



Graduation Booking Policy

Terms and Conditions

Academic Year 2024/25

Eligibility to attend

1. All students must meet the below eligibility criteria to be able to attend Graduation:
 - 1.1. Students must have completed their intended award to attend Graduation or have accepted an exit award.
 - 1.2. The award must have been conferred upon the student (by the Board of Examiners for taught students or the Dean for Postgraduate Research students) by the deadline of 3 July 2025.
 - 1.3. Where a student has an appeal in progress, their eligibility to graduate is determined by their published examination results and award.
 - 1.4. As per the University's Student debt policy, students will not be eligible to attend graduation while they are in debt (educational or non-educational) to the University.
 - a. Students who have a payment plan approved with the University Income Section, where the debt is due to be repaid before the day of Graduation, may book tickets and hire their gown.
 - b. Students will not be permitted to attend Graduation until the debt is cleared; tickets and gowns will be withheld until the debt is cleared.
 - c. If a student's debt is not cleared until after Graduation, they will not be invited to a future Graduation but will be sent their Award Certificate.
 - 1.5. If a disciplinary case is ongoing, in some circumstances a student's award may not be conferred, and they may not be able to attend Graduation. Please refer to the University's [Regulations relating to Academic Affairs \(6.28\)](#).

Graduand Attendance

www1.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation

2. All eligible students will be invited to attend Graduation, but attendance is not compulsory.
3. A graduand is not permitted to attend an alternative ceremony to the one their department or programme has been allocated to.
4. All students must book their place through the online [Graduation Booking system](#) to attend Graduation.
5. If a student chooses not to attend their Graduation ceremony, they will not be invited to attend a future Graduation ceremony, unless there are exceptional circumstances and as such a formal deferral is approved.

Deferring Attendance

6. If a graduand is unable to attend their allocated ceremony, they may submit a formal request to defer their attendance at Graduation in certain circumstance.
 - 6.1. A deferral will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and each case will be considered individually by the Graduation and Awards Manager, or their appointed nominee. Circumstances which may allow for a formal deferral include:
 1. A death in the graduand's family
 2. Critical illness in the graduand's family
 3. Problems obtaining a visa to attend Graduation
 4. A pre-arranged event which cannot be easily cancelled, such as a job interview, work conference, or consultant appointment
 5. Birth of a child
 - 6.2. A graduand can submit a request to defer their Graduation attendance prior to their original Ceremony, or up to 30 days after the ceremony. Any requests received after this point will only be considered where the exceptional circumstances were still ongoing.
 - 6.3. All formal requests should be made in writing to graduation@essex.ac.uk, including supporting evidence for the exceptional circumstance.
 - 6.4. Where a deferral is approved, this does not, in any circumstances, guarantee or secure tickets for the graduand and guests to the deferred ceremony. For all approved deferrals, the graduand will need to confirm their attendance and purchase any required guest tickets via the Graduation Booking System and will be subject to the Graduation Terms and Conditions and deadlines for that Graduation.
 - 6.5. A deferral will be approved on only one occasion.

Guest tickets and attendance

7. Guest tickets for Graduation will be available to purchase at £30 per ticket and will admit the ticket holder to the Graduation Ceremony as well as the Reception afterwards, which includes light refreshments.
8. Guests will not be permitted entry to the Graduation ceremony or reception without a Guest ticket.
9. **Babies and children under the age of 5 will not be admitted into the Graduation ceremony.** Children aged 5 and over may attend the ceremony accompanied by an adult and must have a ticket purchased for them. There are no discounts for children's tickets.
10. If a ticket has been purchased for a child under 5, then a cancellation request must be submitted to the Graduation and Awards Office before the cancellation deadline to be eligible for a refund. Children under the age of 5 will not be permitted entry to the ceremony on the day.
11. For all guests aged 5 and over who do not have tickets to the ceremony, reception-only tickets will be available to purchase at £15 per ticket. They will admit the ticket holder to the Graduation reception in the Essex Sports Arena. All children under 5 attending the reception must have a reception-only ticket, which is free of charge.

Booking

12. Booking for Graduation is divided into two phases: Phase 1 and Phase 2. The opening and closing dates for each phase of booking will be clearly communicated via email to all eligible students.

Phase 1 of booking

- 12.1. During Phase 1 of booking, students can confirm their place and purchase up to 2 Guest tickets, subject to availability.
- 12.2. If a student does not purchase their 2 Guest tickets when they book their own space, but subsequently wishes to do so, they may re-access the booking system and purchase up to 2 Guest tickets at any point prior to the closing of Phase 1 of booking, subject to availability.
- 12.3. During Phase 1 of booking, it is not possible to purchase more than a total of 2 Guest tickets.
- 12.4. Please note: there is no automatic entitlement to two guest tickets per student in Phase 1. All tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

Phase 2 of booking

- 12.5. Booking for Graduation will temporarily close as the system moves from Phase 1 into Phase 2 of booking, and ticket availability is reviewed.

-
- 12.6. Any Guest tickets that remain unsold from Phase 1 of booking will be made available for purchase by students eligible to attend Graduation. This means that, for ceremonies which are not sold out, it may be possible to purchase additional Guest tickets in Phase 2 of booking.
 - 12.7. Please note: the release of additional Guest tickets in Phase 2 is entirely subject to availability, and availability will differ across ceremonies. It is likely that some ceremonies will sell out in Phase 1, and as such, additional Guest tickets may not become available in Phase 2.
 - 12.8. Where tickets are available, they will be made available to purchase via the online Graduation Booking system. The availability of tickets for specific ceremonies will be advertised on the Graduation website when known, and the number of extra tickets that can be purchased will be limited per student.
 13. All Guest tickets must be booked and paid for online. Once booking and any payment has been processed, a confirmation email will be sent to the external email address the student has registered with the University.
 14. If the confirmation email has not been received within 2 working days, please contact the Graduation Office at: graduation@essex.ac.uk. If a confirmation email is not received this may mean that a student's place and/or Guest tickets for Graduation have not been successfully booked.
 15. Where tickets are still available it may be possible to purchase Guest tickets, or reception only tickets, on the day of the ceremony (£30 per guest ticket for both ceremony and reception, £15 per reception only ticket). Please note that we cannot confirm the availability of any tickets for on the day sales in advance. Any available tickets for Guests to purchase on the day will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.
 16. Guests without tickets will not be permitted entry to the ceremony or reception but may still attend campus on the day of Graduation. The ceremony will be screened live at various locations across Colchester campus. This facility is available free of charge for additional guests without tickets, including guests under the age of 5, to watch the ceremony. Please note that seats to watch live screenings cannot be reserved and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.
 17. Tickets remain the property of the University of Essex and are non-transferable.

Collection of tickets

18. All tickets will be available to collect on the day of the Graduation ceremony; ticket collection opens two hours before the ceremony start time. It is not possible to collect tickets to Graduation in advance of the day of the event.
19. All tickets, including Guest tickets, can only be collected by the student; Guest tickets will not be issued to any individuals without the Graduand present.
20. Students will be asked to present their University of Essex or photo ID card to verify who they are when collecting their tickets.

Cancellations and refunds

21. Students who are not eligible to attend by the conferral deadline (3 July 2025) will have their booking cancelled and a full refund will be issued, they will then be invited to the next Graduation following the conferral of their award.
22. Students who have purchased Guest tickets but subsequently become ineligible to receive an award, as determined by the Board of Examiners, will automatically have their booking cancelled and a full refund will be issued.
23. Students may cancel their place at Graduation at any point but must do so before the refund deadline (17:00 - 4 July 2025) to be eligible for a refund for any Guest tickets purchased

Cancellation requests must be submitted in written email to the Graduation and Awards Office (graduation@essex.ac.uk). Requests must be sent by the student and contain the student's full name, registration number, details of the number of Guest tickets that should be cancelled, and the reason for cancellation.

24. Cancellation requests for Guest tickets received before the cancellation deadline will have a full refund processed.
25. Cancellation requests for Guest tickets received after the cancellation deadline will not be eligible for a refund, unless exceptional circumstances are presented for consideration by the Graduation and Awards Manager.
26. On the day cancellation requests must be submitted in writing to graduation@essex.ac.uk for consideration by the Graduation and Awards Manager. For more information please speak to a member of the Team at the Enquiry Desk when you collect your tickets
- 27. Students who have purchased Guest tickets but are ineligible to receive an award or attend Graduation as a result of being in debt to the University will have any refunds due off-set against the outstanding debt owed by the student to the University. Where the outstanding debt is higher than the sum of the refund, no refund will be given.**
28. All refunds will be processed after the Graduation ceremonies have taken place and will be refunded via the original method of payment.
29. The University reserves the right to postpone or cancel Graduation ceremonies, where a significant health or security risk is made apparent.

Policy Owner	Chelsey Smith, Graduation and Awards Manager Graduation and Awards team, Academic Section
Published	November 2024
Policy review date	November 2025