

2026 WINTER
COMMENCEMENT

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES



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* All times listed are Central Time (CT)

BEFORE THE CEREMONY

Degree Conferral

Participation in the graduate and undergraduate commencement ceremony does not mean your degree has been conferred. We confer degrees daily, effective the last day of each month. Once the Registrar's Office has verified that your degree program is 100% complete, we will notify you via your student email and ask you to [order your diploma](#) online. Your diploma will arrive approximately eight weeks after the conferral date. At the commencement ceremony, you will receive your diploma cover, but not your diploma.

If you have not yet received notification from the Registrar's Office, you may check your Advisement Report in [BRUIN](#) under My Info. If it indicates your degree is 100% complete, you may complete the Diploma Order Form. Please do not complete the Diploma Order Form if your report indicates an incomplete degree, as early submission of the form may delay conferring your degree. We ask that you clear all obligations to the university so we can release your diploma.

If your Advisement Report does not indicate you have reached 100% completion when you believe it should, please contact your Academic Advisor. If you have questions regarding your diploma, please contact Student Records at sssstudentrecordsteam@bellevue.edu or 1.800.756.7920, ext. 557-7386.

In addition to your conferral, you may participate in the Commencement Ceremony held twice each year in the Omaha Metropolitan area. Hosted by the Bellevue University Board of Directors, the Commencement Ceremony is the official celebration of your success. The event is open to all family and friends.

Please note: Having your degree conferred does not register you into the commencement ceremony, and participating in the commencement ceremony does not mean you have graduated or your degree has been conferred.

Commencement Ceremony Form Deadline

Starting August 18, 2025 the [commencement ceremony form](#) will be available in [BRUIN](#), please register for the ceremony by December 1, 2025. In order to be included in the ceremony, you will need to complete and fill out this form.

Shout Outs

You will have the opportunity to record and send in a video or text “Shout Out.” We will play the video “Shout Outs” on the big screens at commencement before the ceremony beginning at 8 a.m. Shout Outs submitted by Doctoral graduates will be shown prior to the Hooding Ceremony. They will also be posted online for viewing two weeks after commencement.

“Shout Outs” are a brief video clip of graduating students sending out messages (video or text) to family and friends, thanking them for their love and support. An example of a Shout Out: “Hi, Mom and Dad. Thanks so much for your love and support during my time at Bellevue University. It has been a great experience and I could never have made it without you.”

Video Shout Out Requirements:

- Video Formats: Apple ProRes, AVI, M4V, MOV, MP4, MPEG, MPE, MPG, WMV
- 1920x1080 or 1280x720, if possible
- Shoot with camera/phone horizontally
- Place camera/phone on table or tripod
- Solid color background/wall behind you
- Not handheld, if possible
- Good lighting (light yourself from the front)
- No windows or bright light source behind you
- Say or spell your name before giving your Shout Out
- Rename video file with student ID number
- Upload your video to your Bellevue University OneDrive or similar service

Text Shout Out Requirements:

- Text Shout Outs have a limit of 255 Characters
- Text Shout Outs must not contain nudity, profanity, hate speech, or adult content
- Text Shout Outs can include one photo
- Photos must not exceed 2 MB
- Photos should be in focus, contain only your face (no group photos) and not contain nudity, profanity, hate speech, or adult content
- Photo Formats: JPG or JPEG, PNG, TIFF, PSD, PDF, RAW, HEIF, and GIF
- Photos and text must be submitted to: av@bellevue.edu

Video or Text Shout Outs can be submitted between December 1, 2025 and January 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. (CT). Questions? Contact av@bellevue.edu.

**** Bellevue University reserves the right to edit or decline submissions at its sole discretion.***

Graduation Open House/Final Friday

Graduation Open House/Final Friday will take place January 30, 2026, from 4 - 7 p.m. on Bellevue University's main campus. You and your guests are invited to attend this celebration to connect with your instructors, classmates, and academic advisor. The event will include refreshments and guided campus tours. The Bellevue University Bookstore will also be open until 7 p.m. Please RSVP to these events by going to: <https://www.bellevue.edu/student-support/graduation/applying-for-graduation>.

Graduation Announcements/Class Rings

While Bellevue University does not supply announcements for your graduation, we welcome our graduates to order announcements and/or class rings if they wish. We are proud to partner with Balfour for all of your graduation announcement and keepsake needs. Order online at cbgrad.com/school/BELLE.

Commencement Gifts

Pre-order your commemorative Bellevue University January 2026 Graduation t-shirt designed by The Commencement Group. The graduation t-shirt includes your name on the back along with the 2026 graduating class.* To guarantee your name on the t-shirt, you must register for the Winter ceremony by December 1, 2025.

The Commencement Group also provides flowers and other graduation keepsakes for purchase prior to the start of the ceremony.

*Bellevue University recommends you arrange for one of your guests to pick up your items before the ceremony begins at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, IA on Saturday, January 31, 2026. Items will be ready for pickup when the doors open for graduates and guests at 8:00 a.m. The Commencement Group will be onsite for 30 - 45 minutes following the ceremony for any last-minute purchases.

To pre-order please visit: [The Commencement Group](#)

Graduation Photography

Bellevue University partners with Ceremony Photos to ensure professional photographs of each graduate are taken and made available for purchase. Portraits will be taken immediately after exiting the stage. Photos will be available 2 - 3 weeks after the ceremony. Please visit ceremonyphotos.com/events-proofs to view the photos. There is no obligation to purchase.

If you have questions, please email Todd@ceremonyphotos.com or call 1.402.917.6518.

INFORMATION FOR ALL GRADUATES AND GUESTS

Day of Ceremony for January 31, 2026:

The commencement ceremony is held at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 8:00 a.m.
(CT) | Doors open Graduates arrive for check in and formation at the Mid-America Center south entrance; Video Shout Outs begin on screen in the arena. |
| 8:30 a.m.
(CT) | Final count of participants (please be in your seat by this time as this will determine whether or not your name is read while crossing the stage); Live stream begins (check www.bellevue.edu for the link) |
| 9:10 a.m.
(CT) | Ceremony begins with the procession of graduates;
Late arrivals WILL NOT be admitted into the ceremony. |

Directions to the Mid-America Center

1 Arena Way, Council Bluffs, IA 51501

From I-80 East

- Traveling east on I-80, merge onto I-29 North via Exit 1A on the right toward Sioux City.
- Take the Nebraska Ave exit, Exit 52, toward Riverboat Casino/Dog Track Casino/Mid-America.
- Turn left onto Nebraska Ave and take the first right onto S 35th St., which becomes 23rd Ave.
- Turn right onto Bass Pro Drive and take the first left onto 24th Ave.
- Stay straight to go onto Arena Way.

Lodging Information

The following hotels are located close to the Bellevue University campus.

Candlewood Suites Bellevue: 10902 S. 15th St., Bellevue, NE 68123 1.402.932.8144	Courtyard Bellevue at Beardmore: 3730 Raynor Parkway, Bellevue, NE 68123 1.402.408.5300	Holiday Inn Express & Suite Bellevue: 10804 S 15th St., Bellevue, NE 68123 1.402.293.1600	Hampton Inn Bellevue: 3404 Samson Way, Bellevue, NE 68005 1.402.292.1607
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The following metro-area hotels are located close to the Mid-America Center, where the commencement ceremony is held, and within 20 minutes of the University.

Springhill Suites: 3216 Plaza View Drive, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501 1.712.256.6500	Country Inn & Suites: 17 Arena Way, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501 1.712.322.82820	Hilton Garden Inn: 2702 Mid America Drive, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501 1.712.309.9000	Holiday Inn Express: 2211 South 32nd St, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501 1.712.352.1300
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Guests

We do not limit the number of guests you can invite. Seating is on a first come, first served basis. Your guests should enter the Mid-America Center from the main entrance on the south side. Your guests will not be allowed into the Exhibition Hall as the area is reserved for graduates. Seating for guests is accessible by stairs, escalator, or elevator, which will be available when doors open at 8 a.m.

We strive to make the commencement ceremony and commencement week activities a welcoming environment for all in attendance. Please refrain from using air horns, confetti poppers and other items that make loud and sudden noises.

Only service animals are allowed on campus and at the Mid-America Center. Please contact disability services if you have a service animal attending the commencement activities and commencement with you.

Meeting Your Guests After

Once graduates have exited the arena following the commencement ceremony, family and friends can proceed to the first floor. Please make arrangements or designate a location to meet your friends and family after the ceremony.

Alphabetical banners hanging in the Exhibition Hall at the Mid-America Center make a convenient meet-up place for you and your family, and location to return your gown at the cap and gown pick-up area.

Personal Items

Please give your valuables to your family or friends before you go to the Exhibition Hall for formation. (If you would like to take pocket-sized items with you to the dressing area, make sure to keep them with you at all times.) Once you are dressed, counted, seated by the Registrar's Office, and given instructions for the ceremony, you will not be able to leave the Exhibition Hall to visit with family and friends.

Disability Access

We strive to make the ceremony comfortable and accessible for all graduates and guests. An early arrival is recommended for guests with a disability, as accessible seating is available on a first come, first served basis. The south entrance of the Mid-America Center is an optimum location to drop-off individuals who have mobility limitations. All guest entrances to the convention center are fully accessible, featuring power assist doors. Guests with mobility limitations are welcome to utilize the elevator or escalator to the general seating areas on the second floor.

Only service animals are allowed on campus and at the Mid-America Center. Please contact disability services if you have a service animal attending the commencement activities and commencement with you.

Services for Guests who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired

An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter may be provided upon request with advanced notice of 4 - 6 weeks. We will attempt to arrange interpreters on shorter notice, but cannot guarantee availability. Email disability@bellevue.edu to request. Closed captioning will be provided on the arena video boards and online for live viewing.

Services for Guests with Visual Disabilities

All commencement programs are printed in large print.

Online Viewing

Our commencement ceremony is available for live viewing via the web for those unable to attend at bellevue.edu/graduation. Live viewing begins at 8:30 a.m. (CT) on Saturday, January 31, 2026.

Ceremony Recordings

Both the Doctoral Hooding ceremony and the Commencement ceremony will be recorded and available for viewing 3 - 5 days after the ceremony dates at Bellevue University's official YouTube channel: youtube.com/c/bellevueuniversity.

Join the party on social media!

- Follow Bellevue University on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok
- Use the hashtag #BUGrads2026 or #BUGrad2026 in your post



Event Photo/Filming Consent Disclaimer

All Bellevue University Commencement activities are being photographed and filmed on behalf of Bellevue University for possible inclusion in marketing and promotional communication.

Please be advised that Bellevue University may use photographs and/or recordings taken during events for publication in print and online, including social media. If you do not wish to be photographed or recorded, we ask that you please leave the location during photography or filming.

By entering Bellevue University Commencement activities and by your presence here, you are hereby giving your consent to be photographed, filmed, and/or recorded. You are consenting to Bellevue University's use in any and all media of your appearance, name, likeness, voice and/or statements recorded at this event for any purpose whatsoever in perpetuity, including, by way of example only, use on websites, in social media, news, and advertising.

If you do not agree to this consent, please do not enter any commencement activities. If you have any questions, email publicrelations@bellevue.edu.



INFORMATION FOR DOCTORAL DEGREE GRADUATES

Doctoral Hooding Ceremony

Doctoral Graduates are invited to a special reception on Friday, January 30, 2026, on the main campus of Bellevue University. A hooding ceremony may be celebrated on Friday, January 30 (prior to the reception) OR Saturday, January 31 (during the commencement ceremony at the Mid-America Center), depending on the number of graduates participating.

Final details will be communicated closer to the event date.

Participation Requirements

Doctoral candidates must have all requirements for conferral completed before participating in the hooding ceremony. Doctoral candidates will receive their diploma at the hooding ceremony on the Friday before the graduate and undergraduate ceremony.

- Meet all admission requirements
- Complete all curriculum requirements listed in the assigned University catalog
- Pass all degree-required doctoral courses with a grade of “C” or better + a maximum of six credits with a grade below a “B-” and no grade below a “C”
- Attain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher in the doctoral degree program
- Have at least 49 credit hours in-residence courses at Bellevue University (online courses are in-residence)
- Have ALL requirements completed satisfactorily, including defense of your dissertation, at least 30 days prior to the ceremony in which you participate.

Ceremony Registration and Deadline

To register for the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony, complete this form: Applying for graduation. From the drop-down menu, choose “Friday, January 30, 2026. (Doctoral Only).”

Doctoral graduates who register for the hooding ceremony will receive communications via email regarding additional information and specifics pertaining to their ceremony. Graduates should monitor their Bellevue University email and the email submitted on their ceremony registration form. Contact commencement@bellevue.edu for additional assistance, if needed.

Ceremony Information

Doctoral Graduates are invited to a special reception on Friday, January 30, 2026, on the main campus of Bellevue University.

A Doctoral Hooding Ceremony will be held on either Friday, January 30, prior to the reception, OR on Saturday, January 31, during the commencement ceremony at the Mid-America Center. The date will depend on the number of graduates participating. Final details will be communicated closer to the event date.

Biographies

Doctorate candidates will be asked to submit a short biography. Submissions will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Friday, January 9, 2026.

Guidelines for Your Biography:

- Write in third person (e.g., “Jane Doe is...” instead of “I am...”).
- Include basic information such as:
 - » Who you are
 - » Why you chose to pursue your Doctoral or Ph.D. at Bellevue University
 - » Your future goals and plans

An email with full instructions and submission details will be sent to each doctoral candidate.

Nominate a Student Speaker:

Doctoral graduates may nominate themselves to be considered as the Student Speaker for the Saturday, January 31, 2026, commencement ceremony.

Nominations will be accepted August 18, 2025, until 5 p.m. (CT) through November 14, 2025. Review the qualifications and expectations of nominees, available on the Student Speaker Nomination Form.

Cap and Gown Pick Up

When a hooding ceremony occurs before the Doctorate Reception, only Doctoral regalia not picked up by 6:30 p.m. Thursday, January 29, 2026, will be available at the John B. Muller Administrative Services Building when you arrive for the ceremony on Friday, January 30, 2026.

If the hooding ceremony occurs during the Saturday, January 31, 2026 Commencement Ceremony, Doctoral regalia will be available for pick-up on Friday, January 30, 2026, from 4-7 p.m. during Open House/ Final Friday, in addition to the following dates and times.

Bellevue University Main Campus - Hitchcock Humanities Auditorium

- Tuesday, January 27 | 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 28 | 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. & 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, January 29 | 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. & 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. *

*** All times listed are Central Time (CT)**

***Please note:** Time and Location details are subject to change.*

INFORMATION FOR MASTER'S, BACHELOR'S, & ASSOCIATE'S GRADUATES

Ceremony Registration Deadline Date

Participating in commencement is a memorable event for all students. We've made reserving your space and ordering your gown for commencement quick and easy! To ensure you are registered, log into BRUIN and type "Commencement Ceremony Form" in the search bar and follow the link to complete the Commencement Ceremony form. Please submit your form either in person or online, by December 1, 2025. Failure to adhere to this deadline may result in your name being omitted from the commencement ceremony program.

Nominate a Student Speaker

Faculty, staff, and students have the opportunity to nominate the student speaker for the Winter Commencement ceremony. Candidates may be nominated from the graduating undergraduate and graduate classes. Nominations will be accepted until November 14, 2025, at 5 p.m. The nomination form can be accessed by logging into Bruin and following:

Resources & Forms > Forms > Student Forms > Student Speaker Nomination Form

Nominees must submit brief answers to the questions on the nomination form. If nominated by someone other than themselves, the questions will be sent to the nominee to complete and return by the deadline date of November 14, 2025.

Nominees

Semi-finalists will be asked to deliver a 2-3 minute "preview" speech before the Student Speaker Selection Committee.

The speech will be judged on the content (unique perspective, motivational aspects, relevant quotations, and anecdotes), presentation style, and delivery.

The selection committee chooses three to four finalists to present their full speeches during the All Faculty Meeting on December 5, 2025. Full-time faculty members vote by ballot and the Winter Commencement Speaker is chosen. The student speaker is announced on the website and social media, interviewed, and photographed for the commencement program and alumni publications.

The Commencement Student Speaker will receive:

- Participation in the platform party processional and stage seating
- Photograph, name, and bio information (Provided by the Student Speaker) printed in the commencement program, Bellevue University commencement news release, *The View* alumni magazine, and Bellevue University social media channels
- Potential invitation to participate in local media interviews

Please note: *The selected Student Speaker will be required to sign a media release agreement permitting Bellevue University to capture and use photographs, video recordings and/or audio recordings of the Student Speaker in connection with commencement events.*

Commencement Regalia

Regalia is rented from Graves Graduation only for graduates participating in the commencement ceremony. The approved regalia consists of a black cap, a black gown for both men and women, and a tassel. Graduates receiving a Master's degree wear a Master's hood. Undergraduate participants meeting the criteria wear cords designating honors, if applicable. Student-athletes wear purple recognition cords. All ceremony participants who have served or are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces wear red, white, and blue military recognition cords in addition to their commencement regalia. If you wish to wear items other than the approved regalia, you will need to submit a written request to the Chief Academic Officer, at commencement@bellevue.edu 60 days prior to the commencement ceremony. If you fail to comply with standards for regalia, you will not be allowed to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Cap and Gown Information & Pick-Up

A cap, gown, tassel, honor and/or military cords and hood (if applicable) will be provided to all students who participate in the commencement ceremony. The gown must be returned immediately following the ceremony. Graduating students may keep their cap, tassel, hood (if applicable), and any awarded cords free of charge.

Please pick up your cap and gown during the following dates and times. Our graduates who have served, or are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces, will be recognized during the commencement ceremony. Please bring proof of military service when picking up your cap and gown to receive your military service recognition cord.

All caps and gowns not picked up by 7 p.m., Friday, January 30, 2026, will be available at the Mid-America Center when you arrive at 8 a.m. (CT) on Saturday, January 31, 2026.

Bellevue University Main Campus - Hitchcock Humanities Auditorium

- Tuesday, January 27 | 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 28 | 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. & 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, January 29 | 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. & 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Friday, January 30 | 4 - 7 p.m. | During Open House/Final Friday *

* All times listed are Central Time (CT)

At the end of the ceremony, please return your gown to the Cap & Gown pick-up area in the Exhibition Hall at the Mid-America Center. If you pick up your cap and gown and are unable to attend the commencement ceremony, please return the gown to OneStop in the John B. Muller Administrative Services Building, on Monday, February 2, 2026, so you will not be charged and your diploma can be released.

Honors - Bachelor's and Associate's Degrees Only

If you are a Bachelor's candidate and **have completed a minimum of 60 credit hours in residence at Bellevue University, you may be eligible for honors at graduation.**

Credit hours earned with grades of pass/fail, CLEP/DSST, PLA, New York University Foreign Language Proficiency Exams, and other transfer credits do not count toward graduation honors. Honors will be estimated December 1, 2025. You will receive a Bachelor's degree with honors if your cumulative grade point average in courses taken at Bellevue University falls within the following limits:

Red Cord	Summa Cum Laude	3.95 to 4.00
Gold Cord	Magna Cum Laude	3.88 to 3.94
Green Cord	Cum Laude	3.76 to 3.87
White Cord	With Distinction	3.60 to 3.75

If you are an Associate's candidate and **have completed a minimum of 30 credit hours in residence at Bellevue University, you may be eligible for honors at graduation.**

You will receive an Associate's degree with honors if your cumulative grade point average in courses taken at Bellevue University falls within the following limits:

Royal Cord	Highest Honor	3.95 to 4.00
Charcoal Cord	High Honor	3.76 to 3.94
Violet Cord	Honors	3.60 to 3.76

Graduate Degrees

Graduation honors are not awarded for Master's or Doctoral degrees. Rigorous academic standards must be maintained in all graduate programs. In the academic tradition, there is no higher honor than to be admitted as a graduate student and ultimately receive a graduate degree.

AFTER THE CEREMONY: STAY CONNECTED

Alumni Benefits

As a graduate from Bellevue University, you are entitled to the following programs and services:

- BRUIN email account
- Subscription to the alumni publication, *The View*
- Monthly issues of the alumni e-newsletter, the AlumniLink
- Access to the extensive, state-of-the-art library resources, both on-site and online
- Job search or career transition assistance through the Career Services Center
- Admission to regular season home athletic events

Stay Connected and Involved

Communicate with other Bellevue University alumni and students worldwide on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. More information is available at bellevue.edu/about/about-us/social-networking.

The University's Alumni Office is dedicated to staying connected with you as you move forward through life and encourages you to:

- Complete an online interest survey
- Tell us about your educational experience at the University
- Refer a friend, co-worker, or family member who is interested in learning more about earning a Bellevue University degree
- Purchase Bellevue University alumni apparel, accessories, gifts, or collectibles
- Support the University with a tax-deductible donation

For more information, contact the Alumni Office at 402-557-7293, toll-free at 1-800-756-7920, ext.557-7293, or visit bellevue.edu/about/alumni.