

**Effective Date** Thursday, March 5, 2009

**Status** Final

**Last Revised** Wednesday, January 18, 2023

**Policy Type** [Executive Vice President & Provost](#)

**Contact Office** [Executive Vice President and Provost \(Office of the\)](#)

**Oversight Executive**

Executive Vice President and Provost

**Applies To** Academic Division.

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## Reason for Policy

Establishes guidelines and procedures governing the awarding of posthumous degrees.

## Definition of Terms

### Posthumous Degree

**Description** A degree conferred by the University to a deceased individual.

## Policy Statement

The University recognizes the accomplishments of those who were close to completing their degree at the University at the time of their death by issuing posthumous degrees. An individual who had completed a majority of the requirements for their degree and was on track to complete their degree within twelve months had it not been for the intervention of death, or of illness or injury resulting in death, will be included on the list of degree candidates presented by the school to the General Faculty.

## Procedures

### 1. Recommendation for Posthumous Degree:

When a school becomes aware of a student's death and first considers the possibility of recommending a posthumous degree, the dean's office will notify the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost of the situation. If the death occurs near the end of the academic year, the dean's office will also notify the Director of Major Events, the Office of the University Registrar (UREG), and the applicable school registrar immediately, pending the school's approval processes. The Office of the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer will be notified of the planned awarding of a posthumous degree.

### 2. Motion to Award the Posthumous Degree:

The General Faculty of the University convenes the week of graduation to confer all degrees brought forth

by each school. At least two weeks in advance of this meeting, the dean's office will contact the Secretary of the General Faculty with the name(s) of the individual(s) who have been approved by the school for the conferral of a posthumous degree(s). At the meeting of the General Faculty, the dean will present these names and submit a motion to award the posthumous degree(s).

**3. Notification of the Family:**

Once the school has completed its approval processes and decided to recommend a posthumous degree, the dean's office will arrange for notification of the family to inform them of the degree conferral. In most cases, family notification will be made by a faculty member or dean who knew the decedent. The Office of Major Events will provide information regarding Final Exercises (e.g., seating, parking) to the parent(s) and/or spouse/partner of the decedent and determine who will attend. The school's dean's office will provide information to the parent(s) and/or spouse/partner regarding the school's or department's degree ceremony.

**4. Presentation of the Diploma:**

The registrar/diploma ceremony coordinator of the individual school will ensure that all applicable arrangements are made for the presentation of the diploma and that the decedent's name is included in the school's graduation materials. The school's registrar/diploma ceremony coordinator (or designated official) will also contact UREG and the Office of Major Events to ensure that all arrangements have been made regarding the diploma and Final Exercises.

Questions concerning the eligibility criteria for posthumous degrees should be directed to the vice provost for academic affairs or their designee.

**Major Category** [Executive Vice President & Provost Policies](#)

**Next Scheduled Review** Sunday, January 18, 2026

**Revision History**

Revised 1/18/23; Updated 5/3/10.

**Supersedes Policy Text**

This policy replaces the "Posthumous Degree Conferral Process" developed by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

**Approved By** Executive Vice President and Provost

**Approved Date** Thursday, March 5, 2009