# Table of Contents

**Letter From the VP for ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS**

**Getting Ready**
- Graduation Application
- Diploma
- Participation In Commencement Exercises
- Faculty Hooders
- Special Hooder Request
- Commencement Fee
- Graduation Requirements
- Graduation Honors
  - Distinction in Research
  - Commendation in Investigative Scholarship
- Issuance Of Diplomas
- Student Accounts
- Library Fines
- Student Loan Exit Interviews
- Office of Financial Aid
  - Bursar’s Office
- School Email Account

**Ceremonies & Celebrations**
- Awards Day
- Senior Week At Downstate
- Tickets
- Academic Attire
- Special Hooders
- What to Expect on Commencement Day
  - Graduates
  - Guests
- Awarding Of Degrees
- Photography Information
- Following the Ceremony
- Venue Rules

**Staying Connected**
- Alumni Association
- Membership
- Activities
- Student Health Insurance

**Calendar of Events**

**Questions?**
Dear Class of 2023,

You are halfway through your final year and it’s time to begin to get ready for graduation! We created this on-line handbook to prepare you for your final semester and to let you know about some of the ceremonies and rituals that have been planned to celebrate your accomplishments.

We hope this book is helpful, but if you still have questions, there are a number of people available to assist you. A complete list can be found on page 16.

We are proud of you and look forward to celebrating with you this spring.

Best wishes,

Jeffrey Putman, Ed.D.
Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
GETTING READY

GRADUATION APPLICATION

The first step in preparing for graduation involves filing a Graduation Application on-line through Banner Self-Service, our student information system. We will send information to you by email in early-January 2023 about logging on to complete the Application. Please make sure you regularly check your Downstate email account. The information that you will be providing is used to order your diploma, and to collect information regarding your participation in Commencement Exercises. Upon completion of the Application, you will receive a confirmation and information about ordering your Commencement attire.

DIPLOMA

The diploma is ordered with your name as it appears on your student record. You may elect to use your middle name or initial on the Application without submitting official documentation.

If you anticipate formally changing your name before completing the requirements for the MD degree, and you wish your new name to be reflected on your diploma, you must present official documentation (e.g., marriage certificate, naturalization papers, etc.) to the Office of the Registrar by February 24, 2023. If your name becomes official after the February 24th deadline, you will be required to submit official documentation of the name change prior to receiving your diploma. Any questions regarding this procedure should be directed to the Office of the Registrar.

Please note: Diplomas are ordered in your official name at the time of graduation. Diplomas will not be ordered with a name that changes officially AFTER the graduation date.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Complete the sections Curriculum Selection, Graduation Year Selection, Graduation Ceremony Selection, Academic Attire Order, and Diploma Name Selection on the on-line Graduation Application, whether or not you intend to participate in the Commencement Exercises. The Application must be completed on-line by Friday, February 24, 2023.

You will be able to print out a Graduation Application Summary following completion of the Application.

After this deadline, it may still be possible for you to participate in commencement, however you will incur a late fee, you will not be listed in the Commencement Program, and you will not have access to tickets to the ceremony on May 11th.

FACULTY HOODERS

Your class will be asked to nominate and vote on two faculty members who will hood graduating students at Commencement.
SPECIAL HOODER REQUEST

A parent, spouse, or sibling who an MD may hood you at Commencement to personalize your graduation from medical school. No other requests will be considered. You may have only one hooder.

To request a special hooder, please complete the Special Hooder Form that will be included with the commencement application. Print out this form and submit it and ALL required information with a check for $65 made payable to SUNY Downstate TA-010 to the Office of the Registrar by Friday, February 24th, 2023. Special hooders will be allowed to participate if they adhere to this deadline. Academic attire will be ordered for them and will be available at the venue on the day of Commencement. Confirmation and additional information will be sent to you and your special hooder. If you or s/he does not receive confirmation by April 1, 2023, please contact Schuyler Hooke at schuyler.hooke@downstate.edu.

COMMENCEMENT FEE

The graduation fee for all graduating students is $90. Students pay this fee whether or not they attend Commencement.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for graduation, you must achieve the following:

- Satisfactory completion of the Foundations 1 and 2 curricula;
- Satisfactory completion of all clinical course requirements as delineated in the College Bulletin;
- Satisfactory remediation of any academic deficiencies;
- Be in good standing (i.e., not on academic or clinical or disciplinary probation at the time of graduation);
- Have no disciplinary charges in progress or pending;
- Pass Step 1 and Step 2 of the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) as specified by College policy;
- Satisfy all financial obligations due SUNY Downstate (see pg 6);
- Complete all mandatory financial aid exit interviews if you received financial aid while at SUNY Downstate (see pg 6);
- Register for and satisfactorily complete all required course work.

GRADUATION HONORS

Upon faculty recommendation and with the approval of the Academic Promotions Committee, students may be awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine with Distinction in Research or Commendation in Investigative Scholarship.

Honors are not automatically conferred on the basis of fulfillment of numerical requirements or the submission of a report. Such compliance shall serve only to determine eligibility.

Distinction in Research

To be eligible for this award, the student must have demonstrated a prolonged involvement—typically over a period of 1–2 years with substantial investment of time—in a basic or clinical project with a faculty mentor of this institution. The work should be done while enrolled at Downstate Medical Center. Students will...
be expected to show evidence of substantive intellectual input into the project. Mere technical participation will not be deemed sufficient grounds for conferral of this graduation honor. Additional information regarding eligibility can be found in the 2022-23 Student Handbook on pages 75-76.

Completed research project reports must be submitted to GradWithHonorsSubmissions-COM@downstate.edu no later than March 1, 2023. M.D./Ph.D. candidates may not use their thesis research for this distinction.

Commendation in Investigative Scholarship

This category of graduation honor is for students who have participated in either basic or clinical research for a limited period of time or who have participated in a project that has not achieved maturity. The work should be completed while enrolled at SUNY Downstate. The student must demonstrate both technical and intellectual input. Candidates must be eligible for graduation. Academic performance in medical school shall not be considered in conferring the award. A faculty committee will review project reports. The same deadlines as Distinction in Research apply. M.D.- Ph.D. candidates may not use their thesis research for this distinction.

Additional information regarding eligibility can be found in the 2022-2023 Student Handbook on page 76.

ISSUANCE OF DIPLOMAS

The Academic Promotions Committee approves students for degree completion and the awarding of a diploma three times each year – May 31, June 15 and December 31. However, there is one Commencement Exercise each year in May. Refer to the 2022-2023 Student Handbook on pages 77.

Medical students who complete ALL graduation requirements, as outlined above and whose grades have been received in the Office of the Registrar by May 15, 2023 and have NO outstanding financial or administrative obligation to the institution will have their diplomas mailed to them at the address provided to us on the Commencement Application.

All students completing the requirements for the M.D. degree after June 15th but before December 31st, will receive a December diploma. If the student completes requirements by June 30th, prior to starting a residency program, the Office of the Registrar will provide a letter of completion of requirements for the M.D. degree. Any questions regarding this procedure should be addressed to the Office of the Registrar.

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

All graduating students must satisfy all financial obligations owed to SUNY Downstate, including at least eight semesters of full-time tuition (except transfer students and students admitted with advance standing who must pay two semesters of tuition for every year of medical education completed at SUNY Downstate).

LIBRARY FINES

Unpaid fines will result in a borrower being blocked from checking out additional materials and may cause a delay in graduation. Overdue fines may be paid by cash or check at the Bursar’s Office.
Any student who has not met all financial and administrative obligations to the institution will not receive his or her diploma until cleared by the appropriate office.

**STUDENT LOAN EXIT INTERVIEWS**

**Office of Financial Aid**

The following information applies to students who have taken a Student Loan during their attendance at Downstate. Prior to graduation, you must complete the Student Loan Exit Interview. If you have a Wax Loan, you must complete an exit interview for that loan according to instructions you will receive from the Office of the Bursar.

1. To access your student loans data on the NSLDS, visit here:
   - https://studentaid.gov
   - Choose Log In
   - Enter your FSA ID & Password
   - Accept the Terms and Conditions
   - After you’ve entered the system, hover over your name which is in the top right of the screen.
   - Select My Aid
   - Next, select Download My Aid Data which is to the right.
   - Select Continue.

This downloaded text file can now be sent to your financial advisor for analysis and recommendations based on your specific goals. Again, please protect this file as it contains personal financial information about your student loans.

2. Then click on the Exit Counseling tab and complete the Exit Interview.

The Financial Aid Office at Downstate, your lender, and your guarantor will all automatically be notified that you have completed the Exit Interview. No further paperwork is required. However, an in person AAMC debt management session will be held in the Spring.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Financial Aid should you have any questions.

- financialaid@downstate.edu
- 718-270-2488

**Bursar’s Office**

All loans (Perkins, LDS and PCL) borrowed through campus-based loan programs are exited by the Bursar’s Office.

**LDS, PCL and Wax Loan Borrowers** — are required to go through the exit interview process prior to graduation. You will be notified by email to come into our office to complete the exit interview. If you have not heard from us via email by the end of March, or you will not be on campus during the Spring semester, call (718) 270-1078 to arrange for an appointment

**Perkins Borrowers** — are exited electronically by the Bursar’s Office. No appearance or further paperwork is required by you...the student.
SCHOOL EMAIL ACCOUNT

Graduating students School email account will remain active for a period of six (6) months following your graduation date.

You're almost there!

Here is information about the events in the upcoming months.
CEREMONIES & CELEBRATIONS

AWARDS DAY
Monday Afternoon
May 8, 2023
3:00 pm
Alumni Auditorium

The Awards Day program will include greetings from your class president as well as recognition of outstanding medical students with a variety of college and departmental awards. All graduating students are encouraged to attend. Each student will receive two tickets for family and or friends to attend.

A reception in the Atrium will follow.

SENIOR WEEK AT DOWNSTATE
All graduating medical students are invited to participate in Senior Week. Activities are planned for the week leading up to graduation and traditionally include a picnic, dinner dance, and a wine tour. Look for details in mid-February and make plans to participate with your friends and classmates.
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Tuesday Afternoon  
May 11, 2023  
3:00 pm  
The Amphitheater at Coney Island  
3052 W. 21st Street B  
Brooklyn, NY 11224

The College of Medicine along with the School of Public Health and School of Graduate Studies will honor the Class of 2023 at its Commencement Exercises. The ceremony includes the academic procession, greetings from the President, a member of the Class of 2023, and Commencement speakers. Each graduating student walks across stage and is recognized by name. Academic attire is required.

TICKETS

*Tickets are required for all guests.*

All participating students will receive 5 tickets for general admission into the Amphitheater. Requests for additional tickets must be submitted through the on-line Graduation Application and will be accommodated based on availability. All guests, including infants/toddlers who do not require their own seat, must have a ticket.

Ticket pick-up information will be available in mid-January.

ACADEMIC ATTIRE

Degree candidates who wish to participate in the Commencement Exercises are required to wear academic attire and to march with members of the faculty and honored guests in the academic procession.

Once you submit your Commencement Application, you will receive confirmation that it has been received. That confirmation will include a link to Oak Hall who is our contracted provider of academic attire. Click on the link and order your own attire which will be sent to an address that you provide. Each degree level has a drop-down menu displaying each program at Downstate. Find your degree/program which will have the appropriate attire. You will pay Oak Hall directly and they will ship to you. Oak Hall’s site will close on March 31st for guaranteed delivery by Commencement.

Please note: Academic attire will NOT be available at the Coney Island Amphitheater. You must bring your attire with you to graduation. You will not be allowed to march without attire.

SPECIAL HOODERS

Special hooders will be seated separately in the amphitheater and will process with the faculty, but will require tickets. They are also required to report to the main Boardwalk entrance at 2:00 p.m. where they will be instructed where to go to pick up and put on their academic attire, which will be waiting for them at the venue. A special mailing will be sent to all special hooders in mid-March.

To request a special hooder, you must submit the Special Hooder Form (http://sls.downstate.edu/student_affairs/commencement/medicine/documents/spechooder.pdf) by February 24, 2023. For more information see page 5.
WHAT TO EXPECT ON COMMENCEMENT DAY

Graduation will begin promptly at 3:00 pm and should last approximately two hours. This information will be important to you if you are making dinner reservations.

The Amphitheater at Coney Island is located at 3052 West 21st Street, Brooklyn. You will enter the venue from the Coney Island Boardwalk. There is a stairway and ramp to the Boardwalk at the end of 21st Street.

The closest parking is at the Cyclones Baseball field, Maimonides Stadium. Enter at 1904 Surf Avenue. Park at the back of the lot, closer to the Boardwalk, (near the famous Parachute drop ride.) You can get to the Boardwalk from the lot and walk about a block west. You will see the Amphitheater sign from the parking lot.

The venue is also accessible by public transit. Take the D,F,N, or Q train to the last stop: Coney Island – Stillwell Avenue. It is about a 15-minute walk on the Boardwalk from the station, or you can take the B36 bus two stops west from Stillwell Avenue to 21st Street.

Graduates

All graduates must report with their academic attire no later than 2:00 p.m. to the Boardwalk “Park” entrance to line up in the park behind the amphitheater. You will not be returning to this robing area. Do not carry personal belongings with you. Leave your belongings with one of your guests.

Promptly at 2:15 pm, the staff will begin to line you up for the processional. At 2:45, the line will be moved to the back of the arena.

If you arrive late, you will not be sitting with your classmates and will cross the stage at the end of the College of Medicine graduates.

Guests

All guests will enter through the main amphitheater entrance off the Boardwalk. They will go through a metal detector. All seating is general admission, and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Guests will not be permitted to enter the venue before 2:00 pm, please keep this in mind if you want your guests to hold any personal belongings.

As the venue fills up, areas will be closed off and guests arriving will be directed to seating that is available. Please plan accordingly. To maintain the dignity of the ceremony, guests will be asked by the ushers to keep the aisles clear.

Once the faculty and student processions begin, guests who are not already in the venue will not be permitted to enter the venue until the graduates and the faculty are seated.

AWARDING OF DEGREES

During the ceremony, each candidate will have his/her name read aloud, walk across the stage, shake hands with the President and the Dean and be hooded on stage. Graduates will not be permitted to bring or carry children with them on stage.

PHOTOGRAPHY INFORMATION

The event will be livestreamed and recorded for the pleasure of your friends and family who are not able to attend. A link will be sent in early May to share. The
recorded ceremony will be available on the Downstate website soon after May 11th.

It is recognized that many of the guests wish to have photographs showing their student during the time that they are on stage receiving their diplomas. We have contracted a professional photographer to be on stage to photograph each candidate as s/he shakes hands with the President, and again with their diploma cover. All graduates will be required to fill out a photograph information sheet on-line prior to May 11th. Guests may wish to take their own photographs as well, from their seats. Guests are permitted to use hand-held cameras and self-contained home video equipment using only the natural lighting from their seats. (No flash.)

**Guests may not stand in the aisles at any time to take pictures or videos.**

The ceremony is being sign-language interpreted.

**FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY**

Audience members will remain at their seats as faculty and students recess out of the venue onto the Boardwalk. Following the recessional, you can meet your guests on the Boardwalk.

**VENUE RULES**

Please alert your guests to the following important venue rules:

- **Every individual entering must have a ticket.** Infants and toddlers who will be sitting in laps must have a ticket.
- **No balloons.** You can tie them on a railing on the Boardwalk, or present them to your graduate at home.
- **No weapons AT ALL — including pocket-knives, even if you are off-duty law enforcement.** If you have a relative coming who is an off-duty police officer, they will not be allowed in with a weapon. If you have a relative who has a pocket-knife on their keychain, they will not be allowed in.
- **All attendees will have a bag check and will pass through a metal detector.** WE RECOMMEND YOU NOT BRING LARGE PURSES OR BAGS.

Please be sure to share all Commencement information with your guests and make arrangements where you will meet after the ceremony.
STAYING CONNECTED

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Your connection to the SUNY Downstate Medical Center does not end when you receive your diploma. You are part of our great alumni body, with over 10,000 successful graduates who hold positions in many fields including academic medicine, private practice and administration.

Your Alumni Association is a vibrant organization and, although an independent organization, is committed to helping the medical school. We welcome your involvement with our association.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Alumni Association entitles you to use the Medical Library, which has an outstanding collection of books, journals and other services. You also have the option of joining the Student Center with a valid alumni identification card.

ACTIVITIES

The Alumni Association provides a wide range of grants including support for student tuition scholarships and summer research fellowships. The organization also supports the Mentoring & Career Mentoring Programs, The Brooklyn Free Student Clinic, and many other school electives and programs. Reunions are held annually where alumni network and reminisce.

We would like to keep in touch with you about upcoming events and to share our Alumni Today magazine and other mailings. Please update us with your preferred email and any change of address by sending to alumni@downstate.edu

If you would like more information about the Alumni Association or want to find out how to become more involved, please call the Alumni Office at (718) 270-2075 or you can visit our website at downstatemedalumni.com.

There are limitless ways that our students count on us, and we know that we can count on you to stay connected!

STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE

Any student who currently has health insurance through the SUNY Downstate School plan, and will not have other coverage through a job on August 1, 2023, is eligible to purchase continuing coverage from the broker who handles our insurance. You only have 30 days from the end of coverage (July 31, 2023), to complete your enrollment. Please contact:

Ms. Paula Hyman
HSA Consulting, Inc.
2477 Stickney Point Road, Suite 207B
Sarasota, Florida 34231
1-888-978-8355 Fax: 1-941-925-2001
E-mail: paula@hsac.com
Congratulations!

You did it!!!!
## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Spring Fling tickets on sale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Deadline to complete the on-line Graduation Application</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Residency Rank Order List Certification Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>MATCH DAY!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Spring Fling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Deadline to order academic attire from Oak Hall</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–30</td>
<td>Schedule Exit Interview with Bursar and Financial Aid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–5</td>
<td><strong>Senior Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Awards Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
</tr>
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QUESTIONS?

Alumni Affairs .................................. Stephanie DiBrienza (718) 270-2075
   Alumni Association
   Alumni Membership
   Alumni Activities

Bursar ........................................... Avion Ambrose (718) 270-1078
   Exit Interviews for Campus-Based Loans

Dean's Office .................................. Dawn Froome (718) 270-1101
   Awards Day Program

Financial Aid .................................. Farah Burnett (718) 270-2488
   Financial Aid Exit Interviews

Library ......................................... Juannetta LeGree (718) 270-7401
   Library Fines

Student Affairs/Registrar ................... Edward Graciano (718) 270-4551
   Attendance at Commencement
   Completion of Graduation Requirements
   Graduation Honors
   Ordering and Receiving Diploma
   Health Insurance .......................... Madiha Akhtar (718) 270-2187

Student Center ............................... Info Desk (718) 270-2487

Student Life .................................. Schuyler Hooke (718) 270-2484
   Commencement Ceremony
   Guest Issues
   Special Hooders
   Tickets