

FAQ on State and District Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

What are some alternative approaches for postsecondary graduation ceremonies?

Regional Educational
Laboratory
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

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Typically, universities hold graduation ceremonies in the spring (around May) and as such have been forced to make quick decisions about alternative graduation plans. K–12 schools can explore similar options.

- Given the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s social distancing requirements and restrictions amidst the outbreak of COVID-19, many colleges and universities have postponed their graduation ceremonies. Below are some specific examples of institutions that have decided to reschedule 2020 graduation ceremonies:
 - [Georgetown University](#) has postponed its commencement until it is safer for large crowds to gather in one space.
 - [California State University](#) has postponed its graduation ceremony for now and will reschedule it later this year.
- Other universities plan to hold virtual graduation ceremonies; still, some schools plan to have in-person celebrations in the future.
 - [The University of Southern California \(USC\)](#) will confer degrees online through platforms like Zoom but will still be holding an in-person ceremony at a later date.
 - [Purdue University](#) will hold virtual ceremonies with an opportunity for students to participate in a more traditional ceremony when the crisis is contained.
 - [Johns Hopkins University](#) completely cancelled its ceremony and will only be having an online ceremony in May 2020.
- Some institutions are hosting “two-in-one” graduation ceremonies for both the class of 2020 and 2021 combined. Specifically, students from the class of 2020 can choose to participate in the 2021 commencement ceremony if they choose to.
 - [Virginia Tech University](#) is welcoming graduates of the Class of 2020 to participate in the May 2021 ceremony.
- Another approach to graduation ceremonies involves holding a set of special events for the class of 2020 next year.
 - [Vanderbilt University](#) is holding both a graduation ceremony and a special class of 2020 reunion in May 2021.

Related Links:

- <https://medium.com/@chochinov/dont-cancel-it-how-to-hold-a-virtual-graduation-ceremony-3a6cc4053b63>
- <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/coronavirus-and-college-graduation-what-to-know>
- <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/commencement/>
- <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/03/18/university-operations-update/>
- <https://dailybruin.com/2020/03/18/ucla-moves-spring-graduation-ceremonies-online-to-curb-spread-of-covid-19/>
- <https://vt.edu/commencement.html>
- <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-03-20/ucla-reconsiders-coronavirus-graduation-cancellation-what-are-other-colleges-doing>
- <https://commencement.mit.edu/covid-19-commencement>
- <https://coronavirus.purdue.edu/updates/commencement-announcement-from-president-daniels/>

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