

KANSAS CITY AREA

COMMENCEMENT HANDBOOK



**SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2026
10 A.M.**

CABLE DAHMER ARENA

19100 E. Valley View Parkway Independence, MO 64055

Commencement Schedule of Events

STUDENTS SHOULD ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 9 AM!

8:00 – 9 a.m. — Student Assembly Areas

All graduates will enter the arena via the south entrance

- Master students assemble in the south corridor.
- Bachelor students assemble in the north corridor.

Name Card

Please complete a name card. **Fill out the front and back of the card, and take it with you to the stage.** If you are having a professional portrait taken (prior to the ceremony), please present the card to the photographer and they will record your information, but make sure to retain the card as you will hand this to the reader when approaching the stage to receive your diploma cover. Since the card is used to inform the reader of your name and pronunciation, it is important to write legibly. (Note: Graduates receiving a degree and a certificate should fill out two cards for each time you cross the stage.)

Photographs

GradImages will photograph each graduate receiving their diploma, as well as an optional professional individual photo. Individual photos will be taken from 8:00 to 9 a.m. near the student assembly area. (north and south corridor)

Approximately two weeks after Commencement, GradImages will send a digital color photo proof to the email address listed on the name card.

Orders must be placed within 10 days of receipt of the color proof and will arrive approximately 2 weeks from the date GradImages receives your order. All photos are satisfaction guaranteed and may be returned for a full refund. **For more information or questions about your photos, visit gradimages.com.**

8:30 a.m. — Doors Open for General Public, Family and Friends

- All guests will enter the arena via the east entrance. Upon arrival, all guests will be required to go through a metal detector and bag check as part of Cable Dahmer's standard security procedures. This is a routine precautionary step to ensure a secure and enjoyable experience for everyone in attendance.

9:15 – 9:45 a.m. — Student Instructions

- Graduates meet in the student assembly areas to receive instructions for the ceremony and prepare for the processional. (Masters assemble on south side, Bachelors assemble on north side). Graduates need to be dressed in caps/gowns. If walking for multiple credentials, please fill out a reader card for each.

9:45 a.m. — Processional Line Up

- Graduates' processional lines will be moved to arena entrance.

9:45 a.m. — Guest Seating

- Guests should be seated. Guests arriving after the processional begins should enter the arena quietly and yield to processional traffic.

10 a.m. — Ceremony Begins

- Procession of graduates, faculty, staff and platform party begins.



General Information

Announcements

Announcements, diploma frames and class rings may be ordered online at herffjones.com/college. The Park University Bookstore on the Parkville (Mo.) Campus will have generic announcements and Park University diploma frames available for purchase in-store.

Virtual Graduation Fair

In lieu of the traditional in-person Graduation Fair we have compiled virtual resources for students graduating this term. Please visit the [Virtual Fair](#).

Caps and Gowns

Cap and gown ordering is the responsibility of the student and separate from the Application for Diploma. Ordering information will be sent late February to your Park University student academic email (<http://gmail.park.edu/>). To participate in the commencement ceremony, all **applications** are due by March 15. Please direct your cap and gown questions to commencement@park.edu.

Stole

All undergraduate students will receive a stole to wear draped over their shoulders and down the front of their gown. Note: If you have an honor cord and/or military cord, you will drape the cord(s) over the stole. The stole will be included in the shipment ordered by the student.

International undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to wear their international sash.

Guest Accessibility

Wheelchair accessible seating is available near section 107. Please ask an associate for any additional assistance needed.

Handicap accessible parking is available in the East & South Lots. In order to park in the spaces reserved for disabled guests, the vehicle must have a state issued handicapped window pass, sticker, or license plate. Any vehicle may drop off a disabled patron at the front of the arena and then park their car in the parking lot.

Student Accessibility

Graduates requiring accessible seating and/or assistance crossing the stage during the ceremony should contact Michelle Forrest, at michelle.forrest@park.edu or (816) 584-6357, no later than April 17 to make arrangements.

Deaf Interpreters

Graduates or guests requesting an interpreter for the ceremony, please contact Michelle Forrest at michelle.forrest@park.edu or (816) 584-6357, no later than March 20 to make arrangements. To ensure an interpreter is provided, final confirmation is required.



General Information (continued)

Diplomas

Diplomas will be mailed to graduates approximately six-to-eight weeks after all requirements are completed to the address listed on the Application for Diploma. Please verify that the Registrar's Office has your correct address at registrar@park.edu.

Honors Cords

Honors cords are distributed to bachelor's degree graduates who meet the grade point average requirements *as of the **previous term***. The following statement is a quotation from the Park University Commencement Policy: "Honor students will be designated on their diplomas and on their transcripts as either '*summa cum laude*,' '*magna cum laude*' or '*cum laude*' depending on the final cumulative grade point average and with 30 hours minimum earned at Park University. Final grades for the current semester may be outstanding for many students. All honor students will have the same color honor cord. Honor Cord distribution will be addressed in the communication sent in late February.



Military Cords

Military cords are available for all current and former military service members. The cords will be mailed to the address on your Application for Diploma.

Library Books, Fines and Charges

All library books must be returned. All fines and other charges must be paid prior to Commencement.

Live Broadcast

Family and friends from around the world who can't attend Commencement will be able to watch graduates walk across the stage as Park University will provide a live broadcast of the ceremony via Park's video portal. The video will begin streaming moments prior to the start of the ceremony at ParkUMedia.com. In the days following the ceremony, the video will be available in the "on demand" section of the video portal.



Directions and Parking at Cable Dahmer Arena

From the Airport

Take 1-29 to I-435 East (towards St. Louis), I-70 East (exit 63 on left), 1-470 / MO-291 South (via 15A) to US-40 (exit 16-A), turn left onto US-40, turn left onto East Valley View Parkway. Take exit 17 for Little Blue Parkway toward 39th St/Mall Entrance, Turn right at S Little Blue Pkwy/S Selsa Rd, Take the 1st right onto E. Valley View Parkway.

From the North

Take I-35 South to I-435 South (exit 12A towards St. Louis), I-70 East (exit 63B on left), to I-470 / MO-291 South (via exit 15A) to US-40 (exit 16-A), turn left onto US-40, turn left onto E. Valley View Parkway.

From the South

Take US-71 North, Merge onto I-470 East (towards Lee's Summit), Take US-40 (exit 16-A), turn left onto US-40, turn right onto Valley View Parkway.

From the East

Take I-70 West (towards Kansas City), Take Little Blue Parkway exit (exit 17), Turn Left onto Little Blue Parkway and Turn right on E. Valley View Parkway.

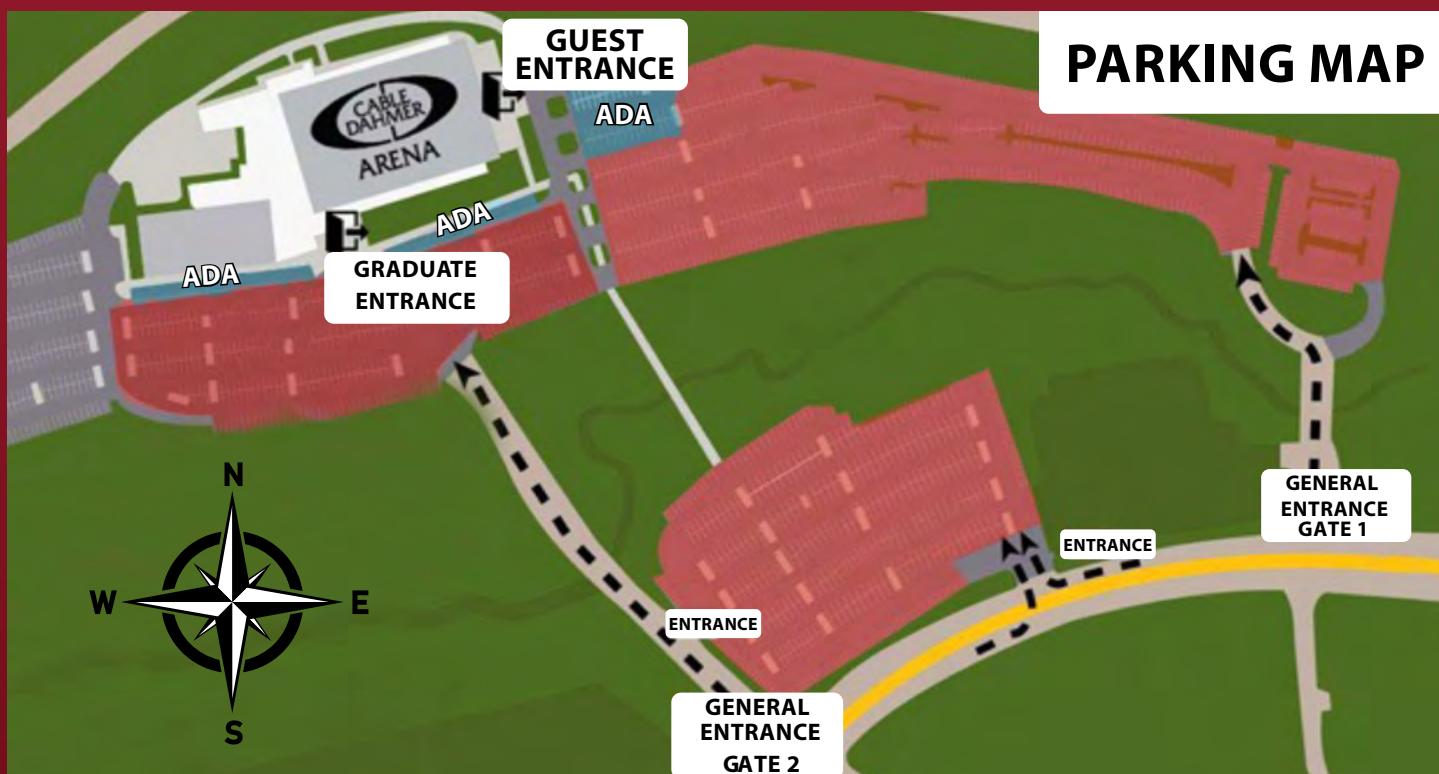
From the West

Take 1-70 East, merge to I-470 / MO-291 (exit 15A), take US-40 exit (exit 16-A), turn left onto US-40, turn left onto Valley View Parkway.

Where should I park and where should I enter the arena?

Parking at Cable Dahmer Arena is free for this event. When you arrive, Cable Dahmer guest services will direct you to available parking, including ADA accessible parking if needed. There are parking lots on the south and east side of the building. However, graduates will enter at the south door. Guests will enter through the east door, as it is the main entrance. If you have a guest that will need handicap accessibility, you may drop them off at the east door and then find a parking spot.

- **Gate 1** - Guest parking and entrance
- **Gate 2** - (near ice rink) Student, faculty, and staff entrance.



Academic Dress and the Procession

Academic dress and the academic procession are two of the few remaining traditions we inherited from early universities and colleges. Even these traditions have evolved over the years to meet the present academic needs and our society's methods of recognizing academic achievement.

We still recognize the three basic types of academic robes: The straight sleeve of the bachelor's gown, the shortened sleeve of the master's gown with its extended blind pouch and the doctor's gown with its three velvet stripes on each sleeve and velvet facing on the front.

Various traditional colors are used to represent different universities and disciplines. Someone who knows the coloring system can tell the granting university, the degree and the discipline of the wearer simply by looking at his or her academic attire.

Park honors these and other traditions. We have added a few traditions of our own, particularly in how the academic attire is worn and the ceremonies are carried out.

Conventions Observed by Park University

- Traditional master's and bachelor's gowns and academic caps (as provided) are worn in the traditional manner.
- The mortar boards are worn level on the head (parallel to the floor), not stuck to the back of the head.
- The tassels, worn on the caps, are to be worn on the right side of the cap. After the degree is conferred, the tassel should be moved right to left.
- Women wear their caps at all times.
- Men's caps are removed during the National Anthem, but are worn at all other times.
- Flowers are not worn on the academic gown or carried by the graduate.
- Business attire is commonly worn with academic regalia (gowns).
- Comfortable shoes are highly recommended.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I decorate my cap?

- You are welcome to decorate your academic cap as long as it is tasteful, contains no inappropriate language and does not obstruct the view of those behind you (decorations should be no higher than one inch).

What should you do with your hood if you are graduating with a master's degree?

- Graduate students should place the hood around their neck and shoulders so that the major portion hangs down the back and the velvet is up. For comfort, you may fasten the cord on the front of the hood to your gown to help keep the hood away from your neck. From a frontal view, the velvet border should be on top. To expose the lining, turn the velvet border to the outside.

How long does the ceremony last?

- The ceremony could last 2-3 hours. The length of the ceremony depends on the number of graduate participants. We ask that all graduates and guests stay through the entire ceremony to support fellow graduates.

Once I'm in the arena can I leave?

- There is no re-entry to the building once guests are inside the arena.

What is the seating like in the arena?

- Click to view the [seating map](#). The stage will be located on the west end of the building.

What items are not allowed in the arena?

- Balloons are not allowed. Outside drinks are not allowed. The arena will have a vendor selling, candy, popcorn, soda and water at the concession stand.

Does my guest need a ticket to the ceremony?

- An announcement will be communicated after the March 15th application deadline.

Is there somewhere to keep personal belongings?

- No, there are no secured areas for personal belongings.

Is childcare provided?

- Childcare will not be provided. Graduates must make childcare arrangements prior to the ceremony. Children are not allowed on the floor during the commencement exercises.

