

## ***Student Policy – Posthumous Degree***

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide an appropriate framework for the awarding of a posthumous degree to a deserving student who died before completing all degree requirements, while still maintaining the academic integrity of the program of study and institution.

A deceased student may be considered a candidate for a posthumous degree when nominated by a department chair.

### **Requirements for Nomination:**

1. A student must have been in good academic standing with the institution at the time of death. Good standing is defined as not being academically deficient for their classification (academic probation, continued probation, suspension or expulsion).
2. College requirements for earned credits in residence must have been satisfied.
3. Student must have been enrolled at time of death (summer excluded), or their continuous enrollment was interrupted by their injury, illness, deployment, etc.
4. A student must have completed 75% of degree requirements (measured by credits attempted and successfully completed) to be nominated for a posthumous degree.
5. The chief academic officer (CAO) recommends the awarding of a posthumous degree.

### **Nomination/Approval Process:**

1. Anybody may identify a candidate for a posthumous degree, but such a suggestion must be made to the department chair who supervises the program in which the student was enrolled at the time of death. Alternatively, the suggestion for nomination may be made to Faculty Senate.

2. Regardless of the source of the nomination, the student's name must be forwarded to the appropriate academic dean of the appropriate academic division for consideration and to begin the formal process.
3. The student's degree audit file shall be reviewed by the registrar to verify program/plan and progress toward degree completion.
4. The academic dean will recommend the candidate for a posthumous degree in the form of a formal written request to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The request must include the name and ID of the student, the degree/program/plan to be awarded, and the recommended semester for degree conferral. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will confer as needed with appropriate faculty, department chair, and academic officers of the college division in which the student was enrolled to reach consensus on the awarding of the degree.
5. If supported by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will submit a recommendation to the college President for formal approval. If approved by the president,
  - a. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will notify the registrar to begin the process for degree posting and commencement proceedings, if applicable.
  - b. The college President will inform the immediate family of the college's decision and desire to recognize their student with this honor (this process should be kept confidential until and unless approved at all levels). If the family desires to represent the student and receive the diploma at a commencement ceremony, this must be relayed to the registrar for planning.

### **Summary: Routes for Approval**

Department Chair → Appropriate Academic Dean → Registrar → Vice President for Academic Affairs → President

### **Miscellaneous Details/Considerations:**

1. A posthumous degree will be printed in commencement programs within the appropriate college section. If the family chooses not to participate, this award may still be read during the ceremony (unless explicitly requested otherwise by the family).
2. If the student had financial debt to the college, this debt will be waived.

3. Exceptions to the aforementioned minimum requirements may be considered in special cases, with support of the faculty senate, administrative chain of command, and the college president.
4. The statement "*awarded posthumously*" will be printed on the student's academic record, but not on the diploma.

**Reference:**

NDSU Posthumous Degree Policy

**History of This Policy:**

First policy draft reviewed by the Faculty Senate on May 1, 2014, reviewed by the Operations Council on May 14, 2014 and approved by the Executive Council on May 30, 2014.

Revisions – August 4, 2014; reviewed by the Operations Council on November 9, 2016 and approved by the Executive Council on November 18, 2016; February 20, 2019.