



**WESTERN GOVERNORS
UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT**

**NEW ORLEANS
MARCH 7, 2026**

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CONGRATULATIONS, NIGHT OWL—TODAY YOU BECOME AN ALUMNI!

All of your hard work and sacrifices have paid off, graduate! You're joining more than **425,000** Night Owls who make up our alumni family. It's time to enjoy more benefits that come with your achievement.

COMMIT TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Professional and continuing education extend beyond your time at WGU as a graduate. We are here to support your ongoing professional development by offering access to premium services such as LinkedIn Learning, Pluralsight®, the Teaching Channel®, Nurses on Boards Coalition®, and more!

Keep learning at the forefront of your mind at wgu.edu/alumnilearn.

PROGRESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Taking time to engage in professional development opportunities not only keeps you cutting edge in your field, it also allows you to network with other professionals and develop your professional brand—all of which can advance your career. WGU's Career and Professional Development team is here to help you thrive.

Get started at wgu.edu/career-services.

JOIN THE NIGHT OWL NETWORK

This exclusive network is a great way to connect with other alumni, find or become an industry mentor, join professional interest groups, discover innovative ideas from other experts in your field, or even find new jobs!

Join today at wgu.edu/nightownetwork.

STAY CONNECTED

Visit our website to find other resources and ways to stay involved.

Look for military alumni resources, explore discounts, shop WGU merchandise, and keep an eye on other alumni events!

Join the community at wgu.edu/alumni.

Learn more

wgu.edu/alumni | 866.225.5948



ALUMNI CELEBRATION

YOU'RE INVITED!

Friday, March 6, 2026

6:00–9:00 p.m.

CHAMPIONS SQUARE

Lasalle Street

New Orleans, LA 70112

Kick off your commencement weekend with this exclusive alumni celebration in honor of our graduates!

All graduates attending the 2026 WGU Commencement in New Orleans are invited to join us for the Alumni Celebration at Champions Square.

This family-friendly, come-and-go event is free to attend, and we encourage graduates and guests to dress in business attire.

AT THE CELEBRATION, YOU CAN:

- Free professional portraits (graduates only): Elevate your LinkedIn profile with free professional portraits—courtesy of WGU!
- Meet with local employers for career opportunities
- Reconnect with Alumni in your area
- Visit our affiliated partnership booths to receive career advice, purchase WGU swag, pick up your WGU Philanthropy Cord, and more.
- Take photos in our social photo booth and share using #WGUgrad
- Meet Sage the Night Owl
- Enjoy light appetizers, refreshments, and self-pay bars
- Hit the dance floor or play family-friendly games with a fun WGU twist
- Come for the networking, stay for the fun.
- Photo op lines close 15 minutes before the event ends (subject to change); arrive early to make the most of your evening

CONTACT INFORMATION

Alumni Celebration:

alumnievents@wgu.edu

Alumni Celebration ADA and accessibility:

alumnievents@wgu.edu

Commencement questions:

commencement@wgu.edu

Please note: 2026 New Orleans graduates are allowed to bring up to six (6) total guests.



COMMENCEMENT IN NEW ORLEANS

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Leavitt School of Health, School of Education,
School of Technology, & School of Business

SMOOTHIE KING CENTER

1501 Dave Dixon Drive
New Orleans, LA 70113

MORNING CEREMONY

Graduate Check-In and Pre-seating: **8:30 a.m.**

Commencement Ceremony: **9:30 a.m.**

After the Ceremony: Families will meet their
graduates outside on the plaza.

AFTERNOON CEREMONY

Graduate Check-In and Pre-seating: **12:30 p.m.**

Commencement Ceremony: **1:30 p.m.**

After the Ceremony: Families will meet their
graduates outside on the plaza.



**All graduates must check in
before the ceremony!**

GRADUATES MUST CHECK IN BEFORE THE CEREMONY.

Smoothie King Center encourages all guests to arrive early and travel light. In the interest of enhancing existing security measures and enforcing the most touch-free experience possible, Smoothie King Center requires clear bags.

The safest and fastest way to enter the venue is to not bring a bag at all. No clear bag, purse, or drawstring larger than 12" x 6" x 12" will be permitted. All bags are subject to search before being allowed into the venue. Guests not allowing inspection of their bags or purses will be refused entry into the building. Backpacks are not permitted. Diaper bags for guests accompanied by infant(s) will be permitted. Medically necessary bags that are required to transport medical equipment will be permitted.

Please bring your cell phone with you to access your Stage Pass and minimal personal belongings.

MORNING CEREMONY SCHEDULE

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026

LOCATION: Smoothie King Center
1501 Dave Dixon Drive
New Orleans, LA 70113

CEREMONY SCHEDULE

Graduate Check-In: **8:30 a.m.**
Graduate Pre-Seating: **8:30 a.m.**
Ceremony Start Time: **9:30 a.m.**

GRADUATE CHECK-IN: 8:30 A.M.

At graduate check-in, you will have the opportunity to pick up your philanthropy, military, and/or scholarship cord. We will also have limited regalia available for purchase, and you can visit with our name readers to clarify pronunciation. If you notice that there are errors on your Stage Pass, please visit the Help Desk.

Note: Only graduates are permitted in the Graduate Check-in Area

GRADUATE PRE-SEATING: 8:30 A.M.

After checking in, graduates will be guided directly to the arena floor where they will be seated with their schools. Please follow the direction of the college marshals.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY: 9:30 A.M.

The ceremony will begin promptly. Please be in your seat and ready at this time. We look forward to celebrating you!

CONFERRAL OF DEGREE ORDER

- Leavitt School of Health
- School of Education
- School of Technology
- School of Business

Note:

Graduates are called to the stage by schools and not in alphabetical order.

Graduates will receive their complimentary diploma cover after the conclusion of the ceremony.

BEFORE ARRIVING FOR COMMENCEMENT

All graduates participating in the Commencement ceremony must arrive wearing full academic attire: cap with tassel, hood, and gown. No changing rooms are available. Graduates are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes. Please have your Stage Pass pulled up on your phone screen to be scanned.

[Video: How to Wear Regalia](#)



Remember to follow signs at check-in!

AFTERNOON CEREMONY SCHEDULE

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026

LOCATION: Smoothie King Center
1501 Dave Dixon Drive
New Orleans, LA 70113

CEREMONY SCHEDULE

Graduate Check-In: **12:30 p.m.**
Graduate Pre-Seating: **12:30 p.m.**
Ceremony Start Time: **1:30 p.m.**

GRADUATE CHECK-IN: 12:30 P.M.

At graduate check-in, you will have the opportunity to pick up your philanthropy, military, and/or scholarship cord. We will also have limited regalia available for purchase, and you can visit with our name readers to clarify pronunciation. If you notice that there are errors on your Stage Pass, please visit the Help Desk.

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GRADUATE PRE-SEATING: 12:30 P.M.

After checking in, graduates will be guided directly to the arena floor where they will be seated with their schools. Please follow the direction of the college marshals.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY: 1:30 P.M.

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[Video: How to Wear Regalia](#)



Remember to follow signs at check-in!

SMOOTHIE KING ARENA POLICIES

GUEST SERVICES

Guest Services Booths are located on the 100 Level adjacent to section 108 and on the 300 Level adjacent to section 310.

EMT/FIRST AID

First Aid services are provided during all events at the Center and are located at sections 123 and 313.

GUEST SEATING

Seating is first-come, first-served. Guests should be seated with their cell phones on silent before the ceremony begins. Guests should remain in their seats during the entire ceremony as a courtesy to graduates and other guests.

PARKING

The public parking garages are designated #2, #2A, #5, and Champions Garage. Lot 3 is for ADA Parking and Oversized vehicles. \$30 per vehicle, credit or debit cards only.

Click here to Pre-purchase [Friday night parking](#).

Click here to Pre-purchase [Saturday parking](#).

BAG POLICY

All bags must be clear and fit within 12" x 6" x 12" or clutches that fit within 6.5" x 4.5"

CONCESSIONS

All concessions are provided exclusively in-house by Legends. Outside food and beverages of any kind may not be brought into the arena.

For food and beverage at concession stands, we accept credit and debit card transactions only. Smoothie King Center is a cashless facility, and cash is no longer accepted.

LOST CHILDREN

If Lost Program - To decrease the possibility of separation, all parents are encouraged to sign up their children for the If Lost Program at the Guest Services Desk across from Section 108. After enrolling, children will receive a wristband which is to contain the full name and phone number of the child's parent or guardian. This information is to help staff assist in reuniting the children with their parent(s) or guardian(s).

NO SMOKING

The Smoothie King Center is a NON-SMOKING facility. All guests are prohibited from smoking (including electronic cigarettes, vaporizers or similar products) inside of the arena and outside of the arena within the security perimeter at any time. Any person who refuses to comply with the policy, after an appropriate warning, shall be subject to be removed from the facility.

MOTHER'S LOUNGE

The Smoothie King Center has Mamava Pods for Nursing Mothers at the following locations: NE Ground Corridor, Section 110/111 and on the Suite Level near Suite 219. Please visit the nearest Guest Services Desk to retrieve an access code.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Smoothie King Center is fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Information on accessibility can be found below or [linked here](#).

SMOOTHIE KING ARENA POLICIES

ACCESSIBLE PARKING & ACCESS

Accessible parking is available throughout our campus on a first come, first served basis. Parking is based on availability and does change event to event. ADA Parking is in Lot 3 of the Smoothie King Center. To gain access to accessible parking, proper vehicle registration is required as well as a current disabled placard with a matching identification card. Please note, all parking is cashless. For any remaining questions regarding parking, please contact the Parking Office.

Superdome Parking Office: (504) 587-3805

Champions Garage Parking Office: (504) 587-3971

LOST AND FOUND ITEMS

Any lost and/or found item will be turned into Guest Services Desk across from Section 108. At the completion of the event, items are logged and kept for thirty (30) days before being discarded or donated. All guests should submit a claim prior to contacting the Guest Services Offices. To submit a claim, email lostandfound@asmneworleans.com.

Please note, claims are reviewed on the next business day (Monday through Friday, 9am to 4:30pm).

SERVICE ANIMALS

Trained service animals that assist guests with disabilities are permitted inside Smoothie King. Please note, comfort animals are not classified as service animals according to the Americans with Disabilities Act. prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. Service animals will rest in the seating area of the individual with a disability, rather than in the aisle. A guest whose service animal poses a threat to the safety of other guests and employees may be asked to escort the animal off the premises.

Animals that simply provide emotional comfort do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Therefore, Emotional Support Animals (ESA's) are not permitted inside the Gas South District.

GRADUATES



There will be a metal detector—bring only your phone with you!



Please have your Stage Pass up on your phone screen.



Please do not bring any bags or purses with you to the ceremonies.



Graduates are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes.

SENSORY INCLUSION

For our Kulture City Quiet Room, please take Elevator 1 to the Suite Level, or ask for directions at the Guest Services Booth at 108.

BALLOON DROP

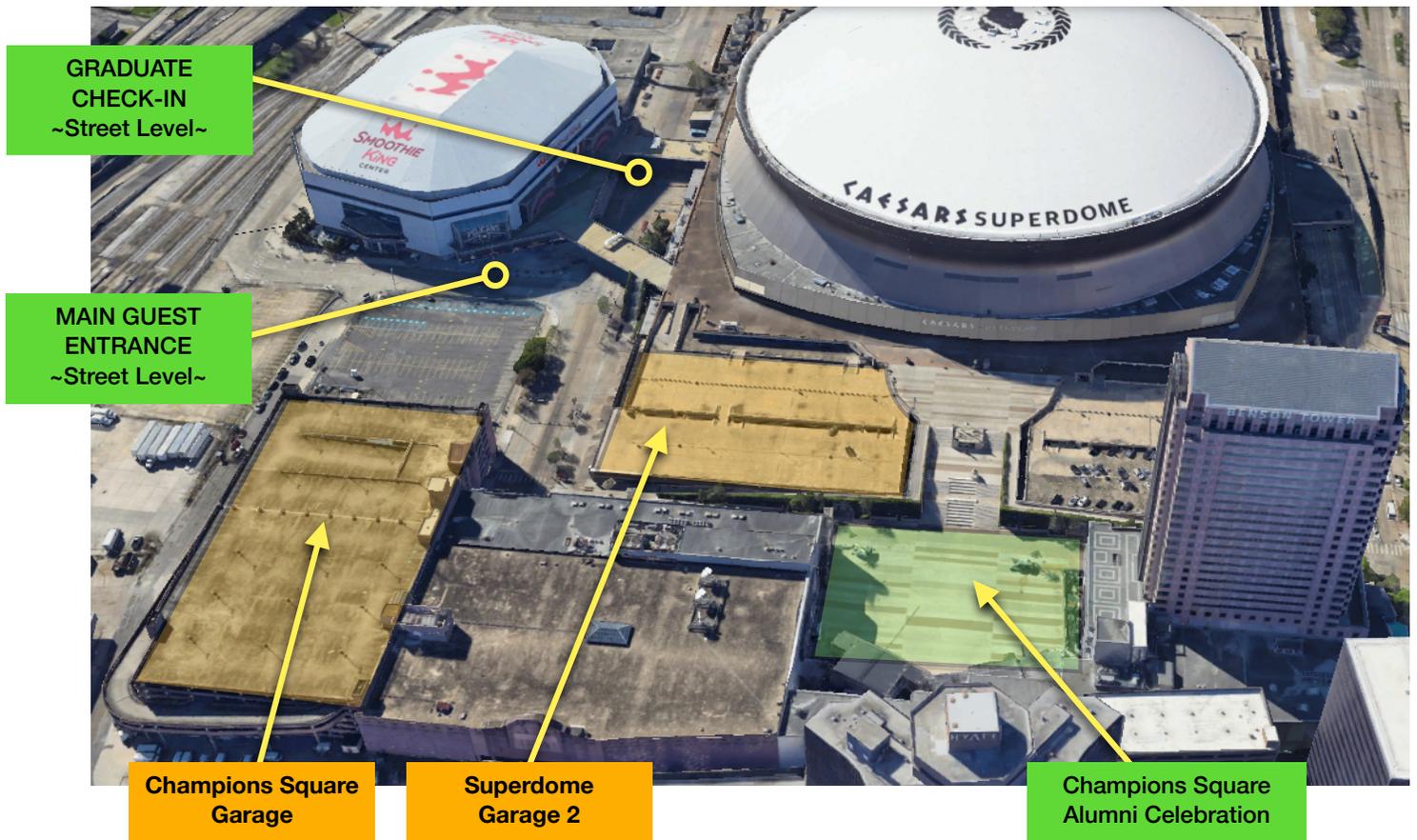
There will be a balloon drop during the close of the commencement ceremony. If you have a latex allergy, please alert a member of the WGU staff or Guest Services before the ceremony begins. They will assist you out of the arena prior to the balloon drop.

SMOOTHIE KING CENTER ENTRANCE & PARKING MAP

GENERAL ACCESS AND PARKING MAP

Smoothing King Center - Commencement

Champions Squares - Alumni Celebration



COMMENCEMENT ETIQUETTE AND DECORUM



ABOUT

Commencement Weekend is a memorable experience for graduates and their loved ones to celebrate their academic achievement. We want our graduates to experience a joyful, rewarding, and distraction-free ceremony that recognizes their hard work and the sacrifices they have made to reach this point. WGU believes that mutually respectful participation by graduates and their guests is the best way to accomplish this shared intention. In preparation for Commencement, WGU has outlined a protocol. Your and your guests' adherence will ensure a positive experience for all.

ACADEMIC ATTIRE FOR GRADUATES

All graduating students wear approved academic attire that includes a cap, gown, and tassel. The official regalia color is navy. We encourage all graduates to wear comfortable yet professional dress attire under their gowns rather than casual clothing. Master's degree graduates will need a hood specific to their degree. Graduates affiliated with an academic honor society may wear society pins or honor cords on their gowns. With the exception of WGU scholarship pins, leis, and corsages, graduates should not wear other items or decoration on their academic regalia.

Take into consideration the following if decorating your cap for commencement: WGU does not allow content on caps that is considered, in WGU's sole discretion, obscene, vulgar, defamatory, hateful, inappropriate, profane, or that might disregard another's copyright or third-party rights. All decorations must lay flat on the cap.

WGU COMMENCEMENT DECORUM POLICY

Please be advised any graduate or guest acting in a disruptive or disrespectful manner at WGU events, as determined by WGU in its sole discretion, may either not be allowed in the venue or may be escorted from the venue.

MILITARY

Graduates who indicate active-duty military or veteran status on their ceremony RSVP form will receive military honor cords at the Graduate Check-in Area.

[Video: How to Wear Regalia](#)

COMMENCEMENT ETIQUETTE

To promote a respectful, comfortable, and disturbance-free experience for our graduates and their guests, all attendees are asked to observe the following guidelines:



Place your cell phone on vibrate or silent during the ceremony.



Do not leave until the entire ceremony has ended.



Cheer respectfully and avoid disruptive outbursts to allow the families and guests of other graduates to hear their graduate's name when read.

WGU ACADEMIC CORDS AND HOODS

GRADUATE CORDS:

Graduates who have earned honor cords may pick them up from the affiliated partner tables during the Alumni Celebration on Friday night or during grad check-in on Saturday. Please reach out to the appropriate departments for more information about your cord eligibility.



MILITARY

Red, white, and blue



SCHOLARSHIPS

Gold and white



PHILANTHROPY

Navy, gold, and light blue



WOMEN IN TECH

Purple and white



NSLS

Black and silver

MASTER HOODS:



SALMON

Master of Science in Integrated
Healthcare Management



DRAB

School of Business



APRICOT

Nursing



SAGE

Master of Health Leadership



BRIGHT GOLD

School of Technology



LIGHT BLUE

School of Education

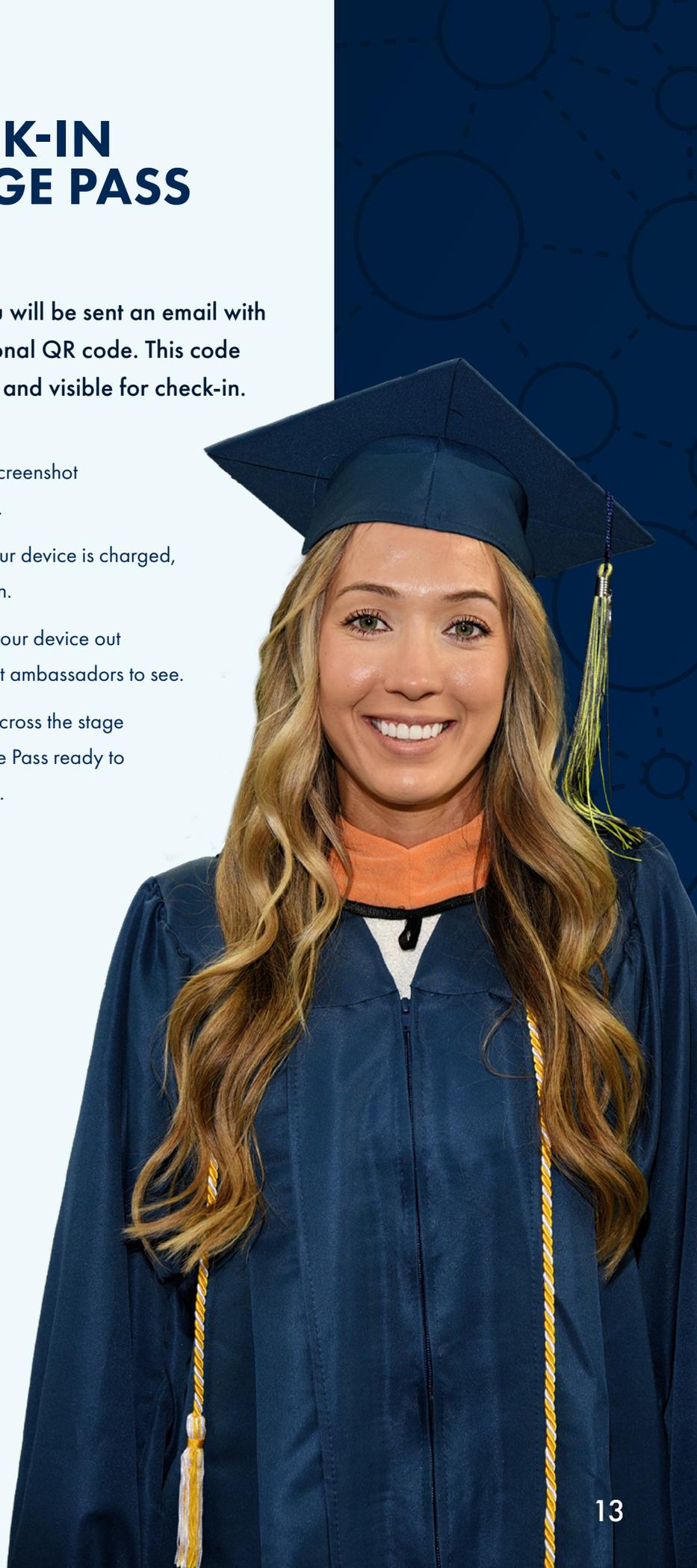
GRADUATE CHECK-IN PROCEDURE STAGE PASS



The week of Commencement, you will be sent an email with a Stage Pass with your own personal QR code. This code must be available on your device and visible for check-in.

1. Once you receive this email, please take a screenshot you can easily find and access this QR code.
2. Please make sure your device is with you, your device is charged, and the display is set on the brightest position.
3. When you arrive for check-in, please have your device out with the screen visible for the commencement ambassadors to see.
4. Your Stage Pass will be scanned before you cross the stage during the ceremony. Please have your Stage Pass ready to be scanned as you line up to cross the stage.

SAMPLE STAGE PASS



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

Receive a WGU
philanthropy cord!



Donate \$25 or more to the WGU Fellow Night Owl Scholarship Fund and receive a philanthropy cord.

You can help current WGU students cross the finish line to graduation, too, by purchasing a philanthropy cord to wear with your cap and gown. All proceeds support the WGU Fellow Night Owl Scholarship Fund.

Make your gift today!



Scan the QR Code or visit fundraise.givesmart.com/f/269b/n?vid=topwws

Visit the WGU Advancement table at the Alumni Celebration or Commencement Check-in to pick up your philanthropy cord.

Have a question? Email advancement@wgu.edu.

ONLINE VIEWING

Family and guests who are unable to attend in person may view the ceremony online. To watch the ceremony live, please visit the [online link](#) on Saturday, November 15, 2025.

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026

MORNING CEREMONY

Ceremony Start Time: 9:30 a.m. CST

AFTERNOON CEREMONY

Ceremony Start Time: 1:30 p.m. CST

PHOTOGRAPHY

During the WGU Commencement, the Grad Team will be taking candid photos, speaker photos, and graduate portrait shots. There is no obligation to purchase.

How to access your Commencement photos:

A week after Commencement, the Grad Team will post commencement photos online.

Visit thegradteam.com/events/wgu to view Commencement photos.

SPECIAL NOTE:

A graduate's appearance and participation are recorded at Commencement. This may include but is not limited to broadcast video, online web video, and photos in print materials. WGU may use some of these images for educational and informational purposes.

CONTACT

During Commencement week, the most efficient way to reach the WGU Commencement Office is by sending an email to commencement@wgu.edu.

You may also visit the [Commencement website](#).

Please [download](#) our Commencement app.



REFER YOUR FRIENDS TO WGU!

Share WGU with your friends and family by using your Refer-a-Friend link.

You'll earn **500 points** in the Owl's Nest once they've completed their application!



Scan the QR Code or visit wgu.onl/wgufriends to share WGU with your friends and family.