

<b>UT Health Science Center: SA108 Commencement Participation</b>	
<b>Version 1</b>	<b>Publication Date: 02/06/2026</b>

<b>No./Title: SA108 – COMMENCEMENT PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>Resp. Office: Student Success Approval Body: CASA</b>	<b>Effective Date: 04/01/2025</b>
<b>Category: Student Affairs</b>	<b>Last Review:</b>	<b>Next Review: 04/01/2028</b>
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<b>Related Policy: EM108 Awarding of Degrees</b>		

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for student participation in commencement ceremonies at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. This policy aims to clarify the requirements for participation in commencement, and the distinction between participation in the ceremony and the actual conferral of a degree .

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in degree programs at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, as well as faculty and staff involved in the planning and execution of commencement ceremonies.

## ROLES

### Office of Student Success

This office is responsible for reviewing and approving any exceptions to the commencement participation policy. The office will work in conjunction with the appropriate college student affairs deans to process and evaluate exception requests.

### College Associate Deans

The college associate deans are responsible for submitting exception requests to the Office of Student Success on behalf of students who seek to participate in a commencement ceremony outside of their expected cohort.

## PROCEDURES

### Commencement Overview

Commencement is a ceremonial event held by the University of Tennessee Health Science Center to recognize and celebrate the academic achievements of its students. It is important to note that participation in the commencement ceremony does not equate to

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the conferral of a degree. The conferral of a degree is the official act of awarding a degree to students who have successfully completed all academic requirements to the satisfaction of their respective college and the University. Participation in commencement does not guarantee the award of a degree.

- Commencement ceremonies are held twice a year, once in May and once in December.
- Students who are expected to complete their degree requirements in the spring or summer semester are expected to participate in the May commencement ceremony.
- Students who are expected to complete their degree requirements in the fall semester are eligible to participate in the December commencement ceremony.
- Students who are part of program-based cohorts are expected to participate in the commencement ceremony alongside other members of their cohort. Exceptions to this expectation can be requested through the Office of Student Success, with the appropriate college associate dean submitting the request. However, due to venue limitations and logistical considerations, not all requests for exceptions will be accommodated.

Note:

- Participation in the commencement ceremony does not confer a degree. Students must complete all degree requirements and adhere to other relevant policies for the conferral of a degree.
- The date of the commencement ceremony and the date of the conferral of a degree are independent and separate dates.
- Students are permitted to participate in only one commencement ceremony per degree completed.

## **APPROVAL HISTORY**

Effective: April 1, 2025, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)

Approved: March 4, 2025, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)

Approved: January 12, 2026, Chief Academic Officer