

Commencement Checklist

Commencement

Aquinas College confers degrees three times per year – December, May, and August. Commencement occurs once per year in May. Commencement for the 2024-2025 academic year will be **Thursday, May 1, 2025**

Graduation signifies the official completion of all degree requirements. Commencement is a ceremony. They are NOT the same thing.

Attending Commencement does not mean that you have graduated.

Before Commencement

- **Complete the Intent to Graduate Form.** The *Intent to Graduate Form* is required of all students planning to obtain a degree or acknowledgment of completion. Students must meet with their academic advisor to complete the Intent to Graduate Form at least 1-2 semesters prior to their final semester of degree completion.

Deadlines to meet with your academic advisor:

For December 2024 graduating candidates: December 6, 2024

For May 2025 and August 2025 graduating candidates: December 6, 2024

Students who fail to meet their degree requirements as planned on their *Intent To Graduate Form*, must complete a new form and will be subject to any increase of graduation fees as pertains to the newly intended graduation date.

- **Settle your student account.** Arrangements to meet all financial obligations to the College must be made before diplomas and/or transcripts will be released.
- **Order your academic regalia.** Candidates for graduation who intend to participate in Commencement are expected to wear the academic regalia distributed by the College. As Commencement is a formal ceremony, it is customary for laity to wear the academic gown over business attire and for Sisters to wear their mantels in lieu of the academic gown.

Candidates for graduation must place an order for academic regalia prior to February 28, 2025. The *Academic Regalia Order Form* will be emailed to you in late-January or early-February 2025. Academic regalia will be delivered to Aquinas College and will be available for pick up from the Office of Academics. An email will be sent to you once the regalia has arrived. Honor cords will be distributed at Commencement.

Important note: Students who do not place their order for academic regalia by the specified deadline may not be eligible to participate in Commencement.

- **Diploma.** The name to appear on the diploma is exactly as stated on the student's *Intent to Graduate Form*. Diplomas will be presented at Commencement to candidates for graduation who have completed all degree requirements, whose *Intent to Graduate Form* has been finalized in the Office of the Registrar, and who have met all financial obligations to Aquinas College. For those who do not participate in Commencement or who finish their coursework after Commencement, diplomas may be mailed or picked up in the Office of Academics per the preference indicated on the student's *Intent to Graduate Form*. Those who fail to meet their degree requirements as planned must complete a new form and will be subject to any increase of graduation fees as pertains to the newly intended completion date. *NOTE: Please contact the Office of Academics for any mailing address changes. Aquinas College cannot accept responsibility for diplomas lost in the U.S. Mail system.*
- **Commencement Practice.** Information regarding Commencement Practice will be sent out closer to the day of Commencement. Please be sure to check your email and the Aquinas College website for important Commencement notifications.
- **Announcements.**

Commencement Announcements are the perfect way to inform the people in your life about your academic achievement and give this special occasion the attention it deserves. Announcements are not invitations; therefore, they can be sent out as late as two weeks prior to your Commencement date.

Aquinas College may offer to print your Commencement announcements in-house. An email will be sent to your Aquinas College email regarding this information. Please be sure to check your email.
- **Rings, and Diploma Frames.** You may order college rings on-line at www.herffjones.com/collegelrings and diploma frames at www.collegiateframes.com. Choose Aquinas College from the drop down menu and follow the instructions from there. Please note that rings and diploma frames are individual purchases and payment will be expected when placing these orders.

At Commencement

- **Arrive early at the Aquinas Center.** Candidates for graduation will need to arrive no later than 8:45 a.m. Guests should arrive at least thirty minutes before the ceremony begins. The procession will begin promptly at the appointed time.
- **Wear appropriate academic attire.** Academic regalia must be worn as distributed by the College. Lay students wear the academic gown over business attire, along with the cap, tassel, and hood. Sisters wear mantels in lieu of the academic gown, along with the hood. Master degree candidates will wear the appropriate academic regalia and carry their hoods in order to be hooded during the ceremony.

- **Don't bring personal items.** Please do not bring purses or other personal items. Candidates for graduation are asked not to carry anything in the ceremony, with the exception of master degree candidates who will carry their hood over their left arm during the procession. There is no place to check or store purses, coats, or other personal items. Also, childcare is not provided at this ceremony. Children are not permitted to process with, recess with, nor be seated with candidates for graduation during the ceremony.
- **Follow the order of the processional.** The standard order of procession will be provided to you prior to Commencement.
- **Be respectful.** Families of the candidates will be asked to stand as the candidate's name is called. In essence of time and so that each candidate's name will be clearly heard, please hold all applause until the end of the conferring of degrees.
- **Move your tassel.** At the beginning of Commencement, tassels are worn on the right. Upon direction from the Aquinas College president or before you recess out, move your tassel to the left.

After Commencement

- **Commencement Program.** Please be sure to take your Commencement program from your seat when you leave. It is one of those keepsakes which commemorates your academic achievement.
- **Diplomas.** Candidates for graduation will receive their diplomas during Commencement. If the actual diploma is not in the diploma cover, the graduating student will receive a message within the diploma cover explaining the issue with the diploma. If for some reason the diploma you receive is incorrect, please notify Mrs. Kari Byard immediately following the Commencement ceremony.