

LENOIR-RHYNE SPRING 2026

COMMENCEMENT HANDBOOK



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



TO THE GRADUATES OF THE CLASS OF 2026,

It is my great pleasure to invite you to participate in Lenoir-Rhyne University's 2026 Commencement ceremonies. This moment marks the culmination of years of dedication, perseverance, and growth, and it is our honor to celebrate you—our graduates—and to thank the family members, friends, faculty, and mentors who have supported you along the way.

This Commencement Handbook has been prepared with you and your guests in mind. Within these pages, you will find important information about the ceremonies taking place across all three of Lenoir-Rhyne's campuses, including details on locations, schedules, and assembly instructions. I encourage you to review this information carefully to ensure a smooth, joyful and meaningful experience for all.

Commencement is an important milestone and a powerful reflection of all you have accomplished as a Bear. I look forward to celebrating with you at Lenoir-Rhyne University's 2026 Commencement ceremonies and wish you every success as you begin your next chapter.

Congratulations on your remarkable achievement.

Go Bears!

Warm regards,

Dr. Summer McGee
President
Lenoir-Rhyne University



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DATES TO REMEMBER

Jan. 12 Online regalia orders OPEN

Jan. 28 100 Days to Graduation
Table in Cromer

Mar. 25-26 Graduation Fair

April 29 Baccalaureate

May 7 Columbia Center Graduate Commencement

May 8 Hickory Campus Undergraduate and Graduate Commencement

May 9 Asheville Center Graduate Commencement

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 **BACCALAUREATE WORSHIP SERVICE**

10AM – Grace Chapel, Hickory, NC

THURSDAY, MAY 7 **COLUMBIA CENTER GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT**

1PM – Ebeneezer Lutheran Church, Columbia, SC



FRIDAY, MAY 8 **HICKORY CAMPUS UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT**

6PM – Moretz Stadium, Hickory, NC

SATURDAY, MAY 9 **ASHEVILLE CENTER GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT**

10AM – Orange Peel, 101 Baltimore Avenue, Asheville, NC



GRADUATION FAIR



Attendance at the Grad Fair is strongly encouraged for ALL Hickory Campus graduates.

Cromer Center

Wednesday March 25

11AM - 3PM

Thursday March 26

10AM - 2PM

Order your cap, gown, and stoles

Receive honor cords

Order your announcement cards and invitations

Sign up for the Alumni Network, Bears for Life

Learn more about career services support

Get free stuff

ANNOUNCEMENT CARDS AND INVITATIONS

Order your personalized invitations and announcement cards at the Grad Fair. The bookstore will carry a limited number of general announcements for purchase.

CAPS AND GOWNS

You can order your caps, gowns, hoods and stoles **ONLINE!** Visit colleges.herffjones.com to order. If you need assistance, there will be help at the Grad Fair or you can contact Dondi Joyner at **828.328.7142** or dondi.joyner@lr.edu.

THE DEADLINE FOR ORDERING YOUR CAP AND GOWN ONLINE IS **February 19** If you have questions after April 4, please contact **dondi.joyner@lr.edu**. There is NO GUARANTEE YOU WILL HAVE A CAP AND GOWN AFTER THE DEADLINE. Order early!

HICKORY CAMPUS GENERAL INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE

All candidates are expected to attend the commencement exercise unless they have received permission in writing from the University Registrar. Please email your request with appropriate justification to **registrar@lr.edu** to receive permission to graduate in absentia.

APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

All graduates and undergraduates seeking a degree must submit an application to the registrar's office no later than **March 1, 2025**. Applications can be found on the university's website or through the registrar's office. Failure to submit an application on time may result in your name being omitted from the commencement program. Those who had degrees conferred in December 2025, or will be conferred in May 2026 or August 2026, have permission to walk.

DIPLOMAS

All graduate and undergraduate diplomas will be mailed to the student from the registrar's office. **Please be sure a correct mailing address is on file in the registrar's office.** Diploma covers will be handed out during the ceremony.

LIVESTREAMING

For those unable to attend commencement, the ceremony will be broadcast live on the university's YouTube channel. A link to the live stream can be found at **lr.edu/lrlive**.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Interpreters/Translators and Assistive Listening Devices for the deaf and hard-of-hearing guests are available upon request. Please contact Debby Mitchell, Ed.D., at **828.328.7296** or **deborah.mitchell@lr.edu** at least two weeks in advance to make your request.

disability requiring any accommodations for special seating, etc., please contact Ms. Mitchell at least two weeks in advance to make your request.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos and videos may be taken from the audience or from a designated area by the stage. The university has contracted with a professional company, Photo Specialties, who will photograph each graduate receiving their diploma and post the photos online for you to view or order at **photospecialties.com**. An individual password for each graduate will be emailed from Photo Specialties to the graduate's LR email address when photos are posted. In addition, a paper proof will be mailed to each graduate's permanent address. There is no obligation to buy.

PERSONAL DRESS

Candidates should wear clothing appropriate for this significant occasion. Improper dress may cause a candidate to be withdrawn from participation. Cords, pins or medallions will be allowed only if they are symbolic of campus-wide and programmatic academic honors.

CONFIRM YOUR INFORMATION

It is imperative that LR has your correct phone number, email address and permanent address on file. At Grad Fair, you will be able to double-check the information we have for you. If this information is not correct, you risk having your name incorrect in the program and your diploma mailed to the wrong address.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Sign up to become a Bear for Life. You will also have an opportunity to contribute to your class gift, designating it in memory or in honor of someone special. To learn more about resources available to LR Alumni, visit **lr.edu/alumni**.

COMMENCEMENT ATTIRE

All candidates should wear their cap, gown and stole, which should be ordered no later than **February 16**. Underneath the gown, candidates should wear clothing appropriate for this significant occasion. Improper dress may cause a candidate to be withdrawn from participation. Cords, pins, or medallions will be allowed only if they are symbolic of campus wide and programmatic academic honors.

CAP GUIDELINES

Students choosing to decorate their cap must follow the strict guidelines below developed by the Office of the President. The guidelines will be enforced the day of the ceremony and the university reserves the right to request that graduates change inappropriate attire before they are allowed to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Only the flat, top area of the mortar board may be decorated, and adornments must lay flat on the surface of the cap. Decorations cannot extend beyond the border of the cap or fall below the perimeter. 3-D creations are prohibited.

Graduation cap decorations:

- Cannot contain any advertisement, symbols, abbreviations, initial, words, slogans, patches, or pictures that: refer to drugs or controlled substances, tobacco, alcohol, or weapons or be of a sexual nature.
- Denote an affiliation with gangs or which advocate drug use, violence, illegal activity, or disruptive behavior which is detrimental to the safety and welfare of other students.
- Be obscene, profane, vulgar or lewd.

It is appropriate to put the following on your cap:

- Thank a parent, grandparent, teacher, friend
- The graduation year
- The branch of the military you will be joining
- Recognize the career you will be beginning
- Their home country's flag



HICKORY UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

MAY 9, 6PM

Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory will have one ceremony for both our graduates and undergraduates. Please review the ceremony day procedures below and contact Cameron Womack, commencement director, if you have any questions at commencement@lr.edu.

TIME AND LOCATION

The Hickory Commencement Ceremony will be held **Friday, May 8, at 6PM**. The ceremony will take place outdoors at Moretz Stadium in Hickory.

CHECK-IN AND LINE-UP

All bachelor's and master's degree candidates who have met all degree requirements and received approval from the registrar must check in **promptly at Shuford Arena at 4:30PM**. Candidates will be directed by the Vice President for Student Experience and Dean of Students, Harry Titus, Ed.D., and Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education, Jeni Wyatt, Ed.D. Candidates will be able to sit in any order within the college from where their degree is conferred. Graduates will process in first, followed by undergraduates. For example, if you are graduating with a B.S. in Biology, then you will line up with the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

PROCESSIONAL NOTE

It is tradition to begin the ceremony with the ringing of the University Bell at the top of the hour, 6PM. Therefore, the procession will begin 20 minutes prior to the hour. **All guests are encouraged to be in their seats 30 minutes prior to the ceremony.** As directed, the candidates will line up and process in the following way:

Doctoral Candidates will lead the procession, followed by Master Candidates and Undergraduate Candidates. The faculty procession and stage party (dignitaries) close out the procession. All involved will be led by Student Marshals. All candidates will stand at their seats until the National Anthem has been sung.

DRESS AND REGALIA UNDERGRADUATES

Tassels: You will start wearing your tassel on the right side of your cap. During the ceremony, you will

be prompted to move it to the left, signifying that you have earned your bachelor's degree.

Honor Cords (undergraduates only): Gold, Silver, and Bronze honor cords will be given for summa, magna, and cum laude candidates (respectively) at Grad Fair and during the line-up for the processional. Other cords, pins, or medallions will be allowed only if they are symbolic of campus-wide and programmatic academic honors.

Summa Cum Laude: 3.9+ GPA

Magna Cum Laude: 3.6 – 3.89 GPA

Cum Laude: 3.4 – 3.59 GPA

Caps: Caps may be decorated. Please follow the guidelines located on page 7.

GRADUATES

Tassels: You will wear your tassel on the left side of your cap, signifying that you have previously earned your bachelor's degree.

Hoods: Carry your hood in the processional.

Candidates will be directed by the Dean of Students, Harry Titus, Ed.D., regarding line-up and proper hooding procedures.

Arts and Letters/Humanities	White
Business Administration	Drab
Communication/Journalism	Crimson
Counseling/Education	Light Blue
Divinity/Theology	Scarlet
Economics	Copper
Fine Arts	Brown
Law/Jurisprudence	Purple
Leadership	Drab
Occupational Therapy	Scarlet Blue
Library Science	Lemon
Medicine	Kelly Green
Music	Pink
Nursing	Apricot
Philosophy	Dark Blue
Physical Science	Sage Green
Public Health	Salmon Pink
Science/Mathematics	Gold

FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY

Students can plan to meet their family and friends on the field for photo opportunities. Your diploma will be mailed to you. Allow 4-8 weeks for delivery and make certain the registrar has a current mailing address for you when you apply for graduation.

INCLEMENT WEATHER, TICKET INFORMATION, GUEST INFORMATION

Lenoir-Rhyne University makes every effort to hold our commencement ceremony in Hickory outside in our Moretz Football Stadium. Being in North Carolina in the spring, weather is unpredictable so we do our best to plan for inclement weather.

If inclement weather causes us to move the ceremony inside, **tickets are required for guests**. Each LR Graduate will receive a number of tickets based on the total # of graduates. These tickets will be available to you at the Graduation Fair on March 25 & 26. Following Graduation Fair, graduates will need to pick up their tickets from Cameron Womack in the President's office. Detailed instructions will follow the Graduation Fair.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN A:

Delay/Light Shower

If a passing light shower or light rain is expected, the ceremony will go on as planned. Guests are encouraged to bring rain gear and umbrellas.

In the event we have lightning, we have the option to delay the start of the ceremony.

Any updates to the ceremony start time or other last-minute details will be provided on our website and social media. Graduates and guests, please stay in touch through these outlets.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN B:

Heavy Rain/Storms

If we have all day rain or late day storms that cannot be waited out, the ceremony will be held in Shuford Arena at 6PM. Specific details about line up and check-in will be provided to you the week before the ceremony.

GUEST INFORMATION

- **Arrive Early:** Please arrive in time to get your seats by 5:40 p.m. The procession will begin 20 minutes prior to the ceremony and arriving after 5:40 p.m. may delay you getting to your seat before the ceremony begins.
- **Parking:** Parking is first come first served. Accessible/handicap parking is available behind the home side off 7th street in our "practice field".
- **Bag Check:** All bags are subject to inspection upon entry. To expedite entry, we encourage guests to bring small bags only.
- **Water Bottles:** Guests may bring sealed bottled water only into the stadium. Refillable or open containers are not permitted.
- **Concessions/Merchandise:** LR will provide limited concessions and branded merchandise for purchase.
- **Move to indoors:** If we must move inside due to inclement weather, each graduate is provided with 2 guest tickets. ONLY 2 GUESTS CAN ATTEND THE CEREMONY IN SHUFORD ARENA. We will have streaming rooms throughout campus, and the ceremony will be available online. We make every effort to hold our ceremony outside. A call to move inside will be made as soon as possible. Keep watch of social media and our website, www.lr.edu for updates.



DIRECTIONS TO CAMPUS

FROM INTERSTATE 40:

- Take exit 125 Lenoir-Rhyne University exit.
- Turn north onto Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard.
- Pass Kickback Jacks and Mellow Mushroom restaurants (on your right just off the interstate) and go through four lights.
- At fifth light, turn left onto 7th Avenue N.E. (light will be right after you cross under a railroad bridge).
- Go through one light and proceed a quarter of a mile to the intersection with Stasavich Place (5th Street N.E.). Past the light, you enter campus.
- Turn right after a quarter of a mile onto Stasavich Place – the road has three speed bumps. McCrorie Center and Shuford Gymnasium are on your left.

FROM CHARLOTTE AIRPORT/ GASTONIA:

- Leaving the airport, take Billy Graham Parkway North (left lane) to I-85 South.
- Take I-85 South to Gastonia, about 15 minutes away.
- Take the exit for US 321 North (exit 17) and turn left at the light.
- Take US 321 North until the highway intersects I-40 (exit 43).
- Take I-40 East to exit 125 and follow directions for From Interstate 40 above.

FROM BOONE:

- Follow US 321 South to Hickory. As you come into Hickory, you will cross Lake Hickory. Turn left at Arby's at the first stoplight after going over the bridge.
- Follow that road up the hill and around the curve to the fourth street on the left, which will be 12th Avenue N.W.
- Turn left and follow to the stoplight (this will be a T-intersection).
- Turn right onto 6th Street N.W. Take the second left onto 9th Avenue N.E.
- Go through three stoplights.
- After the third stoplight, take the first right onto 3rd Street N.E.
- Take an immediate left onto 7th Avenue N.E.
- Proceed up the hill to the stop sign.
- Take left onto Stasavich Place (Shuford Gymnasium is on the left).

LODGING IN HICKORY

The following is a list of hotels which give discounts for LR-related events. Call them directly to confirm discounts and rates.

Best Western	828.323.1150
Comfort Suites	828.323.1211
Courtyard by Marriott	828.267.2100
Crowne Plaza	828.323.1000
Fairfield Inn	828.431.3000
Hampton Inn	828.624.2000
Holiday Inn Express	828.328.2081
Jameson Inn	828.304.0410
LaQuinta Inn & Suites	828.465.1100
Sleep Inn	828.323.1140

CAMPUS MAP

For a larger, interactive campus map, visit lr.edu/campusmap.



LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY

#	Grid	Academic & Administrative
1	D11	Lohr Hall
2	D12	Cloninger House
3	J10	Cornerstone Student Support & Wellness
4	E9	Cromer Center
5	H11	George Hall
6	D11	Information Technology Center
7	E11	Koinonia House
8	F10	Lineberger Building
9	H8	Maintenance Facility
10	F8	Mauney Music Building
11	E11	Mauney-Schaeffer Conference Hall
12	D9	McCrone Center
13	G11	Minges Science Building/Observatory
14	G11	Rhyne Building
15	G12	Rudisill Library & Professional Development Center
16	E9	Russell House
17	H7	Visual Arts Building
18	J14	Wayne B. Powell Health Sciences Complex
#	Grid	Campus Safety & Wellness
19	J10	Cornerstone Student Support & Wellness
20	E10	Cromer Center
#	Grid	Dining
21	E10	Cromer Center
#	Grid	Housing & Residence Halls
22	C4	4th Street Apartments
23	H10	Conrad Hall
24	G10	Fritz Hall
25	D1	Hickory House
26	D5	Isenhour Hall
27	G5	Living Learning Center (LLC)
28	C7	Morgan Hall
29	H4	Price Village
#	Grid	Public Event Venues
30	G11	Belk Centrum
31	E10	Cromer Center
32	F10	Grace Chapel
33	E8	P.E. Monroe Auditorium
#	Grid	Athletics & Recreation
34	F4	Baseball Field
35	H5	Intramural Field
36	D9	Intramural Gymnasium
37	B9	McCrone Field
38	C10	McCrone Fitness Center
39	F6	Moretz Sports Complex
40	C8	Moretz Stadium
41	D9	Pool
42	G8	Sand Volleyball Court
43	D8	Shuford Gymnasium
44	H7	Softball Field
#	Grid	Parking
P	D7	Visitor Parking
P	E13	Visitor Parking
AP	D11	Admissions Parking

Questions? Contact Cameron Womack, Executive Assistant to the President and Commencement Director, at **828.328.7334** or cameron.womack@lr.edu.

COLUMBIA CENTER GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

All graduates seeking a degree must submit an application to the registrar's office no later than **March 1, 2026**.

You can download the form at lr.edu/registrar. Select **Application for Graduation**. Completed forms can be scanned and emailed to registrar@lr.edu or mailed to:

Lenoir-Rhyne University
Office of Registrar
625 7th Ave. NE, LRU 7227
Hickory, NC 28601

Failure to submit an application on time may result in your name being omitted from the commencement program.

CAPS, GOWNS & HOODS

You can order your caps, gowns, hoods and stoles **ONLINE**! If you need assistance, contact Dondi Joyner at **828.328.7142** or dondi.joyner@lr.edu. Be sure you arrange to have your purchase shipped to your home. Cost is approximately \$100.

The deadline to order regalia online is FEBRUARY 16.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Sign up to become a Bear for Life. You will also have an opportunity to contribute to your class gift, designating it in memory or in honor of someone special. To learn more about the resources available to LR Alumni, visit lr.edu/alumni.

COMMENCEMENT SITE ADDRESS

Ebenezer Lutheran Church
1301 Richland Street
Columbia, SC 29201

COLUMBIA CENTER CEREMONY - May 7, 1PM

GRADUATE CEREMONY

TIME AND LOCATION

The Graduate Commencement will be held at **1PM, Thursday, May 7**, at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1301 Richland Street, Columbia, South Carolina. Attendance is open seating and does not require tickets.

PARKING

Parking for the ceremony at Ebeneezer Lutheran Church is mostly on street parking. There are two small lots around the perimeter. Please enter from Richland Street and be sure to lock your vehicle and place valuables out of sight.

CHECK-IN AND LINE-UP

All master's degree candidates who have met all degree requirements must assemble **promptly at 12PM** at Ebenezer Lutheran Church. Additional details TBA.

PROCESSIONAL

Master degree candidates will form a single

line and process in following faculty. You will wear your tassel on the left side of your cap, signifying that you have previously earned your bachelor's degree. Carry your hood as directed.

The commencement marshal will lead the procession into the sanctuary. You should remain standing once you reach your reserved seats until instructed to sit.

If you are unable to participate in the commencement, please email your request to the registrar at registrar@lr.edu.

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Master degree candidates will be directed to the stage row by row. When your name is read, your program advisor will direct you to move to your left across the stage to receive your diploma. Continue across to shake hands with the president of the university and other dignitaries.

PERSONAL DRESS

Candidates should wear clothing appropriate for this significant occasion. Bring your cap, gown, hood, cords (if applicable) etc. with you to check-in.

Questions? Contact Cameron Womack, Commencement Director, at **828.328.7334** or commencement@lr.edu.

ASHEVILLE CENTER GENERAL INFORMATION



APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

All graduates seeking a degree must submit an application to the registrar's office.

You can download the form at lr.edu/registrar. Select **Application for Graduation**. Completed forms can be scanned and emailed to registrar@lr.edu or mailed to:

Lenoir-Rhyne University
Office of Registrar
625 7th Ave. NE, LRU 7227
Hickory, NC 28601

Failure to submit an application on time may result in your name being omitted from the commencement program.

CAPS, GOWNS & HOODS

All regalia orders are placed online. If you need assistance, contact Dondi Joyner at **828.328.7142** or dondi.joyner@lr.edu. Be sure you arrange to have your purchase shipped to your home. Cost is approximately \$100.

The deadline to order regalia is FEBRUARY 16. There is no guarantee you will have a cap and gown after the deadline.

ANNOUNCEMENT CARDS AND INVITATIONS

You may order personalized invitations and announcement cards online. The LR Bookstore will carry a limited number of general announcements for purchase.

CAREER SERVICES

You can meet with your career advisor to refine your job search, interact with employers at recruiting events, connect with alumni at networking receptions, or receive coaching to negotiate your salary. Contact Katie Wohlman, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Alex Lee Career and Professional Development Center, at katie.wohlman@lr.edu.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Sign up to become a Bear for Life. You will also have an opportunity to contribute to your class gift, designating it in memory or in honor of someone special. To learn more about the resources available to LR Alumni, visit lr.edu/alumni.

ASHEVILLE GRADUATE CEREMONY – May 13, 10AM

TIME AND LOCATION

The Graduate Commencement will be held at **10AM, Saturday, May 13**, at The Orange Peel, 101 Biltmore Ave., Asheville, NC. The doors will open at 9:30AM. Attendance is open seating and does not require tickets. However, seating is limited, and we ask our candidates to be mindful when inviting friends and family.

CHECK-IN AND LINE-UP

All master's degree candidates who have met all degree requirements must assemble **promptly at Pack Square, 80 Court Plaza, Asheville, NC at 9AM**. In case of rain, we will meet at the Orange Peel. At this time, candidates will check-in and be given instructions about the procession and ceremony.

PROCESSIONAL

For our master degree candidates, the ceremony will start at Pack Square with a procession down Biltmore Avenue to The Orange Peel. Candidates will form a single line. You will wear your tassel on the left side of your cap, signifying that you have previously earned your bachelor's degree, and hold your hood over your arm. The faculty marshal will lead the procession from Pack Square Park to The Orange Peel. You should remain standing once you reach your reserved seats until instructed to sit.

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Master degree candidates will be directed to the stage row by row. When your name is read, your program advisor will direct you to move to your left across the stage to receive your diploma. Continue across to shake hands with the president of the university and other dignitaries. Exit via the back of the stage (look for someone motioning you toward the door) and return to your seat.

PERSONAL DRESS

Candidates should wear clothing appropriate for this significant occasion. Bring your cap, gown, hood, cords (if applicable) etc. with you to check-in.