

Proposal of Revision of Posthumous-In Memoriam Degree Policy: Conferring Degrees to a Student Experiencing Terminal Illness

A Degree awarded to a student experiencing terminal illness recognizes academic work completed by a student who has made progress toward completion of a degree. The Degree to a Student Experiencing Terminal Illness is a regular UF degree and is reported to the Board of Governors. Regardless of the level of the Degree, appropriate documentation must verify the student's terminally ill condition that negates any possibility for the student to continue remaining coursework.

Undergraduate Degree:

- Departments should notify their college dean of a proposed degree to be awarded to a student experiencing terminal illness.
- The department will partner with the Dean of Students Office who should work closely with the student and/or family to obtain medical documentation that confirms that the student will never be able to complete their coursework for the degree because of their current health condition and impending death.
- The dean's office should consult with the student's degree program to review the student's academic record. If the student has completed at least 80% of the requirements for the degree program and the majority of the degree program faculty supports the awarding of the degree, the Dean's Office should request the approval of the degree by submitting a request to the Provost.
- The dean's letter should include the degree and the term for which the student should be awarded the degree. The dean's request should include medical documentation confirming the student's terminally ill condition.
- If the Provost approves the request, the college dean will be notified in writing, with a copy sent to the Office of the University Registrar.

Professional Degree:

- These include the Colleges of Dentistry, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy and Veterinary Medicine and the professional programs offered by other colleges.
- The college/program will partner with the Dean of Students Office who should work closely with the student and/or family to obtain medical documentation that confirms that the student will never be able to complete their coursework for the degree because of their current health condition and impending death.
- A college desiring to award a degree to a student experiencing terminal illness should address a letter from the dean to the provost requesting permission to grant a posthumous degree.
- The dean's letter should include the degree and the term for which the student should be awarded the degree. It also should indicate the student's proximity to the completion of the degree. The request should also include medical documentation confirming the student's terminally ill condition.
- If the provost approves the request, the college dean will be notified in writing, with a copy to the Office of the University Registrar.

Graduate Degree:

- The department will partner with the Dean of Students Office who should work closely with the student and/or family to obtain medical documentation that confirms that the student will never be able to complete their coursework for the degree because of their current health condition and impending death.
- The department should address a letter, approved by the college dean, to the dean of the Graduate School, requesting permission to grant the posthumous degree.

Approval Partners: Provost, Provost Leadership Team, Dean of Students Office (Heather White), Academic Policy Council, Registrar (Steve Pritz), Office of General Counsel (Brandie Smith), Graduate School (Nicole Stedman, Paul Duncan), OIPR (Cathy Lebo), UAC (Dylan King)

- If the Graduate School dean approves, s/he should submit a written request for approval of the degree to the provost.
- The Graduate School dean's letter should include the degree and the term for which the student should be awarded. It also should indicate the student's proximity to completion of the degree. This request should also include the medical documentation obtained by the department.

Examples of other universities' policies:

Drexel University, <https://drexel.edu/provost/policies/conferral-of-degree-or-certificate-posthumously-or-upon-terminal-illness/>

Degree conferred to a student experiencing terminal illness

A student in good standing who becomes terminally ill with documentation while they are attending Drexel University may be awarded a degree without fulfilling all degree requirements.

The criteria for the award of a degree under these circumstances are:

- The degree is 80% complete
- The student is in good academic standing

In exceptional cases, the Provost may decide to modify completion or academic standing criteria. The transcript and diploma will be annotated that the degree was awarded posthumously. These degree recipients will be reported as official graduates of Drexel University.

Colorado State University, <https://www.csusb.edu/policies/university-policy-and-procedures-awarding-undergraduate-and-graduate-degrees-posthumously>

University of New Mexico, <https://facgov.unm.edu/assets/60/a3/0bc4eeaff4375bb9ea5794121b54/d90.pdf>

University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, <https://www.umassd.edu/policies/active-policy-list/academic-affairs/policy-on-conferral-of-posthumous-degrees/>