



Frequently Asked Questions about Graduation

Where is Trentham Gardens (the venue)?

The Trentham estate is in Stoke-on-Trent. The former seat of the Duke of Sutherland, the estate has been the subject of an extensive regeneration project in recent years, including the magnificent Italianate Gardens which provide the setting for the Graduation celebrations. It is accessed from the A34 trunk road, and easily accessed from junction 15 of the M6 motorway. The postcode is ST4 8JG, and their website is www.trentham.co.uk

Is there car parking?

There is ample car parking at Trentham, which you will be directed to on arrival. Please be aware that the Graduation Village is approximately a 10-15 minute walk from the main car park. All paths are wheelchair friendly although some are graveled. There is a shuttle bus from the car parking area to the Graduation Village that will run every 10-15 minutes throughout the day for guests who may have difficulty walking. If you wish to use the shuttle bus, please ask the car park marshals on arrival who will direct you.

What time should I arrive?

We would recommend you arrive roughly 2 hours before the time of your ceremony. This will give you time to make your way to the Graduation Village, check in and collect your Student Seat Ticket, collect your gown, have your photographs taken, enjoy a complementary tea or coffee and chat to fellow students and Tutors. You should be in your seats in the Ceremony Marquee 30 minutes before the start time of your ceremony.

What happens when I arrive?

When you arrive at Trentham, please enter the gardens through the Trentham Visitors Center Reception (situated among the wooden shopping village) or alternatively if you have difficulty walking, you can use the shuttle bus from the car park. You will be required to show your checking in slip and guest tickets to access the bus service or to enter the gardens, so please make sure you have them ready. On arriving at the Graduation Village, Graduates must proceed to the Registration Desk and hand in their checking-in slip. You will then receive their seat ticket so you know where you will be seated in the Ceremony hall. Then you are free to collect your gowns, have photographs taken and enjoy yourselves before the ceremony begins!

What is my checking-in slip, and what must I do with it?

In your ticket envelope you will find a small slip of coloured paper which instructs you to fill in your name and award title. This is very important. **You must hand in your completed slip to our staff at the Registration Marquee on arrival at Trentham. Without this slip we will assume you have not arrived and your name will not be called in the ceremony.** Don't worry if you lose the slip, or if you can't find one in your ticket envelope, we have spares in the Registration Marquee. It helps us to check you in quickly if you have your slip ready and completed when you arrive.

What if I am late for the ceremony?

If you are late, please do not run straight into the Ceremony Marquee as we will have assumed you are not attending and your name will not be called. **YOU MUST** go straight to the Registration Desk and tell the booking-in staff who will then alert Ushers in the ceremony and you will be slotted in at an appropriate moment. Staff will look after your guests and direct them to their seats.

When should I collect my gown and have my photographs taken?

You should collect your gown after you have checked-in at the Registration Desk. It is important to check-in first so we know you have arrived. Tempest Photography will be there throughout the day so you can have your photographs taken either before or after the ceremony. Remember - even if you are running late, you must check-in and collect your gown before going into the ceremony, whereas photographs can be taken after the ceremony.

What happens if I have not pre-booked my Cap and Gown?

The Gown hire company will have a selection of Gowns available to hire on the day. Please note that payment for these will need to be made by cash.

Will I have to pay to enter Trentham Gardens?

Graduating students and their guests do not need to pay to enter the Gardens. When you get to the gate, please have your tickets ready to show the gate staff and say you are attending graduation, you will then be able to enter the Gardens free of charge.

Can I get extra tickets on the day?

We usually have some tickets (including cancellation tickets) available for each ceremony. These are made available on the day of the ceremony on a first-come-first-served basis. These tickets will be available approximately 2 hours before the start time of your ceremony. **These cannot be reserved in advance.** They must be purchased from the University Reception Desk in the Trentham Visitors Centre Reception in the shopping village (see map). You must not use the shuttle bus service up to the Graduation Village if you have not purchased a ticket in advance. We reserve the right to limit the number of extra tickets available to each party (e.g. if we have 5 spare tickets we will not be able to give all 5 to the first party who enquires).

Can I bring along extra guests without tickets?

We are limited to the number of seats we have in the Ceremony Marquee; however it is often possible to purchase tickets on the day (see question above). If you there are not tickets available for your ceremony your guests are still very welcome to come along on the day. They will have to pay the normal entrance fee to Trentham Gardens to be able to enter the grounds. These guests will not be able to enter the ceremony itself, but we will be broadcasting the Ceremony on a large screen in the catering area so they can watch it live (please note that this is not guaranteed). We may also have a limited number of tickets on the day, subject to availability – see above points.

What should I wear for the ceremony?

Graduation is a formal occasion and you are requested to dress appropriately. You will find it useful to wear a buttoned shirt/ blouse to which the academic hood can be fastened, or alternatively bring some small safety pins to affix the button-loop of the hood to your clothes. Hair pins are also useful to secure the mortar board (hat). Some of the ground/ paths in Trentham Gardens are sloping and graveled. Therefore, we would recommend “sensible” shoes.

Is there a dress code for guests?

There is no dress code, however as it is a formal occasion we tend to find guests dress smartly and appropriately.

Where will I be seated for the ceremony? Are the seats allocated?

Each guest ticket will have a seat number printed on it. Graduates will collect their seat ticket when they register on the day, it is important that you sit in the correct seat as this is the order you will be called across the stage. Guests will not be seated with the graduates. You will be shown to your seats by a member of University Staff or a Student Ambassador.

Will I be seated with my guests?

No. During the ceremony Graduates will be seated in a designated area in front of the stage, ready to be called forward to collect their award. After the Ceremony, in the Post Graduation Celebration Marquee, you will be free to mingle with friends, family and staff and celebrate your achievement.

Will graduates be photographed as they cross the stage?

The official photographs are taken in the photography studio marquee. Tempest Photography will also photograph all students as they cross the stage and shake hands with the Vice Chancellor. These are available to purchase immediately after each ceremony and directly from Tempest after the event. Guests are welcome to bring their cameras (including video cameras) to capture your special moment during the ceremony. We would politely ask that those with cameras to take care not to obscure the view of other guests at the ceremony. Please note, you are not permitted to bring a professional photographer or video crew into Trentham Gardens.

Is there a commemorative programme of the day?

Yes. These are provided free of charge in the Ceremony Marquee.

When will I receive my certificate?

Certificates will not be presented to you as you cross the stage, but will be available for you to collect during the day. Please note you will need to produce your student card to collect your certificate. Any certificates not collected will be posted out.

Is there a cloakroom available?

No, we do not provide cloakroom services. Graduates are advised to leave any coats/ bags etc. with their guests as they do not return to the same seat after receiving their award on-stage.

Where can I collect lost property?

Lost property can be collected on the day from the Registration Marquee. After that it will be returned to the University. Enquiries please contact the Student Experience Office on 01782 292770.