252nd Commencement Weekend
May 22–24, 2020
Understanding Commencement

An Overview of Commencement and Reunion Weekend
Dates and Resources

2020 Dates

- Friday, May 22: Campus Dance
- Saturday, May 23: Forums and Baccalaureate Service
- Sunday, May 24: Commencement Procession and Ceremonies

Additional Resources

- Commencement Website
- Commencement Guidebook App
- Welcome Kiosks on College Green on May 23 and 24. Stop by for information about weekend events
Campus Dance

Friday, May 22
9 pm to 1 am

Families and guests are welcome to attend.

Tickets are required and go on sale beginning April 15th on the Brown Alumni Association website.

One of Brown’s best-loved Commencement and Reunion traditions, Campus Dance brings together more than 11,000 people to dance on the College Green under hundreds of paper lanterns.
Saturday, May 23

9:00 am - 9:50 am
11:00 am - 11:50 am
12:30 am - 1:20 pm
3:30 am - 4:20 pm

No tickets required. Open seating is first come, first seated. Arrive early for best availability of seats.

Each Commencement, Brown presents a wide range of forums led by faculty, alumni and Honorary Degree candidates. Speakers, topics and locations are announced in late April.
Baccalaureate Service

Saturday, May 23

1:30 pm Seniors line up
1:45 pm Procession begins
2:30 pm Ceremony begins
4:00 pm Ceremony ends

This service is for Seniors only

Guests can watch a simulcast from the college green

Features student performers and a keynote address.

The Baccalaureate Service is a multi-faith ceremony that incorporates the many spiritual and cultural traditions of the Brown community. Seniors process to the First Baptist Church from the College Green.
Commencement Day
Commencement Day Schedule
Sunday, May 24

- 9:45 am  Procession begins
- 10:15 am  Graduate School Doctoral Ceremony
- 10:15 am  Medical Ceremony
- 10:30 am  Graduate School Master’s Ceremony
- 12:15 pm  College Ceremony at First Baptist Church
- 1:15 pm  University Ceremony on the College Green
- 2:30 pm  Diploma Ceremonies

*All times are approximate*
Commencement Day for Graduates

Sunday, May 24

- Caps and gowns can be rented or purchased from the Brown Bookstore and are required for students participating in Baccalaureate and Commencement.
- The procession lasts from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm; pack a water bottle and a snack.
- Find your diploma ceremony location and coordinate a meeting place with your guests in advance.
- Dress comfortably and for the weather. Ceremonies will be outdoors, rain or shine, and you will be walking a lot.
- Stay together and keep moving along the procession route.
Commencement Day for Family and Guests

Sunday, May 24

- Sunday is a long day.
- Arrive early for best availability of seats.
- Surrounding streets are closed to traffic during the morning for the procession, making the campus difficult to reach by car after 9 am.
- For best viewing of the procession and College Ceremony, Watch the simulcast from the College Green rather than trying to view them from the street.
- Consider only attending the Diploma Ceremony if you have concerns about the length of the day or about navigating the campus on foot. Seniors receive their degrees individually at these ceremonies.
College Green Seating

Enter the green from George street to avoid the congested procession lineup areas on Waterman and Brown streets. The center seating section is for graduates only. You must be present and seated to hold seats for other guests. All seats have a view of the simulcast displayed on the Jumbotron.
Procession

9:30 am Seniors line up
9:45 am Procession begins

Seniors line up on Waterman Street then march through Faunce Arch, the College Green and the Van Wickle Gates before processing to the First Baptist Church for the College Ceremony.

Guests watch a simulcast from the College Green.

Graduates march through the Van Wickle Gates, which are opened only twice each year. Alumni who have returned for Reunion march with their classes. Once the last person is through the Van Wickle Gates, the procession inverts and continues down College Street, with each participant passing by the others, to mutual applause.
Sunday, May 24
12:15 pm to 12:35 pm

The ceremony is for Seniors only, guests watch a simulcast from the College Green

Seniors assemble on the lawn of the First Baptist Church for the College Ceremony where the undergraduate degrees are conferred.
Procession continued
12:35 pm – 1:15 pm
(Approximate times)

Procession resumes immediately following the College Ceremony.

Seniors split and process in two groups up the hill to the College Green.

After the College Ceremony at the First Baptist Church, seniors return to the College Green for the University Ceremony.
University Ceremony
1:15 pm - 2:15 pm
(approximate times)

Seniors, Graduate and Medical School Students all celebrate their accomplishments

Senior Orators speak

Presentation of Honorary Degrees

Presentation of Symbolic Degrees

What a view it is from the stage podium, where President Paxson addresses all gathered for the University Ceremony on the College Green
Diploma Ceremonies

Immediately follow the University Ceremony
2:30 pm (approximate time)

Diplomas are awarded at various ceremonies in buildings and tents across campus.

Make sure you know seniors concentration.

Refreshments and food are served at most ceremonies.

No Tickets Required

Families and guests are invited to attend the Diploma Ceremonies. See the map of the ceremony locations at the back of the Commencement program for location.
Diploma ceremonies are the best opportunity for photos

The Van Wickle Gates will remain open through Monday evening for more photo opportunities

**Live Streamed events:**

Baccalaureate
Procession
College Ceremony
University Ceremony

DVD sales are available from Collegiate Video.

*View a simulcast of all major events on the Jumbotron on the College Green*
Travel, Food and Lodging
Housing & Dining

Most local hotels require a 2 night minimum during this weekend. Rooms sell out months in advance.

Campus Resident Hall rooms can be booked through the Office of Residential Life beginning in March.

Make dinner reservations in advance. Most diploma ceremonies end by Sunday at 4pm.

Several “grab & go” retail food locations are open on campus and will be listed on the website and app.

Providence Waterfire traditionally takes place Saturday evening of Commencement Weekend.
Storm Plan

Implemented **ONLY in SEVERE weather conditions**

- Announcement will be made on Brown’s home page brown.edu
- Procession will be cancelled
- University Ceremony held in Pizzitola Sports Center for Seniors only.
- Guests can live stream the ceremony, or view a simulcast in Salomon Center, Sayles Hall or Olney-Margolies Athletic Center (OMAC)
Weekend Parking

Parking and driving around campus is challenging. Expect traffic and roadblocks.

University lots open at 5 p.m. on Friday and remain open all weekend.

Consider a Drop Off Pass for your guests.

Handicapped parking registration opens in early spring and closes mid-April.
Thank you!