



Graduation and Commencement Frequently Asked Questions

- **Graduation** is the completion of all degree requirements as recorded on the official transcript. All students must apply for graduation in order to be considered for degree conferral.
- **Commencement** is the ceremony that celebrates the completion of an associate's degree and/or credit certificate.

Graduation Applications and Requirements

How do I apply for graduation?

Review the article [Owl Link: How to Access and Complete Your Graduation Application \(Credit\)](#) for step-by-step instructions for completing your graduation application.

When should I apply for graduation?

Students should apply for graduation only after registering for their final classes required for their academic program. Applications submitted after the deadline will be processed for the following semester. Application deadlines are: Spring – February 15, Summer – July 15, and Fall – September 15.

Can I apply for more than one degree or certificate?

Yes. Students may apply for multiple degrees and certificates within the same semester, but a separate application must be submitted for each one. Students pursuing more than one degree must earn an additional 15 credits for each degree (for example, two degrees require at least 75 credits). This additional-credit requirement does not apply to certificates.

I have transfer credits. How can I use them toward my program at PGCC?

All transfer credits must be evaluated by credit evaluators in the Office of Records and Registration. The college accepts up to 45 transfer credits, and transfer grades are not factored into the GPA. Students with transfer credits must complete at least 15 credits at PGCC to receive an associate degree, and at least 50% of required credits must be completed at PGCC to receive a certificate. More information is available on the College's [transfer credit website](#).

I completed all of my courses for graduation, but my application was denied because of my GPA. What should I do?

Students must have a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA to receive a degree or certificate. AAT degree programs require a minimum 2.75 GPA and passing aptitude test scores (ACT or PRAXIS I). Students denied graduation due to GPA must take courses at PGCC to raise their GPA, as transfer credits do not count toward GPA improvement.

I took courses not required for my degree or certificate. Can I substitute them for required courses?

Students must contact the department chair responsible for the course to request a course substitution. All substitutions must be approved by both the program department chairperson and the registrar

Can I take courses after I graduate?

Yes. Students may take additional courses after completing a program, but they must re-apply to the College under a new program of study or as a non-degree student. Visit the [Returning Students website](#) to learn more about the readmission process.

Diplomas

I have an outstanding balance on my account. Can I still receive my degree?

Students with an outstanding balance may still be cleared for graduation and have their degree conferred. However, the diploma will not be released until the balance is paid in full.

When will I receive my degree or certificate?

All diplomas and certificates are mailed by a third-party vendor (Parchment) to the student's permanent address on file. Students who need to update their address should complete the [Personal Information Update Form](#) and submit it to registrar@pgcc.edu.

I lost or never received my diploma, or I received my degree or certificate, but my name is misspelled. What should I do?

For diploma errors or reprints, students should email graduation@pgcc.edu for assistance.

Commencement Questions:

When and where is the Commencement (graduation ceremony)?

Commencement is held once each year in May at the Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Students who completed their programs during the previous summer or fall may participate in the ceremony the following year. Students with six or fewer credits remaining, and who are registered for those credits in the upcoming summer semester by May 1, may also participate, and must email the Graduation Coordinator at graduation@pgcc.edu to indicate their interest in participating. The 2026 Commencement ceremony will be held on Saturday, May 16 at Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, MD. The processional begins promptly at 10:00 AM. Students should plan to arrive by 8:30 AM.

Do I have to participate in Commencement?

Participation is encouraged but not required. Students who plan to participate must indicate this on their graduation application.

How many people can I invite to Commencement?

The number of guests varies depending on the total number of graduates. Historically, each graduate has received four tickets. All guests must have a ticket to enter the venue, although

graduates do not need one for themselves. Graduates will receive details about ticket distribution during the spring semester prior to Commencement.

Can I request additional guest tickets? Do children require their own tickets?

Extra tickets are not guaranteed and may not always be available. If additional tickets become available, graduates will be notified by email during the week before the ceremony. All guests who will occupy a seat must have their own ticket, per Show Place Arena policy.

How can I invite family members who live in another country?

Students may request an Embassy Letter form from the Office of Records and Registration. A letter will be prepared for the student to mail to the embassy. The student will be notified by email when the letter is ready for pickup, typically within three to five business days of the request. Embassy letters are not issued until the spring semester begins. Students who need to an Embassy Letter should complete the [Embassy Letter Request Form](#).

If my family cannot attend in person, how can they view the ceremony?

The ceremony will be livestreamed on the PGCC TV YouTube channel. Graduates will also have the opportunity to purchase video clip of their stage crossing.

Where do I get a cap and gown for graduation?

Students should order their caps and gowns [online](#) no earlier than February 1 of the year of their Commencement. Orders may be shipped directly to the student's home (for an additional fee) or shipped to the PGCC Bookstore for pickup between May 11 and May 15, 2026. Students who wish to have their caps and gowns in their possession prior to May 11 should be sure to order them to be shipped directly to their home.

How are graduation honors recognized at Commencement?

Students who graduate with an honors designation will receive a gold tassel during ticket distribution to recognize their achievement. Please note that honors **will not** be designated for students who have not completed all requirements for graduation, such as upcoming summer graduates.

Where can I order a stole or cords?

Students may order stoles [online](#) at the time they order their caps and gowns no earlier than February 1 of the year of their Commencement. Cords will be issued by the applicable organization.

Is there a dress code? Are there specific clothing or shoe requirements?

All graduates must wear a College-issued cap and gown. Formal military uniforms are allowed as an approved substitution instead of cap/gown. Men typically wear dark trousers and a dress shirt and tie beneath their gowns. Women usually wear a lightweight dress or a blouse and skirt that is shorter than the gown so it does not hang below the robe. All graduates should zip up their gowns prior to crossing the stage.

Am I allowed to decorate my cap?

Yes. Graduates are permitted to decorate their caps.

I forgot to request or pick up my cap and gown. Can I still attend graduation?

Graduates without a cap and gown cannot participate in the ceremony. However, a limited number of extra caps and gowns will be available at the event for students who have lost or damaged theirs.

I have one course left to take in the summer. Can I participate in the ceremony?

Yes. Degree-seeking students who are registered for their final six or fewer credits during the summer are eligible to participate in the ceremony before completing their program in August.

Is there a Commencement rehearsal for graduates?

There is not a Commencement rehearsal for graduates.

Will special accommodations be available for graduates or guests with disabilities?

Students requiring special assistance should notify the Office of Records and Registration by Monday, May 11, 2026, by emailing graduation@pgcc.edu.

Is there a parking fee at the Show Place Arena?

There are no parking fees at the Show Place Arena.

****Graduates and their families are encouraged to visit the [Commencement website](#) for the most up-to-date information and to email graduation@pgcc.edu with any additional questions.****