

Odessa College Graduation FAQ's

Q: What do I need to do to graduate?

A: Log in to [Student Planner](#) to confirm your graduation information. Be sure to select the appropriate term.

Q: Who may participate in graduation?

A: The graduation ceremony celebrates the accomplishments of students who complete a certificate or degree, certain Occupational Skills Awards (through Continuing Education) and those completing their Texas Credential of High School Equivalency (TXCHSE/GED). Students in Occupational Skills programs and TXCHSE should contact their program director about their cap & gown costs.

Q: Does it cost anything to graduate? What about my cap and gown?

A: There is no application fee and your **cap and gown** has been reserved for you (FREE for those who qualify and commit to participating in the ceremony).

Q: I received a free cap and gown last year – do I wear the same one?

A: Yes, the set you received previously (since 16/FA) is the current design. You are welcome to wear the tassel from a prior year or you may purchase a tassel from the Campus Store. Students are limited to one free cap and gown, for those who participate in the ceremony.

Q: Do I get to wear my PTK regalia?

A: Members of Phi Theta Kappa are allowed to wear their personally-purchased PTK **stole, honor cord, and tassel**. The website is <http://store.ptk.org/graduation/regalia.html>

Q: Do I get to wear my NSLS regalia?

A: Members of National Society of Leadership and Success are allowed to wear their personally-purchased NSLS **stole, honor cord, and tassel**. The website is <https://www.societyleadership.org/>

Q: What about other honors cords?

A: There are some specific honors for certain student groups. Please see the advisor of your student group to ask for more information. Those honors are not handled by the Records Office or the Graduation Advisor.

Q: Does the graduation application need to be submitted by a certain date?

A: There is no deadline to graduate, however there is a deadline to turn in applications in order to have your name printed in the graduation program. This date is roughly 6 weeks prior to the ceremony, so confirm through [Student Planner](#) as early as possible.

Q: When and where is rehearsal and graduation?

A: Each eligible graduate receives a personalized email detailing the time and location of the ceremony. Please save that message for all the important information it contains, including the flyer at the end.

OC may send graduates a link to a rehearsal video *in lieu of having a rehearsal*. If you receive this link, please watch it carefully to be familiar with the flow of the ceremony. Additional information will be provided to graduates one hour before the ceremony begins.

If a rehearsal *is held*, it will be the day before the ceremony. Graduates who wish to participate in graduation **MUST** attend rehearsal. Please check the Graduation webpage for current dates and locations. **PLEASE BE SURE TO ARRIVE AT LEAST ONE HOUR PRIOR TO THE START TIME LISTED.** Late arrivals will be lined up at the end of the line, not with students in the same program. Please see the **Day of Graduation Checklist**.

Q: What do I wear under my graduation gown?

A: Please wear **dress casual**, comfortable clothing, suitable for the weather that day. Realize that you may feel a little warmer due to wearing an extra layer (gown), being around many people in an enclosed building, and the excitement of the day. Please wear sensible shoes, as you will be walking up and down several flights of stairs. **Please pick up your cap & gown from the OC Bookstore prior to rehearsal, but do not bring it to rehearsal.**

Q: I am receiving two degrees or certificates. How will I walk for both?

A: Graduates will only walk once and will receive one diploma folder. The highest credential you earn will be announced with your name. Please call (432) 335-6404 if you have any concerns.

Q: When will I get my diploma?

A: Each graduate who has completed all coursework with satisfactory posted grades will receive an email notification when the diploma and/or certificate is ready to be picked up. This will usually be 2-3 weeks following the graduation ceremony. To receive your credential, all holds must have been cleared and you will need **a photo ID to receive your credential**. Diplomas and certificates not picked up within a few weeks will be mailed to the address on file on your academic record.

Q: What about my academic honors, such as Cum Laude? Do I need to purchase an honor cord?

A: Each graduate who has earned honors will be presented with their honor cord during the graduation ceremony. There is no cost to the graduate. We will discuss how the honor is bestowed upon you before the ceremony. Honors are listed in the program based on the graduate's "graduation" GPA at the end of the fall 1 or spring 1 term, and will be similarly announced. The "graduation" GPA includes college level courses taken at Odessa College only. A minimum of 30 semester hours must be taken at OC to be awarded honors.

Cum Laude	3.500 – 3.699
Magna cum laude	3.700 – 3.899
Summa cum laude	3.900 – 4.000

After final courses' grades have been submitted, a final review of the academic record will be done to bestow the appropriate honor to the graduate on the transcript and on the diploma (degrees only).

Q: Other schools allow graduates to decorate their cap. Can we do so?

A: NO. It is the policy of Odessa College and the OC President, Dr. Williams that all graduates will maintain their cap in the manner in which it was purchased. Decorations for graduation are NOT permitted.

Q: Will my guests need tickets to attend the ceremony?

A: No. However, please be considerate to the other graduates and invite a reasonable number of guests. Due to the large number of graduates, we may have multiple ceremonies, but each one will be quite full.

Q: Will family and friends from out of town be able to watch my graduation through Live Stream?

A: Yes. Please ask them to go to this website at the time of your ceremony.

<http://www.odessa.edu/live>

Q: Will there be a photographer present?

A: Yes! We have arranged for a professional photography team to commemorate your big day. There will be 2-3 photos taken of each graduate and a few candid shots along the way. You can go to www.gradimages.com to pre-register. There is no obligation to purchase and your family and friends are welcome to bring their cameras for group photos.

Q: Is handicapped seating available for my guests?

A: Yes. There are specific areas at both venues that accommodate wheelchairs. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating these areas.

Q: If there is a mandatory graduation rehearsal, but I live several hours away and can only drive in for the ceremony. What can I do?

A: Please contact the Graduation Advisor at records@odessa.edu or call 432-335-6404 to let us know. Also watch the link to the short **Graduation Rehearsal Video**. *Knowing what to expect and how everyone lines up and goes through the ceremony is critical to having a smooth, enjoyable ceremony, of which you will have fond memories.*

Q: I have comments (positive or negative) about my time at Odessa College. Can I tell someone?

A: ABSOLUTELY! We ask all graduates to complete a **survey** letting us know how OC served your needs in various departments. Watch for the email, click the link and let us know who you'd like to give a shout out to or what improvements you'd like to see. *It's because of graduates like YOU that we've continued to improve to become an Aspen Institute Rising Star award-winning college, ranked in the top four community colleges in the nation – and we thank you!*