

*SUMMARY***ORDER OF ACADEMIC PALMS**
(*Ordre des Palmes Académiques*)

Since 1808, the Order of Academic Palms has existed in France in two empires, three kingdoms and four republics. It is an order of merit bestowed on those who hold knowledge and education are the most important expression of human dignity. It honours people who have contributed to education in France and worldwide.

By decree of 17 March 1808, Emperor Napoleon I founded the Decoration of Academic Palms, intended for professors at the University of Paris. In the beginning, the decoration was shaped as a wreath formed of two fronds, which was attached to the university toga. As did the Order of the Legion of Honour, the Academic Palms survived Napoleon's fall and continued to be bestowed under Kings Louis XVIII (1814-1830), Charles X (1824-1830), Louis Philippe I (1830-1848) and the Second Republic (1848-1852). A new form was given to the Academic Palms by decree of Emperor Napoleon III of 7 April 1866. The two grades of decoration: 1st grade - Officer of public instruction (*Officier de l'instruction publique*) and 2nd grade - Officer of the Academy (*Officier d'academis*), were since then made of gilded silver (or gold) and silver and worn on a necklet. Despite the name, the decoration had the shape of a wreath composed of an olive and a palm branch.

On 4 October 1955, French President Edgar Faure (1908-1988) issued a decree establishing the Order of Academic Palms (*Ordre des Palmes académiques*), which fundamentally changed the structure of that decoration. The grade of Commander as the highest grade was introduced, and new names of the grades of the Order were prescribed:

1. Commander (*Commandeur*), is a medal worn on a necklet,
2. Officer (*Officier*), is a smaller medal worn on a ribbon with a rosette on the left breast, and
3. Knight (*Chevalier*), is a medal worn on a ribbon (without a rosette) on the left breast.

The order is shaped as a wreath of two palm branches. The ribbon is still purple. Smaller insignia, ribbon bars, can be worn instead of the decorations. The bar for the Knight is a ribbon. The bar for the Officer is a ribbon with a rosette. The Commander's bar is similar, but the rosette is shown on a silver braid. The form of the order has not changed since 1955, and it is still awarded today.