



Campus Administrative Policy

Policy Title: Posthumous Academic Degrees

Policy Number: 7025 Functional Area: Student Affairs

Effective: January 1, 2021
Date Last Amended/Reviewed: February 1, 2021
Date Scheduled for Review: July 1, 2027
Supersedes: Posthumous Academic Degrees (January 1, 2011)

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

Applies to: Denver Campus
Anschutz Medical Campus

A. INTRODUCTION

Posthumous degrees are provided to the family of the deceased student as a meaningful acknowledgement of the student’s accomplishments and legacy while attending the University of Colorado. This policy supports accreditation standard criteria and procedures under which posthumous degrees may be awarded to a Denver Campus or Anschutz Medical Campus student, at the time of their death, prior to completing degree requirements.

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 Provost or designee, academic degrees may be awarded posthumously. The 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 or 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 or as otherwise defined by their program of study for students at the Anschutz Medical Campus; 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 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, unless explicitly requested otherwise by the family. The Provost's Office must notify the Office of the Registrar at least three weeks prior to the commencement ceremony, so that the student's diploma is ready in time to be awarded at the commencement ceremony.

If a family member is unable to attend the commencement ceremony, the Office of the Registrar will send the diploma to a family member as determined by the campus liaison identified per [Campus Administrative Policy 7027, University Response Following a Student Death](#).

G. POSTHUMOUS DEGREES ALTERNATIVE NOMINATION

In rare instances, the Provost or designee 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 Provost's Office for approval.

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
January 1, 2021: Revised
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.
January 1, 2021: Minor clarifications made.
3. Initial Policy Effective Date: April 13, 2004
4. Cross References/Appendix:
 - Campus Administrative Policy 7027, University Response Following a Student Death