



Graduation and Commencement F.A.Q.

Graduation is the completion of all degree requirements as recorded on the official transcript.

Commencement is the ceremony that celebrates the completion of a degree.

Graduation Applications and Diplomas:

- 1. How do I apply for graduation?**
 - a. Log into Owl Link
 - b. Click Graduation Overview.
- 2. When should I apply for graduation?**
 - a. Students should ONLY apply for graduation once they have registered for their final classes for their academic program. Applications received after the deadline will be processed for the following semester. Application deadlines are typically:
 - i. Spring = Feb 15th
 - ii. Summer = July 15th
 - iii. Fall = Sept. 15th
- 3. When will I receive my degree/certificate?**
 - a. All diplomas/certificates will be mailed from a third-party vendor (Parchment) to the student's permanent address on file.
 - b. Any students who need to change their address should fill out this form and return it to registrar@pgcc.edu:
<https://www.pgcc.edu/media/wwwpgccedu/content-assets/admissions-amp-registration/records-amp-registration/Personal-Information-Update.pdf>
- 4. Can I apply for more than one degree/certificate?**
 - a. Students may apply for multiple degrees and certificates in one semester.
 - b. Separate applications must be completed for each degree/certificate.
 - c. Students must acquire *15 extra credits* per each degree (e.g., 2 degrees require at least 75 credits). This rule does **not** apply to certificates.
- 5. I have transfer credits. How can I use them towards my program at PGCC?**
 - a. All transfer credits must be evaluated by transfer credit evaluators in the Office of Records and Registration. There is a 45-credit limit for transfer credits accepted by the college. The grade received will not be factored into the GPA. More information about the transfer credit process can be found here: <https://www.pgcc.edu/hs/transfer-credit-policies-and-procedures/>.
 - b. If a student has transfer credits, 15 credits must be completed here at PGCC in order to receive a degree.
 - c. At least 50% of the total credits required must be completed here at PGCC in order to receive a certificate.
- 6. I completed all of my courses for graduation but my application was denied because of my GPA. What should I do?**



- a. Students must have a 2.0 GPA to receive a degree/certificate. AAT degree programs require a 2.75 GPA and passing aptitude test scores. (ACT, PRAXIS I)
 - b. If a student is denied graduation due to a low GPA, the student must take courses here at PGCC in order to raise their GPA. Transfer credits will not be factored into their GPA.
- 7. I took courses that are not required for my degree/certificate program. Can I substitute those courses for those that are needed for my program?**
- a. It is the student's responsibility to contact the department chair that oversees the course and request a course substitution.
 - b. All course substitutions must be approved by the program department chairperson and the registrar.
- 8. Can I take courses after I graduate?**
- a. Students may take courses after program completion. The student will be required to re-apply to the College under a new program of study or as a non-degree student in order to take courses after graduation. More information about the readmission process can be found here: <https://www.pgcc.edu/enrollmentsteps/readmission/>.
- 9. I have an outstanding balance on my account. Can I still receive my degree?**
- a. Students may not receive a degree or certificate while carrying an outstanding balance. Students will be cleared for graduation, but no documentation will be released until their balance is paid.
- 10. I received my degree/certificate but my name is misspelled – what should I do?**
- a. For diploma errors, students may send an email to graduation@pgcc.edu for assistance.

Commencement Questions:

- 11. When and where is the Commencement (graduation ceremony)?**
- a. One graduation ceremony each year in May at the Show Place Arena located in Upper Marlboro, MD. Students who complete their programs during the previous summer and fall semester are allowed to participate in the ceremony held the following year. Students who have 6 or less credits remaining, and are registered for them in the upcoming summer semester by May 1, may also participate. This year, Commencement (graduation ceremony) is scheduled for **Saturday, May 18th, 2024** with the processional beginning at 10:00 AM. Students should plan to arrive by 8:45 AM.
- 12. Do I have to participate in Commencement?**
- a. We encourage students to participate in the ceremony although it is not mandatory. If a student is planning to participate, they must indicate so on their graduation application. Please visit the commencement website for more information: <https://www.pgcc.edu/commencement/>
- 13. How many people can I invite to Commencement?**
- a. This number varies depending on the expected number of graduates. Usually, each student will receive 4 tickets. Please note, tickets are required to enter the Commencement venue. Graduates will receive information about ticket distribution during the spring semester.

14. Can I request additional guest tickets? Do children require their own tickets?

- a. We are currently not able to provide extra guest tickets. All guests who will be sitting in a seat require a ticket (Show Place Arena policy).

15. How can I invite my family to Commencement if they live in another country?

- a. Students may come to the Office of Records and Registration and request an Embassy Letter form.
- b. A letter will be drafted for the student to mail to the embassy. The student will be notified by email when the letter is available for pick up from the Office of Records and Registration, which is typically 3-5 business days from the date of the request. Please note that letters will not be written until the spring semester begins each year.

16. If my family cannot attend in-person, how can they view the ceremony?

- a. The ceremony will be live streamed on the college PGCC TV YouTube channel.

17. Where do I get a cap and gown for graduation?

- a. Students are provided the link where they can order the cap and gown to either be shipped directly to their home or to be shipped for pick up at the PGCC Bookstore from May 13 – 17th.

18. Is there a dress code and are we supposed to wear certain color clothing or shoes?

- a. While there is no formal dress code, men generally wear dark trousers and a dress shirt and tie under their gowns. Women usually wear a lightweight dress or a blouse and a skirt that is shorter than the gown so it does not hang below the robe.

19. Am I allowed to decorate my cap?

- a. Graduates are allowed to decorate their caps.

20. I forgot to request my cap and gown or forgot to pick-up the cap and gown - can I still attend graduation?

- a. Graduates who do not have a cap and gown will not be able to participate in the ceremony, however; there will be a limited number of extra caps and gowns available at the ceremony for graduates who have damaged and/or lost their caps and gowns.

21. I have one course to take in the summer. Can I participate in the graduation ceremony?

- a. Degree seeking students registered for their last 6 or less credits in the summer are eligible to participate in the ceremony prior to completing their program in August.

22. Is there a graduation rehearsal for students?

- a. There will not be a graduation rehearsal for the May 2024 ceremony.

23. Will there be special accommodations for graduation participants and their guests who have disabilities?

- a. If you need any special assistance for Commencement, please notify the Office of Records and Registration by Monday, May 13th, 2024 by emailing graduation@pgcc.edu.

24. Is there a fee for parking at the Show Place Arena?

- a. There are no parking fees at Show Place Arena.

25. Will there be a professional photographer taking photos before, during, or after the ceremony that will be available for students to download or purchase?

- a. There will be a professional photographer taking photos during the ceremony as graduates walk across the stage.