



**Campus Administrative Policy**

**Policy Title:** Posthumous Academic Degrees

Policy Number: 7025 Functional Area: Student Affairs

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Effective: January 1, 2011  
Date Last Amended/Reviewed: January 1, 2011  
Date Scheduled for Review: July 1, 2018  
Supersedes: Posthumous Academic Degrees (April 13, 2004)

Approved by: Roderick Nairn  
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Prepared by: Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Reviewing Office: Academic and Student Affairs  
Responsible Officer: Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Applies to: University of Colorado Denver  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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**A. INTRODUCTION**

Occasionally, a student may die prior to completing degree requirements. Although the faculty and college have the discretion to waive degree requirements, consistency is important to ensure the quality and integrity of a University of Colorado Denver and University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus degree meets accreditation standards. This policy sets forth guidelines for awarding posthumous academic degrees to deceased CU Denver and CU Anschutz students.

**B. POLICY STATEMENT**

Upon recommendation from the appropriate department or academic program, approval by the appropriate Dean, including the Dean of the Graduate School for graduate students, and approval by the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs (Provost), academic degrees may be awarded posthumously. The normal guidelines and conditions for awarding a posthumous degree are outlined below.

**C. POSTHUMOUS BACCALAUREATE DEGREES**

Unfulfilled graduation requirements shall be waived, and a posthumous baccalaureate degree awarded, if the following conditions are met at the time of a student's death:

1. The student was making progress toward the degree when last enrolled and had attained a cumulative University of Colorado grade point average of 2.00 or higher; and,
2. The student either (a) was within fifteen semester units of completing all requirements for the degree, or (b) was in the final semester leading to completion, or (c) there is sufficient evidence that the deceased student would likely have completed all requirements and received the degree.

**D. POSTHUMOUS MASTER'S AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREES**

Unfulfilled graduation requirements shall be waived, and a posthumous master's and professional degree awarded, if the following conditions are met at the time of a student's death:

1. The student was making progress toward the degree when last enrolled and had attained a cumulative University of Colorado grade point average of 3.00; and,
2. The student either (a) was within nine semester units of completing all requirements for the degree, or (b) was in the final semester leading to completion, or (c) there is sufficient evidence that the deceased student would likely have completed all requirements and received the degree.

**E. POSTHUMOUS DOCTORAL DEGREES**

Unfulfilled graduation requirements shall be waived, and a posthumous doctoral degree awarded, if the following conditions are met at the time of a student's death:

1. The student had completed all course requirements for the degree, was making progress toward the degree, and had attained a cumulative University of Colorado grade point average of 3.00; and,
2. The student was enrolled for dissertation hours when last enrolled; and,
3. The student was within six semester units of completing all dissertation requirements, or there is sufficient evidence that the deceased student would most likely have fulfilled all dissertation requirements and received the degree.

**F. AWARDING POSTHUMOUS DEGREES**

The posthumous degree will be announced publicly and will be awarded to a family member at the appropriate commencement ceremony. The Vice Chancellor's Office must notify the Registrar's Office at least one week prior to the commencement ceremony, so that the student's diploma can be printed in time to be awarded at the commencement

ceremony.

If a family member is unable to attend the commencement ceremony, the Registrar's Office will send the diploma to a family member designated in the student's official file in the Registrar's Office.

## **G. POSTHUMOUS BACCALAUREATE DEGREES**

In rare instances, the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs may consider awarding a posthumous degree for circumstances that fall outside these policy guidelines. The academic department or program must provide a written statement of special circumstances, which the appropriate school or college dean must approve and forward to the Vice Chancellor.

### **Notes**

1. Dates of official enactment and amendments:  
April 13, 2004: Adopted  
January 1, 2011: Updated and reinstated by the Provost  
April 19, 2019: Modified
2. History:  
April 19, 2019: Modified to reflect a Campus-wide effort to recast and revitalize Campus policy sites into a standardized and more coherent set of chaptered policy statement organized around the several operational divisions of the university. Article links, University branding, and formatting updated by the Provost's office.
3. Initial Policy Effective Date: April 13, 2004
4. Cross References/Appendix:
  - [Campus Policy 7027, University Response Following a Student Death](#)