

Commencement FAQs

When will I receive Commencement invitations?

In March, Commencement invitations are sent from the school to the parents or guardians of each senior. Commencement invitations also include a schedule of events during Commencement weekend. In addition, each senior will receive an invitation in his or her student mailbox. If additional Commencement invitations are needed, please contact Jen Hout, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement, at jhout@andover.edu or 978-749-4271 or Brittany Casey, Administrative Assistant, at bcasey@andover.edu or 978-749-4291.

Do I need to bring a Commencement invitation in order to be permitted to attend Commencement?

No.

Who may attend Commencement?

If weather permits and Commencement is held outdoors, seniors may invite as many guests as they wish. If inclement weather forces Commencement to be held indoors, seating is limited. *See below for more details.*

What should Seniors wear during the Commencement ceremony?

Commencement is one of Phillips Academy's most formal ceremonies. Traditionally, students wear white dresses or jackets and ties. Casual attire, including baseball caps, is not recommended. View photos from [Commencement 2017](#).

Where should parents and guests stand while diplomas are being distributed?

Parents are permitted to stand behind their child on the outside of the circle. All guests, including individuals using cameras or video equipment, are asked to respect the integrity of the ceremony during the Commencement exercises by remaining outside the circle and behind the seniors throughout the distribution of diplomas.

What if it rains?

Please be advised that we make every effort to conduct Sunday's Commencement exercises outdoors. Guests should be prepared to dress for conditions ranging from cold drizzle to intense heat and humidity. If severe weather forces the ceremony to be held indoors, seating will be limited. Each senior will receive three guest tickets (seniors do not need a ticket) for admission. Only ticket-bearing guests will be admitted, and all other guests are welcome to attend a simulcast of the ceremony.

Baccalaureate Service (and limited seating)

The Baccalaureate Service is held in Cochran Chapel the Saturday night before Commencement. For fire code capacity safety reasons, occupancy in the chapel is limited. Every senior may attend the Baccalaureate Service, and each senior may bring **three ticket-bearing guests**. Each senior receives four tickets (three guest tickets and one for themselves) which will be delivered to the student mailboxes on Wednesday, May 30.

The Baccalaureate Service will be simulcast in Kemper Auditorium for guests who do not have tickets. There is unlimited seating and air-conditioning in Kemper. If you need extra tickets please encourage your child to ask their friends for any unused tickets.

Where do I park?

Parking is available in our campus lots; please reference the [campus map](#). Handicap accessible parking is also available behind Samuel Phillips Hall during Commencement weekend.

When do seniors need to be out of the dormitories?

Seniors need to be out of their dorms by 3 p.m. on Sunday following the Commencement ceremony. We encourage seniors to pack up their dorm rooms during the day on Friday and Saturday, so that there is very little left to pack on Sunday after Commencement.

What sort of accommodations are there?

See the section on [Overnight Accommodations](#) for various options.

How do you accommodate guests with special needs?

Phillips Academy makes every effort to accommodate people with differing needs and abilities. All Commencement weekend events are fully accessible. Please contact Jen Hout at jhout@andover.edu or 978-749-4271 or Brittany Casey, Administrative Assistant, at bcasey@andover.edu or 978-749-4291 for more detailed information.

Other important details:

If the weather is extremely warm, please know that water will be available near the library patio and on the lawn area in front of Sam Phillips Hall. Also, the outdoor Commencement ceremony will be simulcast in Kemper Auditorium, which has comfortable seating and is air-conditioned.

Following the distribution of diplomas, seniors and their guests are invited to a reception in Flagstaff Court, in front of Paresky Commons, where light refreshments will be served. For additional information, please see the [complete schedule](#) of Commencement events. Phillips Academy Public Safety officers, Town of Andover police, and an EMT are on-hand to assist guests.

Phillips Academy is a non-smoking campus, and we ask that you refrain from smoking on campus.