

University Regalia Adornment Guidelines and Procedures

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

These guidelines aim to standardize academic regalia adornments for all Utah State University graduates, ensuring an equitable and consistent commencement experience across campuses and colleges. They clarify what regalia adornments students may wear and outlines a formal approval process for any university-issued adornment.

In addition, the guidelines ensure that university funds and resources are spent appropriately when purchasing adornments, and that designs adhere to institutional branding, licensing, and trademark standards.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Utah State University is committed to ensuring that commencement ceremonies reflect both the dignity of the occasion and the diverse achievements of its graduates. In addition to the traditional cap and gown, graduates are entitled to wear [cords](#), [stoles](#), [medallions](#) and/or [pins](#) to signify academic achievement(s) or membership in college organizations.

- All [university-issued adornments](#) must be approved by the Commencement Committee through a formal application process.
- [Personal adornments](#) are permitted within reason, provided they do not contain political, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate content.

Graduates are expected to wear all academic regalia and adornments in a respectful and appropriate manner. Compliance with these guidelines will be monitored by commencement marshals and staff, who may ask graduates to remove any adornments that do not meet the stated requirements.

Adornment Creation Guidelines

When designing any university-issued adornment, organizations must follow Utah State University's brand and trademark standards. The use of the official Utah State logo or university marks is strongly recommended for all stoles, medallions and pins. Prior to submission, organizations should review the [USU Branded Goods Guidelines](#) to ensure compliance with the following:

- Proper use of university logos and trademarks.
- Adherence to official university colors and typography
- Prohibited use of the color red.
- Correct application of design elements on all adornment pieces.

Additionally, to preserve the distinct meaning of Latin honor cords, organizations, colleges, and departments are prohibited from using solid gold, silver, or navy cords. These colors are reserved exclusively for Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Cum Laude distinctions.

Organizations are responsible for ensuring that all adornments meet these requirements before submission for approval.

Adornment Approval Process

Organizations, departments and colleges that wish to provide official adornments for their graduating members using university funds must complete the Adornment Approval Form in ServiceNow. If your organization's adornment has been approved in the past, and you are making no changes to the design or color, the approval remains valid and you do not need to submit the form again.

If your organization has not been approved in the past, you are unsure of prior approval, or you are making any changes to the design or color, please submit the form in ServiceNow at least 60 days prior to Commencement. Any item that uses university logos, trademarks, or brand elements will also be reviewed by University Marketing and Communications, Trademark Licensing. You will receive notification whether your request was approved or declined within seven days of submission. Approved adornments will be listed on the commencement website and remain valid until the design is modified, which would require a new submission.

Latin Honor Cords

Latin honor cords recognize graduates who have achieved distinguished academic performance based on their cumulative GPA for courses taken at Utah State University. Latin honors are determined using the graduate's GPA at the end of the Fall semester immediately prior to the graduation ceremony in which the student is participating, or their last attended semester.

The cords are centrally distributed by the Registrar's Office in conjunction with the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Provost. The following cords correspond to each Latin honor level:

- Summa Cum Laude: GPA 3.95 – 4.0 | Gold cord
- Magna Cum Laude: GPA 3.80 – 3.94 | Silver cord
- Cum Laude: GPA 3.50 – 3.79 | Navy cord

These cords are university-issued adornments and do not require submission of a ServiceNow form by the graduate or any organization.

Personal Adornments

Graduates may wear personal adornments, such as leis, decorated mortarboards, candy necklaces, etc., provided they are respectful, in good taste, and do not interfere with the ceremony. Personal adornments should enhance the celebratory nature of the event without distracting from the collective experience of commencement.

Restrictions

All adornments must comply with the expectations of respect and decorum appropriate to commencement. Political statements, offensive or profane content, and imagery that undermines the dignity of the occasion are not permitted. Commencement marshals and staff will monitor regalia adornment, and graduates may be asked to remove any adornment pieces that do not follow these guidelines.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Organization, Department or College Leaders

- Typically, the Department Head, President or Vice-President of the organization should submit the adornment approval form on behalf of the organization.
- Must ensure that any adornment design, color, or insignia representing the organization has been approved before members wear it at commencement.
- Responsible for communicating the guidelines and adornment approval status to their members.

University Marketing and Communications, Trademark Licensing

- Reviews and approves any adornment design that uses USU trademarks, logos, or brand

- elements.
- Ensures consistency with university branding standards.

Commencement Committee

- Reviews and approves requests for university-issued adornments.

Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President

- Reviews and approves requests for university-issued adornments.
- Maintains and publishes the official list of approved adornments on the commencement website.

DEFINITIONS

- **Cord.** A twisted rope with tassels on each end, worn draped around the neck. A cord is most often used to signify academic honors (e.g., cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude) or membership in an honor society. A graduate may wear more than one cord at a time.
 - **Medallion.** A medal-like emblem attached to a ribbon or cord and worn around the neck. A graduate may wear more than one medallion at a time.
 - **Personal Adornment.** An item chosen by an individual graduate, not funded or issued by the university, that is worn with academic regalia to celebrate personal identity, culture, or achievement. Examples include leis, decorated mortarboards, cultural stoles, or handmade items. Personal adornments must be respectful, in good taste, and consistent with the dignity of commencement.
 - **Pin.** A small metallic or enamel emblem worn on the gown (usually on the lapel area). A pin signifies recognition, membership, or achievement (e.g., “A” pin).
 - **Stole.** A decorative cloth sash worn over the shoulders, extending down the front of the gown. A stole often features colors, embroidery, or insignia that represent a student organization or academic achievement.
 - **University Issued Adornment.** An official cord, stole, pin, medallion, or other item provided or sanctioned by Utah State University, a USU college, department, or a recognized student organization, for the purpose of signifying academic achievement, membership, or service. These adornments are paid for by the university or purchased using university funds and must be reviewed and approved through the formal approval process before they may be worn at commencement.
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RESOURCES

Related Forms and Tools

- [Adornment Approval Form](#)
- [List of Approved Adornments](#)
- [USU Brand Standards](#)

Contacts

- [Janet Anderson](#), Vice President and Chief of Staff to the Provost, Commencement Co-Chair
- [Fran Hopkin](#), Vice Provost and Registrar, Commencement Co-Chair
- [Nathan Laursen](#), Assistant Provost, Commencement Co-Chair

- [Ivy Thompson](#), Program Coordinator, Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President