

Title/Subject: **POSTHUMOUS ACADEMIC RECOGNITION**

Applies to: faculty staff students student employees visitors contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: July 30, 2018

Contact for More Information: Provost's Office

Board Policy Administrative Policy Procedure Guideline

BACKGROUND:

This document provides guidelines for the awarding of posthumous academic recognition to current CMU students who, regrettably, died while pursuing their studies. In some cases, family members request recognition be given to the student for their academic achievements. Students who have completed all, or most, of the degree requirements may be awarded the degree posthumously. Students who are early in their academic career, may be awarded a Certificate of Academic Achievement.

PURPOSE:

This policy describes the criteria and procedures for awarding academic recognition through the Academic Division to deceased undergraduate and graduate students.

DEFINITIONS:

Academic Program - A structured ensemble of courses and/or requirements designed to achieve significant educational outcomes. Majors, minors, certificates, and degrees are examples of academic programs.

Academic Unit - For purposes of this policy, an academic unit is a college, department, school, or interdisciplinary council.

Degree - An academic credential conferred on students who complete a unified program of study.

POLICY:

A degree or Certificate of Academic Achievement may be awarded to a student who dies before all academic requirements are met. This policy applies to all students: on campus, online and off-site; undergraduate, graduate and College of Medicine who pass away prior to completing their academic program. This policy does not apply to academic minors and/or certificate programs.

Authority: George E. Ross, President
History: New Policy
Indexed as: funeral, grief, death, absence.

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PROCEDURE:

1. A family member, including but not limited to a parent, guardian, spouse/partner, or adult child, may initiate procedures for awarding posthumous recognition of academic achievement by contacting the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.
2. A representative of the deceased student's family shall be provided with both a copy of this policy and procedural instructions for exercising a request for review of the academic records for determination of recognition per guidelines established per this policy.
3. Recognition of posthumous undergraduate academic achievement
 - 3.1. If 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 at the family's request.
 - 3.2. If a student dies prior to completing all degree requirements, the following guidelines will govern the awarding of the degree, waiving the remaining degree requirements. At the time of death, the student must have been:
 - 3.2.1 in good academic standing at the university,
 - 3.2.2 continuously enrolled¹ at Central Michigan University within seven years of initial matriculation to Central Michigan University, and
 - 3.2.3 completed at least 86 semester credit hours (senior standing) toward the degree.
 - 3.2.4 If the student meets all of these conditions, the degree will be conferred posthumously at a regularly scheduled Commencement Ceremony or in a private setting at the family's request.
 - 3.3. If a student dies before completing the requirements stated in 3.2, was in good standing and continuously enrolled¹ at Central Michigan University but has not received enough credits to qualify for the posthumous award of a degree, Central Michigan University may award a Certificate of Academic Achievement. Certificates of Academic Achievement are not awarded during a Commencement Ceremony.
4. Recognition of posthumous graduate academic achievement
 - 4.1. If a student dies after completing all degree requirements but before the degree is conferred, the degree will be conferred posthumously at a regularly scheduled Commencement Ceremony or in a private setting at the family's request.
 - 4.2. If a student dies prior to completing all degree requirements, the following guidelines will govern the awarding of the degree, waiving the remaining degree requirements. At the time of death the student must have:
 - 4.2.1 been in good academic standing at the university,
 - 4.2.2 been continuously enrolled¹ at Central Michigan University within seven years of initial matriculation to Central Michigan University, and
 - 4.2.3 completed all course work or be enrolled in the last semester of course work, and if applicable,

¹ Central Michigan University defines continuously enrolled as student enrollment in a minimum of one (1) credit at the University during an Academic Year. Academic Year is defined as August to July.

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- 4.2.3.1 successfully completed comprehensive exams, received approval from the student's graduate committee and begun work on the dissertation, thesis, research paper, creative project, and/or internship to a point where the student's committee feels confident that the project would have been completed successfully, or
 - 4.2.3.2 students enrolled in the College of Medicine must have completed their first two years of coursework and be approved for year-three clerkships.
- 4.3. If a student dies before completing the requirements as stated in 4.2, was in good standing and continuously enrolled¹ at Central Michigan University, but has not progressed far enough to qualify for the posthumous award of a degree, Central Michigan University may award a Certificate of Academic Achievement. Certificates of Academic Achievement are not awarded during a Commencement Ceremony.

5. Authority

- 5.1. The approval process will be coordinated through the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs who will:
 - 5.1.1 verify the student's identity and status,
 - 5.1.2 secure permission from the representative of the deceased student's family,
 - 5.1.3 validate the student's academic standing with the Registrar's Office, and
 - 5.1.4 gain approval from the academic unit and from the Dean of the respective academic college, and in the case of graduate students from the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.
- 5.2. Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will make a recommendation to the Executive Vice President/Provost, who will make the final determination of the award and will inform the Office of the President. Each case will be considered independently.
- 5.3. The authority to interpret this policy rests with the Executive Vice President/Provost.
- 5.4. The Office of the President will coordinate printing and awarding of the degree/Certificate of Academic Achievement.
- 5.5. The Office of the President may grant exceptions to this policy if in the best interest of the institution. Any extraordinary cases or exceptions to this policy will be considered at the sole discretion of the Office of the President after consultation with the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the Executive Vice President/Provost.
- 5.6. The decision of the Office of the President as to whether to award a degree or Certificate of Academic Achievement is final and there is no appeal process.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.