

**COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON**
OFFICIAL DIVISIONAL POLICY
Academic Affairs Division

Posthumous Degree Policy

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1.0 Introduction

A posthumous degree may be awarded for a deceased student upon the recommendation of the relevant Dean or Deans and as supported by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (hereafter, “Provost”) and approved by the President.

2.0 Eligibility

A student who dies while actively pursuing a degree at the College of Charleston (hereafter, “College”), or on an approved leave of absence, may be considered for either a Posthumous Degree or a Degree in Memoriam based on the following criteria:

2.1 Posthumous Degree:

The student must have been in good academic standing, making satisfactory progress towards degree completion, and enrolled in courses needed to complete the requirements for an undergraduate or graduate degree.

- An undergraduate student must have already completed at least 90 semester hours, and must have completed at least 30 credit hours at the College.

- A graduate student must have been within one semester of completing the coursework for the degree, or must have completed at least 75% of the graduate credits required by the graduate program of study.
- For graduate degrees requiring a research project (dissertation, thesis or research paper), the research proposal must have been completed to the satisfaction of the committee members.

2.2 Degree in Memoriam:

A deceased student who was in good academic standing and did not meet the requirements for a Posthumous Degree may be awarded a Degree in Memoriam. Such a degree will read “Bachelor of Arts in Memoriam, “Bachelor of Science in Memoriam, “Master of Arts in Memoriam,” “Ph.D. in Memoriam,” etc., and depending upon the degree the student was pursuing.

2.3 The determination that either posthumous degree is to be awarded, consistent with these criteria, shall be supported by the Provost and approved by the President. The decision of the President is final.

2.4 Posthumous degree award requests for degree programs jointly administered by the College and other universities will be reviewed on an individual basis by the designated academic representatives of the participating institutions, contingent on the willingness of all partner institutions to consider such requests.

3.0 Date of Award for Posthumous Degrees

A posthumous degree shall be awarded consistent with the regular degree conferral cycle of the College, following the support of the Provost and final decision of the President, to award the posthumous degree.

4.0 Presentation of Posthumous Degrees

The President, Provost, and/or Dean makes a personal presentation to the family with the diploma as provided by the Office of the Registrar. If a presentation is not possible or desired, the diploma may be made available to an appropriate family or other representative by the Office of the Provost or the Office of the President.

If a posthumous degree is awarded, the deceased student’s name will be listed in the next possible Commencement Program or Bulletin, parenthetically noted “Posthumous.”

5.0 Recognition of Deceased Students and Alumni/Alumnae

No provision of this Policy shall prevent the College of Charleston Alumni Association or any academic or administrative unit of the College from appropriately honoring the contributions, accomplishments, or memory of a deceased student, alumna, or alumnus. However, only the President, with the Provost's support, shall have the authority to approve the awarding of a posthumous degree.

6.0 Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

Provost (or Provost's Designee), Office of the Provost

7.0 Departments/Offices Affected by this Policy

Office of the President

Office of the Provost

All Academic Deans, Departments, and Academic Programs

Graduate School

Student Affairs

Office of the Registrar

8.0 Procedures Related to this Policy

See Appendix A, as attached to this Divisional Policy.

9.0 Related Policies, Documents or Forms

Commencement policies (see Commencement website)

10.0 Review Schedule

Approved: August 2004

Revised: August 2023

Next Review Date: October 1, 2028

Signed: 

Suzanne Austin, Executive Vice President and Provost

APPENDIX A

Award Procedures for Posthumous Degrees

The following procedures shall be used in reviewing requests for and awarding posthumous degrees:

- Family or friends of the deceased, or agents of the College, must contact the appropriate academic unit to request the awarding of a posthumous degree.
- The request must be in writing with a copy of the student death notification (e.g., state death notification form, newspaper article, funeral service program).
- The Department Chair or Program Director of the appropriate academic unit will forward to the Dean their recommendation with the aforementioned request along with a cover letter addressing the criteria of the posthumous degree and a complete copy of the student's CofC DegreeWorks audit. The Dean will then make a recommendation to the Office of the Provost, who will forward a recommendation to the President for awarding of the posthumous degree. Requests also may be initiated by a Dean or other academic administrator.
- With the assistance of the Graduate School and/or the Office of the Registrar, as appropriate, the Office of the Provost reviews the student's record to determine if the student has met the requirements for a posthumous degree. The determination that a posthumous degree is to be awarded shall be made by the President with support by the Provost.
- Upon receiving the President's decision from the Office of the Provost, the Dean or other designated College administrator shall notify the individual who made the original request of that decision.
- If the request for a posthumous degree is approved, the Office of the Registrar will produce/order the diploma with the words "Honoris Causa" printed on the same and coordinate with the respective dean and/or chair/program director the diploma's delivery.