

Commencement Day Checklist

How to Make Commencement Day Less Stressful for Everyone





Commencement is coming...

It's the day of all days. Commencement day. Graduating students and their families will have written this on their calendars for months by now, perhaps even years. They're expecting the very best.

So, as an event organizer, what do you need to communicate to them?

We've put together this checklist to help you organize all things graduation and keep up-to-date with how you need to communicate with students and families.



A month before graduation

Most students will want to know how to prepare for the big day several weeks in advance.

Make sure you clearly advertise where to get:

- ☐ Caps & gowns
- ☐ The best places on or off-campus for graduation photos

Don't forget about the families of those graduating! Those who are not local to the area will be setting travel plans (if they haven't already solidified them).

Here's what to communicate to them:

- ☐ The best hotels to get near the graduation venue
- ☐ Restaurants around the area



A week before graduation

Seniors and graduating students will most likely be in finals during this week, but the excitement they feel about graduating will still be palpable.

Make sure you clearly communicate to students:

- ☐ The ins & outs of the graduation venue
 - ☐ Is it a place they will be familiar with?
 - ☐ Is it on campus?
 - ☐ How big is it?
 - ☐ What are the seating arrangements? Will they be able to sit with their friends?

Parents and families will want to know similar things, and some coming from out of state may already be staying near the university or at their students' house.

Here's what to communicate to them:

- ☐ Local restaurants and points of interest
 - ☐ (BONUS: You can use this as a fundraising opportunity. Partner with restaurants that have varying meal budgets, some restaurants will even be willing to give discounts. Recommend your guests the restaurants and let them know if they are having any commencement discounts!)
- ☐ The ins and outs of the graduation venue
 - ☐ Where is it? How long will it take to get there from where they are staying?
 - ☐ Where can they park? How much does it cost? Do you have enough accessible parking?
 - ☐ What time does the ceremony start? How long will it be?
 - ☐ What's the weather going to be like?

The day before and the day of graduation

It's finally here! Although everyone wants graduation to be perfect, it's likely that it won't be. Expect some chaos! Things will go wrong, and that's okay. But as long as you communicate vital information to everyone you need to in an accessible way, things really can't go too off the rails.

Make sure to communicate to students:

- ☐ What time the ceremony starts and an approximation of how long it will last
- ☐ The events within the procession
 - ☐ How long will they have to wait before they can be seated?
 - ☐ Where do they walk?
 - ☐ What do they do once they're on stage?

Cameras at the ready, parents and families will be just as excited (perhaps even more so) for their students to graduate.

Here's what they want to know:

- ☐ What time does the ceremony start?
- ☐ How long will it take them to get from their hotel or home to the venue?
- ☐ Where do they park?
- ☐ Where do they sit?
- ☐ When will their students' names be called?
- ☐ Where is the best place to take photos with their student?
- ☐ Where can they eat afterwards?

Give your students and their families the best day of all days. Help them prepare for Commencement Day before they even realize they need to by communicating vital information in advance.

Interested in how we help schools use communication tools to make events run smoothly?

How UC Boulder Prepared for Graduation