

Graduation FAQs for all Graduands

Frequently asked questions and answers for Graduation 2026

Where is the Graduation Ceremony?

PhD, MRes and Dental Graduands

Graduation ceremonies for PhD, MRes and Dental Graduands will take place at Bolton Parish Church, Silverwell Street, on:

- Wednesday 8 July 2026
- Thursday 9 July 2026

Undergraduate, Postgraduate & Off-Campus

Graduation ceremonies for Undergraduate, Postgraduate & Off-Campus Graduands will take place at the Albert Halls, Bolton Town Hall, on:

- Monday 13 July 2026
- Tuesday 14 July 2026
- Wednesday 15 July 2026
- Thursday 16 July 2026
- Friday 17 July 2026

How far is it from Greater Manchester Business School to the location of my Graduation Ceremony?

Bolton Parish Church is approximately a 10-minute walk from Greater Manchester Business School.

The Albert Halls is approximately a five-minute walk from Greater Manchester Business School.

Important – Closed Door Policy

All graduates and guests must arrive at Bolton Parish Church and the Albert Halls at least 30 minutes before the ceremony starts.

Late arrivals may not be allowed into the ceremony and refunds cannot be issued. Latecomers may watch the ceremony in the Livestream lounge.

What time do I need to be at the Graduation Ceremony?

If you are attending a 10am ceremony you must register at Greater Manchester Business School and collect a student ticket at 8am.

If you are attending a 1:30pm ceremony you must register at Greater Manchester Business School and collect a student ticket at 11:15am.

If you are attending a 4:15pm ceremony you must register at Greater Manchester Business School and collect a student ticket at 2pm.

Please allow two hours to register, collect your ticket and robes, have photographs taken (you can also do this afterwards) and make your way to Bolton Parish Church or the Albert Halls, 30 minutes before your ceremony starts.

Ceremony

Can I change the day and time that I graduate?

Changes from your allocated ceremony to another **are not permitted** unless there are extenuating circumstances, and you can provide evidence of this.

Due to the high number of students graduating this year, please accept that this is not something we will encourage and that we may not be able to accommodate any requests. We hope you can make every effort to attend your allocated ceremony.

If you do have a request to change ceremony, then it will be looked at on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Management of the Graduation Team and it must be made via email to graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk.



What happens if my ceremony is full?

In the unlikely event you are unable to book the ceremony you have been assigned to, this will be due to all student and guest tickets being sold out. Please rest assured that the Graduation Team will assign your ticket and your guest tickets to another ceremony.

You will receive communication from the Graduation Team via your student email address and/or text message informing you of the change to your ceremony if this situation arises.

Whilst we appreciate that many of you would like to attend the same ceremony as your peers, it is not always possible due to seating capacity within Bolton Parish Church and the Albert Halls.

How long does the ceremony last?

Each ceremony is expected to last approximately 1.5 - 2 hours depending on the number of students being presented.

What happens after the ceremony?

A drinks reception will be held at the Greater Manchester Business School following your Graduation ceremony. Please note, when you are booking your student ticket, you will be required to answer a question on the number of guests attending the drinks reception with you.

Are students given seat numbers?

Yes, your seat number will be printed on the reverse of your ticket. You must ensure to always keep your ticket safe and, on your person, whilst at Bolton Parish Church or the Albert Halls, this is so that our narrator can correctly announce your name and award on the stage as you are presented.

Once you have been shown to your seat, it is essential that you remain in your allocated seat until it is your turn to be presented. Graduation staff will indicate when it is time to exit your seat.

You will be guided to the platform; walk up the steps, present your student ticket to the narrator – this will be read out and you will then be presented. Please then walk across the platform (shake hands/pause) and then proceed to exit the platform by the steps opposite to return to your seat.

What if I don't wish to shake hands whilst being presented on the stage?

We will ask you this when you book your tickets. We have processes in place so that the Presiding Officer knows if you wish to shake hands or not.

Can guests sit with students?

No, all guests will be shown to seats in the designated guest seating area. All guests must arrive together so that they can be seated together, as guest seats are not numbered.

Booking and Tickets

Do I need to pay to attend my graduation?

You do not need to pay for a ticket for yourself, these are free for graduating students. You do still need to book this in the system, so we know you are attending.

Guest tickets are £15 and you can purchase up to 2 guest tickets per MRes and Dental Graduand and 3 guest tickets for PhD Graduands (1 ticket for PhD Graduands is free, please purchase the allocated 2 then email graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk for us to allocate your free third guest ticket).

The cost includes entry to the ceremony, the drinks reception and a Graduation programme.

The booking system will be live on Monday 20 April 2026 when you will be able to book your free student ticket via the Graduation Web Pages (if you have successfully completed your studies and received your award).

If you are still completing your studies and waiting for your award, the booking system will open after results day (Wednesday 24 June 2026).

You must book your guest tickets at the same time as you are booking your free student ticket.

PhD, MRes and Dental Graduands need to book tickets by Tuesday 30 June and Undergraduate, Postgraduate & Off-Campus Graduands need to book by Friday 3 July.

Failure to book your tickets will result in you being unable to attend on the day.



Can I purchase extra guest tickets?

You will be notified by email if extra tickets become available.

Please note that experience has shown that the demand for extra guest tickets is extremely high, and these tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis from the moment that availability is announced.

Can I bring young children with me as guests?

Degree ceremonies are formal occasions and are not suitable for children under the age of 6 who might struggle with the length of the ceremonies.

Guests with children can watch the ceremony in our Livestreaming Lounge at Bolton Parish Church and the Alberts Halls. There is no charge to watch the ceremony in the Livestream Lounge.

Children are free to move around in the Livestreaming Lounge and are still able to join in the celebrations. Livestream Lounge tickets will be issued to guests with children on arrival at Bolton Parish Church and the Albert Halls.

Children over the age of 6 are permitted to sit with an accompanying adult, and they must have a paid for guest ticket to do this.

Noise in the Livestream Lounge must be kept to a minimum.

All children must be accompanied by an adult in all areas at all times.

If any child is found to be on their own, the parent or guardian will be found and removed from the venue.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding the Livestream Lounge or guest tickets, please email graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk.

I need to defer my attendance – how do I do this?

You may have extenuating circumstances as to why you are unable to attend your Graduation and wish to defer to the following year. If this is the case, please email a deferral request directly to: graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk as soon as possible. Please ensure that you note your full name and Student ID number in your email.

Your email will be forwarded to the Executive Management Team for consideration and approval.

You will be contacted further to advise whether the University has granted your deferral to 2026. Please note that until you have received this decision in writing, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to attend a future ceremony.

If you do not attend your Graduation ceremony this does not mean you will be invited the next year instead.

I have booked my tickets but cannot attend my Graduation ceremony, what should I do?

Please email the Graduation Team at graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk letting us know the circumstances of why you cannot attend your specific ceremony.

Depending on your circumstances, we may be able to accommodate you and your guests on another ceremony/day. This will be subject to availability and will be reviewed on a case-by- case basis.

What happens if I have booked my ticket(s) to attend my ceremony but do not attend on the day and didn't advise the Graduation Team beforehand?

Your two guest tickets will automatically be allocated to any students whose two guests were on the waiting list for tickets. No refunds will be issued to non-attendees, and you will not be added the following year's Graduation ceremonies.

I believe I am eligible to graduate, but have not received any notifications?

There are several reasons why you may not have received notifications.

First, please double-check that you have access to your **student email address**. All email communications will be sent to student emails only.

If you are unable to access your student email, please email sdm@greatermanchester.ac.uk and request your university email address to be re-activated. Remember to include a description as to why your account should be re-activated and include your student ID number with your email request.

If you still have not received notifications concerning Graduation, it could simply be that you have not yet been identified as a potential graduate just yet. We are awaiting communication from the administrator.

If you have not received details or cannot access the booking system and you believe that you are/will be eligible to graduate, you should contact us so that we can follow this up. Please email your full name, Student ID number, and the date you expect to qualify or have qualified to: graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk.

I owe fees to the University - can I still book to attend my Graduation ceremony?

If our records indicate that you have an outstanding University debt, you will not be able to book tickets/gowns for your Graduation ceremony. Therefore, if you wish to attend a ceremony it is essential that you contact the Finance Office as soon as possible. The deadline is midnight on Wednesday 24 June 2026.

Arrangements for payment can be made by contacting Financial Services at creditcontrol@greatermanchester.ac.uk

Unfortunately, the Graduation Team cannot be involved in discussions regarding student debt.

Award Information

Will my result classification be published in the official programme or read out at my ceremony?

Classifications are not published in the official programme. Graduands achieving a first-class honours classification for their first degree and postgraduate Graduands achieving a distinction will be announced as they are presented on stage.

How do I check that the correct name will appear on my certificate?

It is important that you check your student record to ensure that this contains the correct spelling of your name, as this information will be used on your certificate. If this information is incorrect, you must inform us immediately by email to SDM@greatermanchester.ac.uk.

Changes to your name must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation. Names cannot be changed after the final examination boards have confirmed your award.

You will be presented with a scroll, for photography purposes, when you go on to the stage at the Albert Halls. This is not your award certificate (your actual certificate will be posted to your home address following the ceremony).

When will I receive my certificate?

Degree certificates will be posted out to your home address within eight weeks of your Graduation, following approval by the relevant examination board. It is therefore essential that you advise the University of any change of address before the completion of your course.

You can update your address online [here](#) – input your university username and password, and then select student details which will contain your address.

If your address changes following completion of your course and you haven't already received your certificate, please email certificates@greatermanchester.ac.uk.

Where can I obtain my results?

Results for most students will be published within your Student Portal after 10am on Wednesday 24 June 2026.

Unfortunately, if you do not successfully complete your studies you will not be able to attend this year's Graduation.

However, once you have successfully completed your studies you will of course be invited to attend the next Graduation ceremony.

Academic Dress and Photography

Head Measurements: Cap sizes can be obtained by measuring the circumference of your head one inch above the eyebrows, level round, and state measurement in inches or centimetres.

Orders must be placed by Friday 26 June 2026 at 5pm.

For detailed instructions on how to measure correctly for your hat. Please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ttQo1piDxl>

What is the correct form of dress for Graduation?

Most students choose to wear smart attire beneath their gown. Alternatively, national, or religious dress may be worn.

There are several steps up to the stage to collect your award and you are advised to bear this in mind when selecting your footwear for the day.

How do I hire my academic dress?

All Graduands are entitled to wear academic dress and, in our experience, almost every student chooses to do so. This can be hired from William Northam Ltd. our official robe makers, either online www.williamnortham.com, or by contacting +44 (0)370 2401 852. When ordering academic dress, you need to order a gown, hood, and cap.

Queries regarding academic dress should be made directly to William Northam Ltd.

You may need an appropriately placed button or a couple of safety pins to attach the hood over your gown. It is important that you order the correct gown for your award, so you are advised to carefully check the details before submitting your order.

Please note that the last date for gown hire is Friday 26 June 2026 at 5pm.

Where will I collect my academic dress on Graduation Day?

If you have pre-booked your academic dress it will be available to collect from room Y0-02, Greater Manchester Business School (GMBS), Great Moor Street, Bolton, BL1 1NE. You can collect your gown from **8am** on the day of your Graduation ceremony.

Only Graduands are allowed to enter the robing area, and your guests are asked to wait outside the GMBS building.

We would like you to enjoy wearing your gown for the day but this **must** be returned by 7pm on the same day to room Y1-05 in GMBS.

What happens if I order my academic dress/photography but do not attend?

Should you wish to cancel your academic dress and photography order, you can do so without any financial penalty within 14 days of results day Wednesday 24 June 2026. Should you wish to cancel after the 14 days 'cooling off period' you may still do so; however, a

£1.50 administration charge will be deducted. All refund requests must be received at least seven days before your Graduation ceremony date.

To cancel please visit www.williamnortham.com and log in to 'My Account' or email student@williamnortham.com.

Where will my Graduation photographs be taken?

You can book official Graduation photography with William Northam.

Photography will take place from 8am until 7pm in room Y1-04, Greater Manchester Business School (GMBS), Great Moor Street, Bolton, BL1 1NE.

Please bear in mind any time constraints dependent on the time of your ceremony.

You are advised, if your ceremony is at **10am** to have your photographs after your ceremony, as the time to travel to Bolton Parish Church or the Albert Halls could take longer than anticipated.

Photographs will automatically be taken (whenever possible) as you are presented with your certificate on the platform.

Photographs taken on the platform will be uploaded to the William Northam website in the weeks following the ceremony.

All enquiries regarding photography and deliveries should be sent to William Northam - www.williamnortham.com or alternatively call +44 (0)1223 205625.

Can I have my photographs taken before my Graduation ceremony?

Yes, but you should allow yourself sufficient time to register, collect your academic dress, have photographs taken, and make your way to the Bolton Parish Church or The Albert Halls.

Can my guests take their own photographs?

Guests are welcome to take their own photographs during the ceremony providing they do not block the aisles, other guests and must remain seated. We also advise no flash photography.



How do I pre-order my photographs?

Please visit the William Northam website www.williamnortham.com or alternatively call +44 (0)1223 205625 to pre-order all your Graduation photographs.

Should you decide not to pay in advance, it is possible to pay at the sales desk on the day. A link to the William Northam website can be found on the University Graduation webpage.

International Students and Visitor Visas

How can I attend Graduation if my student visa expires before the ceremony?

If your student visa expires before your Graduation ceremony you will need to return to your home country and apply for a Standard Visitor visa to return to the UK. You cannot apply for a Standard Visitor visa from within the UK.

Visa nationals must obtain a visitor visa before leaving their home country. Non-visa nationals may apply before leaving their home country or on arrival in the UK. To check how you should apply please visit the UKVI web page.

Standard Visitor visas cannot be extended, and it is not possible to switch into any other immigration category from within the UK.



What are the requirements for a Standard Visitor Visa?

To apply for a Standard Visitor visa, you must be able to show that you:

- Intend to visit the UK for no more than six months.
- Intend to leave the UK at the end of your visit.
- Have enough money to support and accommodate yourself (a General Visitor visa does not allow work).
- Can meet the cost of your return/outward journey.

More information on the requirements can be found at the UKVI web page [Standard Visitor visa information](#).

What documents do I need to apply for a Standard Visitor Visa?

Information on the documents accepted by the UKVI can be found on their web page – ‘Standard Visitor visa documents required’. On this page you can view a full list of supporting documents that you may wish to provide.

Normally you should expect to provide the following documents **as a minimum** for a Visitor visa application:

- Information about you (current valid passport, passport photo as appropriate).
- Information about your finances (bank statements covering a period of several months or payslips).
- Accommodation and travel details (providing information of where you intend to stay e.g., in a hotel or with friends. If staying with friends, you should provide a letter from them confirming this. You should also provide details of when you expect to arrive and leave the UK).
- Information about your visit (a letter from the University to confirm course details and the Graduation ceremony dates, transcript of results to show you have successfully completed your course).
- Evidence that you do not intend to stay in the UK after your visit

More information on the application process from your country can be found on the UKVI web page:

<https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor/apply-standard-visitor-visa>.



How can I invite my family/friends to attend my Graduation?

If your family members need to travel to the UK to attend your Graduation, **they should apply for a Standard Visitor visa** as detailed above. Please check the UKVI web page Standard Visitor visa information for information on how to apply. In addition, you will need to provide a letter to formally invite them to visit you for your Graduation.

Visa support letters should include the dates of your Graduation and any accommodation arrangements if applicable. You should also supply the following:

- Photocopies of your passport and immigration document(s)
- Evidence that you are a student at the University (request a 'To Whom It May Concern' letter from Internationalstudents@greatermanchester.ac.uk)
- Evidence that you have been invited to attend Graduation

If you have any questions and wish to speak to someone – please contact Internationalstudents@greatermanchester.ac.uk

How can I request a 'To Whom It May Concern' Letter?

If you are an international student and you have successfully completed your studies and may require a letter, you can either:

1. Visit the International Support Team in the Student Centre
2. Complete a 'To Whom It May Concern' letter request through your student portal [Log in to the portal](#) or
3. Request through emailing internationalstudents@greatermanchester.ac.uk

Travel Information

Will I be able to park at the University on my Graduation day?

University parking is available at the National Centre for Motorsport Engineering (NCME) Student car park **on a first-come, first-served basis**. This car park is open to students and guests. Access to this is situated behind the NCME building on Wellington Street, see map [here](#) – this shows you the quickest route to the GMBS building.

Nearby car parks include:

- NCP Deane Road: Wellington St, Bolton BL3 5DX ([Bolton Deane Road NCP Car Park](#))
- NCP Octagon Theatre: Great Moor Street, Bolton, BL1 1SN ([Bolton Octagon Theatre NCP Car Park - Pre-book today](#))
- NCP Bolton Topp Way (Duke St): Duke Street, Bolton, BL1 2DD ([Bolton Topp Way NCP Car Park](#))
- NCP Bolton Ashburner Street: Ashburner Street, Bolton, BL1 1TD ([NCP - Bolton Ashburner Street](#))
- Euro Car Parks, Higher Bridge Street – Bolton: All Saints Street, Bolton, BL1 2ER ([Euro Car Parks - Location Detail](#))

Bolton is located:

- 12 miles from Manchester city centre (approximately 40 minutes in a car, traffic depending).
- 20 miles from Manchester Airport (approximately 55 minutes in a car, traffic depending).

For travel information visit:

Transport for Greater Manchester: [Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

National Rail: <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Bolton has a good bus service with routes all over the North West region. For more information visit: Transport for Greater Manchester ([Plan a journey | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)).

Accommodation

Are there any hotels close by?

There are several hotels in Bolton - a few are listed below:

Travelodge Bolton Central River Street Hotel | [Book Now](#)

River Street, Bolton, BL2 1BX
Tel: +44 (0)871 9846 520 (0.7 mile from the University)

Holiday Inn | [Book Now](#)

1 Higher Bridge Street, Bolton, BL1 2EW
Tel: +44 (0)871 9429 090 (0.9 miles from the University)

Britannia Hotel | [Book Now](#)

Beaumont Road, Bolton, BL3 4TA
Tel: +44 (0)871 2220 024 (2 miles from the University)

Premier Inn Bolton West | [Book Now](#)

991 Chorley New Road, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 4BA
Tel: +44 (0)871 5278 118 (3.8 miles from the University)

Last Drop Village Hotel & Spa | [Book Now](#)

Hospital Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton, BL7 9PZ
Tel: +44 (0)1204 873 500 (3.9 miles from the University)

Bolton Stadium Hotel | [Book Now](#)

De Havilland Way, Bolton, BL6 6SF
Tel: +44 (0) 1204 673610 (4.6 miles from the University)

Premier Inn Bolton (Stadium/Arena) Hotel | [Book Now](#)

Arena Approach 3, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 6LB
Tel: +44 (0)871 5278 116 (4.8 miles from the University)

For more information on where to stay in Bolton, please see the following website: www.visitbolton.com



Special requirements, information for students and guests

What arrangements can be made if I or my guests have any special requirements?

Prior to booking your student/guest tickets, you should inform us by email to graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk. Please detail any special requirements that you or your guests may have (for example, wheelchair user, mobility problems, blind/partially sighted or deaf/hearing impairment), and we will make every effort to accommodate you. We will contact you to discuss arrangements, but if you have any queries, please call our Disability Team on +44 (0)1204 903 478 or email disabilityinfo@greatermanchester.ac.uk.

How do I contact the Graduation Team?

If you have not found the answer to your question, please contact us at: graduation@greatermanchester.ac.uk.

Please note that to answer your query, we will require your full name and your student number.