

10 reasons to ticket your commencement ceremonies

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Commencement is a celebrated, centuries-old tradition that parents, grandparents and other loved ones aren't about to miss.

Over the years, the demand to attend [college and university graduation ceremonies](#) has continued to grow. Family and friends often travel great distances to see a loved one in cap and gown achieve their degree or diploma.

For the schools themselves, organizing these huge events takes an incredible amount of time and effort.

More and more are bringing in a proven solution to take things up a notch and [ticket their commencement ceremonies](#).

Here are 10 good reasons why:

1. Increased efficiency

Class sizes are growing. Venues are not. Harvard University alone for example requires almost 80,000 tickets every year.

It is far more efficient for colleges and universities to put their time and effort into the nuts and bolts of commencement than to become ticketing distributors.

“We find that their efficiency comes from staying out of that business,” says Derek Mitchell, Product Manager for AudienceView Grad product. “Having to get the right tickets to the right graduates and dealing with waitlist and additional ticket demand across numerous ceremonies is onerous and can become a full-time job. Being able to technically automate these tasks and avoid human intervention is significant.”

2. Ease of use

A commencement ticketing solution like [AudienceView Grad](#) makes the process easy. It starts with a simple, web-based questionnaire that asks for basic information about ceremonies – including dates, times, venue, total number of available tickets, how many tickets are available to each student, any special ticketing requirements for VIPs and/or accessibility concerns.

A commencement website that matches each school's branding is developed and training takes less than an hour. Schools can then easily add content to the site, run reports, communicate with graduates, add and revoke eligibility and so forth.

It's also important to make sure that your process is easy for all students and guests. One key way of doing that is by using contactless scanning. This provides safe entry for all guests while also supporting any contact tracing efforts you have in place.

3. Tighter security

Given today's global event security landscape, schools want more awareness of who is at their commencement events, making sure they are affiliated in some way with a guest or with the ceremonies.

"Commencements have historically been very open. Folks can just wander on campus and join in. Year after year, we hear about schools who find people that have no affiliation with the college participating in commencement, literally buying a cap and gown on Amazon.com and walking across the stage," says Mitchell.

He adds, "When you ticket commencement ceremonies using AudienceView Grad, the only way to get tickets is through a participant; students getting their tickets and assigning them to their guests. So, at a high level, you know that some person off the street is not just wandering in."

Schools can also require students to give the names of their guests in advance. This is particularly useful when registrations need to be vetted and/or pre-cleared, as is the case with a military installation or when a diplomat or other dignitary is part of the ceremony.

4. Avoid mistakes

With self-fulfillment, students can electronically send tickets to their guests and everyone can print them at home or add them to their mobile wallet. This means you won't be wasting time and resources (or making mistakes) stuffing envelopes, staffing pick-up windows and dealing with lost or missing tickets.

In 2020 and 2021, some schools are deciding to increase their number of ceremonies while decreasing the number of attendees per event to allow for social distancing. This makes it all the more important to have an easy way to regularly communicate with students and guests about event locations, times, as well as any operational rules such as mask-wearing policies.

5. Student authentication

Ticketing platforms like AudienceView Grad can integrate directly with student information systems. This gives students the luxury of using the same username and password they use elsewhere on campus and the ability to log in through a familiar portal that they already use every day. There's no need for students to follow directions, complete a user registration or enter information to validate eligibility.

Beyond making the login process easy, the integration can also make it possible to validate a student's commencement eligibility in real-time. This takes the complexity out of the conversation, even for students with dual degrees and a choice of multiple ceremonies.

Ticket limits can also be unique to the student level, allowing for special allocations to valedictorians, speakers and other special guests.

6. Collect information

Schools can ask anything they'd like during the ticket reservation process. This may include questions about accessibility accommodations, plans after college or a non-university email address so the alumni team can keep in touch. This information is also invaluable when it comes to supporting your [contact tracing](#) efforts.

“Questions like this can be optional or required,” explains Mitchell. “They can be fill-in-the-blanks, dropdowns or checkboxes, ultimately to tailor the reservation process to accommodate whatever data collection needs the school might have.”

7. Automated ticket allocation, waitlists and lotteries

Students want to bring more and more guests because commencement is important to them, so demand always exceeds inventory. There's also an uptick in certain populations as well, like when a student is the first graduate in their family.

Waitlisting and lottery functionality allow schools to fairly distribute any extra tickets and then fulfil them on an automated basis, either randomly or chronologically based on when requests were received.

8. Manage payments

AudienceView Grad can process payments and is PCI compliant because of AudienceView's work in the traditional events space. This allows schools to create something of a one-stop shop for their graduates; collecting payment for regalia rentals or purchase, for example.

Some universities give graduates free admission to a pre-grad party but allow families to buy tickets for reserved tables with or without catering packages.

In other cases, schools can use payments to offset excess demand. As an example, sometimes space at the venue is not an issue but schools don't want to offer unlimited free tickets, knowing that someone may jokingly reserve 500 seats, so they charge a nominal fee beyond the first 10 tickets.

9. Generate revenue

Some schools are exploring the idea of sponsorships on their tickets, like a local hotel, restaurant or other business that could benefit from capturing the eyes and attention of significant commencement traffic. Campus users are likely customers too. The campus bookstore might run an ad promoting “Class of 2020” t-shirts or the alumni association might consider an ad that reminds students to join.

10. VIP service

Scanning ticketed guests in as they arrive provides visibility and tracking on who showed up and which door or gate they used.

Schools have complete control of their branding with AudienceView Grad, VIP tickets can also be designed with a unique look so that event staff can easily identify and direct these guests to special parking and/or seating areas.

These are just some of the benefits of ticketing your commencement ceremonies with AudienceView Grad alongside schools including Harvard University, Florida Atlantic University, Kent State University and

Southern Methodist University.

If you're ready to get started, click [here](#) to request demo.