



Commencement Attire Guidelines and Tips

Graduating from college is a big achievement, and there will be enough happening on this special day without wardrobe worries getting in your way. With the weeks of finals and presentations, planning parties, saying goodbyes and getting ready to move out, choosing what you will wear to graduation should not be burdensome. Keeping a few simple guidelines in mind as you shop or search through your closets will help you put together something appropriate to wear under that graduation gown.

Regalia

- All graduation candidates are required to wear traditional academic attire which includes a gown, cap, sash, and tassel.
 - Master's degrees: Black master's gown, hood, silver sash*
 - Bachelor's degrees: Navy bachelor's gown, cap, silver sash* and a blue & silver tassel.
 - Associate's degrees: Navy associate's gown, cap, navy sash* and a blue & silver tassel.
- Graduation gowns are made of a rather warm and stifling material. To try to stay comfortable under the weight of the gown, wear breathable fabrics that are loose fitting to allow some air to circulate.
- Your graduation gown will arrive folded. Be sure to remove your gown from its original package and steam the wrinkles/folds; do not use an iron as it may ruin the material.

Honor Cord/Honor Tassel

- Official DSU honor cords or honor tassels are distributed to candidates during the assembly process preceding the commencement ceremony. An honor cord is worn by bachelor's degree candidates, while an honor tassel is worn by associate's degree candidates who achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher.

Men's Attire

- Men often wear dress slacks or khakis with a long-sleeved shirt or a collared, cotton shirt. A tie may or may not be worn when wearing a long-sleeved shirt. Sometimes men wear suits to a graduation ceremony. It's appropriate to wear leather shoes, but they should be comfortable as college graduation ceremonies can sometimes last for several hours.

Women's Attire

- Ladies often wear a dress or a skirt or slacks to a graduation ceremony. Women may also wear suits, such as pants or a skirt with blouse or dress shirt and a blazer.

A dressy sleeveless shirt, especially if it's warm, is acceptable. Women can wear shoes such as flats or dressy heels. However, flats are advisable because they're often more comfortable than high-heeled shoes. Women can wear simple jewelry.

Mortarboard/Cap

- The cap should be placed on a shelf or level surface so that it will not develop creases, and will fit the head properly during the ceremony. There should be directions on the crown of the cap to help you determine the front from the back. When the cap is placed on the head, the mortarboard should be completely level, without going to the back or side of the head. The crown of the cap should rest about 1 inch above the eyebrow.
- Don't spend too much time styling your hair. Keep in mind you'll be wearing a graduation cap for a few hours. If you're planning an elaborate hairstyle, try it out with your cap before graduation day to make sure that the cap still sits properly.
- Traditionally, the moving of the tassel at graduation is called, "turning the tassel" or "the turning of the tassel ceremony." It symbolizes one's transition from candidate to graduate. Standard protocol in the US dictates that the tassel be worn on the right side of one's mortarboard at commencement and during the ceremony, moved to the left side.
- Men should remove their caps during the school song and the National Anthem, while women are allowed to keep their caps on during the ceremony.

Appropriateness

- Keep your attire appropriate, as it will not be hidden under the graduation gown all day. Throughout the day you'll be taking numerous photos with friends, attending graduation parties, and maybe going out with family. And, you may get hot and need to take off your regalia. Plan your outfit knowing that the day doesn't start and end with Commencement.

What Not to Wear

- Both men and women should avoid wearing flip-flops, casual sandals and sneakers. Both should also avoid wearing T-shirts, jeans, ripped clothing and shorts. Other kinds of clothing that wouldn't be appropriate to wear are hoodies, sweatshirts and sweatpants. Tank tops and baseball caps would not be appropriate attire. Of course, active wear such as clothing worn for exercising is also inappropriate attire.

Other Commencement Tips

- Avoid wearing new shoes. Commencement is not the day to break in new shoes. Another tip: Don't wear high heels if you are not used to walking in them. On your walk across the stage you should be focusing on shaking hands with the president, not worrying about tripping.
- Stay hydrated and take a bathroom break before for during line-up. Once you're on the floor, water and bathroom access will be limited.
- Leave bags at home. This will save you the hassle of carrying around a purse. If you're wearing a dress or skirt, try to find one with pockets to easily carry small items like keys and your cell phone. Consider a wristlet or small clutch if you need to take a purse.