

Commencement Guide



Spring | May 14, 2026



ACADEMY *of* ART UNIVERSITY®

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Commencement Overview



SCHEDULE

Thursday, May 14, 2026

8:00 AM Undergraduate Students Check In

10:00 AM Undergraduate Commencement

1:00 PM Graduate Students Check In

3:00 PM Graduate Commencement

LOCATION

The Masonic Auditorium

1111 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94108

The Commencement ceremonies will celebrate graduates from all Academy schools:

Acting

Advertising

Animation & Visual Effects

Architecture

Art Education

Art History

Communications &

Media Technologies

Fashion

Fine Art

Game Development

Graphic Design

Illustration

Industrial Design

Interaction & UI/UX Design

Interior Architecture & Design

Jewelry & Metal Arts

Landscape Architecture

Motion Pictures & Television

Music Production & Sound Design

Photography

Visual Development

Writing for Film, Television

& Digital Media

President's Congratulations



Dear Graduate,



Congratulations on your upcoming graduation! Your degree reflects years of dedication and hard work, and it will serve you well as you meet the challenges of our ever-changing world. On behalf of the entire Academy, I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. I look forward to celebrating with you in May.

Sincerely,

Dr. Elisa Stephens

President

Commencement Preparation



Information Sessions: Attendance at one of these sessions is mandatory for all students who wish to participate in the onsite commencement ceremony.

There are four online information sessions to help you prepare you for commencement. Each session will provide instructions on how to order your academic regalia, details on the check-in process, an overview of commencement day procedures and protocol, and important information about tickets and guests. You must attend one of the sessions.

ONLINE SESSIONS

February 6, 2026	5:00 PM PT	Zoom: https://bit.ly/artugrad
February 27, 2026	5:00 PM PT	Zoom: https://bit.ly/artugrad
March 20, 2026	5:00 PM PT	Zoom: https://bit.ly/artugrad
April 10, 2026	5:00 PM PT	Zoom: https://bit.ly/artugrad

If you are unable to make one of these information sessions, please contact commencement@academyart.edu so we can send you a recording.



= Pay special attention to this information.

Commencement Materials



Commencement Pack: Your Commencement Pack includes your cap and gown and tassel. The Commencement Pack (including shipping) is free for all Fall 2025, Spring 2026, and Summer 2026 graduates, but you will need to place the order yourself at

www.jostens.com/apps/store/customer/1006892/Academy-of-Art-University

Please note that any additional items such as announcements, stoles, and accessories, are NOT included in your Commencement Pack and costs for those items are your responsibility. American flag tassels and veteran stoles will be provided onsite to graduating veteran students.



Remember to place your order for the Commencement Pack by April 7th, 2026.



Your cap and gown, included in your Commencement Pack, are required to participate in the Commencement exercises.

Tickets: Each student will receive five (5) tickets, which are required for entry into the Masonic. Each student is allotted five tickets in total; no additional tickets can be provided by the University.

Ticket Exchange: Graduating students who are not participating in the onsite ceremony may transfer their allotted tickets to another graduating student. To do so, please [complete the form](#) and include the name of the student giving the tickets, the name of the student receiving the tickets, and the name of the person who will pick them up.

Ticket Exchange Link: <https://forms.gle/9ub7pkXG3VMg7nsQA>



To be valid, exchanged tickets must match the same time and ceremony, or they will not be accepted at the door. For example, if you are graduating at the 10:00 AM undergraduate ceremony, any ticket you receive must also be for the 10:00 AM undergraduate ceremony.



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Ticket Lottery: In April, any unclaimed tickets (due to no RSVPs) will be redistributed through a ticket lottery, based on availability. To enter, please [complete the form](#) and indicate how many tickets you are requesting (up to five). If selected, you will receive a confirmation email and may pick up the additional tickets during Ticket Pickup Days or at Will Call.

Ticket Lottery Link: <https://forms.gle/3j1p59MXeNFNRnHU7>

Ticket Pickup Days: You can collect your tickets on either of the two ticket pick-up days at the Art Café at 655 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA.



Saturday, May 9, 2026, 9:00 AM PT – 5:00 PM PT

Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 9:00 AM PT – 5:00 PM PT



Grad Images will be onsite during ticket pickup days. Bring your cap and gown to have professional graduation photos taken. You are not required to purchase these photos.

Announcements*: Graduation announcements are available through www.Jostens.com. You are responsible for the cost of any announcements you order.



***Please be aware that graduation announcements are not the same as graduation tickets. Announcements cannot be used for admission to the Commencement ceremony.**

Diplomas: Diplomas will be mailed to graduates approximately 90 days after all coursework has been completed and grades have been posted.

Please verify that your address is correct on the student self-service portal. If you have questions, please contact Diplomas@academyart.edu.



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Other Important Information



Accessibility: To request accommodations related to a disability, including sign language interpreting during the ceremony, please contact Accessibility Resources at **(415) 618-3775** or Accessibility@academyart.edu.

Visas for International Guests: Our International Student Services office is available to help guests who will be traveling internationally to attend the Commencement Ceremony.

Please visit: <https://www.academyart.edu/forms/international-student-services/letter-request-form/> to request a letter of invitation. This letter will be included with the guest's visa application.



Please initiate the letter request as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to receive the letter and apply for a visa.



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Commencement Day



Arrival



Graduates: You must check in **TWO HOURS** before the start of your ceremony!

Therefore, please allow plenty of time for travel. If you arrive less than two hours prior to your ceremony, you run the risk of not walking with your department. Commencement ceremonies are complex and highly coordinated events; **please don't be late!**

Guests: Please let your guests know the exact time for their arrival. For morning ceremonies, guests should arrive at 9:00 AM. For afternoon ceremonies, guests should arrive at 2:00 PM. Guests will not be allowed to enter the auditorium any earlier than one hour before each ceremony.

Will Call: If you are unable to pick your tickets up on one of the two Ticket Pickup Days, there will be a table at the Student Check-In entrance on California Street where your family and friends can pick up your tickets using your name.



Please follow the signs to the check-in and line-up area on California Street. You will be looking for signs that read "EXHIBIT HALL."



Please note that you will look for the entrance by the parking garage and NOT the main entrance of the auditorium at the top of the steps.

It is important to be punctual so that we can verify your attendance. You are required to check in at the student check-in table for your major. **Your name will not be called if you do not check in and collect your index card.**

You will then line up with your fellow students in your department or program.

We will provide hangers and coat racks for you to store your personal belongings in the graduate check-in and lineup area. While this area will be cordoned off from public access, the Academy is not liable for the loss of personal belongings.



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Commencement Day (cont'd)



Parking and Transportation

Parking is available for \$65 per car at the venue.

Campus shuttles will also be available, running on a continuous loop from campus to the event venue for students and guests.

The venue is accessible via public transportation. We suggest using [Google Maps](#) or [511.org](#) to find the best route for your visit.

Commencement Ceremony Details



The Procession: All graduating students will march into the auditorium in celebration of their Commencement. Graduates remain standing for the entire processional.

Recognition of Graduating Students: Per Academy tradition, each graduate's name will be read aloud, at which time that student will walk across the stage. Each graduate will be presented with a scroll and photographed by a professional photographer. Please be respectful of the ceremony and your fellow students and refrain from taking selfies or behaving unprofessionally while on stage. Graduates must stay throughout the entire ceremony and must remain seated unless otherwise directed by faculty marshals.

The Recessional: After all students have been recognized, President Stephens and other University executives will recess first, followed by faculty members. Finally, the graduates exit, beginning with the front row and followed by each succeeding row.

Behavior and Line up Information: Commencement is a dignified occasion. Participants are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. The behavior of each graduate helps to set the tone for this important event. Graduates and families look forward to this milestone with excitement and anticipation. For many guests, Commencement is their first experience with the Academy. We want to ensure that the Commencement ceremony elicits positive memories for all who attend. Students and guests are expected to remain until the ceremony has concluded.

After the Ceremony: Graduates are asked to meet their family members and guests at a pre-determined (by the student) location outside. If family members or guests wish to present you with flowers and or leis, please ask them to do so after the ceremony. **Balloons and confetti are not permitted on the premises.**

Guidelines for Guests



Protocol: Commencement marks the pinnacle of academic achievement, and the Academy proudly celebrates the occasion with formal pomp and circumstance. Please help us provide a memorable event for all involved.

- *To be considerate of other guests and graduates we ask that your guests do not bring noise makers, balloons, confetti, utilize umbrellas, or stand in the aisles during the Commencement Ceremony.*
- *Each guest must have a ticket for entry.*
- *Guests should be seated before the procession begins; late arrivals will have to wait until the procession ends.*
- *Cell phones and electronic devices must be placed on silent mode.*
- *Guests are required to remain for the entire ceremony as a sign of respect for all graduates.*

Photos and Videos: Audience members are welcome to take photographs and videos throughout the ceremony, provided they remain in their seats, do not block aisles or egresses, and do not block the views of other guests.

Accessibility for Guests: To request accommodations related to a disability, including sign language interpreting during the ceremony, please contact Accessibility Resources at **(415) 618-3775** or Accessibility@academyart.edu.

Prohibited Items: The following items are prohibited: alcohol; illegal drugs/paraphernalia; weapons of any kind, including firearms and knives; and animals (certified service animals are allowed). Balloons, air horns, and other decorations or noisemakers are not allowed at the venue. Please leave these items at home or in your vehicle. **Security will be screening guests upon entry to the venue.**

Please contact: Commencement@academyart.edu with any questions or if you require additional information.

Live Stream of Ceremonies



The livestream of each Academy of Art University Commencement ceremony will be made available for online viewing. You will be able to watch on any device.

Thursday, May 14, 2026



Undergraduate Ceremony

10:00 AM PT Livestream Link

<https://bit.ly/ugradartu2026>



Graduate Ceremony

3:00 PM PT Livestream Link

<https://bit.ly/gradartu2026>

Only students attending the in-person ceremony will have their names recognized during the ceremony.

Post-Graduation Student Email and Adobe Creative Cloud Access



Graduates will continue to have access to their university email account and access to Adobe Creative Cloud for one (1) year post-graduation. Please make sure to save all your Adobe Creative Cloud and portfolio files before your access expires. Access to Brightspace ends ten days after the semester closes.



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