THE EXCEL CENTER 2022-2023 GRADUATION FAQS

All you've ever wanted to know about this year's graduation…and MORE!

We are **excited** to see each of you – Class of 2023 Graduates – walk the stage on June 3, receive your diplomas, and begin the next phase of your journey! You have worked hard, and we are thrilled to share this day with family and friends.

The Excel Center 2023 Graduation Ceremony
Saturday, June 3, 2023 – 10:00 AM
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Austin
6505 North Interstate Highway 35
Austin, Texas 78752

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY:

Question: **How many family members and friends may I invite to graduation?**
Answer: The maximum capacity at the DoubleTree Hotel is 1000, so we must limit each graduate to THREE guests so that every graduate may celebrate with their guests. Small children who can sit on laps do not count towards your three guests.

You will receive three tickets during the cap and gown pickup to give to your guests for entry at the ceremony. If you cannot attend the cap and gown pickup, please reach out to your Life Coach so the tickets may be emailed to you.

Question: **Where is the ceremony being held inside the DoubleTree Hotel?**
Answer: The ceremony will occur inside the Phoenix Ballroom, to the left of the hotel's main entrance. All students must check in at the Check-In Table in the Austin Room at the far end of the hallway outside the Phoenix Ballroom. ***We recommend leaving personal items (bags/purses) with family/friends, in your vehicle, or at home as this room is not secure.***

Question: **Where do I park at The DoubleTree Hotel?**
Answer: Parking is FREE in the hotel parking garage and surface lot on a first-come, first-served basis. We highly encourage carpooling to ensure enough parking spots for everyone.

Question: **What should I do if I need transportation assistance?**
Answer: Please get in touch with your Life Coach to discuss your transportation needs.

Question: **Can we bring balloons/silly string/air horns/confetti/food, etc., to graduation?**

Answer: Unfortunately, these items are **NOT** allowed! We must respect the event venue and leave it in the same condition we find it to ensure we are welcome back in the future! Family members/friends **CAN** bring items like flowers and other gifts!

Question: **May I decorate my graduation cap?**

Answer: A “Cap Decorating Party” will be held at the Norwood Campus on May 31 and June 1 during the cap and gown pick-up. You may decorate your cap only if it is tasteful, uplifting, and appropriate. You must show your Life Coach your design for approval before the ceremony.

You may also decorate you cap on your own, however the same rules apply - tasteful, uplifting, and appropriate; and you must show your Life Coach your design for approval before the ceremony.

Question: **Do I get to keep my cap and gown?**

Answer: You get to keep your cap, however, if you want to keep your gown, you must purchase it for $10 **CASH ONLY** after the ceremony in the Austin Room. If you choose not to purchase your gown, it must be returned after the ceremony to receive your diploma. If you do not attend the ceremony, please make other arrangements with your Life Coach to return the gown and get your official diploma. ***Caps and gowns are a dark navy-blue color.***

Question: **How should I dress underneath my graduation gown? Is there a dress code?**

Answer: Wear comfortable and appropriate clothing. You can choose to wear dressier versus casual clothing; there will be plenty of photo opportunities. Be sure to select shoes so you can easily walk across the stage.

Question: **Will there be formal graduate photos?**

Answer: YES! Graduation Photos will be taken as you walk across the stage at the ceremony and receive your diploma - you will receive instructions for accessing the photos after the ceremony. A "step-and-repeat" for selfies and pictures with guests will also be available.

Question: **Will I get my actual diploma when I walk the stage?**

Answer: No. Please visit the Graduation Table in the Austin Room outside the Ballroom after the ceremony to receive your diploma and return your gown. If you have any outstanding obligations from the school, such as not returning a school device, you will receive your diploma once all obligations are met.

Question: **I recently changed my name. How can I make sure my name change is reflected on my diploma?**

Answer: Please contact your Life Coach to ensure the name correction by May 29, 2023.

Question: **How long will the ceremony last?**
Answer: The length of the ceremony depends on the number of graduates but typically lasts 1 to 1 ½ hours.

Question: **What should I do if I have a disability or need special accommodations?**
Answer: Please get in touch with your Life Coach to discuss all questions, concerns, or needs regarding special accommodations during the graduation ceremony.

Question: **My friends and family or I can't attend the ceremony. Will there be a live stream?**
Answer: YES! We'll be streaming live on Facebook – you can access the event here: bit.ly/XLGrad2023 or visit our Facebook page @The Goodwill Excel Center.

Question: **Will my name still be called if I attend the graduation ceremony via the live stream?**
Answer: Yes, the names of graduates not attending will be called after all in-person graduates have walked the stage.

Question: **If I don't attend graduation, how will I receive my diploma?**
Answer: Please contact your Life Coach so that you can make other arrangements to get your official diploma.

Question: **What are the health and safety requirements for the graduation ceremony?**
Answer: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that everyone be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. Please stay home if you are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Masks are optional.

THE EXCEL CENTER 2023 GRADUATION DAY SCHEDULE

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Arrive and check in at the Check-In Table in the Austin Room, at the end of the main hallway outside the Phoenix Ballroom
9:00 AM – 9:20 AM	Brief rehearsal
9:20 AM – 9:30 AM	Group class picture
9:40 AM – 9:55 AM	Line up in assigned order and LAST CALL for all graduates to be able to walk in the ceremony
10:00 AM	Ceremony begins