

SPRING 2021 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

Frequently Answered Questions

What are the dates of Spring 2021 commencement ceremonies?

UT will host in-person ceremonies May 7, 8, 9, in Neyland Stadium.

What is the schedule?

Friday, May 7, 2021 – 10:00 a.m. Haslam College of Business

Friday, May 7, 2021 – 4:00 p.m. Graduate and Professional Hooding

Saturday, May 8, 2021 – 10:00 a.m. College of Architecture and Design, College of Communication and Information, College of Social Work, Tickle College of Engineering

Saturday, May 8, 2021 - 4:00 p.m. College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, Herbert College of Agriculture, College of Nursing

Sunday, May 9, 2021 – 1:00 p.m. – College of Arts and Sciences

I'm a 2020 graduate who hasn't participated in a commencement ceremony yet. Can I participate?

Yes, the ceremonies will have capacity for 2020 graduates who have not participated in a UT commencement ceremony. All eligible 2020 graduates will receive a message to their official UT email address with registration details.

I'm a 2020 graduate and I participated in a November 2020 ceremony. Can I come back for the spring 2021 ceremonies?

Students who have already participated in a commencement ceremony will not be able to participate again.

When can I register?

Registration information will be sent to graduates' official UT email addresses. It is critical that graduates check that email address to stay updated and meet the stated deadlines.

Students with religious or cultural conflicts with their assigned ceremony may contact commencement.utk.edu for rescheduling options.

Graduates will only receive the link to register for their specific ceremony. Once we have 1,000 registrants for a ceremony, the link will close and students can sign up for a waitlist.

Wednesday, March 3, 10:00 a.m.: Registration opens for 2021 graduates

Wednesday, March 10, 10:00 a.m.: Registration opens for 2020 graduates

Thursday, April 1, 11:59 p.m.: Ceremony registration closes

Beginning Friday, April 2 (and continuing until process is complete): All ceremony confirmations sent. Unused guest tickets offered to graduates for additional guests.

What safety precautions will be in place?

- Face coverings will be required
- Graduate participation will be limited
- Guest attendance will be limited
- Graduate and guest seating will be assigned and socially-distanced
- All check-in and graduate processes will be contactless
- Staff members will undergo a health screening before they begin work
- Enhanced cleaning protocols will be in place
- Graduates will exit the field and the stadium after crossing the stage
- There will be periodic pauses in the ceremony to allow guests to leave and meet their graduate outside the stadium.

What if it rains?

Ceremonies will take place in Neyland Stadium rain or shine.

Can I bring guests?

Graduates will be allowed to invite four guests. Digital tickets will be emailed to graduates prior to the ceremonies. Guest tickets **will not** be sent earlier than April 2, and likely will be sent in late April. Graduates will be responsible for distributing tickets to their guests. Tickets will be required of all guests regardless of age.

Why are guests limited in Neyland Stadium? For football games, 25,000 were allowed in the venue.

The nature and experience of a football game and a formal academic ceremony are different. Visibility and audibility are critical for the ceremony experience. We want our guests to hear the messages of the commencement speakers, to be able to see their graduates cross the stage and hear their names called in recognition of their academic accomplishment. Supplementary audio-visual equipment will be placed to enhance the guest and graduate experience. Seating will be socially distanced throughout the lower bowl sections of Neyland Stadium on the west sideline and north and south endzones.

I'm finishing my classes this spring or summer. If I register for a ceremony, is that all I need to do?

Students must apply for graduation with the Office of the University Registrar. The registration for participation in a ceremony is a separate process.

Visit to apply: <https://registrar.utk.edu/graduation-overview/how-to-apply-for-graduation/>

Do I have to participate in a commencement ceremony to graduate?

No. Graduation is the procedure by which the university recognizes that a student has completed all necessary academic requirements. You must apply for graduation for the university to process requirements, order your diploma and finalize your academic transcript.

Commencement is the public academic ceremony where your accomplishment is recognized. You are not required to participate.

Will commencement be in Neyland Stadium from now on?

Plans are only in place for spring 2021 in response to necessary COVID-19 safety protocols. There are no current plans to change the ceremony location in future years.

Can I defer to a future ceremony?

Please direct these questions to commencement@utk.edu.

Additional questions? Contact commencement@utk.edu.