



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

**VIRTUAL RECOGNITION EVENT TOOLKIT**

EVENTPRO

# INTRODUCTION

The tradition of a ceremonial recognition is as old as Indiana University itself, and no milestone merits more recognition than graduation. This treasured time for acknowledging our graduates' hard work, dedication, and fortitude is a small token of the honor that students and families deserve for the sacrifices they have made on the path to graduation.

Although your event will be virtual, your unit will be carrying forward this time-honored tradition. This toolkit provides best practices, assets, and resources to help you virtually offer the best possible occasion for your graduates and their families and friends.

## UNIQUE TO THE OCCASION

A school recognition event celebrates the unique relationship between a school and their students. It sets time aside to acknowledge the individual accomplishments of each graduate. Ensure your event doesn't feel like just another Zoom meeting, and instead include elements that make this moment unique.

### VIPs

Invite your dean, program directors, notable alumni, or a prominent student to share a brief message.

### TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

Present honorees with a small gift and delivered by mail or electronically.

### APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Encourage deans and academic speakers to dress in appropriate regalia in recognition of the occasion.

### GET SOCIAL

Create a unique hashtag for social media specific to your unit. Share this hashtag with students and families for sending notes of congratulations and enjoying the experience together.

### KEEPSAKE

Create a downloadable program booklet with a list of honorees and their accomplishments as a keepsake for your graduates and guests.

### NOTABLE GUEST

Invite a alumni or special speakers as a surprise to your audience. Share their message either live or in a prerecorded video.

### GOING BEYOND ZOOM

Build a custom website to serve as the landing page for your event. Share the agenda, a prerecorded video, or social media messages to create a central source for all aspects of your event.

### TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Because of many unknown factors in the planning of the in-person Commencement ceremonies, we suggest you schedule your recognition event on a date other than your campus's scheduled Commencement date. Weather and unknown COVID restrictions may result in changes of Commencement times.

# BEST PRACTICES

## PRACTICE SESSION

The difference between a polished presentation and a mediocre Zoom call is often a practice session. Take time with all presenters to rehearse the elements of your ceremony such as:

- Rehearsing transitions
- Sharing screenS
- Ensuring good audio and lighting conditions
- Establishing the order of speakers

## BACKUP PLAN

Sometimes unexpected things happen, so be sure to have a backup plan! Designate a master of ceremonies, who will step in should a speaker's internet go out, audio troubles arise, or shared screen go wrong. Designating this role will keep your ceremony running smoothly in the event of an unexpected change.

## LICENSE-FREE MUSIC

If you are using music in your ceremony, be sure it is not copyright protected, or that you have written permission to use it during your ceremony. Many social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube can identify copyrighted music in real-time and mute or end your livestream prematurely. Be sure to check out the **Resources** page in this toolkit for access to license-free music.

## VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS

Virtual backgrounds for speakers are often overused and distracting. Zoom's ability to cleanly place the speaker into a virtual background is limited. Often a speaker's head is oddly cut out, or arm gestures become lost. It is better to use your natural background with subtle lighting. If you do decide to use a virtual background, consider all presenters using the same background for a professional, uniform look.

## SCREENSHARE TIPS

When you share your screen, Zoom places the active speaker in the upper right corner of the screen. If you are simultaneously broadcasting your ceremony on Facebook or YouTube, Zoom also places a branded logo in the lower right corner. Keep this in mind when designing your visual assets.



*Example of a webinar broadcast on Facebook with the active speaker in the upper right corner and the IU brand in the lower right corner.*

## SCRIPT YOUR CONTENT

Create a script and share it with your planning team using a collaboration tool such as Microsoft Office 365 or Google Docs. These tools enable multiple people to view the script and see revisions in real time. Be sure to also include technical cues, such as when to start/stop screenshare, play a video, or drop a note to your audience in the chat window.

Check out the **Resources** page to find a free teleprompter app to increase the professional look and feel of your ceremony.

## BUILD A TIMELINE

Create a minute-by-minute timeline. Anticipate how long each speaker, video, and slide deck will take to present. Doing this will help you know if you're running long on your event and aid in making any necessary edits on the fly.

## PRE- AND POST-EVENT SLIDES

Create a holding slide using PowerPoint and start streaming it 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of your ceremony. Combined with license-free music (see the **Resources** page), this lets your audience connect early and be assured that their audio is working and they are in the right place. Be sure to include the name of your ceremony and a message that the ceremony will begin shortly on your holding slide.

Consider ending your ceremony with another holding slide. This slide may incorporate a call to action, or simply thank your audience for attending. It's a nice way to cue your audience to disconnect from you, rather getting a message that the host has ended the meeting.



Example of a pre-event slide.



Example of post-event slide.

## ADA SERVICES

All events and ceremonies at IU, including virtual ones, must provide reasonable accommodation on request. It is now standard to order live captioning for any event that may include a public audience. Although Zoom offers automated captioning, the results and accuracy vary. We recommend hiring a professional captioning or American Sign Language service for your ceremony. Check out the **Resources** page for vendor information for these services. For more information, please contact your [campus ADA office](#).

## GRADUATE SLIDESHOW

Consider making a PowerPoint deck consisting of photos of your graduates and biographical details. Ask each graduate to provide a headshot and compile slides including names, majors, and honors. Use this slideshow as a visual aid during the name recognition ceremony portion of your event.



Example of a graduate slide used during the name recognition portion of a virtual ceremony.

### TECH TIPS:

- Slides should be in a 16:9 format
- Screenshot the PowerPoint window, not the desktop
- Do not use “optimize for video” when showing a static image
- Transitions (wipes and fades) do not work well

## LIVE vs. RECORDED EVENTS:

Does it need to be live? What are the benefits of each approach? Some points of deliberation are listed below.

### RECORDING WITH SOFT LAUNCH:

A link for a prerecorded video is posted, and the video can be watched at any time. This method offers opportunities for higher-quality presentations (video and audio) and removes the need for all attendees in all time zones to have access to technology at the same time. Can be saved and replayed as a keepsake. The video can be edited and presented as a more finished product. Chances of mistakes and/or technical issues are reduced.

### RECORDING, WITH A HARD LAUNCH DATE, BUT ALSO AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE STREAMING:

The video can be first watched at a specific time and date, which can be coordinated with various social media tools to allow all viewers to collectively view the recording and chat or post content in real time. This method allows active participation in an event, but with the higher quality of pre-recorded content. The event can remain archived and viewable beyond the initial launch, but without social media component.

### LIVE:

Offers opportunities for direct interaction with the presenters, including Q&A, polls and feedback. Events in this format convey a sense of immediacy and direct involvement.

### NOTE ON SOCIAL MEDIA COMPONENTS TIED TO EVENTS:

If virtual event organizers are concerned about the content of social media messages related to their events, there is IU-supported software that makes moderation possible. Products include Microsoft Teams, Google Chat, and Canvas. Chat participants can be limited to predetermined groups, and Q&A sessions can be monitored to prevent inappropriate messages.

## DIGITAL GUIDES AND ASSETS

### [Webinar vs. meeting](#)

Trying to decide which is the best format for your ceremony? This link helps compare the differences between a webinar and meeting.

### [Request a webinar license](#)

Contact UITS Videoconferencing Support to request a temporary Zoom webinar license

### [Making your event secure](#)

Ensure your Zoom security settings are setup correctly to avoid unwanted disruptions or guests.

### [Sharing your screen](#)

Learn how to share your screen with a single or multi-monitor setup.

### [Sharing audio / music](#)

Learn how to embed music in the background of your ceremony or while sharing your screen.

### [License-free music](#)

Download music to use before and after your ceremony, license free, courtesy of University Events. (CAS login required)

### [Licensed ceremonial music](#)

Download traditional Indiana Univeristy ceremonial music such as "Hail to Old IU" and the "IUPUI Fight Song". (CAS login required)

### [Teleprompter](#)

This free tool lets users load a script and view it at the top of the screen, closest to the webcam lens, so speakers can make eye contact with the audience while delivering their lines.

## SAMPLE CEREMONIES

### [O'Neill School Winter Recognition](#)

See an example of a recognition ceremony produced by the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs in December 2020.

### [School of Nursing](#)

See an example of a recognition ceremony produced by the School of Nursing in December 2020.

### [School of Education](#)

See an example of a recognition ceremony produced by the School of Education in May 2020.

## EXTERNAL VENDORS

### [ACS Captioning Services](#)

ACS provides professional closed captioning services and is an approved Buy.IU vendor.

### [Markey's Rental & Staging](#)

Looking for a more professional, hands-off approach? Markey's offers a wide range of virtual services and is an approved Buy.IU vendor.

UNIVERSITY EVENTS  
EVENTPRO

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