Information

Awarding Posthumous Degrees

Effective

September 23, 2022

Applicability

This policy applies to the University Community (administrators, faculty, staff, and students).

Administrative Authority

Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Responsible Unit

Dean of Student's Office

SAC W301

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History

This policy was approved by the University of Louisville Board of Trustees on September 23, 2022.

Revision Date(s):

Reviewed Date(s): November 15, 2025

Categories

Statement:

In the event that a University of Louisville student passes away, a posthumous degree may be awarded. The process is outlined below.

The faculty of the home department of the deceased student may choose to approve a motion for a posthumous degree, provided the following conditions are met:

- The student was in good academic standing at the time of death;
- The student had completed 90+ hours toward a baccalaureate degree;*
- The degree is recommended by department/program faculty; and
- The departmental recommendation is endorsed by the academic unit through the Dean.

Once the Dean has endorsed the departmental recommendation for posthumous degree, the Provost will review the recommendation. If approved, the student is listed as a candidate with the appropriate class in the next Commencement program.

Following the awarding of a posthumous degree, units or departments may plan a private ceremony with the family and appropriate departmental personnel, usually facilitated by the Dean or other university official as agreed.

If the student does not meet the criteria for the awarding of a posthumous degree but the academic unit wishes to acknowledge the student's memory in some way, it is acceptable to work with the Registrar's Office to award a memorial degree to recognize that the deceased student has enriched the lives of others while enrolled at UofL and will be remembered within the University community.

*If the student is in graduate or professional school, the process is the same but is governed by the conventions of the unit or the profession, especially in the required hours completed. For Graduate School students, the Graduate School Dean must also endorse the departmental recommendation. Each unit or department may have

slightly different requirements; however, a student working toward a doctoral degree must have completed comprehensive exams, be making progress on the dissertation, and be recommended by the faculty and Dean.