



Policy AC026: Commencement

Recommended for Approval by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James D. Fisher".

James D. Fisher, Ph.D.

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Anderson".

Jon Anderson, Ph.D.

President

Effective Date: 07/01/2022 | **Amended:** 04/03/2025

A. Intent

To define the timing of commencement ceremonies for students completing their degree requirements at different points during the calendar year.

B. Definition(s)

Not Applicable.

C. Policy

1. Pennsylvania Western University will hold a commencement ceremony twice each year, in May and in December. The dates of the commencement ceremonies will be established by the President and listed in the academic calendar.
2. To participate in the commencement ceremony, a student must be completing an associate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree.
3. PennWest Global Online students are assumed to be attending the commencement ceremony at the California campus unless otherwise selected.
4. Students completing degree requirements in Winter and Spring terms will participate in the May commencement ceremony.
5. Students completing degree requirements in Summer and Fall terms will participate in the December commencement ceremony.
6. Doctoral students are eligible to participate in the commencement ceremony after the

completion of all degree requirements.

7. In extraordinary circumstances, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee, may authorize an individual to participate in a commencement ceremony even though degree requirements have not yet been met, or participate in commencement out of sequence. Requests are submitted to the Office of the Registrar. A student who participates out of the sequence noted above will have their name listed only in the commencement program in which they participate.
8. Students, regardless of participation in commencement, will not receive a diploma until the degree requirements have been completed and verified by the Office of the Registrar. Diplomas are not presented to students at the commencement ceremony. Graduates will receive their diploma by mail once completion of all degree requirements have been verified by the Office of the Registrar. Participation in the ceremony or having a student's name listed in the commencement program is not verification of an earned degree.
9. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will recommend to the President of the University the name(s) of those suitable to be honored as the Marshal (Bearer of the Mace) for the commencement ceremonies. The President will consider the recommendation and appoint the Marshal (Bearer of the Mace), who shall be a current or retired faculty member.

D. Procedure(s)

Not Applicable.

E. Related policies

Academic Honors at Graduation (AC018)

Degree Conferral Policy (AC027)

Graduation Requirements Policy (AC028)

Graduation Residency Requirements Policy (AC033)

Posthumous Awards Policy (AC025)

Transcript and Diploma Policy (AC041)

F. Contact Information

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Provost.

G. Policy Review Schedule

All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in BOG, PASSHE or Pennsylvania law would create the need for an immediate change.