

## UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER GRADUATION – Frequently Asked Questions

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## **1. ELIGIBILITY AND BOOKING**

### **1.1. Am I eligible to attend graduation?**

You need to meet the following eligibility criteria to attend graduation:

- Your award must have been agreed at least seven working days prior to the start of the ceremonies.
- You must have paid all tuition fees owing to the University. (This does not include any non-tuition fee debts.)

If you do not receive your invitation email and you believe you may be eligible to attend graduation, please email [studentcentre@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:studentcentre@westminster.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

### **1.2. Can I attend graduation if I have a Tuition Fee debt?**

If you have tuition fee debts your results will not be seen by the relevant Assessment Board and you will not receive an award. This means that you would not be eligible to attend the graduation ceremonies. Please refer to the [Student Fees and Other Charges Policy](#) available on the University website. Information on paying your fees can be found on our [Paying your fees page](#).

### **1.3. Do I have to attend graduation to graduate?**

No. You can select the option to not attend in the online booking task and your name will not be read out at the ceremony.

### **1.4. Can I defer my attendance to a future ceremony?**

Yes. When you complete the online booking task, you can choose to defer your ceremony for up to one calendar year. You will be invited to the next graduation ceremony for your course.

### **1.5. When does booking open?**

You will receive an email once booking opens:

- July ceremonies – Booking normally opens in early May
- November ceremonies – Booking normally opens in early October

### **1.6. When will the date of my ceremony be confirmed?**

All dates published on the [Graduation website](#) are provisional until you receive your graduation invitation email. We strongly advise that you **do not make any travel or accommodation arrangements** until you have received your invitation email and booked your ticket. The University of Westminster cannot take responsibility for transport or accommodation costs incurred and you make these arrangements at your own risk.

### **1.7. How do I register to attend?**

If you are eligible to attend, you will receive an email from the Student Lifecycle Team inviting you to Graduation. This email will be sent to your Westminster email and to any secondary email address that we hold for you. The email will contain a link to register for graduation. The deadline for registering is included in your email and in the online booking task. You will need to complete the online booking task even if you do not wish to attend. Likewise, you must apply to attend even if you are not buying guest tickets.

### **1.8. What if I don't receive the email inviting me to graduation?**

All invites will be sent at least 6 weeks prior to the graduation ceremony. If you do not receive an email, please contact us via the [Student Centre](#) or [COMPASS](#) immediately.

### **1.9. I am having problems with the registration system.**

If you need to reset your password, log in to our [password self-service](#) and follow the instructions. Password reset links will be sent to the personal email address you provided when

joining the University. If you experience any issues, call our Service Desk on +44 (0)20 7915 5488.

**1.10. My name is showing incorrectly on my student record when I make my booking.**

When booking your place please check that your name is correct, as it will appear as stated in the graduation brochure and on your certificate/diploma. If it is incorrect, log your enquiry via [COMPASS](#) and click 'My enquiries' alternatively, please email the [Student Centre](#) immediately.

**1.11. I have not received my results, should I book my place?**

You should not wait for your results to book your place and reserve guest tickets. You will not be asked to pay until after your award is confirmed. If you have any queries about your expected completion date, or the date your results will be published please log your enquiry via [COMPASS](#) and click 'My enquiries' alternatively, please email the [Student Centre](#).

**1.12. I have booked my place, but not completed my course successfully.**

If your award is not confirmed in time, you will not be eligible to attend the ceremony. You will then be invited to the next ceremony for your course.

**1.13. My guests/I have special requirements, how do I let you know?**

When you book your place and your guest tickets, please complete the special requirements section for yourself and/or your guests. You can go back into the booking system to add this information up to the booking deadline. If you need to notify us of any special requirements after the booking deadline, you will need to log your enquiry via [COMPASS](#) and click 'My enquiries' alternatively, please email the [Student Centre](#). We will allocate appropriate seating based on the details you provide and will only contact you if we have any queries.

**1.14. I missed the registration deadline. Can I register on the day?**

No. We cannot take registrations on the day of graduation. You must book your place and guest tickets before the booking deadline in your graduation invitation email.

**1.15. How do I cancel my place at graduation?**

Before booking closes, you can cancel at any time by re-entering the booking task through '[My Student Record](#)'. After booking has closed, you will need to log your enquiry via [COMPASS](#) and click 'My enquiries' alternatively, please email the [Student Centre](#). Cancellations cannot be made over the phone, only by email. Please make sure you quote your student ID number.

## **2. VENUES, ACCESSIBILITY & TRAVEL**

**2.1. Where are the graduation ceremonies held?**

Our ceremonies are held at the [Royal Festival Hall](#) on London's Southbank. The venue is easily accessible by public transport.

**2.2. How do I get to the venue?**

The venue is within the congestion charging zone and parking is very limited. We recommend that you and your guests travel to the venue by public transport where possible. [Plan your journey with Transport for London](#).

**2.3. What is accessibility like at the venues?**

The venue is fully accessible with spaces available for wheelchair users. Further information can be at [Royal Festival Hall Access and Facilities](#).

**2.4. Are cloakroom facilities available?**

Cloakroom facilities are managed by the [Royal Festival Hall](#) and are available at a charge per item. Students and guests should refrain from bringing large items.

**2.5. Are refreshments available at the venue?**

There are many [cafes and restaurants](#) on the Southbank.

**2.6. How do I organise travel/accommodation?**

Graduands and their guests are responsible for arranging their own travel and/or accommodation. We are unable to make recommendations.

### **3. TICKETS**

**3.1. Do I need to register for my Student Ticket?**

Yes. Although student tickets are complimentary, they are not automatically allocated and you must apply online via ["My Student Record"](#).

**3.2. How much do tickets cost?**

Tickets for Graduands are free. The price of guest tickets will be published in your invitation email.

Guest tickets for children aged 5 - 12 are free, however all children aged 5 -12 must have a guest ticket or they will not be allowed access to the auditorium. Children's tickets are included in your overall ticket allocation.

All children aged 4 and under do not require a ticket and are not included in your ticket allocation. They will need to sit on the lap of a ticketed guest as they will not be allocated a seat in the auditorium.

We are unable to seat children with graduates.

The Royal Festival Hall also has a limited number of boxes (private seating areas) for up to a maximum of four guests. If you have four guests, you will be given the option to reserve a box during the booking process.

You will not be asked to pay for the tickets you have reserved until booking has closed and your results have been published.

There are no concessions on ticket prices.

**3.3. How many guest tickets can I buy?**

You will be notified how many guaranteed guest tickets are available to purchase when you receive your invitation email. Once booking has closed, we will notify you if there are any additional tickets available for purchase and these will be sold on a first come, first served basis.

If there are still tickets available after the booking system closes, then they will be on sale on the day of graduation from the Queries Desk. However, there is no guarantee that tickets will be available on the day, so we recommend that you order all your tickets via the online booking system.

**3.4. Who can buy guest tickets?**

Only students can buy guest tickets via the Booking Task in ["My Student Record"](#). Please remember you must not disclose your login details to anyone.

**3.5. When are the deadlines for guest ticket sales?**

The deadline will be confirmed when you receive the email requesting payment.

**3.6. Can I change the number of guest tickets I require?**

Yes. You will be able to return to the online booking task up until you pay for your tickets to make any changes.

**3.7. If I don't need any guest tickets, can someone else buy them?**

No. Guest tickets can only be purchased by the graduand up to the maximum permitted to ensure fairness. You cannot purchase tickets for other graduates or ask another graduate to purchase tickets for you.

**3.8. Are the tickets posted to us?**

No. You must collect your tickets at the venue on the day of the ceremony. You must present your confirmation email to collect your tickets. Confirmation emails are sent out to students approximately 5 working days before the ceremony.

**3.9. Can guests collect my tickets for me?**

No. All tickets must be collected by the graduand. This is how we ensure that you are present at the ceremony.

**3.10. Are guest seats allocated?**

Yes. Any tickets purchased through online booking will be allocated together. If you purchase tickets at the venue on the day of your ceremony it may not be possible to seat all your guests together. If you have notified us in advance of any special requirements for your guests, then your seats will have been assigned with these requirements in mind. It is not possible to change your guest seat allocations.

**3.11. Can I bring children to the ceremony?**

Graduation is a celebration and children and young adults (up to the age of 16) are welcome to attend if they are accompanied by an adult. Please bear in mind that the ceremonies are formal occasions and can feel quite long for very young children. Please note that childcare facilities are not available at the venue. The ceremony is shown on screens in the foyers of the Royal Festival Hall, if you need to leave the auditorium with a small child you can still watch the ceremony.

## **4. VISA SUPPORT**

**4.1. How can I obtain a visa to come to London for the ceremony?**

If your visa is no longer valid, you can apply for a [Visitor Visa](#) to attend the ceremony.

**4.2. Can Westminster provide a visa letter for me or my guests?**

We can provide you with a letter, which can be used in support of a visa application/extension for you or your guests. However, we cannot include your guests' names on the letter, as the university is not responsible for inviting them.

Please log your enquiry via [COMPASS](#) and click 'My enquiries' alternatively, please email the [Student Centre](#) no later than one month before the date of your ceremony. Requests may take up to 5 working days to process.

The letter will confirm your eligibility to attend the ceremony and the date and time of the event. If you have reserved your tickets, we will also include this information. The letter will be emailed to you as a pdf document. A hard copy can be provided on request.

**4.3. I have the wrong address on my visa letter.**

The Student Lifecycle team cannot update student details. You must check these details are correct in [‘My Student Record’](#) prior to requesting the visa letter.

## **5. GOWN HIRE**

### **5.1. How do I hire my gown?**

The University of Westminster has a recommended supplier, [Ede & Ravenscroft](#) and **we recommend that you order your gown at least three weeks before your ceremony**. If, however, you opt to source your own gown independently you should check that it adheres to University of Westminster regulations.

### **5.2. I forgot to hire my gown in advance, can I hire my gown on the day?**

Yes, however it is slightly more expensive on the day and Ede & Ravenscroft cannot guarantee that they will have the correct size and gown for you. We strongly advise that you hire the gown ahead of the ceremony.

### **5.3. Where do I collect my gown before the ceremony?**

If you have hired your gown from [Ede & Ravenscroft](#), you will collect this at the venue on your graduation day. You will need your gown order confirmation.

### **5.4. Where do I return my gown after the ceremony?**

Please return it to the drop off point at the venue on the day.

### **5.5. I am no longer able to attend, can I receive a refund for the gown hire?**

As the gowns are issued by [Ede and Ravenscroft](#) you will need to contact them directly.

### **5.6. Do I have to wear a gown to the ceremony?**

Wearing a gown is advisory but not compulsory.

## **6. PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING**

### **6.1. Can I have professional graduation photographs taken on the day?**

[Tempest photography](#) will have studios set up for photographs before the graduation ceremony and throughout the day if you would like to have photos taken of yourself, your family, and friends. You are encouraged to visit the photography studios prior to your graduation ceremony to avoid the queues afterwards. We recommend that you and your guests proceed to photography immediately after gowning where possible.

### **6.2. Can I book my photography session prior to attending the ceremony?**

No. You will need to visit the photography stand on the day of your graduation. Prints can be purchased on the day, or you can order them online afterwards. You will also have the chance to buy professional photographs taken during the graduation ceremony. For more information contact [Tempest Photography](#):

### **6.3. What is the maximum group size I can have in my photographs?**

The maximum group size for photography is 6 including the graduate.

### **6.4. What time do the photography studios open and close on the day?**

Photography studios will open 2 hours before the ceremony and close promptly at 5pm.

### **6.5. Will I/my guests be able to take photos during the graduation ceremony?**

Yes, but please be considerate of those nearby if taking photographs or filming during the event.

### **6.6. I have not received my graduation photographs.**

If your studio graduation photographs have not arrived, please contact [Tempest photography](#)

**6.7. Will the ceremony be live streamed?**

The ceremonies can be viewed during the ceremony on our [Live Stream page](#)

**6.8. Will there be screens at the ceremony to watch the ceremony?**

There are several screens in the foyer where guests can watch the graduation.

**7. ON THE DAY**

**7.1. What should I bring with me on the day?**

You will need to show your confirmation email at the Registration Desk - no need to print it.

**7.2. What is the dress code on the day?**

**Graduands.** Graduation is a formal occasion. As your clothes can be seen under your gown, we recommend smart formal dress for your ceremony. Graduands are very welcome to wear national dress. Please note that shorts, denim, and trainers are not appropriate attire for a graduation ceremony. Please ensure you wear appropriate footwear for walking up and down steps and across the stage.

**Guests.** There is no dress code for your guests, but as the ceremony is a formal occasion, we would recommend all guests wear smart dress.

**7.3. Do I need to register on the day?**

Yes. The first thing that you must do when you arrive at the venue is to register at the registration desk so that we know you have arrived. This is where you will collect your ticket(s) on presentation of your confirmation email.

**7.4. Is my seat allocated?**

Yes. Seats for graduands are allocated by course and then alphabetically by surname. This is the order in which you will be presented on stage, so you must not change your seat. Your seat number will be listed on your graduation ticket. When everyone is called into the auditorium, please take your seat promptly.

**7.5. Do my guests sit with me?**

No. Guests will sit in a separate area of the auditorium. You will be able to meet up with your guests after the ceremony.

**7.6. What time should I/my guests arrive?**

We recommend that you and your guests arrive at the same time. This should be approximately 2 hours before your ceremony begins to allow enough time to register, collect your gown and have professional photographs taken. If this is not possible, guests must arrive at least 30 minutes before your ceremony begins so that you can hand over their tickets.

**7.7. What if I arrive late?**

Go straight to the registration desk to collect your tickets for yourself and your guests. A member of staff will show you what to do next. We will try and get you into the Graduation Hall at an appropriate time to graduate, but it may not be possible for you to graduate with the rest of your Course if they have already been called up to graduate.

**7.8. What if my guests are late?**



If any of your guests will be late, please leave their tickets with staff at the Queries Desk on Level 2 before you go into the auditorium. Your guests will need to show ID to collect the tickets. If the tickets are not left at the Queries Desk, we cannot guarantee access to the auditorium.

**7.9. What happens on the day of the ceremony?**

Students are strongly advised to plan their day to enable them to have enough time to enjoy all aspects of their graduation. Full details can be in On the day information.

**7.10. How long does the Graduation Ceremony last?**

Each graduation lasts between 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on the number of graduands being presented. Each graduation is followed immediately by an hour-long reception. At the end of the ceremony, you will need to stand and wait for the Academic Procession to leave the auditorium.

**7.11. How will I know when to walk across the stage?**

As the ceremony progresses, you will be called to the stage to be presented to the Vice-Chancellor. You must get-up when asked by a member of staff and remain quiet whilst waiting backstage.

**7.12. What if I am unable to shake hands at the ceremony for personal or religious reasons?**

If you would prefer not to shake hands, clasp your hands in front of you as you cross the stage.

**7.13. Will my award classification be read out or printed in the graduation brochure?**

No. Our ceremonies are inclusive, and we are celebrating all our graduating students' achievements at graduation.

**7.14. Can I be called by my nick-name or have it printed in the graduation brochure?**

Your full birth name will be printed in the graduation brochure. Your First name and Family will be read out as you cross the stage.

**7.15. Will I receive my degree certificate/diploma at the ceremony?**

No. Full details of when you will receive your documents can be found on our [Transcripts and Certificates webpage](#).

## **8. DATA PROTECTION**

**8.1. Where does my name appear in relation to graduation?**

All graduates attending graduation should be aware of the following:

- Your name (as registered with the University) will be printed in the University's graduation ceremony programme. When making your booking you will have to opt in to have your name printed, otherwise it will be excluded from the programme. This is distributed to all those attending the ceremony. Please note that your degree classification will not be printed in the programme or read out at the ceremony.
- Your name will be printed on the University's 'Class of 20xx' T-shirt. When you complete your booking, you will be given the opportunity to inform us if you do not wish for your name to be included.

**8.2. Where does my image appear in relation to graduation?**

All graduates attending graduation should be aware of the following:

- In attending the ceremony, you and your guests acknowledge that the ceremony is live streamed via the University's website.

- Your image may also appear in generic photographs that can be used for: Social Media, Future graduation programmes, Other university publications.