

FAQs for Family and Friends

The Charles and Louise Travers Department of Political Science is pleased that you are able to attend the graduation ceremony of your son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandson, granddaughter, coworker, or friend. Below you will find answers to some frequently asked questions. For additional information, please go to polisci.berkeley.edu and click on "Political Science at Cal" - "Commencement".

Q: When and where is the Political Science Commencement Ceremony?

A: The Political Science Commencement Ceremony will be held on Sunday, May 14th, 2017 at 2:00 pm at the [Hearst Greek Theatre](#). Gates will open at 1:00 pm. Graduates must enter from the South Gate and be backstage by 1:30 pm. All guests must enter from the [North Gate of the Greek Theatre](#) (across from East Gate/Latimer Hall).

Q: How long is the ceremony?

A: The ceremony lasts approximately 2 hours.

Q: What time should I arrive at the Greek Theatre?

A: 1:00 pm. There is no comfortable place to sit out of the sun (or rain) so with that in mind, we recommend that you arrive no earlier than 1:00 pm.

Q: Is there a reception? Where will the reception be held?

A: Yes. Graduates and their guests are invited to a reception near the [Campanile Esplanade](#) following the commencement ceremony. The reception lasts approx. an hour.

Q: What will be served at the reception?

A: Light refreshments and sweets will be provided at the reception.

Q: Will we need tickets for Commencement?

A: Yes. All guests must have a ticket to enter the Greek Theatre.

Q: How can I get tickets?

A: Each graduating student who [signed up](#) to be in the Commencement Program may pick up two free tickets in person in the Political Science Main Office in 210 Barrows from April 24th through May 12th, 2017. Additional tickets may be purchased through Cal Performances beginning April 25th, 2017 in person at the [Zellerbach Hall Ticket Office](#) or by phone using a credit card. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$13 day of event. There is no limit to the number of tickets you may purchase. Seating is general admission. Be sure to identify guests who are age 8 and under. Children age 8 and under are free but MUST HAVE a ticket. On Commencement Day, tickets will be sold at the North Gate of the Greek Theatre starting at 1:00pm.

Q: Do children need tickets?

A: Yes. Children age 8 and under are free but MUST HAVE a ticket. Due to campus and Greek Theatre safety regulations, it is required that all guests have tickets to gain admittance into the graduation ceremony. Only graduating students in cap & gown will not need a ticket to enter.

Q: What if I forget my ticket?

A: You can always buy another one at the event. Ticket will be available for purchase at the North Gate of the Greek Theatre starting at 1:00pm. Please do not forget your tickets!

Q: Where is the best place to park?

A: For detailed commencement parking information, please visit the [UC Berkeley Parking and Transportation Special Event Parking Website](#).

Q: Is special seating available for disabled/hearing impaired guests?

A: If you or any of your guests have a hearing loss that will require a Sign Language Interpreter or Real Time Captioner, please contact Michelle Dylla at least a month in advance (by April 14th, 2017) at mdylla@berkeley.edu to make the necessary arrangements. If any of your guests require wheelchair-accessible seating, please also contact the department in advance. Advance notice is required to ensure the best possible arrangements.

Q: Is accessible parking available for disabled guests?

A: For accessible parking areas, please visit the [Parking & Transportation Website](#).

Q: Where can I get information about dining and lodging?

A: For restaurants & hotels in the area, check out UC Berkeley's [Visitor Services Website](#).

Q: I want to give my student flowers. Where can I get some?

A: There are many flower vendors close to campus. We even allow one to set up just outside the Greek Theatre.

Q: Will there be a photographer?

A: Yes. A professional photographer will take pictures of each graduate. Information about the photographer will be e-mailed to students, and will also be available at the event venue. Additional information can be found on-line at Grad Images Photo, <http://gradimages.com>.

Q: How do students sign up so that the department knows they want to participate?

A: Students must sign up online (link on the department website). This ensures that the names of the participating students will appear on the printed commencement program.

Q: Are the graduating students' names called at the PoISci Commencement ceremony?

A: Yes. All graduates will be individually recognized by name on stage.

Q: Our family name is hard to pronounce. What can we do?

A: Students are asked to spell their names phonetically on their name cards.

Q: What happens if it rains?

A: Commencement proceeds as planned, rain or shine! Please come dressed appropriately for the weather on that day. If the skies are cloudy and rain is forecast, you may want to consider bringing an umbrella.

Q: My child wrote an honors thesis in Political Science. Will that be recognized at the ceremony?

A: Yes. Departmental honors will be noted on the Commencement Program. However, the level of honors achieved – Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors – will be noted on the final transcripts and diplomas, available a few months *after* graduation. Students completing their honors thesis are also invited to an Honors Reception and are entitled to wear gold Honors Cords at Commencement. Cords will be conferred at the reception (students will be notified of the exact day and time via e-mail). The reception is open to those undergraduates who participated in the 2016/2017 Political Science Honors Program, their families, department faculty and staff.

Q: Can my child graduate with honors another way?

A: Yes. The College of Letters & Science awards Distinction, High Distinction, and Highest Distinction in General Scholarship (comparable to Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude and Summa Cum Laude) based on the final overall GPA. Distinction will be noted on transcripts and diplomas. However, distinctions are not noted on the Commencement program due to the fact that final grades for Spring 2017 are unavailable by the time of graduation.

Q: Are diplomas given out at the ceremony?

A: No. Attending a commencement ceremony does not mean that a student actually graduated. Some students attend the May ceremony though they will not finish all degree requirements until the end of summer session or the following fall semester. The ceremony takes place before final grades for the spring semester are filed. The ceremony is strictly a celebratory ritual.

Q: How does my son or daughter get a diploma?

A: Diplomas will automatically be mailed free of charge approximately 3.5 months after the end of the term to the diploma address supplied by the student on CalCentral For additional details, please visit: <http://registrar.berkeley.edu/Records/diplomas.html>

Q: What's the difference between the campus-wide and department graduation?

A: The campus-wide graduation is for all graduating seniors from all majors and their families. This event includes the Chancellor's address and most of the traditional pomp and circumstance. Department graduations are specific to graduating students in a specific major (i.e., Political Science) and their families with each graduate walking across stage, getting his/her picture taken, and receiving a commemorative certificate (scroll).

Q: Where and when is the campus-wide graduation?

A: The campus-wide graduation is scheduled for Saturday, May 13th, 2017. All graduating students are welcome to attend this event. This is a ticketed event. For more information, please refer to <http://commencement.berkeley.edu>.