

COMMENCEMENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANDIDATES
HARDING UNIVERSITY
George S. Benson Auditorium
9am, December 16, 2023

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Commencement ceremony will take place in the Benson Auditorium. The Benson parking lot, on the South side of the auditorium, will be for those needing accessible parking. Please relay this to any of your guests who may need this information. Benson doors will open approximately one hour prior to each ceremony for seating. This event is ticketed and ushers will be checking tickets at the door. **PLEASE remind your guests to have their printed or electronic tickets pulled up and ready as they arrive.** Thank you all in advance for being considerate and understanding of others by asking your guests to present their tickets as they enter the building.
2. **Designate ahead of time** a place on campus to meet your family and friends so everyone does not congregate immediately surrounding the Benson Auditorium. This will help ease congestion and it will make it simpler to find your family.
3. *Candidates should assemble in the Pryor-England Science Building 45 minutes before the ceremony on Saturday (8:15 a.m.).*
4. Men, wear a dress shirt with dark slacks, socks, and shoes. Ladies, wear dark clothing and dark shoes. Please do not chew gum.
5. Please **do not decorate your cap or gown in any way or add anything to your regalia other than approved honor cords.** Failure to comply could lead to your removal from the line of march.
6. Undergraduates should place the tassel on the RIGHT side of the cap; Master's and Specialist candidates should place the tassel on the LEFT side of the cap. Place the cap on the middle of your head so that the point is lined up with the middle of your forehead. Adjust the mortarboard so it is parallel to the ground – don't wear it to the side or to the back. You may need some bobby pins or clips to keep it securely on your head.
7. Master's and Specialist candidates should be wearing hoods. The dean or marshal can help during line up if you have a question, but the following are a few helpful tips regarding how to wear your hood:
 - a. Make sure your hood is not inside out; **the satin should be on the inside and the black material mostly on the outside.**
 - b. Put the hood on over your head with the velvet side up and the small tapered end pointing down in front. There may be a loop on the front point of the hood to secure it to a shirt button, or you may wish to pin the loop to a blouse or dress, under your gown.
 - c. Drape the hood around your neck with the largest portion of the hood hanging down your back.

- d. Flip the middle of the back of the hood, where the Harding colors are, outward to show the gold and black satin; roll the velvet edge out a bit as well so that the inside colors show. When you're done, the end of the hood will look somewhat like a shark fin.
8. Doctoral candidates should place the tassel on the LEFT side of the tam and carry their hoods over their left arm with the point toward their body. Doctoral students will be hooded on stage.
9. Please ask your family and friends to simply applaud when your name is called during the ceremony. Yelling, whistling, etc. drowns out the next name, so please be respectful.
10. Review the [line of march](#) posted on the Graduation web page (www.harding.edu/graduation) and note your line of march number. If your name has been inadvertently omitted from the list, contact the Office of the Registrar (501-279-4328) as quickly as possible.

ARRIVING FOR THE CEREMONY

1. A marshal has been assigned to your seating section to help you line up and lead you during commencement. Listen carefully and follow the instructions of the marshal.
2. On arrival in the Pryor-England Science building, proceed to the appropriate hallway for your line of march number indicated on the attached list.
 - a. If your line of march number is between **200-1 and 200-80**, assemble in the **NORTH hallway** outside of Room 113 of the Pryor-England Science building. You will enter the Benson auditorium through the doors west of the center entrance (to the far right in the lobby) and sit in the 200 section.
 - b. If your line of march number is between **300-1 and 300-80**, assemble in the **CENTER hallway** outside of Room 103 of the Pryor-England Science building. You will enter the Benson auditorium through the center doors and sit in the 300 section.
 - c. If your line of march number is between **400-1 and 400-80**, assemble in the **SOUTH hallway** outside of Room 116 of the Pryor-England Science building. You will enter the Benson auditorium through the east doors (far left side of the lobby) and sit in the 400 section.
3. Your dean and a faculty marshal will be in the hallway lining candidates up in order of the line of march and giving you instructions. You will be given two name cards that include your line of march number. Once card will be used to scan your QR code as you enter the stage and your information will display on the auditorium screens. The other card will be used by the name reader to call your name as you proceed across the stage. **You must hand the correct card to each person, so do not lose them.** The name reader may have made notes that make sense to them on how to pronounce your name. Please do not erase these or make any other marks on the cards, unless you wish to mark out a part of your name on the card being used by the name reader and **try not to touch the QR code** to ensure it scans quickly and easily.
4. Line up in order down the hallway based on your line of march number. If someone listed to march does not show up, close the gap in the line while marching.

5. When it is time, the marshal will lead you in a single-file line to the Benson. During the processional, the marshal will lead you down the appropriate aisle for your section and direct you into the correct row, filling the section from the front to the back. Do not leave any empty seats in your row.
6. When you arrive at your seat, **remain standing** until the processional music stops and you are instructed to be seated.
7. Men, remove caps when you are seated and leave them off until presented as a group for degrees. Remove caps again for the closing song and prayer.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CEREMONY

1. When the Provost asks all candidates to stand, remain standing until after the President makes his statement of “conferral” of the degrees and instructs you to be seated.
2. Marshals will manage the flow of candidates to the stage, so it is important to pay attention and follow the directions of the marshal for your section.
3. The marshal will indicate when it is time for your row to go to the stage. Each row will exit to the right, turn right and go to the break, turn left and go to the wall, and walk along the wall to the stairs on the right side of the stage. Wait in line along the wall to go up the stairs onto the stage.
4. The first person in line will hand the appropriate card to the screen technician and to the name reader as they walk to the **second tape line** on the floor directly in front of the reader. All other candidates will stop at the **first tape line** on the floor at the top of the stairs and hand their correct cards as they reach the technician and the name reader.
5. When the person in front of you moves across the stage after his/her name is called, hand your card to the reader as you **step forward to the second tape line**.
 - a. If your name is unusual or difficult to pronounce, your name card should already be noted with the phonetic pronunciation. If not, tell the name reader how it is pronounced when you hand her/him your card.
 - b. As the reader calls your name, step forward to shake hands with your dean.
 - c. Next, march across the stage to President Williams who will present your diploma cover.
 - d. You will receive only a diploma cover from Dr. Williams. Your diploma will be mailed to you within six weeks of graduation.
 - e. After receiving the diploma cover from the President, continue marching across the stage. Those receiving a bachelor’s degree should move your tassel from RIGHT to LEFT.
 - f. Go down the steps on the left side of the stage, return to your seat and sit down. Do not wait for your entire row before sitting down.
6. For the recessional (end of the ceremony), you will follow the faculty marshal, beginning from the front row nearest the stage. The marshal for your section will wait until the faculty line reaches the break and then lead your group out, in the same order you entered from front to back, through the same door you entered.

7. When you reach the Benson lobby, **please continue to march out of the building** to make room for those who are marching out behind you.

FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY

1. **Designate ahead of time** a place on campus to meet your family and friends so everyone does not congregate immediately surrounding the Benson Auditorium.
2. Food and beverages will be provided in a reception in the Charles White Dining Hall after the ceremony. Please [register here](#) to assist with meal prep plans.
3. Backdrops and props for photo opportunities will be provided in various locations on the way and at the reception, so look for these fun spots to pose with friends and family!

Additional information may be found at www.harding.edu/graduation

Congratulations and best wishes to each of you!

If you encounter any problems requiring assistance the day of commencement, please call Harding Public Safety at 501-279-5000.