Below you should find the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions the Graduation Office receives in its inbox. If, after reading, you feel you we haven’t sufficiently answered your question then please contact us on graduation@essex.ac.uk or by using this online form.

Eligibility and booking:

Am I eligible to attend Graduation?

If you have passed all of your modules and been awarded your degree or diploma then you are eligible to attend Graduation.

You cannot come to Graduation if you have any debt or you are the subject of a Student Conduct investigation.

You can pay off your debts at the Cash Desk in the Student Services Hub, 1st Floor, Silberrad Student Centre on the day of your Graduation.

Alternatively, you can contact the Income Team on income@essex.ac.uk to arrange to make a payment before Graduation.

I haven’t had my exam results yet. Should I still book my place at Graduation 2020?

Yes! The first phase of ticket sales opens at 10 am on 23 April. Please make sure you go in and book your place and buy up to two guest tickets.

All tickets are sold on a first come first served basis and some ceremonies sell out fast. If you wait until your exam results come in, you may find you cannot get any guest tickets.

What happens if I buy tickets but then find I am not able to attend Graduation 2020?

Don’t worry. If you cannot attend because something outside of your control has arisen then you can request a refund from the Graduation Office by emailing us on graduation@essex.ac.uk or by using this online form.

All requests for refunds must be made by 5 pm on Friday 3 July. If an unexpected occurrence happens after that date, please contact the Graduation Office who will consider your request.

If you cannot attend Graduation because you are no longer eligible then you will automatically be refunded your ticket costs.
How do I buy tickets for my guests?

We open up our Graduation online booking at 10 am on 23 April 2020. You must confirm you are attending Graduation using this form even if you aren’t bringing any guests.

In the first phase of ticket sales, you may buy up to two guest tickets.

Please note, these tickets are not guaranteed and are sold on a first come first served basis. **We cannot guarantee that some ceremonies will not sell out in the first phase.**

In the second phase of ticket sales, we release any unsold tickets.

The amount you can purchase will be calculated by the Graduation Office and a notice will be put up on the Graduation web pages to let you know what your allowance will be.

The second phase is opened in two stages to stop the site being overloaded as students try to buy more tickets.

At 10 am all students who have ceremonies on Monday / Tuesday / Wednesday will be able to get online to buy tickets. Anybody with ceremonies on Thursday and Friday will be unable to access the site until 2 pm, so please be patient.

**My ceremony has sold out and I have more guests than tickets. Help!**

There are several options available to you.

- Check to see if you can buy reception only tickets. If your ceremony has been allocated reception only tickets you will be able to see this by going back into the online booking.
- Your guests can watch the ceremony in the free live streaming event in the Lakeside Theatre or on Square 2 under the pergola.
- Ask on the day at the Enquiry Desk in LTB 6. If we have any tickets returned we can sell them on the day. Please note: this is cash only and is strictly on a first come first served basis.

**Is there a waiting list for tickets?**

No, unfortunately, we do not have any waiting lists.

**A fellow graduand has purchased tickets but cannot come to Graduation 2020. Can I buy their tickets from them?**

Tickets are linked to the graduand who purchased them and can only be collected by that graduand. ID will be requested.
What if a fellow graduand paid for tickets, is going to Graduation 2020 but has fewer guests than originally anticipated?

Once the graduand has collected their tickets it is up to them to allocate them. Please remember that the babies and children under 5 restriction applies at all times.

**I have a guest with a baby and a child under 5. Do they need tickets?**

Unfortunately, babies and children under 5-years-old are not able to come into the ceremonies.

Each ceremony can last up to an hour and a half and once the doors are closed, guests and graduands are asked to remain seated unless there is an emergency.

Adults can take children under 5 to watch the ceremony free of charge in the Lakeside Theatre or on Square 2.

Children aged 5 and over must have a ticket.

**The ceremony:**

**I’ve got family members who don’t get on; do they have to sit together?**

Don’t worry, tickets aren’t numbered and guests can sit anywhere in the guest seating area.

**I have a guest with a disability, what should I do to make sure they have a comfortable seat?**

When you book your place and purchase your tickets make sure you fill in the Access and Disability section of the booking form.

We will then contact you to let you know the arrangements we have made for seating and parking (if required).

**Do I receive my award certificate in the ceremony?**

We print out certificates from the week after the previous Graduation event up until the 31 May of the following year.

If you received your award certificate between those times you will not have a certificate to collect at Graduation.

If your award was conferred after 31 May then you can collect your certificate after your ceremony.

**Do you read out the classification of my award in the ceremony?**

No. The Head of your School or Department will announce the course name and then you will be presented to the Chancellor or Presiding Officer in alphabetical name order.

No one will be told what degree classification you achieved and it won’t appear in the programme.
How do I make sure my name is pronounced correctly?

If you feel that your name is likely to be mispronounced the easiest way for you to ensure it isn’t is to write your name phonetically on your student ticket.

If you’re unsure how to do this then drop by the Enquiry Desk in LTB 6 and someone will assist you.

Do I have to shake hands with the Chancellor or Presiding Officer?

No. If you prefer, for cultural or religious reasons, not to shake hands then, as you approach the Chancellor or Presiding Officer, keep your arms lowered as a sign to them that a handshake is not required.

Do I have to wear a gown?

Yes. Graduation is a formal event as such all graduands are expected to wear a gown appropriate for their level of award.

You must hire your gown from our official gown supplier – Graduation Gowning Company. Their booking system will open on 25 April.

What should I wear under my gown?

Graduation is a formal ceremony and as such smart attire must be worn.

Any graduand who does not comply with the dress code may not be admitted to the ceremony.

Graduands can wear what they feel fits their gender identity and expression as long as it is ‘smart attire’.

Denim, t-shirts, trainers, flip-flops and other items of casual clothing are not deemed appropriate for Graduation events.

If you have a national dress and want to wear it, go ahead!

General questions

Can I bring our family pet?

In the Graduation Office we love animals but sadly, only service dogs are able to attend the ceremonies and receptions.

I can’t make my ceremony date; can I come to a different ceremony?

If you are unable to make your ceremony date please contact the Graduation Office on graduation@essex.ac.uk or by using this online form.

Our policy is to allow a change of ceremony only in certain mitigating circumstances such as family or personal illness. However, individual cases will be assessed.
I’m studying for a joint degree; can I go to either department’s ceremony?

Unfortunately, you have to attend the ceremony of your ‘home’ department.

For example, if you are studying a joint degree such as History with Politics then your ‘home’ department would be History and not Government.

If you are really unsure of which department you are registered under then contact us on graduation@essex.ac.uk or by using this online form

Can I defer to the next year’s Graduation?

We do allow graduands to defer to the next year but only in exceptional circumstances and only with the permission of the Graduation Manager.

If you have an exceptional reason why you cannot attend Graduation 2020 then please contact us on graduation@essex.ac.uk or by using this online form

Do I have to go to my Graduation ceremony? Will I be considered a graduate of the University if I do not attend?

If you chose not to attend Graduation 2020 then your degree will be awarded to you in your absence. This is known as graduating in absentia.

If I don’t come to Graduation 2020, how will I get my award documents?

All uncollected award documents will be posted out to you two weeks after Graduation week.

We will send all uncollected award documents to the Student Services Hub at Colchester Campus for one week so they can be collected in person or by a nominated representative.

You will receive an email in the week after Graduation to explain all of this and give you your options for receiving your documents.

I don’t understand my Assessment outcome after my exams. Can I still come to Graduation?

You may only attend Graduation if you have passed all your examinations and coursework and have been awarded a degree.

If you are unsure what your Assessment outcomes mean and whether you can attend or not please contact the Graduation Office on graduation@essex.ac.uk.

Why does attending Graduation cost so much? For example, a lot of Universities don’t charge for guest tickets.

Whilst it is true that many Universities do not levy a charge for guests to attend the Graduation celebrations, equally, a large number do.

All the revenue generated by the ticket price is used to invest in providing the best Graduation experience possible for our graduates.
We only charge for guest tickets and do not require our graduates to purchase a ticket in order to attend.

We review the costs regularly and always work to keep them as low as possible.

We also work with the suppliers of gowns, photography and other services to maximise the benefit to our graduates and maintain low costs.

All graduates attending Graduation must wear the University’s academic robes; it is a formal requirement of the day and is the same expectation as at other UK universities.

However, our research shows that we are one of the cheapest universities in the country for gown hire.

I can’t afford to come to Graduation. Can you help?

If you are experiencing financial difficulties and do not believe you are able to meet the costs of Graduation, we will be sending information out to students shortly about a financial assistance package available to those who meet certain criteria with regards to their finances.

Graduation Team

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