Graduate School Posthumous Degree Policy

Washington State University

Posthumous Degree Policy for Graduate Students

Approved Spring 2011

Washington State University may confer posthumous graduate degrees upon students who are deceased prior to but nearing formal completion of all degree requirements of the programs being pursued.

Requirements for Nomination:

1. A graduate 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 (academic probation, continued probation, suspension or expulsion).
2. The student must have been enrolled at time of death (summer excluded), or in continuous doctoral status, approved graduate leave, or their continuous enrollment was interrupted by their injury, illness, or deployment.
3. For graduate students in thesis/dissertation programs, significant coursework should have been completed, and the student should have commenced the research project; at least 80% of the program requirements must been met by the student. Graduate students in non-thesis programs should have been within one semester of completing the work required for award of the master’s degree.
4. There are no student conduct concerns or active account receivable concerns.
5. The college and program in which the student was enrolled recommend the awarding of a posthumous degree.

Nomination/Approval Process:

1. The request for a posthumous degree must be made by a family member, department chair, director of program or faculty member to the dean of the appropriate college for consideration and to begin the formal process.
2. The dean of the college in which the student was enrolled may recommend the candidate for a posthumous degree in the form of a formal written request to the Dean of the Graduate School. The request must include the name and ID of the student, the degree to be awarded, and the recommended semester for degree conferral.
3. If supported by the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the Graduate School will submit the recommendation to the university Provost and President for formal approval. If approved by the Provost and President,
   o The Dean of the Graduate School will begin the process for degree posting and commencement proceedings, if applicable.
   o The dean of the college will inform the immediate family of the university's decision and desire to recognize their student with this honor. If the family desires to represent the student and receive the diploma at a commencement ceremony, this must be relayed to the Graduate School for planning.
Miscellaneous Details/Considerations:

1. The posthumous degree will be printed like other degrees 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. Exceptions to the aforementioned minimum requirements may be considered in special cases, with support of the Dean of the Graduate School and approval of the Provost and President.