harvard to admit and credential women on the same basis as men. The credential awarded was the CPH—a certificate in public health.

First Women

First Woman to Receive a Harvard Credential

Harvard University's first credentialed woman was Linda Frances James, born in 1891, who received her certificate in public health from the Harvard-MIT School for Health Officers in 1917.



Linda James, left, shown in Minnesota with her husband at right and a guest from China



Martha May Eliot, former chair of the Department of Maternal and Child Health and first woman president of the American Public Health Association

Progress by Degrees

In 1936, HSPH became the second of Harvard's professional schools to grant degrees to women. The first was the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



First Woman Professor

“A woman on the Harvard faculty!” marveled the *Boston Sunday Globe* on March 23, 1919, describing the sensation created by the appointment of Harvard’s first female professor, Alice Hamilton, who served as assistant professor of industrial medicine on the faculty of the Harvard-MIT School for Health Officers and Harvard Medical School. Hamilton’s appointment, at the age of 50, was subject to three restrictions: She was not to be allowed into the Faculty Club, nor to participate in academic processes at commencement, and was not eligible for faculty tickets to football games.

WOMAN IN HARVARD POST.

Dr. Alice Hamilton First of Her Sex Elected to the Faculty.

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., March 11.—The first woman to hold a position on the Harvard University Faculty will be Dr. Alice Hamilton of Chicago. Announcement was made tonight of her appointment by the Board of Overseers as Assistant Professor of Industrial Medicine in the Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Hamilton, who obtained her medical degree from the University of Michigan in 1893, studied at several other universities in this country and Europe was Professor of Pathology at the Woman’s Medical College of Northwestern University for three years, and served as Bacteriologist at the Memorial Institute for Infectious Diseases in Chicago for eight years. Since 1910 she has been engaged in investigating industrial poisons for the Federal Department of Labor.

The overseers also made public the appointment of Professor Comfort A. Adams as dean of the Harvard Engineering School, and of Colonel Robert C. F. Goetz, as Professor of military science and tactics.

Professor Lucien Levy-Biuhl, of the Sorbonne, was announced as exchange professor from France to Harvard for the first half of the next collegiate year.

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*Today, about 60 percent of
HSPH students are women.*

Background:
Alice Hamilton, in the lab