

UWS Graduation : Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

UWS confirmed in April 2021 that regrettably, the traditional graduation ceremonies will not take place in 2021 due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions on travel, events and gatherings of people.

We share your disappointment that in-person graduation ceremonies are not possible this year in our usual venues due to ongoing Coronavirus restrictions. Please read below for more information about how we are developing arrangements to celebrate your academic achievements in 2021.

1. I am due to graduate in summer 2021 – what is happening with my graduation?

Our summer graduations will be taking place in August this year and, as indicated above, will be a virtual graduation event. At the graduation, the University Chancellor or nominee will confer your award and you will be sent your certificate by post following the date of conferment.

Students who are eligible to graduate by August will be sent details in the coming weeks about how to register for it.

2. If my award was conferred on 30th March 2021, can I still participate in a virtual graduation event in August ?

Yes - students who had awards conferred in March 2021 and whose parchments have already been issued will be contacted in the coming weeks about how to register for the August 2021 virtual graduation celebration. This relates to students who studied on UWS campuses and those who studied franchised courses with UWS partner institutions.

3. If there are no in-person graduation ceremonies in 2021, will I still be a graduate at the end of my studies?

Yes – we will confer your degree and let you know when this has happened and provide your award parchment (certificate). Whether you choose to participate in a virtual graduation celebration or not, you will, through the conferment of your award, be a graduate of UWS.

4. Will there be any charge for attending the virtual ceremonies?

No, the University is pleased to be able to offer the virtual graduation ceremonies at no cost to students or their guests.

5. I do not want to participate in a virtual graduation ceremony so how do I get my parchment?

There is no obligation to participate in the virtual ceremony, although we hope that a lot of students will choose to do so. We do ask that you respond to the invitation when you receive it and let us know that you do not plan to participate.

If you are a student who has not yet had their award conferred and you do not confirm your attendance at the graduation, you will graduate in absentia and your parchment will be sent by post to your home address.

6. What does 'in absentia' mean?

Graduating in absentia means the University will give you your award without you attending a ceremony. Your award is conferred by the University Chancellor or nominee and your parchment will be sent to you in the post to the home address provided by you in Self Service Banner.

7. What address will my parchment be sent to?

Parchments will be sent to your home address. This is the address where you normally live when not attending university. You can check what address is held for you currently and update it now at <https://ssb.uws.ac.uk> You will also have an opportunity to confirm your home address or to provide an alternative address for graduation purposes when you register for graduation.

8. I thought there would be a London/Spring 2021 Graduation opportunity as my award is now complete so when will I graduate?

Students whose awards were conferred in Spring 2021 have already been contacted and their parchments will be posted to them in April. You will also have opportunity to participate in one of our August 2021 virtual ceremonies. If your award was conferred on 30th March, you will receive further information in the coming weeks about the online celebration event in August.

9. When will I find out which day my graduation will fall on from the published August dates?

We will be in touch with those students eligible to graduate this summer in the coming weeks. There is no need to contact us in the meantime. August 2021 ceremonies will take place between 20th - 26th August and you will be allocated to one of these days depending on your programme of study to allow you to graduate with your fellow students in the same programme and in the same School. There will be more than one ceremony each day and some will be in the early evening.

10. If I am unable to participate at the scheduled date/time, can I change to another ceremony?

No, each programme in each School has an allocated ceremony and it is not possible to request a change to a different date or time. If you are unable to attend, and your award has not already been conferred, you will graduate in absentia.

11. I am due to graduate in November 2021 – what is happening with my graduation?

Given ongoing uncertainties and the potential for ongoing social distancing requirements, we are arranging for the November 2021 graduations to also be held virtually. These will take place between 12th - 18th November 2021 and there will be no charge for participation. Eligible students will be contacted late September or the beginning of October with further information about how to register for the event.

12. What will be the format of the virtual ceremonies and how long will they last?

Each ceremony will include a welcome by the Vice Chancellor or his deputy; a formal graduation address and the presentation of individual students for their award by the Dean or Deputy Dean of School. Your family and friends will also be able to log in and watch the ceremony live from anywhere in the world via YouTube. You will be provided in advance with the relevant live-stream link for your graduation ceremony in order to share that with them. The ceremony should last about 45 minutes. Afterwards a recording of the ceremony will be available on our UWS YouTube channel for on-demand viewing.

13. Do I need to register for the virtual graduation ceremonies?

Yes – as with all our graduation ceremonies, we know not everyone will want to attend and participate in the ceremony. Eligible students will be contacted in due course about the summer 2021 or winter 2021 virtual graduation events. If you do not register, you will still have your award conferred – this will enable us to send your award parchment to you. You should ensure your contact details and full name are up to date by visiting the following web page (<https://ssb.uws.ac.uk>).

Ceremonies will be live broadcasts, so you must be logged in to attend at the allotted time you will be given. After you have formally Registered to graduate, and closer to the time of the Graduation ceremonies, you will receive your personal access link in advance of your ceremony taking place. We encourage you to check your e-mails for this information (and it is also worth checking your spam/junk folders just in case communications are moved there by your e-mail provider). Graduands will attend their ceremony live via Zoom.

14. Will I be able to hire academic dress when I participate in the virtual graduation?

Yes – we are hoping that you can hire the correct UWS academic dress from our gown supplier, Ede & Ravenscroft, if you want to wear this for your online graduation. Details can be found at <https://graduation-services.edeandravenscroft.com/graduation-events-2021/> However, hiring a gown is not compulsory and please note that at the virtual ceremony, only your head and shoulders will be visible. If you'd like to get into the celebratory spirit, please do feel free to dress to impress for your virtual live graduation ceremony.

15. Will I have any souvenirs from my virtual graduation?

We will publish a souvenir graduation programme which you can save digitally or print. There will also be the opportunity for you to purchase a range of quality UWS branded merchandise, should you wish to do so, and further info and ordering details will be made available in due course. Your friends and family will be able to view your graduation ceremony live online and our digital platform will provide a recording of the virtual ceremony which can be accessed over and over again.

16. Will my name appear in the newspaper on the day of my graduation ?

If you wish to have your name published in the newspapers, you need to give us permission at the time when you register for the graduation.

Please note that the Herald and Scotsman are responsible for the publication of graduation lists and while we will try to have graduations listed on the day of the ceremony, the University does not have control over the timing of the publications.

17. Although an in-person graduation ceremony is not possible this year due to Covid 19, I would like to return to the University and have a formal photo opportunity with academic dress – will the university be able to provide such an opportunity for this at some point in the future

Yes – we really want those students who would like this opportunity to come back and see us and to be able to take photos to commemorate their graduation – as restrictions lift we will identify one or more days when this can be organised with gown hire and professional photography available for you to book if you wish. This will not include a ceremony but there will be refreshments and photo opportunities available. At this stage we cannot confirm when this will be possible and may not be until 2022. There is no need to contact us in the meantime; we will be in touch when more details are known.

18. Will I be able to defer my 2021 graduation so that I can graduate in the future once normal in-person ceremonies are possible again?

No, your graduation is still being held this year but will be a virtual ceremony and not an in-person ceremony. Your award will be conferred as soon as possible after the award is confirmed, so that you can provide evidence of your UWS qualifications to future employers/academic institutions for further study. Like many celebrations and significant life events which have had to be held differently during the time of Covid, it will not be possible to re-run these virtual graduations in a traditional format in the future. Over 8000 students will have graduated from UWS in 2020 and 2021. However, our online graduation platform partners and the University have worked together to ensure a high-quality virtual experience. Your ceremony will be live and will be personalised to your class and cohort. Once your degree or other award is conferred we will ensure your formal parchment is forwarded to you so that you have your qualifications for future employment or study requirements.

However, please note that as outlined in question 17 above, you will be very welcome to come to the campus on one or more specific days still to be determined when you will be able to celebrate

with us and if you wish, to hire your academic dress and book a professional portrait photograph and we intend to make both of those external professional services available on campus to give you another opportunity to mark your academic achievement for the camera! At this stage we cannot predict when restrictions will be eased to a point when this is possible and it may not be until 2022. There is no need to contact us in the meantime; we will be in touch when more details are known.

19. I graduated in a virtual ceremony in 2020 or 2021 – will there be additional formal graduation ceremonies in the future which I can attend with my guests?

Although University staff were working from home during much of 2020 and 2021, we put in place arrangements to ensure your award was conferred and your parchment provided when you successfully completed your course so that you have your qualifications for future employment or study requirements without delay.

We understand that a virtual graduation was not the same experience as you were expecting when you began your degree or other course – it was not what we expected either. Like many celebrations and significant life events which have had to be held differently during the time of Covid, we made every effort to ensure our high-quality virtual ceremonies were special occasions, allowing our graduates to celebrate their well-earned academic achievements with their loved ones, friends and the UWS community and we were pleased to receive positive feedback from attendees. We hope that despite the restrictions and disappointment of not being able to attend a live event, our online graduation platform provided a meaningful and personalised milestone in your academic journey. While it will not be possible to re-run these virtual graduations in a traditional format in the future for the 8000 students who will have graduated from UWS in 2020 and 2021, we are planning an opportunity for you to return to campus on a specific day in Paisley when it is safe and within government guidelines for you to do so. While we have still to determine the format for these days, it will include an opportunity, if you wish, to hire your academic dress and book a professional portrait photograph while on campus and we intend to make both of those external professional services available on campus to give you another opportunity to mark your academic achievement for the camera! At this stage we cannot predict when restrictions will be eased to a point when this is possible and it may not be until 2022. We will publish more information here in due course.

20. When will I receive my award parchment?

We still have fewer people working on campus than usual and this is likely to be ongoing for some time. For those who completed their courses in late 2020 or early 2021, and had their awards conferred at the Spring 2021 conferment, you will receive your parchment by the end of April 21. For those completing their studies over the next few months and having their award conferred at the graduation in August 2021, you will receive your parchment by mid September 2021.

We will send your parchment to your home address as held for you on your student record. If this has changed since you last gave us your information you must update that so we can send your parchment to the correct address. You can do that now at <https://ssb.uws.ac.uk>. You will also have an opportunity to confirm your home address or to provide an alternative address for graduation purposes when you register for graduation.

21. I need confirmation of my academic award before you are due to send me my parchment – what should I do?

We are not able to provide electronic parchments at present but an authorised version of your Academic Transcript showing your progress to date on all the modules you have studied is available at any time – this should be requested by email to hub@uws.ac.uk It will be updated to include your final award decision within two weeks of the meeting of the School Board of Examiners where any award is approved This should provide sufficient evidence of your qualifications until your parchment is available.

Please note an interim version of your Academic Transcript can be downloaded by you via Self Service Banner at <https://ssb.uws.ac.uk> without you having to contact the University.

22. I achieved my award in session 2019/20 but I did not register to graduate – when will I receive my award parchment?

Students who completed their studies in 2019-20 and who had not previously graduated, had their awards conferred in March 2021, and the parchments will be posted in April.

23. Where can I get more information about the Summer 2021 graduation?

Any Graduation updates will be published on the graduation page of our website [here](#). If you have any specific questions please contact us by email to graduationenquiries@uws.ac.uk

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20th April 2021