



Commencement at UIS

The Difference between Graduation and Commencement

Graduation is the actual awarding of degrees. Upon certification of satisfactory completion of all degree requirements, the students' degrees are awarded and added to their official academic records. The date of degree conferral is the official graduation date for that term, and is the date that appears on the students' diplomas and transcripts. Official diplomas are mailed to students following degree conferral and once all financial obligations to the university have been cleared.

Commencement is a ceremonial exercise. Commencement gives students the opportunity to be recognized for their accomplishments by their families, friends and the university community. Participation in commencement, however, does not guarantee a student's graduation and official diplomas are not awarded at the ceremony. Students are eligible to participate in the spring commencement ceremony if they meet all of the guidelines for participation outlined in the spring course schedule and communicated by the Office of Records and Registration. **Please note that students can only participate in the commencement ceremony in which they are first eligible. Students cannot participate in more than one ceremony for the same degree program.** There are **no** exceptions to this criterion.

Commencement Decorum

The conferring of academic degrees is a tradition that dates back to the 12th century and is regarded as an important rite of passage for students and their families. While commencement is a time for celebration, please remember this long and respected tradition and approach the ceremony with the proper decorum and respect.

Suggested Attire

- For Women
 - Dark dress or pants, cool fabric
 - Dark low heel or flat shoes
 - No high collars or bows at the neck
 - No corsages or jewelry on the robe
- For Men
 - Dark trousers, white shirts, tie is optional
 - Dark shoes and socks
 - No sandals

Candidates for bachelor's degrees, please note that your mortarboard should be worn so that it sits parallel with the ground, with the tassel hanging to the right. During the ceremony, the officiant will ask you to move your tassel from the right front side of your mortarboard to the left as a mark of the official awarding of your degree. Master's and doctor's candidates should wear your caps with the attached tassel hanging to the left. Valuables should be left with family members or guests prior to arriving at the commencement location.

Commencement Etiquette

The Commencement exercise is a formal academic ceremony. We ask that all guests respect the ceremony, graduates and other guests by behaving in the dignified manner that the occasion merits. In keeping with decorum and tradition, we ask that guests adhere to the following guidelines.

- Plan to arrive at least an hour before the ceremony, and allow ample time to find parking and seating.
- Students who arrive after the commencement procession has begun will not be allowed to march.
- Degree candidates are expected to remain in their seats throughout the entire ceremony, except when approaching the stage to receive their diploma cover. Out of respect for everyone having their names called, all students are expected to remain quietly seated until the President confers degrees at the end of the ceremony and the President's party and University faculty have recessed.
- Cellular phones and other electronic equipment should be turned off or to their silent operating modes to help ensure that all guests can hear and enjoy the ceremony.
- Students and guests should avoid all unnecessary conversation and movement during the exercises.
- Food is not allowed in the seating area.
- Students may not bring pets, babies, or young children to participate in the ceremony with them.
- Only authorized photographers and Commencement staff are permitted on the stage area during the ceremony.
- Individuals who engage in inappropriate or disruptive behavior may be removed from the event.
- Children should be seated with a responsible adult. All guests are asked to limit their movement during the ceremony, as going in and out of the ceremony is distracting to everyone.
- Commencement begins with the academic procession. The audience is asked to rise as the procession enters and remain standing until the platform party has taken its place and the Invocation has concluded. Students will be led into their seats by staff marshals. Once in their seats, students should immediately sit down.
- Please remain silent during the awarding of diplomas. Please express your excitement in ways that will not prevent others from hearing the speaker and enjoying the ceremony.
- Please remain in your seats for the duration of the ceremony until after the recessional. Please do not block the aisles or passageways by attempting to greet or take photos with graduates.
- Commencement closes with the recessional of graduates, faculty, and platform party. Guests are asked to rise and remain at their seats until the conclusion of the ceremony.

The points listed above are meant to ensure that our graduates and guests have the most enjoyable day possible.