



# Frequently Asked Questions - Graduation, Diplomas, and Commencement

## Graduation (Degree Completion) Questions

### 1. How many credit hours do I need to graduate?

You must have a minimum of:

- 120 credit hours to graduate with a Bachelor's degree from UST.
- 30 + credit hours to graduate with a Master's or Doctoral degree from UST. Specific hour requirements vary by degree.

### 2. I am close or have finished my degree requirements, what do I do now?

There are two steps that must be followed. First, you must meet with your Academic Advisor and review your degree requirements. Upon review, your advisor will add a service indicator (known as a HOLD) on your record. The indicator will state: Eligible for Graduation. Once you have been made eligible, **you must apply to graduate**. Within your myStThom portal, you will find a link "Apply for Graduation". Follow the steps to submit your application. **Important Reminder: You must be made eligible AND you must apply.**

### 3. What does "applying for graduation" mean exactly?

For your degree to be "awarded" (conferred), there are requirements that must be met first. When you apply for graduation, you are signaling to the Office of the Registrar that you are planning to complete your degree requirements by the end of the term you select in the application. Once we have this application, we will review (audit) your degree progress to ensure you are on track to meet all requirements for graduation.

### 4. Will my degree automatically reflect on my transcript?

Once you have completed all your degree requirements, and a final audit of your record has been processed by the Office of the Registrar, your degree will be posted to your academic record (your degree will be "conferred"). As noted above, you must first apply to graduate, or your degree will not be flagged for conferral. If you have not already completed this step, please fill out the application for graduation through the myStThom portal.

### 5. When should I apply for graduation? Is there a deadline?

Submitting your application for graduation the semester prior to your anticipated completion is required. An email will be sent to your @stthom.edu email address when the application window has been opened.

The deadlines to apply for graduation are:

- May and Summer candidates– Last day of classes in the previous fall semester.
- December candidates – Last day of classes in the previous spring semester.

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**6. I missed the deadline to apply for graduation; now what do I do?**

If you have missed the deadline to apply for graduation, you may submit an appeal using the Graduation Appeal Form. This form should be sent to [graduation@stthom.edu](mailto:graduation@stthom.edu). Approval for late application submissions is not guaranteed, and your degree conferral may instead be completed during the next available graduation date. (May, August, December).

**7. I've submitted my application. What happens now?**

Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an on-screen confirmation that your application has been successfully submitted. The Office of the Registrar will review your record to confirm you are on track for the completion date you selected. You will receive correspondence to your @stthom.edu email address if there are any concerns about your degree progress.

**8. What if I am scheduled to graduate and do not pass a class my last semester?**

First things first, if you need the course to fulfill your degree requirements, keep working! Don't give up! If you are sure you will not successfully complete all the degree requirements during your last semester, contact your Academic Advisor to confirm what is still required to complete your degree. Then, please contact the Office of the Registrar and notify us of your new plan so your record and graduation date may be updated.

**9. What if I am scheduled to graduate and my audit shows that I do not have enough credit hours or have not met degree requirements?**

If you do not have enough hours or have not completed all the degree requirements, you will receive an email from the Office of the Registrar indicating that you have not met the degree requirements. You will need to talk with your Academic Advisor about the specific requirements that still need to be completed.

**10. When do I receive confirmation that I am actually cleared for graduation and conferral?**

Once final grades are posted at the conclusion of the semester you have applied to graduate, a final degree audit will be completed. The final audit verifies you have successfully completed all the degree requirements for your specific degree program. After the final degree audits have been verified, you will receive an email from the Office of the Registrar congratulating you on the completion of your degree. Please note that it may take up to 30 days from the term's last date of final exams for your degree to be posted to your records.

**11. What date will be reflected on my degree? (Degree conferral dates/graduation dates)**

Your degree conferral date is typically the day after the end of the final exam period of your graduation term.

**12. Will my minor/concentration show up on my degree?**

Your minor and/or concentration will be reflected on your transcript. They are NOT listed on diplomas.

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### 13. How do I have credits from another college or university applied toward my degree?

Credits from other colleges or universities are considered transfer credits. To have credits transferred from another institution to UST you must submit an official transcript to the Office of the Registrar. Your transcript will be reviewed by the Assistant Registrar who oversees transfer credit, and, if applicable, hours will be posted to your UST transcript. Transfer credit questions should be directed to the Office of the Registrar at 713.525.2150 or [registrar@stthom.edu](mailto:registrar@stthom.edu)

### 14. What is the difference between “graduation” and “Commencement”?

“Graduation” refers to the date you completed your degree or the date of your degree conferral. “Commencement” is the ceremony celebrating all the students who have graduated or anticipate graduating within this academic year. Since grades can be due after a commencement ceremony has occurred, walking during the ceremony is not confirmation that all degree requirements have been met.

## Diploma Questions

### 15. How do I obtain my diploma once it is available, and when will it be ready?

Diplomas are printed by our 3<sup>rd</sup>-party partner, Parchment. You will receive a separate email from Parchment that will contain instructions on how to access your digital diploma after your degree has been conferred. You should receive a physical copy of the diploma in the mail 3-4 weeks after you receive your digital diploma.

Please note that we do NOT hold diplomas for pick-up - they are mailed directly to the home address (or mailing address, if applicable) that you have on file. After the diploma is ordered, we are NOT able to change the mailing address, so it is important to ensure that your home address is current in myStThom!

### 16. I have an outstanding financial balance on my UST account; may I still obtain my diploma?

If you have a past due balance with the University (owe the University any money) you will not be able to obtain your diploma until the balance is paid in full. If you have questions regarding your account balance, contact the Business Office at 713.525.6992.

### 17. I have a hold from the Financial Aid Department and/or Career Services and Testing; may I still obtain my diploma?

If you have a hold from the Financial Aid department for an exit interview hold or a hold from Career Services and Testing for a graduation survey hold, you will not be able to obtain your diploma until these holds are cleared.

For the Financial Aid exit interview hold, students will need to complete an exit interview survey at [studentloans.gov](http://studentloans.gov). After completion, you must contact the UST Financial Aid Office at 713.525.2170 to request that the hold be removed.

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For the Career Services and Testing graduation survey hold, a link to the survey will be sent to you via your @stthom.edu email address. Once you complete the survey, we will automatically update the system to remove your hold. Please note that it may take 24-48 hours for the hold to be removed.

### **18. What will my diploma say? (Major, school name, etc.)**

Your diploma will list the University of St. Thomas, your full primary name as reflected in the myStThom system, degree name (e.g., “Bachelor of Arts” or “Bachelor of Science”), and your major(s) (e.g., General Studies, Biology, etc.).

If you receive academic honors, or if you were in the Honor’s Program, these will be noted on your diploma and transcript. Concentrations and minors are NOT printed on the diploma but are listed on your transcript.

### **19. How may I obtain a duplicate copy of my diploma?**

Duplicate copies of your diploma may be ordered for a fee via the Parchment website. Please allow 4-6 weeks for the duplicate diploma to be processed and received.

## Commencement Questions

### **20. When is Commencement?**

UST holds one commencement ceremony a year. It is typically held the second Saturday of May each year. Commencement details are placed on the UST website in March of the spring semester. Search for “Commencement” on the UST Website.

### **21. Is there a graduation/commencement for December grads?**

Students that complete their degree requirements in December may participate in a Winter Baccalaureate Mass and reception. December grads may also participate in the Spring Commencement ceremony with the May and August Graduates the following year. (Example: Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer I/ Summer II 2022 candidates may participate in the May 2022 Commencement.)

### **22. May I walk in the May commencement even if I have to complete a course or two in the summer?**

Yes! Those eligible to participate in the yearly commencement ceremony are graduates from the previous December as well as upcoming May and August graduation candidates. (Example: Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer I/ Summer II 2022 candidates may participate in the May 2022 Commencement.)

### **23. Will I receive my actual diploma at Commencement?**

No. Diplomas are ordered after Commencement. As you cross the stage at the commencement ceremony you will be handed a diploma tube.



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### **24. May I pick my diploma up early?**

No. Diplomas are ordered after your degree has been conferred. You will be notified via an email from Parchment when they should arrive at the address you have on file.

### **25. Is there a rehearsal prior to commencement?**

No; we do not have a Commencement rehearsal.

### **26. How long is the Commencement ceremony?**

The length of the ceremony is contingent upon the number of candidates participating in the ceremony. The standard length has been just over 2 hours the last several years. You will also need to arrive in advance to sign in and line up. Please be on the lookout for an email from UST Events that will notify you when you need to arrive.

### **27. Where do I get my cap and gown for commencement?**

You should have received an email from UST Events to register to attend/participate in the commencement as well as to order your cap and gown. Please contact them at [marcom@stthom.edu](mailto:marcom@stthom.edu) if you did not receive that email but believe you should have.

### **28. What is the expected attire for graduation ceremonies?**

Students should wear business attire and dress shoes underneath the commencement robe.

### **29. I signed up to participate in commencement but am unable to attend. Who do I need to notify?**

Contact UST Events at [marcom@stthom.edu](mailto:marcom@stthom.edu).

### **30. How do I know if I have been nominated for any awards related to graduation?**

The School you are graduating from will be in contact with you if you have been selected to receive an award. (e.g., School of Nursing, School of Business, etc.)

### **31. As a student with academic honors, how am I recognized at commencement?**

If you have earned any academic honors (i.e., Academic Distinction, Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, or Summa Cum Laude), it will be indicated as your name is read and you cross the stage.

Please note that academic honors are calculated for use during the Commencement Ceremony using the cumulative GPA of your previous term. Once grades for your final semester of coursework have been received, your cumulative GPA may change, and the academic honors that you are awarded might be different than what was announced on stage and printed in the Commencement Program.

### **32. I'm a Military Veteran, will I be recognized at commencement?**

**THANK YOU**, we appreciate your service and sacrifice! UST recognizes veterans using a special stole. Please speak to the Director of the Veteran Success Center to determine the steps to receive one.



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### 33. What do I need to do if I want to continue to take classes for a new degree/program after graduation?

You will need to contact the admissions office to obtain the next steps required to continue here at UST. The options are Post-Bac or Graduate.

- **Will I be considered a graduate student then?**

Yes. Once you have an undergraduate bachelor's degree you are considered a graduate student. If you plan to pursue a specific Master's degree you will need to apply to the specific Master's program you are interested in for admission.

- **What tuition fees will I be charged?**

As a graduate student you will be charged graduate tuition rates. For current rates go to: <https://www.stthom.edu/Scholarships-and-Financial-Aid/>

- **Will I still be able to get financial aid?**

To be eligible for financial aid you must be admitted to a qualified degree program. For details regarding Financial Aid availability contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships at [finaid@stthom.edu](mailto:finaid@stthom.edu) or 713.525.2170