



Graduation Ceremonies August 2020

UL's decision to cancel the conferring ceremonies is a hugely disappointing one for everyone who is involved in these great events. We at the university are equally disappointed that we cannot celebrate this milestone in your lives with you and acknowledge your academic achievement and success. The decision was dictated by the Government public health directives on the hosting of large events and followed consultation across the campus community, including with UL Student Life and its student representatives.

1. I have completed my studies within UL, how will I proceed to graduate?

All eligible students will be conferred in absentia following ratification of their results by Academic Council. We will then host online events to celebrate and to honour the graduation of the Class of 2020. 'In absentia' refers to a mechanism whereby following the formal convening of a university meeting, all eligible graduands are conferred with their degrees, and become graduates, without them being physically present at the meeting.

2. Why am I being conferred in absentia?

We want to ensure that you can apply for employment opportunities and / or further study without any uncertainty as to your academic status. We want you to be able to do this at the very earliest opportunity.

3. Why have the onsite autumn conferrings 2020 been cancelled?

The ceremonies in August (known as autumn conferrings) have been cancelled because it is not permitted to host events where large numbers of people gather. During graduation week, we host 12,000 people on campus, something not permitted under current public health guidance.

4. Why can't the graduation ceremony be deferred?

The alternative of a deferred ceremony at some unknown and unpredictable date in the distant future, would on balance, add to the further uncertainty and frustration that is being experienced currently. It may be a protracted period of time before gatherings that involve thousands of people in close proximity will be permitted. Additionally, there may be periodic reintroduction of restrictions, which would add further delay.

5. When will next Exam Board be convened and when will I graduate officially?

The next Exam Board in UL is due to meet on July 6, 2020. After Academic Council has ratified the results of that board, you will officially graduate on this date providing you meet all relevant course requirements.



6. When and how will our parchments be available to us?

We will let you know as soon as possible when the parchments will be available digitally. Please see this document for updates going forward. A hard copy parchment will be mailed to you as soon as possible after the university campus reopens. Currently there are no print, postal or administrative services operating on campus. Therefore, the current plan is to make parchments available digitally until services can produce and distribute traditional parchments.

7. What do non EU students who are due to graduate need to do to ensure they receive the official copy of their parchment from UL?

Please ensure that UL's Academic Registry Division have your correct postal contact details on their system, i.e. your **home postal address**. We will let you know as soon as possible when the parchments will be available digitally. Please see this document for updates going forward. Please contact Academic Registry by email saa@ul.ie to check that the information they have on file is correct.

If you wish to be kept informed on arrangements for the celebratory event that will be planned in lieu of the cancelled conferrings, when it is safe for such an event to be held on campus please send details of your email address to: ceremonies@ul.ie

8. What does the online ceremony involve and can we participate in it?

The dates for these online events will be advised in due course but are likely to take place in the month of August. **A number of different formats are currently being reviewed.**

9. When will it be possible to hold the Celebratory Event?

Once it is safe to do so and following public health advice, we plan to invite all graduates back on campus for a celebratory event. We are eager to celebrate your achievements and we want to allow you to celebrate your own success together and in person with your classmates, your lecturers, your teachers, families and partners. We also want to recognise and acknowledge the sacrifices that so many of you have made in ensuring the wellbeing of others. As this will be a large scale public event it is not possible to state when it will happen as that will be determined by public health guidance and the capacity of the university to accommodate additional large groups along with the normal campus population. All stakeholders, internal and external to UL, including ULSL, will engage in regular review and scoping of what will be possible and appropriate to celebrate the achievements of the class of 2020.

Please ensure you update your contact information with Academic Registry so that we can make contact with you with the specific details on this event.

10. Why haven't the graduations been set to an alternative later date this year (2020)?



Due to social distancing restrictions and Government guidelines in relation to large events, we are not permitted to host the ceremonies on campus. The autumn conferring's in August are our largest graduation event in the academic year, where more than 12,000 people visit UL. To facilitate the hosting of thousands of people and to engage the various internal and external event teams requires a long lead in time with regard to planning. In light of the current restrictions, it is simply not possible to hold such an event on campus and there is no indication that this will change over the course of the coming months.

11. Will the January conferring ceremonies take place as normal?

We do not know this now. What we do know is that if the current public health advice remains in place, then large gatherings of people will not be permitted. January ceremonies host at least 5,000 people and so, we will keep this event under review as government advice changes over the coming months.