

Awarding Academic Recognition Posthumously

Date of Current Version: April 2015

Responsible Office: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides the procedures for awarding academic recognition to deceased undergraduate and graduate students.

2. AUTHORITY

The Board of Visitors has the authority to enact policies for the university. Where this authority has not been exercised by the board, it is delegated to the president. The President has delegated to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs the establishment of policies and procedures in the Division of Academic Affairs.

3. DEFINITIONS

Academic Program

A course of study that involves any set of courses and experiences which have been identified by the university as satisfying curricular requirements. Includes majors, minors, concentrations, pre-professional programs and professional programs.

Academic Unit

An academic department or its functional equivalent.

Degree

An academic title conferred on students who complete a unified program of study.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy relates to academic awards awarded through the Division of Academic Affairs to deceased students.

5. POLICY

A degree or certificate of academic achievement may be awarded to a student who dies before a degree is conferred or all requirements for a degree are met.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Posthumous Award of a Degree

- 6.1.1 When a student dies after completing all degree requirements but before the degree is conferred, the degree will be conferred posthumously at a regular commencement ceremony or in a private setting.
- 6.1.2 If a student dies within one semester of degree completion, the university may waive final requirements and approve awarding of a degree to the student. This review process will be coordinated through the office of the Vice Provost for Academic Development, who will make a recommendation to the Office of the President. The President will make the final determination of award.

- 6.1.3 The following guidelines will govern the awarding of the degree:
- The student must have been in good academic standing at the university.
 - The student must have been enrolled at James Madison University within the previous 12 months.
 - Degrees will only be conveyed with family assent, typically secured from the parents of an unmarried student or the spouse of a married student.
 - The academic unit must support the awarding of the degree.
 - The Graduate School must support the awarding of the degree for graduate students.
 - University Studies must support the awarding of the degree for undeclared students.

6.2 Posthumous Award of a Certificate of Academic Achievement

- 6.2.1 To honor to a student who dies before completing his/her undergraduate or graduate degree, James Madison University may award a Certificate of Academic Achievement. The approval process will be coordinated through the Vice Provost for Academic Development, who will make a recommendation to the Office of the President. The President will make the final determination of award.
- 6.2.2 The following guidelines will govern awarding of the certificate:
- The student must have been in good academic standing at the university.
 - The student must have been enrolled at James Madison University within the previous 12 months.
 - Certificates will only be conveyed with family assent, typically secured from the parents of an unmarried student or the spouse of a married student.
 - The academic unit must support the awarding of the degree.
 - The Graduate School must support the awarding of the degree for graduate students.
 - University Studies must support the awarding of the degree for undeclared students.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

An academic unit can initiate the request to award a degree or certificate of academic achievement.

The Vice Provost for Academic Development will coordinate the process for awarding a posthumous degree or certificate of academic achievement.

The President will approve the granting of a posthumous degree or certificate of academic achievement.

The Office of the President will coordinate for arrangements for the posthumous degree or certificate of academic achievement conferral.

8. SANCTIONS

Failure to comply with this policy and referenced procedures may result in sanctions commensurate with the severity and frequency of the offense.

9. EXCLUSIONS

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs may grant exceptions to this policy in the best interests of the institution.

10. INTERPRETATION

The authority to interpret this policy rests with the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Approved: A. Jerry Benson
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: April 29, 2015