



EAST TEXAS A&M

GRADUATION GUIDE

CONGRATULATIONS!

The graduation office is happy to assist you with the most exciting part of your educational journey. We developed the “Graduation Guide” to help students better navigate and prepare for graduation as well as prevent undue stress at the end of the semester.

We are here to help you along the way, but it is your responsibility to have everything in order. We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to use this guide as your best source for graduation information throughout the semester.

GRADUATION COMMUNICATION

The graduation office communicates with prospective graduates via LeoMail throughout the semester. Please make sure you read emails from us thoroughly.

We also have a website: www.etamu.edu/graduation.

Due to the large volume of emails we receive, we respectfully ask that you use this guide to find answers to your questions **before** emailing our office.

Undergraduates and graduates should email Graduation@etamu.edu for any general graduation related questions.

Graduate students should email GradGraduation@etamu.edu for questions specifically related to grad school or their degree requirements and their DegreeWorks audit.

Please include your CWID on all correspondence.

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IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY AND DISTINCTIONS

“Walking” in the commencement ceremony DOES NOT EQUAL graduating.

Completing all degree requirements and having your degree
awarded DOES EQUAL graduation.

Degree

This is what you earn after
completing program requirements.
Ex. Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of
Music, Bachelor of Business
Administration

Degrees are awarded 3 times per
year- May, August, and December.

Diploma

This is an official paper document,
containing the University seal and signatures
of university officials, to signify that you
received your degree.

There is no “graduation certificate” for
students who are receiving a degree.

Transcript

This is a detailed listing of all coursework you completed towards earning your degree.

Unofficial transcripts are printed on plain paper and do not have a college seal or
registrar’s signature.

Official Transcripts are the University’s certified statement of your academic record and
contain all coursework, your final GPA, any earned academic distinction, and your degree
title and conferral date.

The official paper transcript is printed on security sensitive paper and contains the
University seal and signature of the University Registrar.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

The graduation application is an informational document used to notify the graduation office of a student's intent to graduate in a given semester. The information obtained from the application is used to plan the commencement ceremonies as well as to keep track of whose degree requirements will need to be reviewed for degree conferral at the end of the semester.

The \$40 graduation application fee is non-refundable and is charged each time you apply.

The graduation application is not an order form for the cap and gown. Those must be ordered through the bookstore and purchased separately (see pg. 4).

For undergraduates, there is not an official “approval” process. If we received an application from you, it is assumed you have reviewed your degree requirements, discussed them with your advisor, and are on track to meet them by the end of the semester you applied to graduate in. This means, you will not receive a clearance or approval email from us; however, if there are issues with your requirements, we will contact you.

If you are unsure whether you are on track or not, please contact your advisor.

Please note: For Master's and Doctoral grads, the grad school does the degree checks and emails status updates. For questions about this, please email gradgraduation@etamu.edu.

Do not cancel your application without emailing us first.

APPPLICATION INFORMATION CHANGES



Please note the deadlines for making changes!

- **NAME CHANGES**- Use the following link: Personal Identification Change Request Form **no later than 3 weeks prior to graduation**. If you miss this deadline, the wrong name will appear on your diploma and in the program.
- **ADDRESS CHANGES**- We will mail your diploma to the address listed **on your graduation application**. If you need to change your address, you must email graduation@etamu.edu **no later than one week after graduation**. **Changing it in your myleo will not update our records.**
- **CEREMONY ATTENDANCE**-
 - **Requests to change from “not attending” to “attending” AFTER the graduation application deadline has passed will be handled on a case-by-case basis. You will be allowed to participate, but there may not be any guest tickets to give you.**
 - You can change to “not attending” at any time by emailing our office.

Commencement Regalia (Cap and Gown) and Merchandise

- **You are responsible for ordering your cap and gown, and it is NOT included in the \$40 application fee.**
- **Do not wait until the last minute to order it!**

TO ORDER, GO TO: www.amcbookstore.com/home

OR CALL: Texas Book Company at 903-886-5830

WHAT IS REGALIA?

Graduation regalia includes the cap and gown, as well as other distinguishing hoods, stoles, and cords that denote traditions of **academic** achievement. Please see below for more details.

Academic tradition has prescribed robes particular to the level of degree earned: Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral. Robes and caps appropriate to the degree earned may be purchased through the University bookstore. Bookstore personnel can assist degree candidates in selecting and ordering appropriate regalia if needed.

As the graduation ceremony is a dignified tradition in which to celebrate one's **academic** achievements, we strongly encourage students to follow the guidelines listed below. Students will be required to remove anything not appropriate for the ceremony. You are more than welcome to adorn yourself with any decorations you want before or after the ceremony but not during. **Failure to comply could result in dismissal from participating in the ceremony.**

CLOTHING

To enhance the dignity of the commencement ceremony, degree candidates are required to dress appropriately, particularly for the portions of clothing that are apparent under the academic robes. Nice slacks/skirts with a dress shirt or a dress that does not go below the hem of the gown are recommended. **Clean, neat, comfortable dress shoes should be worn as you will be walking down a ramp.**

CAPS

Mortarboard caps should be worn parallel to the ground with the tassel on the left. While not encouraged, students may decorate their cap with flat, tasteful decorations. They may not have any three dimensional (3D) or other standing decorations or have any hanging decorations from the sides, back or front such as ribbons, flowers or any other hanging items.

STOLES

Stoles are optional and not required. If you choose to purchase one, it should be academic in nature. Greek letters, initials, or other additions to the academic regalia should not be used.

DECORATIONS

Decorations, Greek letters, initials, or other additions to the academic regalia should not be used. Candy, flowers, or other decorations are not allowed over the regalia during the ceremony. Nothing should be worn over your regalia except appropriate cords or stoles.

Veteran's Cords- contact Dustin Pearson at Dustin.Pearson@etamu.edu

Rings, announcements, flowers, and photography- Go to www.etamu.edu/graduation and click on Commencement Regalia (Cap and Gown) and Merchandise.

Academic Distinction- Please refer to page 13.

How to wear your hood:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukzCmgtqz-Q-Q>

DOCTORAL REGALIA

Consists of:

Doctoral hood and tassel
(color depends on your major)

Doctoral gown

Doctoral cap

Example:



Doctoral Hood
2061012
\$32.99



Doctoral Souvenir Set
2061008
\$65.99

Please contact Dayla Burgin if you have questions.

MASTER'S REGALIA

Consists of:

Masters hood and tassel
(color depends on your major)

Black cap and gown

Example:



***Please make sure you select the correct hood.

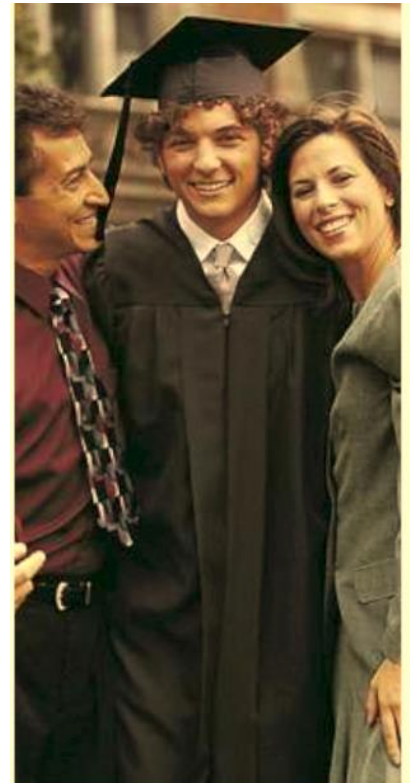
Unless you are getting a Master of Business Administration, do not select "Master Business" when you order. Most business degrees are a Master of Science.

BACHELOR'S REGALIA

Consists of:

Black cap, gown, and tassel

Example:



Your tassel should be black. If you are given a different color by a sorority, fraternity, or honors organization, we will ask you to change it out for a black one.

If you have questions, about your order, please call the bookstore at 903-886-5830.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

DATES, TIMES, AND TICKET QUANTITIES ALL DEPEND HOW MANY STUDENTS MARKED THAT THEY PLAN TO ATTEND THE CEREMONY ON THEIR APPLICATION.

WE WILL EMAIL YOU WITH THE CEREMONY AND TICKET DETAILS AND POST THEM ON THE WEBSITE APPROXIMATELY 5-7 DAYS AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE PASSES.

CEREMONY INSTRUCTIONS

It is our honor to provide you with a commencement ceremony, and we want to make it a great experience for all of you. To do so, we ask that you please be respectful and follow directions so that you, as well as our staff and volunteers, can enjoy a less stressful and overwhelming event. We will guide you through each step of the ceremony. There will not be a rehearsal.



- **BE ON TIME!!** Graduates must arrive 45 minutes before their ceremony start time. If you arrive after the ceremony begins, you will not be allowed to enter no matter what the reason is.
- Have your cap, gown, and tassel (and hood if Masters level) on or ready to put on quickly. The Graduate Entrance is on the left when you're looking at the front of the field house, and it will be labeled. Guests will NOT be allowed to enter through these doors.
- Leave any personal items that can't fit in your pocket in the car or with a family member/friend. We are not responsible for items left in rooms.
- You will check in and be directed to a "holding room" where you will find and complete your name card. **You will keep this card until it's time for you to give it to the name announcer right before you walk across the stage.** If you are an undergraduate with academic distinction (cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude), please make sure your card shows your distinction and that you get your medallion.
- All graduates should be lined up and ready to "walk" at least 15 minutes before the ceremony start time. We will line you up numerically in two lines. Your name card will tell you which line to get in.
- You will all walk in together and be seated until it is time for your row to go to the stage. You will have your picture made just before you walk. These photos will be available for purchase from Flash Photography a couple of weeks after the ceremony. They will use the information you put on your card to email you the proofs.
- Before you cross the stage, you will give your name card to the announcer and let them know how to pronounce your name as well.
- After you walk, you will return to your seat until the ceremony is over. You may use the restroom, but do not leave your seat for any other reason. Graduates will walk out together and are not permitted to leave early. The ceremony usually lasts no more than 1.5 hours.

The week of graduation, we will be at the field house all day on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, so we will probably not be available for last minute phone calls and emails. **Please make sure you are prepared and ask any questions you have no later than the Wednesday before graduation.**

GUEST INSTRUCTIONS

LOCATION

University Field House

1804 Lee St.
Commerce, TX
75428.

Doors will open for guests one hour before the ceremony begins.

PARKING

Parking lot 4 is reserved for handicapped parking only. You must have the proper verification to park in this lot. The entrance to lot 4 is on Bois D'Arc St.

The closest parking lots are lots – 1, 2, 3, and 5.
- Shuttle buses are free of charge and will be rotating throughout the parking areas approximately every 15 minutes.

GUESTS

Guests should make sure they can access their tickets BEFORE they arrive to the ceremony and have them ready to be scanned BEFORE entering the building.

Guests must enter using the entrance on the right side at the front of the building. It will be labeled "Guest Entrance"

ACCESSIBILITY

The bottom two rows of bleachers are reserved for guests with disabilities. Representatives from the Student Disability Services office will be available to assist. We do not have a wheelchair to be used for seating during the ceremony or for transportation to and from vehicles.

A campus map can be found at <https://www.etamu.edu/directions/>.

All ceremonies will be live-streamed. The livestream will be shown in the Rayburn Student Center for additional guests (those without tickets) to view. We will post the links on our website (<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/graduation/ceremony.aspx>) the week of graduation.

ACCESSIBILITY

- If you are a student needing accessibility accommodations, please email our office and cc: StudentDisabilityServices@etamu.edu.
- The bottom two rows of bleachers will be available for guests with physical disabilities. This means the disabled guest and a companion can sit in this section. We do not “reserve” this section for an entire party.
- Guests in wheelchairs will have floor seating, and a representative from our staff will assist with the location. We do not provide a wheelchair for guests to use during the ceremony, for transportation to and from their vehicle, or for seating. The chairs we have are for emergency use only.

CEREMONY PHOTOS

- Flash Photography will take individual photos just before you get on stage and again when you are handed your diploma cover (diplomas will not be in there because we will not have awarded degrees yet).
- You will receive an email from them 2-3 weeks after the ceremony that contains the proofs and options for purchasing the photos.

CLEAR BAG POLICY

A clear bag policy will be enforced at the commencement ceremonies for everyone. Please make sure you have informed your guests.

ALLOWED

Clear plastic, vinyl, or PVC bags- no larger than 12"x 6"x 12"; small clutches/wallets

NOT ALLOWED

Clear bags that have buckles, hardware, or décor concealing the bag

Backpacks, regular size purses, large totes, diaper bags, or other similar items



CEREMONY TICKETS

The commencement ceremonies are ticketed events unless other information is provided to you by the graduation office.

ALL TICKET INFORMATION, INCLUDING HOW TO CLAIM YOUR TICKETS, WILL BE SENT TO YOU THROUGH YOUR SCHOOL EMAIL APPROXIMATELY 5-7 DAYS AFTER THE GRADUATION APPLICATION DEADLINE.

Tickets are calculated using a very simple formula:

The # of seats available for guests at the venue divided by the # of students planning to attend the ceremony = the # of tickets per graduate.

This number will be the maximum number we can give you without going over occupancy limits. If students decide not to attend, they will be responsible for offering their tickets to someone else. We will not be keeping track of that nor do we have control over the number of students who are “no shows” the day of the ceremony.

FOR THIS REASON, WE DO NOT OFFER EXTRA/ADDITIONAL TICKETS NOR DO WE FACILITATE THE TRANSFER OR SHARING OF TICKETS AMONGST GRADUATES. GRADUATES ARE WELCOME TO SET UP THEIR OWN GROUPS AND CHATS ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR THROUGH VARIOUS APPS TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT TICKETS, BUT THIS WILL NOT BE DONE THROUGH THE GRADUATION OFFICE.

To be clear, we will not respond to emails asking for extra tickets.

Each ceremony is distinct, so tickets for one ceremony will not work for another one, and tickets cannot be scanned more than once.

Tickets are **FREE**. We do not sell tickets to students or the public. Tickets can only be accessed by the graduates themselves.

OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICE REQUIRES THAT ALL GUESTS, REGARDLESS OF AGE, HAVE A TICKET.

Graduates themselves do not need a ticket.

ACADEMIC DISTINCTION AND HONORS

Academic Distinction is only given to undergraduates and is determined approximately three weeks before graduation using the Institutional GPA (GPA of courses taken at East Texas A&M) from the **prior semester** as final grades will not have officially been posted at the time of the ceremony. Students who achieve academic distinction will be provided a medallion (at no cost) on the day of the commencement ceremony. Stoles and cords are not provided for academic distinction.

If you are in the College of Innovation and Design (competency-based) you may or may not have distinction at the time of the ceremony. If you look at the top of your DegreeWorks and there is no institutional GPA listed, then you have not taken courses with us previously and will not have any prior ETAMU grades to pull distinction from. We will, however, update your GPA and award any earned distinction once final grades are processed.

Levels of distinction:

Summa Cum Laude 3.90-4.00

Magna Cum Laude 3.70-3.89

Cum Laude 3.50-3.69

Your Institutional GPA can be found at the top of your DegreeWorks audit as shown below.

Student ID
[REDACTED]

Name
[REDACTED]

Degree
BS-Bachelor of Science

Advanced search

Level	Undergraduate	Classification	Sophomore	Major	Chemistry	Program	BS in Chemistry	College	Science & Engineering	Advisors	Abigail Parmer
Academic Standing	Good Standing	Institutional Hours	14	Overall Hours	57	Transfer Hours	43	Institutional GPA	3.714	Overall GPA	3.824
Transfer GPA	3.860	Holds	FR	TSI Math	College Ready	TSI Reading	College Ready	TSI Writing	College Ready		

HONORS

Honors, High Honors, and Highest Honors are awarded, as determined by the Hearing Committee, to students in the Honors College based on defense of their thesis. The Honors College provides pins and fourrageres as well as stoles for Regents Scholars.

Distinction and honors will be listed in the program and will be announced with the student's name as they cross the stage. If your distinction level changes after the ceremony, we will be happy to exchange your medallion.

Due to the inherent nature of the higher required GPA for Masters and Doctoral candidates, academic distinction and honors are not recognized at these levels.

DEGREEWORKS AUDIT

It is ultimately the student's responsibility to know if they will or have met degree requirements. You can determine this by learning to read your DegreeWorks audit.

If you are missing degree requirements, there will be a **red circle** next to what is missing. To receive your degree, there cannot be any red circles, and your audit must show 100% complete at the top.

There is a Quick Guide for Students that is available online using the link below.

<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/DW%20quick%20guide%20for%20students.pdf>

Being able to understand your audit empowers you with knowledge and prevents surprises from occurring such as transfer credits not showing up correctly or missing hours you didn't know about.

By monitoring your DegreeWorks and discussing issues with your advisor, there should not be any surprises at the end of the semester. There are times, however, when a student will not meet degree requirements for various reasons. If the graduation office determines this is the case prior to the commencement ceremony, the student will not receive their degree and participation in the ceremony will be handled on a case-by-case basis depending on multiple factors.

If a student does not meet degree requirements after the final graduation check, the student will be processed as "will not graduate" and will not receive their degree. If the student "walked" in the ceremony, they cannot walk again but will still have to reapply and repay the graduation fee in another semester. The student should mark "not attending" on the subsequent graduation application.

Primary reasons a student does not graduate as expected:

- Dropped classes or short the number of required hours
- Failed a required course/did not pass comps
- Did not complete thesis
- Did not submit transfer transcripts

DEGREES, DIPLOMAS, AND TRANSCRIPTS

Final grades for the semester will not be officially posted until the Wednesday after the ceremony.

Once grades are posted and “rolled” by the Registrar, we will do a final check of degree requirements on every student who applied for graduation. **This process can take up to three weeks.**

****If you are in the College of Innovation and Design, your degree will be awarded at the same time as everyone else’s even if you finish early**.**



TRANSCRIPTS

Once you receive the email letting you know your degree has been awarded, you can order an official transcript here www.etamu.edu/transcripts. For transcript questions, email transcripts@etamu.edu. Our office does not order them for you. Your first official transcript is free. The company we use for transcripts now charges \$8 for additional official transcripts.

AWARDING OF DEGREES

Students whose DegreeWorks audit shows 100% complete are awarded first. The only way we know if a student is 100% complete is if when we go down the list student by student and look at their DW audit. There is no report that gives us this information, so it’s literally just one by one.

Any audits that show “Incomplete” will be skipped and reviewed after all others have been awarded. We will email you when your degree has been awarded. Please do not email us asking what your DegreeWorks shows as you can access this information. If there is a problem, we will contact you.

IF YOU OWE MONEY TO THE UNIVERSITY, YOU WILL HAVE A TRANSCRIPT HOLD OR A T4 HOLD ON YOUR STUDENT ACCOUNT, WHICH WILL PREVENT YOU FROM RECEIVING YOUR DIPLOMA. OTHER HOLDS DO NOT AFFECT YOUR DIPLOMA OR TRANSCRIPTS.

- Students who received title IV funding will be able to get an official transcript, but your diploma will still be held until the balance is paid.
- Students with a transcript hold who did not receive Title IV funding, will not be able to get an official transcript or their diploma until the balance is paid.
- **It is the student’s responsibility to notify the graduation office when transcript holds have been cleared. We will not know to mail your diploma if you don’t tell us.**
- If you have paid your balance, but your account still shows a hold, please contact student accounts to have it removed.

The graduation office cannot answer questions about transcript holds, balances owed, or take payments.

You can view holds and make payments in your myLEO portal by clicking on View Holds or under the Student Resources tab. You can also contact Student Accounts at student.accounts@etamu.edu or by calling 903.886.5044.

DIPLOMAS

Diplomas will be printed in bulk after ALL degrees have been awarded. Again, it will likely take 3-4 weeks after graduation for this to happen.

Once diplomas have been printed, we will email you with the dates that they will be available to pick up from our office. Any diploma not picked up during the designated time frame will automatically be mailed to the address we have on file.

If we mail your diploma to the wrong address because you didn't email us with the correct address, it will be your responsibility to pay to have it resent.

You do not have to notify us as to whether you plan to pick up or if you prefer that it be mailed.

If you are having your diploma shipped internationally, there will be a shipping fee, and we will notify you of the amount prior to shipping.

You can expect to receive your diploma approximately 5-7 weeks after graduation.

We do not provide individual tracking numbers due to the large volume of diplomas that get shipped at one time.

IMPORTANT:

Majors are not printed on the diplomas.

Several years ago, university officials made the decision to omit the name of the academic major from the diploma. The degree earned is the official degree approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the A&M System. Majors are printed on official transcripts and will not appear on your diploma unless it is actually part of the degree name. **You can find your degree information in the top right corner of your DW audit.** A few examples of different degrees are shown below.

Degree BAAS-Applied Arts & Sciences	Degree BBA-Bachelor of Business Admin	Degree BM-Bachelor of Music
Degree BSCJ-Criminal Justice	Degree BA-Bachelor of Arts	Degree BS-Bachelor of Science

A Bachelor of Science is the most common undergraduate degree at ETAMU. The BSCJ is a good example of a degree that has the major as part of the degree name. Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Nursing are other examples. Most education majors will receive a Bachelor of Science. We do not have a Bachelor of Education degree. A BBA will not show accounting or finance or marketing, etc. The same is basically true for Master's level degrees, but again, most Master's degrees will be Master of Science- including most business and education majors.

If you have a double major under a single degree plan, you will receive one diploma. Students cannot pursue two different undergraduate degrees at the same time.

TEACHING CERTIFICATES

Any student receiving a teaching certificate can contact the College of Education, Certification Office by calling (903) 886-5182 or by going here:

<https://inside.etamu.edu/academics/colleges/educationHumanServices/educatorCertificationAcademicServices/default.aspx>

GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

Graduate Certificates are issued by the graduate school. You can contact them by calling (903) 886-5163 or email: GradGraduation@etamu.edu.

DUPLICATE DIPLOMA REQUESTS

If you have already received your original diploma and wish to purchase a duplicate, you can order one online using the link below. There is a fee of \$30.

[*online purchasing through our storefront*](#)

APOSTILLE AND DIPLOMA NOTARY INFORMATION

If you need an apostille or your diploma notarized, please notify the graduation office at Graduation@etamu.edu. The Registrar's office can notarize original Texas A&M University-Commerce diplomas or duplicate diplomas. For more information about apostille and the diploma notarization process, please visit the [Apostille Information](#) page on our website.

WE WISH YOU A BRIGHT AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE!

Thank you for choosing Texas A&M- Commerce to receive your degree. We invite you to check out <https://www.etamu.edu/alumni/> to learn more about our alumni services. We also encourage undergraduates to further their education with us. Information about our graduate programs can be found here <https://www.etamu.edu/grad/>.

ARCHIVES

Archives of past commencement videos and programs are available on our website.

<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/graduation/videos.aspx>

<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/graduation/commencement-programs.aspx>



