



A Guide for Students, Faculty, Family, and Friends

Thursday, May 22, 2025 • 4:30 p.m.

Total Mortgage Arena

600 Main St., Bridgeport, CT 06604

SouthernCT.edu/commencement/

The university will hold its spring graduate commencement at the Total Mortgage Arena for students receiving Post Master's and Graduate Certificates, Master's Degrees, Sixth Year Professional Diplomas, and Doctoral Degrees.

Located about 30 minutes from campus, the arena is easily accessible from I-95 and the Merritt Parkway. **Due to the likelihood of rush-hour traffic on I-95, please allow yourself extra time to arrive at the arena, consider carpooling and use the Merritt Parkway, if possible. (See site map for directions.)**

The indoor arena is fully air-conditioned and can seat up to 7,000 guests. It is wheelchair-accessible and will provide services for guests with disabilities. These services, available on a first-come, first-served basis, include handicapped parking, wheelchair locations with companion seating, sign language interpreting, and programs in large-print and alternative formats.

First-aid medical assistance is staffed by EMT professionals. The first-aid station is located on the first floor of the arena below sections 107 and 108.

The ceremony will be livestreamed at
SouthernCT.edu/commencement

PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY

Students eligible to participate in commencement must have completed their degree or diploma requirements in the Fall 2024 or Spring 2025 semesters. Students who are completing the final six (6) credits of coursework towards their degree during the Summer Session 2025 are also eligible to participate in graduate commencement. **Please note that participation in commencement is not a confirmation of graduation from your program and diplomas are not issued at the event.**

ACADEMIC REGALIA

All graduates must wear appropriate academic regalia. Master's and Doctoral Degree students wear cap, tassel, gown, and hood. Sixth Year Diploma students wear cap, tassel, gown, hood, and

stole. Post-Master's and Graduate Certificate students wear cap, tassel, gown, and cord.

Sixth Year Diploma candidates may wear the master's level academic regalia they wore at previous graduate level commencements, but they still need to purchase the special Sixth Year Diploma stole.

Post-Master's and Graduate Certificate candidates may wear the master's level academic regalia they wore at previous graduate level commencements, but they still need to purchase the certificate cord.

No academic regalia will be available for purchase on the day of commencement. For Regalia related questions, contact the SCSU Bookstore at SM769@BNCCollege.com or call (203-392-5270) between the hours of 10 am-4 pm and ask for Cam or Lauren.

CEREMONY AND FACILITY PROTOCOL

Please have respect for the other graduates and their guests. Do not leave the Commencement ceremony early.

To preserve the dignity of the ceremony and the safety of those in attendance, air horns, beach balls, and other inflatable items are prohibited and will be confiscated by the arena security.

All bags brought into the venue are subject to search.

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed at the ceremony. Arena Security will confiscate any alcoholic beverages brought into the arena.

Please silence all phones during the ceremony. The use of cellular phones is disruptive to both participants and guests.

PARKING & ARRIVAL

There is plenty of parking at the Total Mortgage Arena. There are two large outdoor lots and one parking garage. Parking is free for all commencement graduates and guests. Bridgeport Police will be stationed at the entrance and various arena locations to direct traffic and instruct visitors.

Expect traffic delays, so plan extra travel time. To alleviate traffic congestion, students and families are encouraged to travel

together or carpool. Persons with state-issued handicapped parking permits may park in the handicapped parking areas of the garage or as directed by traffic personnel. For Directions & Parking Maps, please visit [Total Mortgage Arena – Directions & Parking](#).

GUEST TICKETS

All guests are required to have a ticket to gain entrance to the ceremony. *All guest seating is unreserved general admission.*

You will receive eight (8) tickets for entry into the Total Mortgage Arena. These e-tickets can be accessed through your Tassel account. You may email or print your tickets to give to your guests. Children three (3) years of age and under are not required to have a ticket but should be held in the lap of an attendee and cannot occupy a seat without a ticket. If you bring an infant in a car seat/carrier, they will need a ticket because the carrier would take a seat.

Be advised that strollers brought into the arena cannot be taken into the seating area.

Additional guest tickets may be available once the RSVP deadline has passed, and we can determine the number of additional tickets each participating graduate may request. Additional information will be shared as we get closer to commencement.

GRADUATE CHECK-IN

All graduates are asked to arrive at the first level of the arena parking garage no later than 2:30 PM to check in and receive their GradPass reader card. Look for the banner with your school name and proceed to that area to check in. Be sure to bring your reader card and tassel with your regalia, to the Arena.

Please note that personal items such as handbags and cameras should be left with your guests and may not be brought to the assembly area.

Ticketed guests will enter the arena through the front entrance. Guests are asked not to visit the graduate assembly area. Seating will begin at 3:00 PM.

Hoarding Faculty should arrive at the first level of the arena parking garage no later than 2:30 PM to check in.

COMMENCEMENT PROCEDURES

There will be no Commencement rehearsal. Students will receive all necessary information during check-in on the afternoon of Commencement.

Students will be lined up by degree level with their respective school. You will need to keep your GradPass reader card with you to assemble for the procession and to have your name announced during the ceremony. This is the order in which you will process to the arena. The procession will begin promptly at 4:00 PM.

Staff members will direct all candidates to the appropriate areas to line up. University marshals will lead the procession into the arena and direct you to your seat. Remain standing until the

University President asks you to be seated.

Each school's dean will ask their candidates to stand. Your university marshal will direct you to the stage. Hand your GradPass reader card to the announcer who will read your name. Shake hands with your dean and the University President, then proceed, as directed, for your official graduate portrait. After your picture has been taken, go back to your seat. **It is important that all candidates remain for the duration of the ceremony out of respect for fellow graduates.**

ACADEMIC PROCESSION AND CEREMONY

All students must be in line no later than 4:00 PM, so that the academic procession can begin promptly. Wear comfortable shoes, as you will be standing for an extended period of time. The ceremony will begin at 4:30 p.m. The ceremony will last approximately 2.5 hrs.

Master's and Doctoral Degree candidates wear their caps, tassels, and gowns in the procession, but carry their hoods over their right arm for the procession. The hood will be invested on you when you are called on stage during the ceremony.

Sixth Year Diploma candidates wear their caps, tassels, gowns, and hoods in the procession, but carry their stoles over their right arm for the procession. The stole will be invested on you when you are called on stage during the ceremony.

Post-Master's and Graduate Certificate candidates wear their caps, tassels, and gowns in the procession, but carry their cords over their right arm for the procession. The cord will be invested on you when you are called on stage during the ceremony.

As you line up for the procession, you should have your GradPass reader card. If you received a blank reader card and your name is difficult to pronounce, print it phonetically (example: John P. Sobelesky = "So-ba-LES-ski"). This will help us pronounce your name correctly as you walk across the stage to receive your diploma jacket.

PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS

You will receive your diploma by school. Your dean will ask you to stand at the appropriate time in the ceremony. You will then be asked to come forward to receive your diploma on stage. The university has arranged for a private professional photographer to take photographs of you receiving your diploma.

COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHERS

GradImages will take official graduation photos at your upcoming ceremony, including on-stage and graduation portraits. Proofs will be emailed to you as soon as 48 hours after the ceremony, or you can search for your proofs on their website. While there is never any obligation to purchase, if you pre-register you will automatically receive a coupon code for 20% off your purchase of \$50 or more. Visit <https://www.gradimages.com/> or call (800) 261-2576 for more information.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

The Total Mortgage Arena is a handicapped accessible facility. All family members are welcome to attend. Handicapped accessible seating is available on a first come, first served basis. ADA parking is available at each lot/parking garage. In addition, guests may be dropped off at the circle in front of the arena entrance before parking. For more information, please visit [Total Mortgage Arena – Accessibility](#).

NO LONGER PARTICIPATING?

If your plans change and you will no longer be participating in the ceremony, please email us at GPSinfo@southernct.edu.