

2026 COMMENCEMENT GENERAL INFORMATION

Friday, May 8 at 9:00 am | Hawkins Arena, Macon



Commencement will take place on Friday, May 8, at Hawkins Arena, which is located in the University Center on the Macon campus. The ceremony will start promptly at 9:00 am. Doors to Hawkins Arena will open at 8:00 am for guests to arrive and take their seats. Entry before 8:00 am will not be permitted.

SCHEDULE

TIME	GRADUATE SCHEDULE	LOCATION
7:30 am	Graduates arrive in full regalia for class pictures	Hawkins Arena
7:35 am	Class pictures	Hawkins Arena
7:45 am	Breakfast	Intramural Courts*
8:15 am	Processional/Recessional instructions	Intramural Courts* <i>Report to your assigned seat in Intramural courts*</i>
8:30 am	Graduates line up	Intramural Courts*
9:00 am	Commencement	Hawkins Arena
11:00 am	Military Promotion Ceremony	Hawkins Arena

TIME	FACULTY SCHEDULE	
7:30 am	Faculty arrive in full regalia and check in	Intramural Courts*
7:30 am	Breakfast	Intramural Courts*
8:15 am	Processional/Recessional instructions	Intramural Courts* <i>Report to your assigned seat in Intramural courts*</i>
8:30 am	Faculty line up	Intramural Courts*
9:00 am	Commencement	Hawkins Arena
11:00 am	Military Promotion Ceremony	Hawkins Arena

*The Intramural Courts are located on the lower level of the University Center below the fitness center. To access the lower level, please use the elevator or stairs just inside the fitness center.

PARKING

- Parking is available in the Medical School, Stetson School of Business, and areas near the University Center (UC).
- **Parking at the UC is limited to Handicapped parking only.**
- View [map of parking areas](#) available during commencement
- Golf carts will pick up in the designated parking areas and drop off at the UC.
- After the event, golf carts will shuttle individuals from the UC back to parking lots.

TICKETS

- At this time, this is not a ticketed event, and there is no limit on the number of guests.

REGALIA AND ATTIRE

- Cap, tassel, gown, and hood are required and should be free of wrinkles. (Follow instructions provided with gowns.)
- Cap must be worn flat on the head.
- Place tassel on the **left side**. **DO NOT FLIP TASSEL** after receiving diploma. (MD students should pin their tassel in place on their tam with a safety pin to avoid losing them).
- Dark attire looks best under the gown fabric. Dark dress slacks/skirts or a dark dress in black, brown or navy are ideal.
- Wear dark dress shoes. Low heels or flats are strongly encouraged.
- No flip-flops, casual sandals, slides or sneakers.
- Only honor society cords and honor medallions (i.e., Phi Kappa Phi) approved by the University will be allowed.
- All regalia worn should pertain only to the degree you are earning. Improper attire, signs, decorations on caps, and insignia are not allowed and will be removed by the marshals. **Do NOT decorate your cap.**

CEREMONY ETIQUETTE

- Turn off all cell phones.
- Be respectful of other graduates and hold all applause and celebratory outbursts until after **ALL** names have been read so that each name can be heard.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Professional photographs, including class photos, individual photos on stage with Dean Sumner, and candid photos from the ceremony, will be available for download on the School's [SmugMug site](#).
- **No one** is allowed on the arena floor during commencement.

ARENA REGULATIONS

- No balloons are allowed in Hawkins Arena.
- No food or drinks are allowed in Hawkins Arena.
- No strollers are allowed in the seating area of Hawkins Arena.

ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION

- Accessible seating is available on the main floor of Hawkins Arena around the perimeter.
- All accessible seating is first come first serve for individuals with a disability and one companion.
- **Complimentary wheelchairs for transportation to seats:**
 - Mercer University has collaborated with Scott's Pharmacy to provide wheelchairs to be used by guests for travel to seating. Guests transported with the chairs will be assisted by family members, and Mercer staff will accompany them to return the chair to the drop-off location for the next guest.
 - After the ceremony's completion, guests may again use the chairs to assist guests to the drop-off station only.
 - We encourage you to bring a personal chair, if a wheelchair is needed for seating during the ceremony.

For questions and additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs at **(478) 301-2652**. Please make requests for any accommodation including but not limited to: seating, closed-captioning, and interpreting or other accommodations by **April 15, 2026** to ensure access. We will continue to make a good faith effort to provide accommodations received after this date.

BOOKSTORE HOURS FOR MAY 8

Main Store: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

Hawkins Arena Box: 8:00 am until 30 minutes after event conclusion



AREA HOTELS

(Links provided for preferred hotels with April 23, 2026 cut-off date for booking under group rate)

[Hilton Garden Inn](#)

(adjacent to campus)
1220 Stadium Drive
(478) 741-5527

[TownePlace Suites by Marriott](#)

(adjacent to campus)
1550 Mercer University Drive
(478) 812-8522

Marriott Residence Inn

(approximately 7 miles to campus just off I-75)
3900 Sheraton Drive
(478) 475-4280

[Homewood Suites by Hilton](#)

(approximately 11 miles from campus just off I-75)
1514 Bass Road
(478) 477-9776

COMMENCEMENT FAQs FOR GRADUATES

Q. Do friends and family need tickets to attend commencement?

A. At this time this is not a ticketed event and there is no limit on the number of guests.

Q. When should I arrive?

A. Students are expected to be dressed in full regalia in Hawkins Arena at 7:30 a.m. for class photos. Please arrive picture-ready in full regalia (including hood and honor cords). Immediately after your group photo, report to the Intramural Courts for check-in and breakfast.

Q. When do doors open for guests to take their seats?

A. Doors to Hawkins Arena will open at 8:00 pm to allow time for your guests to be seated before the start of the ceremony, which starts at 9:00 am sharp.

Q. Can my guests visit me in the intramural courts before the ceremony?

A. No, family and friends are not allowed on the arena floor or in any of the students areas.

Q. Can I drop off a guest with mobility concerns near the entrance and then park my vehicle?

A. Yes, a passenger drop-off area is located in front of the entrance to Hawkins Arena.

Q. Is there a shuttle service from the parking lot to the entrance of Hawkins Arena?

A. Yes, shuttles will be running from the lots marked on [the map](#).

Q. Are there any items that are not allowed inside Hawkins Arena?

A. Balloons, strollers, food or drinks are not allowed inside of Hawkins Arena.

Q. When will I receive my diploma?

A. Doctor of Medicine graduates will receive their diplomas on the day of commencement. Diplomas for other doctoral programs and graduate programs will be ordered upon completion of requirements. Please note that other doctoral diplomas must be picked up in person and graduate diplomas will be mailed upon receipt.

Q. How can I get a copy of the photos taken during commencement?

A. All pictures from Commencement, including regalia shots, will be on the School's SmugMug site: medgallery.mercer.edu
You will have the option to download digital images or purchase prints through SmugMug.