

Posthumous Degree Policy

Policy Statement:

This policy defines the circumstances under which a posthumous degree may be awarded to a student who passes away while matriculated in an ESF degree program.

Policy Description:

Under certain circumstances, a posthumous degree may be awarded when a student passes away prior to completing their degree requirements.

For undergraduate students a posthumous degree can be considered under the following conditions together:

- The student has completed 75% or more of their bachelor's degree or associated degree credit requirements.
- Student completed at least 24 credits in residency at ESF.
- The student was actively matriculated at the time of their passing.
- The student was in good standing, both academically and with respect to conduct.

For graduate students a posthumous degree can be considered under the following conditions:

- The student was approaching completion of their program. For professional programs, the student must have been in their final semester; for research-based MS and PhD programs the student must have made significant progress towards their thesis/dissertation (e.g., has completed writing at least 50 percent of the PhD dissertation or master's degree thesis).
- The student was actively matriculated at the time of their passing.
- The student was in good standing, both academically and with respect to conduct.

A request for consideration of a posthumous award can be made by the student's parent, legal guardian, partner, relative, or legal equivalent to the department/division chair of the program in which the student was pursuing their degree. The chair will make a formal request, including any supporting documentation, to the Associate Provost of Academic Administration (APAA). The APAA will review the student's records and decide whether the above criteria have been met. If the APAA makes a favorable decision in support of granting the degree, they will instruct the Registrar's Office to confer the degree posthumously and issue a diploma to the requesting party. The conferral will reflect the next regular institutional conferral date following the death of the student.

If the APAA does not approve the request, they will write a letter to the department and requesting party to explain the reason(s) for the denial. Any grievance and need for arbitration in the awarding of a Posthumous Degree will follow the standard grievance procedure as described in the students' academic handbook.