

Commencement FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

- **When is Commencement?**

Saturday, May 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. **Students must arrive between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m.**

- **Where will the Commencement ceremony be held?**

The ceremony will be held on the Simon Green behind the Simon Center. In preparation, you can view the [Henniker campus map](#).

- **When should I arrive and where do I go?**

Students must arrive between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. to check in. This year, there will be two line-up locations:

- **Undergraduate** degree students will check in and line up at the Covered Bridge (located on the river behind West Residence Hall)
- **Graduate** degree students will check in and line up at the Lee Clement Ice Arena (located in the Athletic Complex at 38 Grove Street)

Students must be checked in **AND** at their location **no later than 9:15 a.m.** Students who arrive late may not be able to participate in the ceremony. The procession begins at 9:45 a.m.

- **How will I know where to line up when I get to my check-in location?**

In the week prior to the ceremony, the Registrar's Office will email a unique number to each attending student. This number will be used for check-in and line-up. Please save this email and know your number for a smooth check-in process.

- **Are tickets required?**

Commencement will be held outdoors, and tickets are not required for the outdoor ceremony. If severe weather requires us to move to an indoor ceremony, students will be notified with instructions via their NEC email and should look for updates in the days prior to the ceremony.

- **Is there a guest limit?**

No, there will not be a limit to the number of guests each student can invite to the outdoor ceremony.

- **How long does the Commencement ceremony last?**

The ceremony will last approximately two hours.

- **Will NEC issue a Commencement Invitation Letter for Visa purposes?**

New England College **does not** issue individualized Commencement invitation letters. According to the [US. State Department](#): *A letter of invitation or Affidavit of Support is not needed to apply for a visitor visa.* However, if you are eligible to attend

Commencement, you will be able to provide evidence of your anticipated graduation and your intention to participate in the ceremony to help support your family's visa applications. To provide evidence of your eligibility, you could submit the following with your visa application:

- A copy of your degree audit from Degree Works showing your progress towards your degree. The link to Degree Works can be found in MyNEC.
- A transcript showing your conferral date within the date range listed. Transcripts can be found in MyNEC.
- The automatic email you received after filling out your Intent to Graduate form, which outlines the steps for degree conferral.

- **What if my plans change and I can't attend Commencement anymore?**

If you are no longer attending Commencement, please email registrarsoffice@nec.edu as soon as possible. Seating is extremely limited, and your attendance has been taken into consideration. You may tell us at any time if your plans have changed, but the sooner the better.

- **Where do I park?**

Volunteers will be directing traffic on the day of Commencement. Please look for signage when you arrive. If you are travelling on the morning of Commencement, allow enough time to park and walk to your check-in location before 9:00 a.m.

- **What if my family cannot attend the ceremony in person?**

A livestream will be available for those who cannot attend the ceremony in person: [Commencement 2026 Livestream](#). The program book will also be available digitally during the ceremony at <https://www.nec.edu/commencement>.

- **Will my name be announced during the ceremony if I cannot attend in person?**

Only the names of students attending Commencement in person will be announced during the ceremony. However, if you have chosen to have your name printed in the Commencement program book, a digital copy will be available on our website: <https://www.nec.edu/commencement>.

- **Where do I get regalia?**

The deadline to purchase regalia is March 13, 2026. International shipping is not available. Please ship your order to campus and pick up your order at the Pilgrim Shop. If you have questions about regalia, please contact PilgrimShop@nec.edu for more information.

- **What should I wear?**

Please arrive dressed in your NEC cap and gown (regalia). This is a formal ceremony, and dress should reflect the occasion. Note: the weather can vary widely in May, so

please keep this in mind when dressing for the ceremony. Also, guests may be most comfortable in shoes with low or flat heels due to uneven ground.

- **Which side of my cap should the tassel be draped on?**

The tassel should be draped to the right side of the cap, changing to the left side when indicated by the Master of Ceremonies.

- **What should I bring with me to the Commencement ceremony?**

Please arrive dressed in regalia and DO NOT bring any valuables with you. There will not be a place to store personal belongings during the ceremony.

- **Will I receive a cord?**

If you are eligible for an honors cord, you will receive an email from the Registrar's Office with pick-up instructions prior to the ceremony. Cords will also be available for pick-up on the Bridge the day of Commencement if you cannot pick them up in advance. Cords for national honor societies are distributed by each society. Please expect to hear from an advisor regarding when cords will be available. Note: Graduate students DO NOT generally receive cords.

- **When and how do I find out about Latin Praise (Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Summa Cum Laude)?**

Latin Praise is awarded for bachelor's degree students only. Please keep in mind that the requirements for Latin Praise will be recalculated and officially awarded at the time of degree conferral. Recognition of Latin Praise in the Commencement Ceremony is based on final grades of previously completed terms.

- **Can I sit with my friends during the Commencement ceremony?**

Students will be assigned seats to match the order of the stage name reading.

- **Will I receive my diploma during the ceremony?**

No, you will receive a diploma cover only. Your diploma will be mailed approximately two weeks after your final audit and degree conferral. Please monitor your NEC email for diploma mailing timeline.

- **Is there a cost for the RSVP events?**

Yes—Breakfast in Gilmore (\$10.25/person, pay at the door)

No—Graduate Celebration and BFA Exhibition (5:00 pm at the Art Village at 39 Main Street, Henniker)

- **Can I defer my attendance to the May 2027 Commencement ceremony?**

Students are only eligible to attend the May 2027 ceremony if they are graduating July 2026 or later. Students may only participate in one ceremony and must contact the Registrar's Office as soon as possible if changing attendance.

- **What division am I?**

Art and Design:

Art, Animation
Art, Comic Arts
Art, Fine Arts
Art, Game & Digital Media Design
Art, Graphic Design
Art, Illustration
Art, Fine Arts/Media Arts
Art, Photography
Game & Digital Media Design
Theatre

Humanities and Education:

Art Education K–12
Communication Studies
Creative Writing
Criminal Justice
Education Studies
Elementary Education K–6 & K–8
History
Homeland Security & Emergency
Preparedness
Humanities
International Relations &
Diplomacy
Liberal Studies
Outdoor Education
Philosophy & Literature
Physical Education K–12
Political Science/Politics
Secondary Education

Special Education K–12

Theatre Education K–12

Management:

Accounting
Artificial Intelligence
Forensic Accounting
Business Administration
Computer Information Systems
Cybersecurity
Healthcare Administration
Sport & Recreation Management

Nursing and Health Professions

Nursing

Science, Health, and Exercise:

Biology
Biotechnology
Community Mental Health
Environmental Science
Environmental Studies
Environmental Studies &
Sustainability
Health Science
Human Services
Kinesiology
Psychology
Natural Science; Social Science
(AA)
Social Sciences