



DOWNSTATE
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF NURSING | SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS |
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

GRADUATING STUDENT HANDBOOK DECEMBER 2026



GETTING READY

GRADUATION APPLICATION – DECEMBER CEREMONY

All students who will have completed their program requirements in August or December 2026 are eligible to participate in the December Commencement ceremony.

The first step in preparing for graduation involves filing a Graduation Application on-line through a Qualtrics survey. We will send information to you by email in August 2026 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. Only those who fill out the application, regardless of participation, will appear in the program. Upon completion of the Application, you will receive a confirmation and information about ordering your Commencement attire. The deadline to order Commencement attire is October 9th.



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 your 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 August 1, 2026 (if graduating in August 2026) or **October 9, 2026 (if graduating in December, 2026)**. If your name becomes official after the August 1st/October 9th deadlines, 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

You must fill out the on-line Graduation Application **whether or not you intend to participate** in the Commencement Exercises. Complete the entire application, indicating *Curriculum/Degree, Graduation Ceremony information, (or indication that you will NOT be attending), Academic Attire needs, Phonetic pronunciation, and Diploma Name Selection*. The Application must be completed on-line by **Friday, October 9, 2026**.

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

Please note: Students may march in one Commencement Ceremony. students who have or will complete degree requirements in August 2026 or December 2026 are eligible to attend the December Commencement Exercises. Students who have or will complete degree requirements in May or June 2027 are eligible to attend the May 2027 Commencement Exercises.

After the October 9th deadline, it may still be possible for you to participate in commencement, however:

- you will not have access to tickets to the ceremony on December 2nd.
- you may not be listed in the Commencement Program, and
- You will incur a late fee for your purchase of Commencement attire.

COMMENCEMENT FEE

The graduation fee for all graduating students is \$90, non-refundable.

Students pay this fee whether or not they attend Commencement.

SPECIAL HOODER REQUEST

For those receiving a doctoral degree, Downstate celebrates the tradition of allowing a **parent, spouse, or sibling** who has a *matching doctoral degree* to hood you at Commencement to personalize your graduation. For example, an OTD can be hooded by an OTD, or a DNP can be hooded by a DNP. No other requests will be considered. You may have only **one** hooter.

To request a special hooter, please complete the separate Qualtrics Special Hooter application; the link is in the commencement application. The special hooter application must be completed by **Friday, October 2nd, 2026**. *Please note that this is a week earlier than the Graduation Application Deadline.* Special hooters will be allowed to participate **if they adhere to this deadline**. *Special hooters must be dressed in official Commencement attire, which can be ordered from our attire provider. There is a separate link for Graduate and Special Hooter attire.* Confirmation and additional information will be sent to you and your special hooter. If you or s/he does not receive confirmation by October 30, 2026, please contact Schuyler Hooke at schuyler.hooke@downstate.edu.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

COLLEGE OF NURSING

Students must meet all college and program requirements as established in the *College Bulletin, 2026-2027 Student Handbook* and other university, college or program publications. Degrees are conferred upon faculty recommendation and with the approval of the Faculty Assembly (College of Nursing).

Candidates for graduation must:

- Complete all requirements for admission to the respective program;
- Complete the program of study for the appropriate degree or advanced certificate, including satisfactory completion of all required courses;
- Meet all attendance, course, credit and other stated requirements of the program and college;
- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average (gpa) of 2.5 for the BS degree; 3.0 for the MS or DNP degree or Advanced Certificate with no more than 6 credits of "C" grades in core or supporting courses;
- Be in good standing (i.e., not on academic, clinical or disciplinary probation at the time of graduation);
- Satisfy clinical course requirements;
- Meet program residency requirements;
- Satisfy all financial obligations due SUNY Downstate;
- Complete all mandatory financial aid exit interviews if you received financial aid while at SUNY Downstate;
- In the RN-BS program, pay all fees for the NACE exam prior to registering for the last semester of attendance
- During the registration for your final semester, complete a graduation requirements check list with your academic advisor;
- Have no disciplinary charges in progress or pending;
- Be aware of the requirements and register for the licensing examination (if required) to practice in your profession.

Undergraduate nursing students must also satisfy the following requirements:

The State University of New York confers the degree of Bachelor of Science upon recommendation by the faculty and Dean of the College of Nursing. Candidates must be of good moral character, have satisfied all scholastic requirements of the College and Downstate Health Sciences University, and have paid all fees due to the College and Health Science Center. In addition:

- Students certified for a degree must have completed 125 semester credits approved by the College of Nursing;
- Candidates for the BS degree in Nursing must pay all fees for the NACE exam prior to enrollment in *Professional Nursing & Client Systems in the Community* (NRBS 4410), and *Professional Nursing & Transition into Practice* (NRBS 4510).

STATE LICENSURE/REGISTRY EXAMINATION

There is a \$15.00 fee payable to "SUNY" for the processing of State Licensure Applications. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for certification of State Licensure Applications.

GRADUATION HONORS

For students in a bachelor's degree program, upon faculty recommendation and with the approval of the Faculty Assembly, students with outstanding academic achievement may be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Science cum laude, magna cum laude or summa cum laude. The awarding of honors shall reflect the absence of deficiencies and a judgment of the total performance of the student.

- *Cum Laude* 3.50 – 3.74
- *Magna Cum Laude* 3.75 – 3.89
- *Summa Cum Laude* 3.90 – 4.00

Post-baccalaureate degree candidates are not eligible to graduate with Latin honors.

Master's candidates in the **College of Nursing** are eligible to graduate with distinction if they meet the following criteria:

- earn a cumulative grade point average of 3.8 or above;
- have earned no "C" or lower grades;
- have completed an outstanding research project using course evaluation criteria; and
- no record of disciplinary action or lack of professionalism while in the program.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Students must meet all college and program requirements as established in the *College Bulletin, 2026-2027 Student Handbook* and other university, college or program publications. Degrees are conferred upon faculty recommendation and with the approval of the Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing.

Candidates for graduation must:

- Complete all academic degree requirements for admission to the respective program;
 - Complete the program of study for the appropriate degree or advanced certificate, including satisfactory completion of all required courses;
 - Meet all attendance, course, credit and other stated requirements of the program and college;
 - Have a minimum cumulative grade point average (gpa) of 2.0 for the B.S. degree (some program gpa requirements or academic requirements may exceed this minimum requirement); 3.0 for the M.S. degree, DPT or OTD degree, or the Advanced Certificate;
 - Be in good standing (i.e., not on academic, clinical or disciplinary probation at the time of graduation);
 - Satisfy clinical course requirements;
 - Meet program residency requirements;
 - Satisfy all financial obligations due SUNY Downstate;
 - Complete all mandatory financial aid exit interviews if you received financial aid while at SUNY Downstate;
 - During the registration for your final semester, complete a graduation requirements check list with your academic advisor;
 - Have no disciplinary charges in progress or pending;
 - Be aware of the requirements and register for the licensing examination (if required) to practice in your profession.
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GRADUATION HONORS

For students in a bachelor's degree program, upon faculty recommendation and with the approval of the Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing, students with outstanding academic achievement may be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Science cum laude, magna cum laude or summa cum laude. The awarding of honors shall reflect the absence of deficiencies and a judgment of the total performance of the student.

- *Cum Laude* 3.50 – 3.74
- *Magna Cum Laude* 3.75 – 3.89
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Post-baccalaureate degree candidates are not eligible to graduate with Latin honors.

Master's candidates in the **School of Health Professions** graduate with distinction if they meet the following criteria:

- earn a cumulative grade point average of 3.8 or above;
- have earned no "C" or lower grades.

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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

- Satisfactory completion of all course requirements as defined by your program;
- Satisfactorily remediate any academic deficiencies.
- Be in good standing (i.e., not on academic or disciplinary probation at the time of graduation).
- Have a grade point average of B or 3.0 on a 4.0-point system.
- Have no disciplinary charges in progress or pending.
- Satisfy all financial obligations due SUNY Downstate.
- Satisfy all required course work.
- Complete a mandatory financial aid exit interview if you received financial aid while at SUNY Downstate.
- **DrPH Students** who have completed all program requirements by November 1st in an academic year are eligible to graduate in December of that academic year. An announcement of the dissertation defense, organized by the chair of the student's dissertation committee, must be made at least four weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, and the dissertation must be successfully defended by November 1st.

Master's candidates in the **School of Public Health** graduate with distinction if they meet the following criteria:

- earn a cumulative grade point average of 3.8 or above;
- have earned no "C" or lower grades.

STOLES AND CORDS:

The Departments of Student Life and Student Affairs at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University supports the wearing of honors cords, medallions, stoles, and insignia at Commencement ceremonies only by students who have earned these privileges at SUNY Downstate through any of the following achievements:

- membership in a college-recognized honor society
 - membership in good standing in a college-recognized professional or service organization
 - military service
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Funding for honors cords and accessories is the responsibility of the sponsoring program, honor society, office, or organization, as deemed appropriate by that program. Any honors program/society, scholarship fund, or recognized student professional, cultural or service organization that wishes honor a student with a stole or cords to wear during Commencement must receive approval from the Department of Student Life and administer the process for ordering, distributing, and identify funding sources.

Student Activity Fees cannot be used to fund these accessories.

ISSUANCE OF DIPLOMAS

Upon faculty recommendation and with the approval of the Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing (SOHP) or the Faculty Assembly (College of Nursing and SPH), students are approved for degree/certificate completion and are awarded diplomas three times each year. Each student's degree/certificate conferral date is the next official graduation date after the degree/certificate requirements are completed. The three official graduation dates are May 31 (Spring), August 31 (Summer), December 31 (Fall). However, there are only **two** Commencement ceremonies each year in May and December. Your permanent academic record notes the actual date upon which your degree/certificate requirements were completed, not the date of the Commencement Ceremony.

All diplomas will be mailed to students at the address provided to us in the Commencement Application.

In order for a diploma to be ordered:

- you must not have a hold on your account
- all final grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

All graduating students must satisfy all financial obligations owed to 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 online or by cash or check at the Bursar's Office.

The deadline to clear library fines is the last day of the semester prior to graduation.

When payment is made, send screenshot or copy of receipt to access.services@downstate.edu, or bring a copy to the library.

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 borrowed Federal Loans during their attendance at Downstate. Prior to graduation, you must complete the Student Loan Exit Interview. If you have had a Nursing Student Loan, you must complete an exit interview for that loan according to instructions you will receive from the Office of the Bursar. More information can be found here: <https://slsc.albany.edu/borrowers/>

You must be aware of the total dollar amount of Federal Student Loans you have accumulated before you begin the Student Loan Exit Interview.

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, if you have further questions, please make an appointment to talk to someone in the Financial Aid Office.

➤ financialaid@downstate.edu

➤ 718-270-2488

Bursar's Office

All loans (Perkins & NSL) borrowed through campus-based loan programs are exited by Bursar's Office.

NSL 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 NSL exit interview. If you have not heard from us via email by the end of October, or you will not be on campus during the Fall 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 three (3) months following your graduation date.

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, 2027, 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, 2027), to complete your enrollment. Please contact:

Kelly Anthony
HSA Consulting, Inc.
2477 Stickney Point Road, Suite 207B
Sarasota, Florida 34231
E-mail: kelly@hsac.com
Telephone: (888) 978-8355 | Fax: (941) 925-2001

CEREMONIES & CELEBRATIONS

CONVOCATION/WHITE COAT CELEBRATIONS

- **College of Nursing** December 2026, actual date to be announced.

This celebration will be held in the Alumni Auditorium.

At the annual Convocation, outstanding graduating students will be recognized with a variety of College and program awards.

All graduating students are encouraged to attend. Families of students receiving awards are also invited.



COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Wednesday Afternoon

December 2, 2026

1:00 pm

The Howard Gilman Opera House at the Brooklyn Academy of Music

30 Lafayette Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11217

The College of Nursing, the School of Health Professions and the School of Public Health will honor eligible members all members of the Class of 2026 who will have completed their program requirements by August 31, 2026 or December 31, 2026, and did not participate in the May 13, 2026 Commencement, at its December Commencement Exercises. The ceremony includes the academic procession, greetings from the President, 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 who complete the Commencement Application will automatically receive 3 tickets for general admission into the venue. These are guest tickets, graduates do not require a ticket. Requests for additional tickets will be done by lottery at a later date and will be accommodated based on availability. Please note: All guests, *including infants/toddlers who do not require their own seat*, must have their own ticket.

Ticket pick-up information will be available in early November.



ACADEMIC ATTIRE

Degree candidates who wish to participate in the Commencement Exercises **are required to wear SUNY Downstate academic attire** and to march 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 October 9th for guaranteed delivery by Commencement.

Please note: Academic attire will NOT be available at the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House. You must bring your attire with you to graduation. You will not be allowed to march without attire.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON COMMENCEMENT DAY

Graduation will begin promptly at 1:00 pm and should last approximately **two and one-half hours**. This information will be important to you if you are making reservations to celebrate afterwards.

The BAM Howard Gilman Opera House is located at 30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn. Arrival and entrance information will be sent in October 2026.

There may be street parking, but it is extremely limited, and there are numerous parking garages near the venue, check BAM.org/visit for more information.

The venue is also accessible by public transit. Take the 2, 3, 4, 5, B, D, N, Q, R to Atlantic Avenue/Barclays Center, the C to Lafayette Avenue, or the G to Fulton Street. You can also take the LIRR to the Atlantic Terminal which is approximately 1 block away from the venue.

Graduates

All graduates must report with their academic attire to the designated robing area no later than **12:00 noon**. Entrance and admittance information will be forthcoming. 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 12:15 pm, the staff will begin to line you up alphabetically for the processional. At 12:45, the line will be moved to the back of the theater.

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

Guests

All guests will enter through the main doors on Lafayette Street. All seating is general admission, and available on a first-come, first-served basis. ADA seating is available on all levels and all levels are accessible by elevator.

Guests will not be permitted to enter the auditorium before 12:15 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 doctoral candidates will 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 mid-November to share. The recorded ceremony will be available on the Downstate website soon after December 2nd.

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 December 2nd and the photos will be offered for purchase. 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 also being sign-language interpreted.

FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY

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

VENUE RULES

Please alert your guests to the following important venue rules:

- **Every individual entering must have a ticket.** Infants and toddlers, even those who will be sitting in laps, must have a ticket.
- **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.
- No bottles or cans (glass or metal)
- No Aerosol Cans or noisemaking devices
- No Animals, except documented service animals
- No laser pointing devices
- No items deemed inappropriate or dangerous by BAM Security personnel, at their sole discretion.
- No balloons
- **All attendees will have their bags checked.** WE RECOMMEND YOU NOT BRING LARGE PURSES OR BAGS.

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 2 Deadline to complete the Special Hooder Application (Doctoral degrees only.)
- 9 Deadline to complete the on-line Graduation Application
- 9 Deadline to order academic attire from Oak Hall

NOVEMBER

- 1-30 Schedule Exit Interviews with Bursar and/or Financial Aid (if applicable)

DECEMBER

- 2 Commencement Exercises for August/December Graduates
 - tbd Nursing Convocation Ceremony
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QUESTIONS?

Bursar.....	Avion Ambrose	(718) 270-1078
Exit Interviews for Campus-Based Loans		
Deans Offices		
School of Health Professions.....		(718) 270-7701
School of Public Health.....		(718) 270-1065
College of Nursing.....		(718) 270-7600
Financial Aid.....	Farah Burnett	(718) 270-2488
Financial Aid Exit Interviews		
Library.....	Juannetta Le Gree	(718) 270-7401
Library Fines		
Registrar.....	Edward Graciano	(718) 270-4551
Attendance at Commencement		
Completion of Graduation Requirements		
Graduation Honors		
Ordering and Receiving Diploma		
Health Insurance.....	Student Affairs	(718) 270-2187
Student Center.....	Info Desk	(718) 270-2487
Student Life.....	Schuyler Hooke	(718) 270-2484
Commencement Ceremony		
Guest Issues		
