

Below is a list of important information for Concordia-Chicago graduates, family and friends with answers to many frequently asked questions. If you do not find the answer to your specific question, please contact the Commencement Team at Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMENCEMENT

While all academically eligible students can and should register to participate in the Commencement ceremonies before the October 28 deadline, payment of all financial obligations to the university and the removal of all holds with the Office of Student Business Services must be made to actually participate in the Commencement Ceremony. If the student has had extraordinary expenses that have not allowed them to meet their financial responsibility, they can submit an appeal to the Office of Student Business Services at least two weeks before the Commencement Ceremony. If the appeal is approved, the student has to complete a payment plan agreement with the Office of Student Business Services to participate in the Commencement Ceremony. The Graduation Ceremony Appeal Form can be [found in the CUC portal](#).

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS & LOCATIONS

Concordia-Chicago is planning to host the following in-person Commencement celebrations on our River Forest campus.

Commencement Weekend for December 2023 Graduates

Friday, December 15, 2023

4 p.m. Doctoral Commencement Ceremony
Doctoral graduates do not need to return to campus Saturday.

7:30 p.m. Baccalaureate Service of Praise and Consecration
Students of all levels of study & vocations are invited to worship.

Saturday, December 16, 2023

10 a.m. Bachelor's Commencement Ceremony

3 p.m. Master's Commencement Ceremony

Spring Commencement for May Graduates

Schedule of events is in discussion and ceremonies will be held on May 3 & 4, 2024.

Where is Commencement Held?

Concordia University Chicago's Commencement takes place in person in Geiseman Gymnasium. GPS location is 7400 Augusta Street River Forest, IL. The gymnasium is located in the center of campus. The gym's main entrance is located on the east side of the building. ([View on Campus Map](#))

Where is Baccalaureate Held?

Concordia University Chicago's Baccalaureate Service of Praise & Consecration takes place in person in The Chapel of Our Lord. ([View on Campus Map](#))

What is Baccalaureate? Are Graduates Required to Attend?

Concordia University Chicago's Baccalaureate Service of Praise & Consecration takes place in person in The Chapel of Our Lord. ([View on Campus Map](#)). This worship service is an opportunity to celebrate through our Lutheran Christian Faith utilizing music, scripture readings and prayers. A guest preacher shares a homily message, and special prayers are offered for all graduates to bless their future vocations. The service typically lasts between 60 – 90 minutes. Graduates are not required to attend. Those graduates completing degrees and certifications in professional church work vocations are strongly encouraged to participate.

Can I Reserve Seating for Commencement?

Reserved seating is not provided at Commencement. Doors open for guests one hour before each ceremony. Seating is available on a first come, first serve basis.

How Long Does the Commencement Ceremony Last?

The length of a commencement ceremony can vary each semester due to the number of graduates participating. A commencement ceremony typically lasts about 90 minutes to celebrate 150 graduates.

Where Can Graduates and Their Guests Park?

Graduates are requested to utilize free and ample parking in the University's parking structure entered from Bonnie Brae Street. Additional parking is available throughout campus lots. Street parking is also available on Bonnie Brae and Division Streets. Parking is not available on Augusta Street. ([View on Campus Map](#))

Where Do Graduates Report When Arriving on Campus?

Upon arrival, all graduates should report to the Check In Tables in the Geiseman South Gym. The gymnasium is located in the center of campus. The gym's main entrance is located on the east side of the building. ([View on Campus Map](#)) Graduates should arrive fully dressed in regalia, *no later* than 45 minutes prior to the start of your ceremony.

Will the University Host a Rehearsal before the Commencement?

Concordia-Chicago does not hold a Commencement Rehearsal before the ceremony. An informational video is being prepared to help graduates understand what to expect during the celebration weekend. We anticipate sharing these details in late April.

Where Can I or My Guests View the Livestream of the Ceremony/ies?

The livestream for each Commencement service and ceremony can be found at [CUChicago.edu/Live](https://cu-chicago.edu/live). The feed can also be found through the [Concordia-Chicago's official Facebook page](#).

After the ceremony concludes, links to on demand versions of the ceremony will be posted.

SUPPORT FOR MOBILITY CONCERNS

Where Can Graduates and Guests with Mobility Concerns Park?

Handicap parking closest to the gymnasium is located on the northwest side of the university parking structure. ([Parking Lot 5 on Campus Map](#))

What Special Seating Do You Provide for Graduates with Mobility Concerns?

Accessible seating can be arranged in advance for any graduates with concerns for entering the gymnasium or crossing the Commencement stage. Please enter your request during registration or contact the Commencement Team with additional details at Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

If you did not find the answer to your question, email Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

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Do You Have Any Special Seating for Guests with Mobility Concerns?

Accessible seating for guests with mobility issues or unable to climb bleacher steps. This designated seating is available for up to two guests, meaning another guest from the same household can join an individual with needs. A limited number of wheelchairs are available. Upon arrival, please see an Usher for seating assistance.

Where Can Graduates & Guests Access the Shuttle?

To further assist graduates and guests with mobility issues, a six-seat golf cart shuttle will operate in a continuous loop from the handicap parking lot ([Parking Lot 5 on Campus Map](#)) and University parking structure to and from Geiseman Gymnasium. The shuttle will be available continuously during the 60 minutes prior the ceremonies and 60 minutes after the ceremonies. The shuttle *will not operate* during the ceremony. Please wait near a shuttle stop sign, located at the exit of the University parking structure and by the handicap parking lot.

LODGING

Where Should I Stay During Commencement Weekend?

Visitors to the CUC campus have access to many accommodations within the Oak Park-River Forest community and the wider region. We recommend The Carleton of Oak Park, or any number of properties in the Elmhurst and Rosemont area near O'Hare Airport.

PHOTOGRAPHY & KEEPSAKES

Who Will Be Taking Photographs During the Ceremony?

Grad Images, the University's official commencement photographer, will take graduates official commencement portrait. Photo proofs taken during the ceremony will be emailed directly to you from Grad Images and will be available for purchase directly from their website. [Visit Grad Images Online](#).

Where Can My Guests Take Photographs During the Ceremony?

Photography is only allowed from seating area. Please encourage guests not to stand in the aisle. Flash and tripod photography is also not allowed in the gymnasium.

Where Do You Recommend My Guests Meet to Take Photographs After the Ceremony?

Be sure to arrange a designated location to meet your guests after the ceremony. To avoid hindering graduates' exit, guests should avoid gather around the south or east entrances of the gymnasium

Suggested locations for graduates to meet guests are the Photo Stops at Ferguson Art Gallery in Kretzmann Hall, the Hallways of Krentz Center, the Pillars in front of Addison Hall, or in the Triangle (center of campus). ([View Locations on Campus Map](#))

What are the Size of CUC Diplomas So That I Can Order a Frame?

Concordia-Chicago diplomas are sized as follows:

Associates, Bachelor's and Master's Diplomas	11" wide x 8 ½" high
Doctoral Diplomas	14" wide x 11" high

What Keepsake Items are Available to Celebrate My Graduation?

Jostens, our commencement regalia partner, has joined [the Campus Store](#) to offer many personalized, commencement-related products. [Visit the Concordia-Chicago store at Jostens.com](#) to find custom diploma frames, personalized graduation announcements as well as class rings.

If you did not find the answer to your question, email Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

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Select items are also on display and for sale at the Campus Store located in the lower level of the Koehneke Community Center. During Commencement Weekend the bookstore will open one hour before the start of each ceremony and close within the hour after it ends.

DIPLOMAS, FEES & TRANSCRIPTS

How Do I Know if I Qualified for Graduation?

Students should work with their academic, faculty and/or graduate services advisors to determine if they have met the criteria to complete their degree in the semester they plan to graduate.

When and Where Do I Submit an “Intent to Graduate”?

The Commencement Team begins working with students once they have filed their “Intent to Graduate” form found in the [Concordia Connect](#) online portal. Students are expected to celebrate within the semester their Intent to Graduate is submitted.

Submission deadline for each semester is March 1 – Spring, June 1 – Summer, October 1 – Fall

My program will complete in May. Can I Participate in Spring Commencement Instead?

University leadership has approved that Undergraduate students, including those in the Accelerated Degree Program, within six (6) credit hours left to complete during the summer term are eligible to walk during the spring commencement.

What Does Concordia-Chicago’s Graduation Fee Cover?

The graduation fee is charged to all graduates upon submission of the Intent to Graduate Form. This fee is an administrative charge that covers fees associated with audits, transcripts, diplomas. The fee does not cover participation in the ceremony or academic apparel (cap and gown), which is an additional expense. The fee is the same for ceremony participants and non-participants.

When Can I Expect to Receive My Diploma?

In the weeks following a graduate’s final semester, the team in the Office of the Registrar conducts an audit on all coursework completed to determine if all degree requirements have been met. Degrees are issued upon the successful completion of this review. All payments to student’s account must be paid in full prior to receiving your diploma. Further questions about your degree can be answered by the [Office of the Registrar](#).

Jostens, our keepsake partner, distributes diplomas directly to graduates. NOTE: Fall graduates diplomas are mailed in mid February. Summer graduates may receive their diploma *before* Commencement as they are invited to walk in the fall ceremony.

What are the Size of CUC Diplomas So That I Can Order a Frame?

Concordia-Chicago diplomas are sized as follows:

Associates, Bachelor’s and Master’s Diplomas – 11” wide x 8 ½” high
Doctoral Diplomas – 14” wide x 11” high

My diploma arrived damaged. How can I get a replacement?

In order to receive a new diploma, please fill out the [Diploma Reorder Form](#) attached and submit to the Office of the Registrar via email at registrar@cuchicago.edu.

If you did not find the answer to your question, email Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

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I lost my diploma, how can I get a new one?

In order to receive a new diploma, please fill out the [Diploma Reorder Form](#) attached and submit to the Office of the Registrar via email at registrar@cuchicago.edu.

REGISTRATION & TICKETING**Can I Get More Than Four (4) Tickets for December 2023 Commencement?**

Due to capacity restrictions, the University is unable to guarantee or fulfill any requests for additional guest tickets in advance of the ceremony.

Doctoral graduates will be issued six (6) guest tickets in advance.

Master's and Bachelor's graduates will be issued four (4) guest tickets in advance.

Limited additional guest tickets *may be available* on the day of the ceremony. Graduates can request additional guest tickets at check-in until depleted. The check-in table officially opens one hour before each ceremony.

Do Babies/Young Children Need a Ticket for Commencement?

Every person requires a ticket – no matter his or her age or mobility – for the Commencement ceremony. This guideline is in place due to building capacity limits set by the Fire Marshal and not by the number of seats occupied. We appreciate your understanding to provide the safest opportunity for every graduate. Please be sure to plan guest count accordingly with your ticket request.

Do Graduates Need a Ticket for Commencement?

Graduates do not require a commencement ticket to participate in the Commencement procession and enter the ceremony. Each of their guests must have a digital ticket to enter the gymnasium.

Can I Still Register if I Miss the Deadline for December 2023 Commencement?

The Commencement Team will do its best to accommodate all graduates but we ask participants to register by the published deadline. Should your plans change, please send an email to Commencement@CUChicago.edu. A representative from the Commencement Team will do its best to follow up within one business day.

When Will Registration Open for Future Commencement Ceremonies?

Registration for the Fall 2023 Commencement Ceremonies will open after October 1, 2023.

ACADEMIC APPAREL

Concordia Chicago's partner for academic apparel is [Jostens](#). A specialized online ordering form is created for each commencement. Orders are due six weeks prior to the celebration to help ensure arrival at designated delivery location in time for the ceremony. **Regalia orders for December 2023 are due Friday, October 20.**

What are the Costs for Commencement Academic Regalia?

May 2023 Commencement regalia costs are

Degree Level	Purchase Price
• Undergraduate Package (gown, cap & tassel)	\$69.99
• Master's Package (gown, cap, tassel & hood)	Starts at: \$102.99
• Doctoral Package (basic gown, tam w/tassel & hood)	Starts at: \$199.99

[Fine Quality Master's & Doctoral Robe](#) details available online.

If you did not find the answer to your question, email Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

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Do I Have to Wear a Cap & Gown to Participate in Commencement?

All Commencement participants are required to wear academic apparel during this formal ceremony. Only CUC-approved regalia including stoles, cords and medallions should be worn at graduation. Decorative items may only be worn after the ceremony.

When and Where Can I Pick Up My Regalia From Campus?

Graduate students choose to ship apparel to their homes. Bachelor's apparel shipped to campus can be picked up at the Grad Finale on Wednesday, December 6 in the bookstore on the lower level of Koehneke Community Center. Please make sure you check your apparel as soon as you receive it.

What if I Missed the Deadline to Order Regalia for Commencement Weekend?

Please email Amanda Allen at the Campus Store at aallen@slingshotedu.com to inquire how the team can serve your needs. Please include in the email graduate height, weight, degree level (BA/MA/DR), major and graduation year.

If the Campus Store team is unable to assist, please email Commencement@CUChicago.edu with your request. A representative from the Commencement Team will do their best to follow up within one business day.

Can I Customize/Alter My Regalia?

Only CUC approved regalia including stoles, cords and medallions should be worn at graduation. Please do not wear such items received from institutions, clubs, or organizations not affiliated with Concordia-Chicago. Decorative items may only be worn after the ceremony. Please do not alter the length or style of your gown. Hoods and doctoral tams should not be customized.

Can I Decorate My Cap or Doctoral Tam?

Modest personal embellishments are permitted on the top of the Undergraduate/Graduate Cap but additions should not extend over the edge. Any embellishment to your cap must be appropriate. Caps must lay flat. Doctoral Tams may not be altered.

How Do I Know If I Have The Right Color Tassel?

For undergraduates, the color of the tassel denotes the discipline represented by the degree(s). The colors associated with the different degrees awarded by Concordia-Chicago include:

Business / <i>Drab (light brown)</i>	Communication / <i>Crimson</i>	Education / <i>Light Blue</i>
Fine Arts / <i>Brown</i>	Law / <i>Purple</i>	Letters, Humanities / <i>White</i>
Music / <i>Pink</i>	Philosophy, Political Science / <i>Dark Blue</i>	Physical Education / <i>Sage Green</i>
Sports Leadership / <i>Sage Green</i>	Psychology / <i>Gold</i>	Science / <i>Golden Yellow</i>
Social Work, Sociology / <i>Citron</i>	Theology / <i>Scarlet</i>	

For Master's graduates, the tassel is simple black as the degree discipline is indicated on the graduate's hood. For Doctoral graduates, the tam tassel is gold.

How Do I Know If I Have The Right Color Hood?

The color of an academic hood lining designates the university from which the degree was granted. Concordia-Chicago hoods have a maroon background of the college's primary color with a chevron of gold. The color of the velvet facing of the hood denotes the discipline represented by the graduate's degree. The trim (facing) colors associated with the degrees awarded by Concordia-Chicago include:

Business / <i>Drab (light brown)</i>	Clinical Mental Health / <i>White</i>	Communication / <i>Crimson</i>
Education / <i>Light Blue</i>	Exercise Science / <i>Gold</i>	Fine Arts / <i>Brown</i>
Gerontology / <i>Citron</i>	Grant Writing / <i>White</i>	Human Services / <i>White</i>

If you did not find the answer to your question, email Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

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Leadership Studies / <i>White</i>	Liberal Studies / <i>White</i>	Law / <i>Purple</i>
Letters, Humanities / <i>White</i>	Music / <i>Pink</i>	Philosophy, Political Science / <i>Royal Blue</i>
Physical Education / <i>Sage Green</i>	Psychology / <i>Gold</i>	School Counseling / <i>Light Blue</i>
School Leadership / <i>Light Blue</i>	Sports Leadership / <i>Sage Green</i>	Science / <i>Golden Yellow</i>
Social Work, Sociology / <i>Citron</i>	Theology / <i>Scarlet</i>	

ACADEMIC HONORS

What does Graduation “With Honors” for Undergraduates Mean?

At Concordia-Chicago Academic Honors are awarded for undergraduate degrees only and based on undergraduate credits and GPA earned in classes taken at or through Concordia-Chicago (only). Academic honors are described by the Latin phrases based upon the following GPA ranges:

- GPA of 3.50 – 3.69 Cum Laude (“with praise” or “with distinction”)
- GPA of 3.70 – 3.89 Magna Cum Laude (“with great praise” or “with great distinction”)
- GPA of 3.90 – 4.00 Summa Cum Laude (“with highest praise” or “with highest distinction”)

How is Graduation “With Honors” Determined for Undergraduates?

To graduate “with honors,” a student must have earned at least 60 hours in residency at CUC, including the final semester before graduation. At least 42 of the 60 hours must be GPA hours. The cumulative grade-point average will include only work completed at Concordia-Chicago, excluding the last semester prior to graduation. ([See Academic Catalog](#))

NOTE: Credits earned at other schools count only toward degree completion, not GPA, and therefore not toward Academic Honors.

As an Undergraduate, I was expecting Academic Honors. What happens if I do not see my name listed?

For recognition in the commencement ceremony, students’ GPA and credits are calculated through their second to last semester. The final semester grades, which have not yet been finalized, cannot be included for honors to be recognized. Adjustments are made to diplomas and transcripts as warranted after inclusion of final semester grades and credits. If you have any questions or concerns about your credits, GPA, or qualification, please contact the [Office of the Registrar](#) at Registrar@CUChicago.edu.

As a Graduate Student, What Academic Honors Recognition Can I Expect?

We are very proud of students at every level able to maintain high standings while completing their studies. However, Concordia University Chicago does not mark academic honors at the graduate level as all graduate students are expected to maintain a standard of excellence as part of their programs.

Who Can I Contact to Receive Proof of Participation for My Employer?

Once you have registered for your ceremony, please submit a request to Commencement@CUChicago.edu and Commencement Team can provide verification for your employer via email. Please include any specific details required in your request.