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Commencement is a new and exciting experience for many students. Below are answers to questions asked by previous graduate candidates that may help you prepare for your day. If you have a question that is not addressed below, contact commencement@gcu.edu.

Failure to adhere to university policies and commencement guidelines during the commencement ceremonies may result in a referral to our code of conduct process and may result in sanctions up to and including expulsion and revocation.

Commencement Ceremony Details

Q: What time do I need to arrive?

A: Doors will open two hours prior to the ceremony start time. We ask that you arrive one to two hours prior to the start of the ceremony to allow time for checking in and finding your seat for the ceremony. If you arrive early enough, you are welcome to do a final touch up on your regalia attire (cap and gown), meet and greet with fellow classmates and have pictures taken by our professional photography vendor. Please reference your registration confirmation email for further check-in time details.

Q: What do I do once I arrive to the campus?

A: As the graduate, you will need to enter through your designated entrance and proceed to check-in. Once checked in make your way to the Global Credit Union Arena bowl floor to be seated. Guests may enter the Arena when doors open. There will be commencement staff available to assist and answer any questions you may have or provide directions. At any point, you can find anyone with a staff name badge for assistance.

Q: Will there be a rehearsal for the ceremony?

A: There is no rehearsal for the ceremony – just come and enjoy the day! There will be commencement staff available to direct you and answer any questions you may have.

Q: How should I dress?

A: Business casual is preferred. Wear comfortable shoes; high heels are not advised. Graduates are required to wear regalia to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Q: Do I need to arrive wearing my regalia?

A: Yes, please arrive wearing your regalia. Commencement staff will be available to assist with any regalia details if needed.

Q: What if I did not purchase regalia or forgot it at home?

A: Regalia is required to participate in the commencement ceremony. Representatives from GCU's preferred vendor will be on site the day of the ceremony with items available for purchase.

Q: How long will the ceremony last?

A: Approximately an hour to an hour and a half.

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Q: Where do I park when I arrive?

A: Resident students should remain in their designated parking areas and walk to the arena. Commuter students should park in their normal designated parking area per their parking permit. There will be designated parking areas for graduates and guests. More details will be available closer to the commencement ceremony date on our website at commencement.gcu.edu. Graduate candidates registered for the ceremony will also be sent an email closer to the ceremony date with detailed parking instructions. For GCU's campus map, [click here](#).

Q: How much time should I allow to arrive at the campus?

A: Travel time varies based on your location in the Valley. Remember to allow time to park on campus and to enter Global Credit Union Arena. The following are estimated commute times, not including parking time:

- Coming from East Valley (Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler) – 45 minutes to an hour
- Coming from NE Valley (Scottsdale) – 30 to 45 minutes
- Coming from West Valley – 20 minutes

It's recommended to check traffic and construction information at az511.gov or by calling 888-411-ROAD (7623). You can also follow [@ArizonaDOT](https://twitter.com/ArizonaDOT) on Twitter for ADOT traffic information. Please allow time for parking and entrance into GCU Arena.

Please note, campus classes will be in session Monday - Friday. Traffic to and on campus may be exceptionally busy. Please plan accordingly.

Q: What is the closest airport to GCU?

A: Phoenix Sky Harbor is the closest airport to campus.

Q: Are there any travel discounts available to students and family members?

A: Yes! [Click here](#) for possible car rental and hotel accommodation discounts.

Q: Will there be photographs taken of graduates?

A: Yes, GCU's photography vendor, Pro Pics, will take professional photos of graduates on stage as well as individual portraits. Photos will be available for purchase from Pro Pics after the ceremony. There is no cost to have your photo taken and no obligation to purchase.

Q: Are personal cameras and/or video cameras allowed?

A: Yes, as long as you do not block views of others.

Q: Will I be standing for a while at any point during the ceremony?

A: You will be standing during the check-in process, but that should be no more than 5-10 minutes at a time. There will be plenty of seating for you to sit and rest if needed.

Q: What should I do if I need assistance during the commencement ceremony?

A: Contact Student Disability Services. All requests for assistance should be made at least 14 days prior to the event. Student Disability Services | 602-639-6342 | disabilityoffice@gcu.edu

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Q: What if a friend or family member needs assistance during the commencement ceremony?

A: Contact Student Disability Services and submit all requests at least 14 days prior to the event.
Student Disability Services | 602-639-6342 | disabilityoffice@gcu.edu

Q: What do I need to bring to my commencement ceremony?

A: Remember to bring all pieces of your regalia (cap and gown). GCU is not responsible for any items brought to the ceremony. Storage for personal belongings is not available. **Please note, Global Credit Union Arena will be enforcing a clear bag policy for entry.**

Commencement Seating and Guest Tickets

Q: Is there assigned seating for graduates?

A: Graduates are seated in sections on the Global Credit Union Arena bowl floor based on degree level and college. We strongly advise for you to arrive with friends and fellow classmates within your degree program/college if you would like to sit together.

Q: When will I reserve guest tickets for the commencement ceremony?

A: Registered graduates will receive an email three weeks after the registration deadline date with instructions on how to reserve guest tickets through the Global Credit Union Arena box office ticketing system. Please refer to your registration confirmation email for further details.

Q: When will I receive my reserved ceremony guest tickets?

A: When reserving tickets through the Global Credit Union Arena box office ticketing system, your tickets will be sent via email in either mobile or print at home format (depending on delivery method selected when reserving).

Q: As a graduate candidate, do I need a ticket?

A: No, you will not need a ticket. Tickets are for guests attending the ceremony. Guests will not be permitted into the Arena without a ticket.

Q: Is there an age limit for tickets?

A: Guests three years old and younger do not need a ticket; however, they will not be counted as a seated "ticket" and must be seated on a ticketed guest's lap.

Q: How many guest tickets can I reserve?

A: Registered graduates can reserve up to six guest tickets through the box office ticketing system. There will be no exceptions made as we have capacity limitations based on those who register to participate. It is the graduate's responsibility to reserve guest tickets through the box office ticketing system after completing the commencement registration process. Please refer to your registration confirmation email for further details.

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Q: What if I would like to receive more than the allotted number of guest tickets?

A: Each registered graduate will have the opportunity to reserve six guest tickets. No exceptions will be made. On the day of the ceremony, any released tickets from cancellations or guests not attending will be redistributed on a first-come, first-served basis. If you'd like to look into this option, unticketed guests can come and check for the released tickets, but we cannot guarantee any will be available. If the Arena reaches guest seating capacity, overflow provisions have been made. There will be an area for guests without tickets to watch a live stream of the ceremony.

Q: What if I do not need all the tickets I have requested after all?

A: Please return tickets you will not use to the Global Credit Union Arena box office prior to your ceremony.

Q: When should my guests arrive?

A: Guest doors will open two hours prior to the start of the ceremony. We ask that all ticketed guests arrive and be seated at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.

Academic and Commencement Inquiries

Q: Will I receive my diploma at the commencement ceremony?

A: No, you will receive your diploma after you have completed degree requirements and have filled out your graduation application with your student services counselor.

Q: Do I have to complete the graduation application to register for the commencement ceremony?

A: Commencement registration and the graduation application are two separate links. Completing the graduation application does not register you for the commencement ceremony. Commencement participation is not required, nor does it determine completion of a program.

Q: When will I receive my diploma?

A: Your diploma will be mailed to the address on file approximately 4-6 weeks after you have met all degree requirements, completed your graduation application and fulfilled all outstanding financial obligations with the university. You will receive an email alert 72 hours prior to the mailing of the diploma to update your address or other information, if needed. You will also receive a digital diploma that you can share on social media or with family and friends! Contact your student services counselor for further details.

Q: I would like to change my name on my diploma.

A: Contact your student services counselor to make the correction if it is prior to you receiving the alert. Otherwise, follow the directions you received in the email.

Q: Will my degree list any honor statuses?

A: Contact your student services counselor for further details.

Q: Will I be receiving an honor cord?

A: First-degree undergraduate students meeting necessary requirements will receive an honor cord at the ceremony. Contact your student services counselor for further details.

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Miscellaneous Questions

Q: Is Global Credit Union Arena air conditioned?

A: Yes, Global Credit Union Arena is air conditioned.

Q: Can I bring food into Global Credit Union Arena?

A: Outside food and beverages are not allowed in the Arena, unless medically necessary, with the exception of sealed bottled water. Bottled water will be available for graduates if needed.

Q: What should I expect when entering the Global Credit Union Arena?

A: Metal detectors/bag checks will be in, and a **clear bag policy will be enforced**. Please note, the following items are prohibited for Arena entry:

- Weapons of any kind, including but not limited to firearms, knives, pepper/OC spray, stun guns or brass knuckles
- Illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Noise makers
- Alcohol
- Glass bottles
- Balloons
- Flags or banners
- Wrapped packages or gifts
- Pets (service dogs only permitted)
- Strollers, wagons and car seats

Medical bags and diaper bags will be permitted. All other bags must be clear, and cannot exceed 12x12x6. Clear bags will be available for purchase at the Lope Shop (Building 24).

Q: Can I bring my pet?

A: Pets are prohibited on the GCU Campus. The Commencement Ceremonies are held in the Global Credit Union Arena which is a service dogs only facility. Emotional support animals and pets are strictly prohibited from the commencement ceremonies.

Please note, it is illegal in the state of Arizona to knowingly misrepresent an animal as a Service Animal. The Arizona Revised Statutes states that "A person may not fraudulently misrepresent an animal as a service animal or service animal in training to a person or entity that operates a public place" (ARS § 11-1024).

Q: Can I decorate my cap?

A: Yes, cap decorations are permitted. Decorations must be appropriate, not offensive and not block the view of those who will be sitting around you.

Q: Will there be a place to buy flowers on campus for the ceremony?

A: GCU has partnered with Pacific2You Flowers to bring you an assortment of flower bouquets and leis that will be available for purchase at commencement. The flower booth will be located near Global Credit Union Arena and will accept cash and all major debit and credit cards. You can also preorder at pacific2you.com/school/GCU. The pre-order deadline is one week prior to the commencement ceremony.

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Q: Am I able to carry anything across the stage with me?

A: No, graduates are not permitted to carry things across the stage (e.g. flags, banners, small children, etc.). Your hands will need to be free for safety as well as a handshake and to receive a diploma cover as you cross the stage.

If you utilize a mobility device or may need assistance, please contact Student Disability Services. All requests for assistance should be made at least 14 days prior to the event.

Student Disability Services | 602-639-6342 | disabilityoffice@gcu.edu

Q: Can a guest walk with me across the stage?

A: No, due to liability graduates cannot be accompanied across the stage. For the safety of graduates, staff and administration, guests must remain in the guest seating area.

If you may need assistance crossing the stage, please contact Student Disability Services. All requests for assistance should be made at least 14 days prior to the event.

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Q: Can I watch the ceremony if I am not in attendance?

A: Yes, the ceremonies will be streamed live online where degrees are presented, and names read, of graduates in attendance. The day of the ceremony, the live stream will be available at commencement.gcu.edu. After the ceremony, the video will be viewable on GCU's YouTube channel at YouTube.com/GCU

Q: Can I meet with my instructors?

A: Faculty members are invited to participate in commencement ceremonies. Contact your instructor directly to find out if they will be attending and visit them in the regalia changing area.

Q: Can I meet with any of my GCU counselors or graduation team?

A: Commencement is a busy time at GCU. We recommend that you arrange a date and time outside of your ceremony to meet with your GCU graduation team. Commencement staff will not be able to deliver communication or gifts on your behalf. Please contact your counselor directly to coordinate, if you'd like.

Q: Will I be able to shop for GCU gear?

A: Yes, the Lope Shop (located in Building 24) will be open the week of commencement.