

In-Person Commencement 2022

- **Where:** Indian Wells Tennis Garden (IWTG)
- **When:** May 25, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.
- **What:** Proof of Vaccination or a negative COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test within 72 hours of the event is required in order to participate and attend the commencement ceremony in-person
- **Who:** Requirement applies to all graduates, guests, and College of the Desert (COD) employees, volunteers, sponsors, media, and vendors
- **May 11, 2022** is the deadline to be considered fully vaccinated by IWTG. A booster shot is not a requirement at this time.

We strongly encourage you to read the entire communication in advance to know your responsibilities and requirements to participate, as well as to plan and inform and prepare your guests.

After a two-year absence due to COVID-19, College of the Desert (COD) is proud to offer an in-person ceremony on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at 7:30 p.m., at the Indian Wells Tennis Gardens (IWTG) located at 78-200 Miles Ave, Indian Wells, CA 92210.

Commencement Ceremony 2022

Health and Safety Protocols

To enter the IWTG all attendees will be required to show valid proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 hours of the event. No exceptions to the vaccination or negative COVID-19 test policy will be allowed to keep all patrons on-site as safe as possible. According to this policy, all graduates, guests, COD employees, volunteers, sponsors, media, and vendors will be fully vaccinated or provide a negative COVID-19 PCR test.

What does it mean to be fully vaccinated?

- A person is considered “fully vaccinated” when 14 days or two weeks have passed since they completed a COVID-19 vaccine series (for example, one (1) dose of the Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine or two (2) doses within no more than 12 weeks of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine).
- May 11, 2022 was the deadline to be considered fully vaccinated by IWTG. A booster shot is not a requirement at this time.

Are exemptions permitted?

- There are no exemptions to the IWTG Vaccination Requirement and the policies apply to all attendees. Anyone not meeting the vaccine requirement or proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 hours will not be permitted entry into IWTG.
- While COD grants religious, personal, or medical exemptions, these individuals and exemptions are not authorized or accepted by IWTG.
- Individuals recently infected with COVID-19 are also not allowed an exemption.

Are COVID-19 negative tests permitted?

Yes, proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test will be permitted and must have been taken within 72 hours of the event. A valid photo ID matching the test must be provided.

What happens if I have only had one shot of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine?

All graduates and guests must be fully vaccinated (meaning that two weeks have passed since completing a COVID-19 vaccine series). If you have not completed the vaccination

series and obtained your Digital Vaccine Card, you have the option to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 hours of the event. Attendees who are unable to provide this information will not be permitted entry to the IWTG.

What happens if it has been less than 14 days since my last vaccination shot?

All attendees must be fully vaccinated, which the CDC defines as 14 days after your last shot. If you have received all required vaccine shots, but 14 days have not passed since your last shot, and you do not have a negative PCR COVID-19 test within 72 hours of the event, you will not be permitted entry into IWTG.

What happens if I received my vaccination outside of the United States?

If you received your vaccination outside of the United States, you will still need to show valid proof of full vaccination.

How do I show proof of vaccination?

You may obtain your Digital Vaccine Card via the CLEAR app to complete the vaccination entry requirements. Create a digital vaccine card with CLEAR (<https://www.clearme.com/vaccine-validation>).

- Vaccination cards will be accepted for those who cannot download and complete the CLEAR app instructions.
- During Grad Fest, students will receive assistance to complete their vaccination entry requirements. COD will provide Spanish speakers at each IWTG entrance for those with an actual vaccination card who may require language assistance on the day of the event.

Do I need to carry my vaccination card with me?

No, you do not need to carry your vaccination card with you. Your Digital Vaccine Card located on your smartphone along with a valid photo ID are what you need to show proof of vaccination to enter the IWTG.

What are the requirements for Minors?

All minors are required to show valid proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 hours of the event along with valid photo ID matching the name on your test to enter IWTG. You can download the instructions to add a minor to the CLEAR Digital Vaccine Card.

- The information includes applies to all individuals 17 years of age and under, including those who are international residents. Minors must also present valid photo ID with matching name. A birth certificate, passport, or school ID card will be accepted.

What are the alternatives to participating if my guests or I do not meet the entry requirements?

If attendees are unable to meet IWTG's entry requirements, they may attend this year's Commencement ceremony virtually through YouTube on the day of the event. The video will be posted online after the event.

Frequently Asked Questions

Entrance and vaccine requirements are available as part of the frequently asked questions of the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

Information is subject to change, and graduates will be notified via their COD student email address of any potential change. Updates will also be posted to the [COD Graduation Website](#).

Proof of Vaccination

In order to enter the facility, you must show a valid proof of full vaccination or a negative PCR test result within 72 hours of the event on your mobile phone and present your Digital Vaccine Card by CLEAR.

The CLEAR app is available in the App Store and Google Play Store, and you will need to enroll in a free CLEAR account to upload your proof of vaccination. These initial steps only need to be taken once.

- Download the free CLEAR app and tap on the Digital Vaccine Card tile.
- Enroll for free by uploading a government-issued ID and snapping a quick selfie to confirm you are you.
- Search for your vaccine provider from our list and link your account by logging into your patient portal through the CLEAR app. You can also upload a photo of your CDC Vaccination Card.
- Once linked or uploaded, you can create a secure Digital Vaccine Card.
- On the day of commencement, Spanish speakers will be available at each IWTG entrance for those with a vaccination card.

Cap & Gown Information

Thursday, May 5 - Register to participate in the Commencement Ceremony at Indian Wells Tennis Garden when you pick up your cap and gown at Grad Fest. This event will take place at COD Palm Desert campus in the gymnasium.

5 guest tickets for every graduate for the Commencement Ceremony at Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Graduates do not require a ticket for entry.

Friday, May 20 – Registration deadline. You must register at the Bookstore by the deadline to participate in the ceremony.

If you borrow a former student's cap and gown, you still need to register at the COD bookstore to participate in Commencement. Purchase a tassel (\$6.50) for current year.

Contact the COD Bookstore at 760.773.2564 with any questions.

Gowns

1. Do not decorate your gown.
2. Only Honor Cord, Veteran Cord, COD stole, PTK stole and Transfer Medallion may be worn with the gown during the commencement ceremony.
3. No leis or other accessories are permitted.
4. You will not be permitted to participate in commencement in a gown that has been altered.

Extra Tickets for Indian Wells Tennis Garden

Extra tickets are available to those students who signed up on the waitlist. Please pick up your tickets at the Admissions & Records department at the Palm Desert campus.

Caps

This is a celebration of your accomplishments, but it is also a formal occasion. Some students wish to decorate their caps. This is permitted, but please be tactful. No three-dimensional decorations. Refer to the Cap Decorating Guidelines page included in the Graduation Packet.

Transfer Medallions

Students must attend the Transfer Recognition Ceremony on May 17th to receive the Transfer Medallion to be worn in the Commencement Ceremony. For more information, please call (760) 862-1351.

Graduation Honors

Honors for Commencement are based on a cumulative College of the Desert grade point average. Emails will be sent to qualifying graduates by April 30th. If you believe you qualify for honors, but did not receive an email, you must contact Admissions and Records no later than Thursday, May 12. You can email also at enrolls@collegeofthedesert.edu. Honor cords are distributed during the check-in process for the Commencement Ceremony.

Photographs

A professional photographer, Grad Images, will take pictures of individual graduates as they approach the stage and next to the COD Superintendent/President. The Photographer will email you directly the proofs and order information.

At Home Preparation

Try on the cap and gown immediately after you pick it up. Return to the Bookstore if anything is wrong. You may want to press/steam or hang your gown. Tassel hangs on the right. You may need bobby pins to secure the cap. If you purchased a stole, you are encouraged to secure it to your gown with safety pins. You may want to take pictures before the ceremony.

Reasonable Accommodations

Seating for guests is stadium seating. Other accommodations for this event are available for people with disabilities. Please contact the Disabled Students Programs and Services Office at

(760) 773-2534 or dspsinfo@collegeofthedesert.edu. Early requests will help us meet your access needs. Guests will need to abide by health and safety protocols of Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

Graduation Cap Decorating Guidelines

Commencement is a time for everyone to honor your achievements. You are invited to decorate your graduation cap to enhance this festive milestone in your life. Please take into consideration the following rules when decorating your cap.

Appropriate Decoration

Example of appropriate decoration on your graduation cap include, but are not limited to:

- Expressing appreciation to: parents, grandparents, guardians, faculty, counselors and staff members
- Recognizing the university you will be attending
- Recognizing COD and/or your major

Inappropriate Decoration

Examples of inappropriate embellishment include, but are not limited to:

- Vulgar language, inappropriate verbiage or photos/graphic images
- Reference to any drugs or alcohol
- Decoration, including 3D, that obstruct the view of people seated behind the graduate
- Caps with balloons, silly string, or other items that could pose a safety hazard
- Caps that make noise. No bells, horns, or any items that make noise
- Political statements

Elements used in the design must lay as flat as possible on the mortar board.

Administration will reserve the right to disallow any decorated graduation cap that is not considered appropriate for commencement ceremony.

Guest Information

Tickets

Tickets are required for each guest to enter the stadium. Graduates do not need a ticket.

Ticket holder voluntarily ASSUMES ALL RISKS and DANGERS incidental to being at IWTG as a participant or spectator at the 2022 commencement ceremony. Neither the owner or operator of IWTG, nor any of their respective members, agents, affiliates or representatives, is responsible or liable for any injury, loss, or damage occurring out of or incidental to the 2022 commencement ceremony or ticket holder's presence at IWTG and any adjacent properties used for the event.

Indian Wells Tennis Garden Rules

- No wrapped gifts or gift bags
- No balloons, confetti, flower vases, noisemakers or banners allowed
- No strollers or baby carriers allowed
- No outside food or drink
- Empty standard (16.9 oz.) water bottle allowed
- All bags will be checked at the entrance
- No alcohol
- No smoking
- No pets (only service animals or service animals in training)

Parking (There will be no charge for parking)

Follow the parking attendant's signals. Guest and disability parking are first-come, first-served.

Balloons / Flowers / Gifts

Balloons are not allowed in the stadium. Guests should not present any gifts, flowers or leis prior to the ceremony. Graduates will not be permitted to carry anything during the Ceremony.

Seating

Guest seating is first-come, first-served.

Recessional

Please do not linger at the exit. Plan, in advance, to meet your friends and family outside the stadium after the ceremony. Congestion caused by the excitement of congratulating graduates is a safety hazard.

Reasonable Accommodations

Seating for guests is stadium seating. Other accommodations for this event are available for people with disabilities. Please contact the Disabled Students Programs and Services Office at (760) 773-2534 or dspsinfo@collegeofthedesert.edu.

Children as Guests

Children who meet the venue's vaccination or negative PCR test result within 72 hours of the event are welcome to attend the Commencement Ceremony.

Day of Commencement

Wednesday, May 25th

Rehearsal at 8:00 a.m.

All graduates are expected to attend rehearsal at 8:00 a.m. the day of Commencement, Wednesday, May 25, at Indian Wells Tennis Garden (unless you have a scheduled final exam). You are encouraged to wear a hat or bring an umbrella for shade. Prior to your arrival, graduates should have completed the following items:

- Cap, Gown, and Tassel or Cord purchased or picked up at Grad Fest or Bookstore
- Name card filled out at Bookstore or Grad Fest
- Transfer Medallion received at Transfer Ceremony
- Graduation Honors confirmed with Admissions and Records

Name Pronunciation

Rehearsal is a good opportunity to meet with our commencement announcers to make sure your name is correctly pronounced.

Commencement Ceremony at 7:30 p.m.

- Students are required to report to the Indian Wells Tennis Gardens **no later than 6:30 p.m.** to line up for the ceremony. Please be dressed in your regalia.
- Give yourself ample time to park your vehicle (or be dropped off). You will need to walk through security and also show proof of vaccination prior to entering the venue. It is your responsibility to meet all the entry and vaccine requirements. Failure to do so will not allow you to participate. COD will not provide any exemptions to IWTG policies.
- Security is not provided in the line-up area during the ceremony; it is important that you do not leave anything behind. Give jackets, purses and other valuables to your guests for safekeeping, or lock them in your car before reporting to the line-up area.

Check-in

You will pick up the name card you completed when you registered at the Bookstore or Grad Fest. Students with graduation honors will receive an honor cord with your name card. All students were previously notified about their Honors status. There will be no discussion about honors on the day of the ceremony.

- **Arrive** at event location by 6:30 P.M. Please be on time!
- **Arrive** wearing cap & gown.
- **Do not** leave personal belongings in the line-up area.
- **Pick-up** name card (students with graduation honors will receive honors cord at this time).
- **Keep** the name card! You will hand the card to the announcer at the podium.

Please do not linger at the exit. Please plan, in advance, to meet and celebrate with your guests after the ceremony.