

DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

Completing a Degree or Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study

Degrees and certificates are conferred quarterly for students who have met all of their degree requirements or certificate requirements.

Only students who have met all of their degree requirements (e.g. successful completion of required courses and achievement of cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater, and the submission of the application for graduate degree or certificate) may graduate or be awarded a certificate.

Completing the Degree or Certificate

All SPS Students must submit an Application for Graduate Degree or Certificate Completion form (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/login.php>) to the SPS Registrar by the deadline posted in the SPS calendar (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/academic-calendar/#graduatetext>).

Program Completion Deadlines

All degree-seeking students must complete their program within five years of their admission to their program or request special permission to extend this program-completion deadline. All certificate students must complete their program within 5 years or 10 quarters.

Students who are approaching the five-year deadline and wish to request an extension must submit a Degree Deadline Extension Petition (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php>). When requesting a degree extension, students must demonstrate a valid reason and must provide a timetable for completion of the program.

Students whose deadline has passed and who do not submit an acceptable degree deadline request will not be allowed to graduate. Any SPS student granted an extension may be subject to additional requirements.

Graduation Ceremonies

Northwestern University hosts a number of graduation ceremonies each spring. All degree-seeking students who have completed their degree during that academic year are invited to participate in the University-wide commencement ceremony, usually held in Ryan Field. Additionally, each school holds its own Convocation ceremony, where graduates are recognized by name by the Dean of the school or the faculty director. Staff and faculty, fellow students, friends and family have the opportunity to join in the celebration. A student may participate in more than one ceremony, so he or she should make sure to RSVP for each ceremony individually. Refer to the Commencement website (<https://www.northwestern.edu/commencement/>) for more information.

Here are the things to remember about the graduation ceremonies:

- Graduation ceremonies are held once a year only, in June, for all students who completed their programs during that academic year.
- Attendance at the Graduation Ceremonies is optional. All diplomas are mailed to students following degree conferral in the quarter they completed the program.

- Only degree-seeking students may participate in the Convocation and Commencement ceremonies.
- Candidates from School of Professional Studies MA programs must select a white hood for Master of Arts and a white tassel.
- Candidates from School of Professional Studies MS programs must select a gold hood for Master of Science and a white tassel.
- Candidates from School of Professional Studies MFA program must select a brown hood for Master of Fine Arts and a white tassel.