HGSE Homecomings

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the HGSE Homecomings?
The HGSE Homecomings are designed to provide HGSE students and graduates who completed their Ed.M. online to have connecting, learning-rich experiences on the physical HGSE and Harvard campus. Weekends will include a mix of activities ranging from social to professional, with a variety of learning and connecting opportunities.

Who is eligible to attend the Homecomings?
HGSE Ed.M. 2021 (May and November) graduates and continuing part-time students completing their Ed.M. degree online in December 2021 and May 2022.

COVID-19 continues to pose significant health concerns, and one measure to ensure a work and learning environment that is as safe as possible is to limit the number of visitors on campus. Unfortunately, this means that there will not be programming available for the families and guests of 2021-22 Homecoming attendees.

Can I come to more than one Homecoming?
Yes! Eligible students and alumni are invited to attend the May Homecoming weekend. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate guests of Homecoming attendees.

What time do the Homecomings weekends begin and end?
The May Homecoming weekend will begin at approximately 5pm ET on Friday, May 20th and end at approximately 12pm ET on Sunday, May 22nd, in order to allow for travel time.

What if I can only come to part of a Homecoming weekend?
You are welcome to come for as much or as little as you can.

Will HGSE pay for my travel?
No. You are responsible for your travel costs. We will provide some meals during the Homecomings, and you should expect to pay for some meals on your own as well.

How do I sign up?
Registration is required to attend. Please reach out to nicole_barone@gse.harvard.edu with registration questions and/or if your registration status has changed.

Can I attend if I haven’t registered?
Registration is required to attend. Please see guidance above.

Are there guaranteed room blocks or rates for accommodations near campus?
Unfortunately, due to hotel demand in the Cambridge area during Commencement week, we are unable to offer guaranteed room blocks or rates for accommodations near campus.
For hotel suggestions to help with planning your trip, please see the following lists of accommodations in or near Harvard Square:

- HGSE List of Accommodations near Harvard Square
- Harvard Square - Places to Stay

How do I make sure I'm in compliance with Harvard University COVID-19 precautions, including the vaccination, testing, and masking requirements of all individuals who visit or work on campus?
Beginning on Monday, April 11, the campus will be open to all visitors provided that the visitor attests that they are fully vaccinated, are not experiencing or displaying any known symptoms of COVID-19 and completes the attestation process. Read the full HGSE Visitor Policy.

Can I audit a May-Term course while visiting for Homecomings?
HGSE is currently not permitting in-person auditing at this point in the pandemic. When approved, auditors must agree to abide by community standards and policies, and complete required work as per the agreement with the instructor.

If I cannot come to the Homecomings, will any of the events be recorded and available for viewing? Similarly, will any events be live-streamed or available in “hybrid” format to be inclusive of those who cannot attend?
The Homecomings experiences are designed to be in-person visits, and it should generally be assumed that events will not be recorded, live-streamed, or offered in hybrid format. If an event is available in one of these formats, it will be clearly noted on the Homecomings schedule.

Frequently Asked Questions for International Students/Alumni

Can international students who completed their degrees remotely participate in Homecoming events?
Yes, international alumni in the class of 2021 and part-time international students in the class of 2022 who have completed their degrees online will be eligible to participate in Homecoming events. Students must finish all degree requirements before traveling to the U.S. on a tourist visa or ESTA to take part in the Homecoming activities. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a global threat and impacts international travel. We recommend that you take the pandemic into consideration when making any travel arrangements if you decide to attend the Homecoming activities.

I am located outside of the U.S. Will HGSE provide support to international alumni to receive tourist (B2) visas or an ESTA to travel to the U.S.?
HGSE will provide letters of support for alumni eligible to travel to the U.S. for the Homecoming events. Please fill out this survey to request a visa invitation letter. If you have family members joining you, please submit a separate form for each person. (Letters of support for B2 visas will also be provided for Harvard Commencement, and full details about Commencement continue to be posted to the HGSE OSA website). Please reach out to Andrea Le if you have questions about obtaining a visa for Homecoming.
How long can I remain in the U.S. on a B2 visa or ESTA?
You must check the validity of your B2 visa. You may remain in the U.S. as a B2 for up to 180 days. If you are eligible to enter the U.S. using ESTA, you may remain in the U.S. for up to 90 days.

What will happen if I am unable to travel internationally due to restrictions caused by the pandemic?
Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a global threat. We recommend that you take the pandemic into consideration when making any travel arrangements. Please make sure to thoroughly understand the cancellation policies on any travel or accommodation bookings before purchasing. In addition, please keep in mind that U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide may be closed or operating at reduced capacities. If you are in need of a tourist visa, please check the U.S. Embassy or Consulate website frequently for updates and information.

Do I qualify for Optional Practical Training (OPT)?
Students who have not studied full-time in the U.S. on an F-1 student visa are not eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Can I work/look for jobs in the U.S. while on a tourist visa?
U.S. federal immigration regulations prohibit visitors on tourist visas from working or looking for jobs while present in the U.S.

If you have additional questions, reach out to Nicole Barone at nicole_barone@gse.harvard.edu.