



Graduation Booking Policy

Academic Year 2022/23

Terms and conditions for eligibility, booking, cancellations, refunds and deferrals

1. Graduand Eligibility

- 1.1. A student becomes academically eligible for Graduation, and therefore becomes a Graduand once they meet the [full eligibility criteria](#).
- 1.2. All Graduands must meet the below eligibility criteria to be able to attend Graduation:
 - i Graduands must have completed their intended award of study to attend Graduation or have accepted an alternative or exit award which allows for Graduation attendance, this will be confirmed alongside results.
 - ii Where a Graduand has an appeal in progress, their eligibility to graduate is based upon their published results and award eligibility, potential appeal outcomes will not be considered until finalised.
 - iii As per the [University's Student debt policy](#), Graduands will not be eligible to attend graduation whilst they are in debt (educational or non-educational) to the University. Graduands who are in debt will be able book tickets for Graduation and provided the opportunity to clear their debt up until the day of their Graduation ceremony. However, the Graduand will not be permitted entry to Graduation until the debt is cleared. Graduand and Guest Graduation tickets and gowns will be withheld until the debt is cleared. If a Graduands debt is not cleared until after Graduation, they will not be invited to a future Graduation, but will be sent their Award Certificate.
 - iv If a disciplinary case is ongoing, a Graduands award may not be conferred, and they may not be able to attend Graduation. Please refer to Section 6.28 of the [University's Regulations relating to Academic Affairs](#).
- 1.3. Eligible Graduands and students who are expected to have their awards conferred within the relevant timeframes, will be invited to attend the ceremony specifically scheduled for their course, Department, School or Faculty. The Graduation eligibility timeframes for each set of ceremonies will be published annually on our webpages.
- 1.4. A Graduand is not able to attend an alternative ceremony to the one they have been allocated, as they must attend the ceremony for their specific course.
- 1.5. A Graduand is usually not permitted to defer their attendance at Graduation. A deferral will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances in line with Section 7 of this policy.
- 1.6. The University of Essex hosts two Graduation periods per Academic Year, held in Spring (March) and Summer (July).

2. **Graduand Attendance**

- 2.1. All eligible Graduands will be invited to attend Graduation, but attendance is not compulsory.
- 2.2. If a Graduand chooses not to attend their Graduation ceremony, they will not be invited to attend a future Graduation ceremony, unless a formal deferral has been approved based upon exceptional circumstances in line with Section 7 of this policy.
- 2.3. All Graduands must book their place through the Graduation Booking system.
- 2.4. All Graduands must wear the official University of Essex graduation attire, provided by our affiliated gown supplier as stated on our [website](#), which is prescribed based upon the level of qualification they are being awarded.

3. **Guest Tickets and Attendance**

- 3.1. Guest tickets for Graduation will be available to purchase at £25 per ticket and will admit the ticket holder to the Graduation ceremony and to the departmental reception.
- 3.2. Guests will not be permitted entry to the Graduation ceremony or reception without a Guest ticket.
- 3.3. Babies and children under the age of five will not be admitted into the ceremony. Children aged five 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.
- 3.4. If a ticket has been purchased for a child under five, then a refund request must be submitted to the Graduation & Awards Team before the published refund deadline (see Section 6 of this policy) to be eligible for a refund. Children under the age of five will not be permitted entry to the ceremony and any turned away on the day will not be eligible for a refund on tickets purchased.

4. **Booking**

- 4.1. 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 Graduands and stated on our web pages.
- 4.2. All bookings must be made via the Online Booking System by the Graduand using their registered external email address and passphrase.
- 4.3. Phase 1 of Booking
 - i During Phase 1 of booking, Graduands can confirm their attendance and purchase up to two Guest tickets, subject to availability.
 - ii If a Graduand does not purchase their two Guest tickets when they confirm their attendance, but subsequently wishes to do so, they may re-access the booking system and purchase up to two Guest tickets at any point prior to the closing of Phase 1 of booking, subject to availability.

- iii During Phase 1 of booking, it is not possible to purchase more than a total of two Guest tickets.
- iv Please note, there is no automatic entitlement to two guest tickets per Graduand in Phase 1. All tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

4.4. Phase 2 of Booking

- i Booking for Graduation will temporarily close as the system moves from Phase 1 into Phase 2 of booking, and ticket availability is reviewed.
- ii Any Guest tickets that remain unsold from Phase 1 of booking will be made available for purchase. This means that, for ceremonies which are not sold out, it may be possible to purchase additional Guest tickets in Phase 2 of booking.
- iii 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.
- iv 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 Graduand.

4.5. All Guest tickets must be booked and paid for online. Once booking and any payments have been processed, a confirmation email will be sent to the external email address the Graduand has registered with the University.

4.6. The University reserve the right to refuse entry or remove any Graduand or Guest from a Ceremony, Reception or Campus should they exhibit inappropriate behaviour towards one of our staff members or another attendee.

4.7. If the confirmation email has not been received within 2 working days, please contact the [Graduation & Awards Team](#). If a confirmation email is not received this may mean that a Graduand's place and/or Guest tickets have not been successfully booked.

4.8. For ceremonies with capacity, it may be possible to purchase Guest tickets, or reception only tickets, on the day of the ceremony (prices to be confirmed). 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.

4.9. Guests without tickets will not be permitted entry to the ceremony or reception but may still attend campus on the day. The ceremony will be screened live at various locations across our Colchester campus. This facility is available free of charge for additional guests without tickets, including guests under the age of five. Please note that seats to watch live screenings cannot be reserved and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

4.10. Tickets remain the property of the University of Essex and are non-transferable.

5. **Collection of Tickets**

5.1. All tickets will be available to collect on the day of the Graduation ceremony, up to two hours before the ceremony start time. It is not possible to collect Graduation tickets in advance of the day.

5.2. All tickets, including Guest tickets, can only be collected by the Graduand; Guest tickets will not be issued to any individuals without the Graduand present.

5.3. Graduands will be asked to present their University of Essex Student Card or photo ID to verify who they are when collecting their tickets.

6. **Cancellations and refunds**

6.1. 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.

6.2. Graduands may cancel their place at Graduation at any point but must do so before the refund deadline to be eligible for a refund for any Guest tickets purchased. For Spring Graduation 2023, this deadline is Friday 24 March 2023, and for Summer Graduation 2023, this deadline is Friday 14 July 2023.

6.3. Cancellation requests for Guest tickets received after the refund deadline will not be eligible for a refund, unless this is approved by Graduation & Awards Team based on exceptional circumstances presented for consideration.

6.4. Cancellation requests must be submitted via email to the [Graduation & Awards Team](#). Requests must be sent by the Graduand and contain their full name, registration number, details of the number of Guest tickets that should be cancelled, and the reason for cancellation.

6.5. Graduands who have purchased Guest tickets but are not eligible to attend Graduation due to being in debt to the University will have any refunds due offset 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.

6.6. All refunds will be processed after the Graduation ceremonies have taken place and will be refunded via the original method of payment.

6.7. All Graduation ceremonies will be subject to current UK Government event guidance. The University reserves the right to postpone or cancel Graduation ceremonies, where a significant health or security risk is made apparent. In such situations, full refunds for any Guest tickets purchased will be issued.

7. Deferrals

- 7.1. If a Graduand is unable to attend their allocated ceremony due to exceptional circumstances, they may submit a formal request to defer their attendance at Graduation.
- 7.2. Each request for deferral will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.3. It is not possible to list every circumstance which would be accepted or considered, however, some of the more obvious examples are listed below:
- i A death in the Graduands family.
 - ii Critical illness of the Graduand or a family member.
 - iii Problems with obtaining a visa to attend Graduation or travel restrictions.
 - iv A pre-arranged event which cannot be easily cancelled i.e., a wedding, work conference or consultant appointment.
 - v Birth of a child.
- 7.4. Whilst evidence may not be needed in support of an application for deferral, any evidence that can be provided will help to support the request. The Graduation & Awards Team reserve the right to request evidence where this would help them to reach a decision.
- 7.5. A Graduand must request a deferral before or immediately after (up to and including 10 working days) their original Graduation ceremony date. Any request after this period will not be considered and the Graduand will be deemed to have graduated *in absentia* and will no longer hold Graduand status.
- 7.6. A Graduand is only eligible for one deferral and all accepted deferrals will be to the next set of scheduled ceremonies i.e., a Summer Graduation deferral will be to the following Spring Graduation ceremonies.
- 7.7. Where a deferral is approved, this does not automatically guarantee tickets for the Graduand or their guests to their deferred ceremony. For all ceremonies, Graduands cannot attend without confirming their attendance and purchasing any required Guest tickets via the Online Booking System, subject to availability on a first-come first-served basis.
- 7.8. All formal request for deferral should be emailed to the [Graduation & Awards Team](#) and must include their full name, registration number, reasons for deferral and any supporting evidence, if appropriate.

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