

University of Kent Graduation Ceremonies



Your graduation ceremony:

- **10:30, Canterbury Cathedral**

We hope you have a brilliant time at your upcoming graduation ceremony.

This quick guide will take you through your day from start to finish.

Before your ceremony

Your first stop is [Shirley Hall](#). This is where our Graduation Hub is located and you can pick up your tickets, gown and have professional photography taken. It is in the Cathedral grounds.

You will access this area via the [Mint Yard Gate entrance](#) to the Cathedral Grounds.

Ticket Collection

- 1) **This is for Graduand's only:** Follow signs to Ticket Collection to exchange your E-receipt for your guest tickets. (10.30 ceremony tickets will be available to collect from 8.30).

Please arrive **no later** than 2 hours prior to your ceremony start time to collect your tickets and gown. **The ticket collection point will be for graduand's only, and guests will not be permitted entry into this space.**

Please bring your E-Receipt, either printed or on your device. *(This is an email which will be sent to you by Tempest Ticketing around a week before your ceremony and contains a barcode.)*

If you did not receive your E-Receipt or need to pay on the day, then we will find your ticket booking using your student ID number.

Please note your guests will not be able to enter the Cathedral without their physical ticket, so make sure you give this to them before they start to queue.

Gown Collection

- 2) **Graduands Only:** Collect your gown from inside [Shirley Hall](#). (10.30 ceremony gowns will be available to collect from 8.30)

The gown collection point will be for graduates only so please ask your guests to wait outside Shirley Hall.

Running late?

If you are running late, you should still go to **Shirley Hall** and our teams will assist you as quickly as possible. However, if you are arriving later than 30 minutes prior to your ceremony, then please just go straight to the Cathedral and head to the guest entrance and speak to a member of staff.

- 3) **Guests and graduands:** Official graduation photographs and merchandise.

Official photographs are taken by Tempest Photography. You have the option to take both individual and photos with your guests. This will take place in [Shirley Hall](#).

We recommend allowing time before your ceremony if you would like to take photos. There is also time afterwards but there may be a longer queue, as there will be students coming for the next ceremony who will take priority.

Tempest Photography will close for the day at 18.00.

Our Careers & Employability team, our Alumni team and our Postgraduate Studies team will also be available to meet. Campus Clothing will be located in the marquee, where you can pick up personalised graduation gifts and the 'Class of 2026' clothing.

4) **Guests only: Join the queue at the Cathedral**

Guest seating will begin at 9:30, at the South-West Door of the Cathedral. Please note that guests often begin queuing from 9:00. Guest seating in the Cathedral is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Guests are not able to choose or change seats, and some seats have restricted views. From these seats, you can view televisions showing a live feed of the ceremony. All guests must have a seat, and we cannot allow any guests to stand during the ceremony.

We will be live-streaming our ceremonies on YouTube, which are [available online](#) through the University of Kent website.

5) **Graduand's only: Check in at Chapter House**

Graduand Check-in opens at 9.00. Graduand's must check in prior to their ceremony and arrive no later than 9.30. You will be given a number when you check in, which is the order your name is called out in the ceremony.

You will need to ensure you return to Chapter House, **at least 45 minutes before** your ceremony start time. This will allow enough time for the Graduand Seating team to organise all students in number order and process into the Cathedral.

6) **Graduand's Only: Process into the Cathedral for the ceremony!**

Graduand's will be lined up by our teams, in your numerical order, ready to process into the Cathedral. At this point, your guests will already be seated. Our graduand seating team will explain this process to you.

During the ceremony

If you or your guests require to use the toilet during the ceremony, please ask a member of staff for directions. Please be aware that guests will not be able to leave the ceremony 15 minutes before the end to allow the processions to exit safely.

Ceremonies generally take around 90 minutes. Some ceremonies have an honorary degree awarded, which will take place midway through the ceremony. We request that guests remain in the Cathedral for the duration of the ceremony.

7) **Graduand's and Guests: Leaving the Cathedral**

Please follow guidance from our staff about leaving the ceremony safely.

Once your ceremony finishes, our graduate seating team and the ceremony ushers will process all students out of the cathedral.

You will need to exit the Cathedral and walk down the precincts to the meeting point, which is beside the Canterbury War horse sculpture, this is where you will be able to join up with your guests for post-ceremony celebrations.

8) **Return your gown after your ceremony:**

Gown Return Location: Shirley Hall ground floor.

Please make sure you return your gown on the day of your ceremony. Your gown must be returned no later than 21:30.

(If your ceremony is taking place on **Wednesday 29th July**, please return your gown by 17.30. If your ceremony is taking place on **Friday 31st July**, please return your gown by 13.30)

All graduation attendees will be required to depart the Cathedral Precincts by 21.30.

Arriving for your ceremony

The Cathedrals are located close to train stations (Canterbury West / Canterbury East) and Southeastern offer a high-speed rail service which takes less than an hour from London.

Parking

There are lots of places to park when attending a graduation ceremony, however, Canterbury will be busy at this time.

We recommend checking out the parking in advance and leave plenty of time for travel and parking. We cannot provide parking within the Cathedral grounds. Please arrive with plenty of time to allow for parking.

Please see the [Canterbury Council parking list](#). You may also wish to use the **[Park and Ride service](#)**, with buses running regularly from just outside the city centre.

Canterbury Cathedral is situated within the pedestrian zone and there is restricted access controlled by security bollards, you may not be able to drop guests off by car

at the Cathedral via the Christ Church gate. Access to the Cathedral Grounds through Mint Yard Gate is **prohibited**.

[Park and Ride services will also be available](#) from New Dover Road, Sturry Road and Wincheap. Please note the entrance to the Cathedral via Queningate, will not be open during the week of the ceremonies.

Frequently asked questions

Please do [read through our FAQs](#) and our [information for guests](#).

What to do if you are running late?

If you are running late, you should still go to Shirley Hall and our teams will assist you as quickly as possible. However, if you are arriving later than 30 minutes prior to your ceremony, then please just go straight to the Cathedral and head to the guest entrance and speak to a member of staff.

Is there a Live stream?

We will be live-streaming our ceremonies on YouTube, [which will be available online](#) before your ceremony date.

When do I receive my guest tickets?

Your E-Receipt has been sent to the email address that you registered with on Tempest Ticketing. You need to exchange this E-Receipt on the day for your guest tickets. Please do not worry if you have not received your e-receipt, as we can check your orders on the day using your student number.

Are there any toilets available within the Cathedral?

There are no toilets inside Canterbury Cathedral, there are public and accessible toilets located just outside the Cathedral. Please ask a member of staff for directions. Please be aware that guests will not be able to leave the ceremony 15 minutes before the end as the procession will begin to take place.

How long does the ceremony normally last?

Once you have processed into the Cathedral and sat down, you will watch the ceremony, cheering on your classmates until it is your turn to graduate.

Graduation ceremonies are a formal opportunity to celebrate you. They will begin with the processions into the Cathedral, starting with students and ending with senior academics and civic attendees.

You will hear from our Presiding Officer, and either the new honorary graduate if there is one being awarded at the ceremony or representatives from our Kent students union. Ceremonies are about 90 minutes long.

How is guest seating allocated in the ceremony?

Guest seating is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Guests are not able to choose or change seats, and please note that some seats have restricted views.

From these seats, you can view televisions showing a live feed of the ceremony. All guests must have a seat, and we cannot allow any guests to stand during the ceremony.

There are a few seating areas within the Cathedral, such as the central nave or the south aisle. There are differences in view between these areas, and some provide a view of the graduand walking down the central aisle whereas others can see them at the front.

Some of the seats are located behind a pillar, and therefore have an obstructed view, please note that where seats have an obstructed view, there are screens displaying live streaming.