

# Frequently Asked Graduation and Commencement Questions

## **Do I have to apply for graduation?**

The simple answer is yes, you must apply for graduation. The University has an enrollment of approximately 10,000 students who enter the University in different semesters and different years. Some have early college, advanced placement or transfer credit so they will complete their requirements more quickly than other students. Some are pursuing degree programs with different hour requirements. Some students change majors and will need more hours to complete their more recently declared major. With all those individual differences, it is nearly impossible for the University to determine who will actually be graduating when. So if you don't apply for graduation, no one but you will know that you are planning to graduate.

## **When is the deadline to apply for graduation?**

For spring and fall candidates, the deadline is Tuesday of the first week of classes. For summer candidates wishing to participate in spring commencement, it is the Friday of the week of summer priority enrollment. If you are graduating in summer and do not wish to participate in spring commencement, your application deadline is generally the first day of the summer pre-session. Students are encouraged to apply for graduation as soon as they have completed enrollment for their final semester. This allows for more time to resolve any unexpected problems.

## **What is the graduation hold on my account?**

When you apply for graduation, a hold is placed on your enrollment. This allows the Registrar's Office to make note of changes you make that could affect your graduation. If you need to make a change in your enrollment, contact the Office of the Registrar to have the hold temporarily removed. After the hold is back in place, your record will be rechecked and you will be notified if a problem is found.

## **May I participate in commencement other than in the semester when I'm graduating?**

Spring and fall candidates participate in the semester in which they are approved as a candidate for graduation. Since there is no summer commencement exercise, summer candidates for graduation choose to participate in the preceding spring commencement if they enroll and apply for graduation by published deadlines, or the fall commencement ceremony immediately after their summer graduation. The graduation application should be marked for SUMMER graduation. There is also a space for those planning to graduate in the summer to indicate which ceremony they prefer.

## **Do I have to attend commencement?**

No; however you still have to apply for graduation, fill out senior paper work (available during the fifth week of school and due by the end of the 7th week of school), and meet all graduation requirements. Your cooperation is appreciated in letting us know that you won't be attending so that we can plan seating accordingly. **A word of caution:** You may not wish to participate in commencement, but your family may have other ideas. Even if you think you aren't going to attend, we advise you to order a cap and gown. There is no additional cost, and if your family changes your mind for you, you will be prepared.

## **How much does it cost to graduate?**

There is a graduation fee of \$35 which is the only cost imposed by the University. That fee is charged to your University account when your application for graduation is approved. It covers administrative costs of evaluating your eligibility to graduate, preparing your diploma, postage, etc. Your cap and gown are free. If you choose to purchase souvenir tassels, announcements, rings, a diploma cover or frame, etc., there will be additional costs based on those choices.

For some students, the graduation fee is waived. Students who score at or above the national average on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) will receive a credit of up to \$35 when the graduation fee has been charged to their account and your test score has been recorded. In essence, you are paid \$35 if you do well on a 45-minute test!

## **Is there anything special I have to do if I'm taking a course somewhere else in my last semester?**

Yes. You will need to provide proof of enrollment (see the instructions attached to the graduation application) and when the course is finished, have your official transcript(s) sent to the Registrar's Office.

## **How many guests may I bring to commencement?**

For fall commencement, students are asked to limit their guests to six. For spring commencement, candidates need to limit their guests to four, so that adequate seating can be provided. Spring commencement will also include an overflow seating area with big screen televisions. If you intend to invite more than four guests, please choose up to four to be

seated in the arena, and ask the remainder to use the overflow seating area. (The view is excellent--better than many seats in the arena.)

**If my family cannot attend commencement, how can they see me graduate?**

You can purchase a DVD or video of commencement. If you order on or before Commencement day the cost is \$20, shipped to your home. If you order after commencement day or later, the cost is \$30 to include the special handling that is required for a late order.

**When is commencement rehearsal?**

Because students don't follow the same schedule, and because the facility also has other uses, there is no rehearsal. You will receive an overview of the ceremony and written instructions when you pick up your cap and gown. There will also be faculty marshals to direct you at commencement.

**What if I fail a course or get an incomplete in my final semester?**

Candidates for graduation have three weeks after commencement to complete grades of incomplete, submit official transcripts from other institutions and verify the accuracy of grades received. If you believe you have received an incorrect grade, please it with the instructor. Mistakes happen and it is possible that your instructor could have computed your grade incorrectly. If a failing grade is received in a course you need to graduate and the grade is accurate, you will need to enroll in suitable course work in a subsequent semester, and apply for graduation in that semester.

**What do I do with my cap and gown after commencement?**

It is yours to keep. This allows you to get as many pictures as you desire, even with people who could not attend commencement. (They also make excellent costumes after Commencement. We know students who have used them when attending costume parties to impersonate witches, the headless horseman, and judges.)

**When do I get my diploma cover?**

Some years ago, Southeast chose to discontinue the use of diploma covers on the basis of student preferences. Our graduates told us they prefer to frame and display their diplomas, and therefore discarded the diploma cover. Southeast does not wish to contribute to the further deterioration of our planet by creating unnecessary waste. However, we do wish to accommodate the needs of our graduates. The Southeast Bookstore carries diploma covers as well as several selections of frames suitable for the diploma.

**When will I receive my diploma and how will it be packaged?**

Diplomas should arrive in the mail about eight weeks after the end of the semester in which you complete graduation requirements. Diplomas are mailed to the address you verify as correct when you pick up your cap and gown, and will arrive in a flat 9 x 12 cardboard mailer. If your mail box will not accommodate that size mailer, you may want to speak with your local post office to make arrangements for delivery.

**What will I get with my diploma?**

The package you receive with your diploma will include the diploma, a complimentary copy of your official transcript, and, if possible, a copy of the commencement program that includes your name. Please keep your transcript in a safe place--there may be times when you need to quickly provide one for job opportunities, etc.

**What if I have questions regarding graduation and/or commencement?**

You may find answers to your questions in one of several ways:

- Stop by the Registrar's Office, Academic Hall 129
- Call the Registrar's Office - (573) 651-2051
- Visit the commencement website - <http://www6.semo.edu/commencement>.