

University of Mary Washington
Proposed Policies on Posthumous Degrees and In Memoriam Degrees

July 29, 2015

* POLICY NAME:	Posthumous and <i>In Memoriam</i> Degrees
* POLICY TYPE:	Choose an item.
POLICY #:	To be completed by University Policy Manager
*STATUS:	Choose an item.
*CONTACT OFFICE:	Office of the Provost
*OVERSIGHT EXECUTIVE:	Provost
*APPLIES TO:	Students, Registrar, Office of Academic and Career Services, all academic departments.
*PURPOSE:	The purpose of this policy is to provide families of deceased students with a meaningful acknowledgement of the student's accomplishments and legacy while, at the same time, balancing the need for and upholding academic and institutional integrity in the awarding of degrees.
DEFINITIONS:	<p>Posthumous degree – a regular UMW degree that is included as part of UMW's official count of degrees, is reported officially to the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV), but was awarded posthumously.</p> <p><i>In Memoriam</i> Degree – a recognition provided to honor a deceased student's progress toward the degree. The <i>In Memoriam</i> degree is not included in the official count of degrees and is not reported to SCHEV.</p>
*POLICY STATEMENT:	<i>This policy provides for the award of either a Posthumous or an In Memoriam Degree in recognition of the achievements made by a deceased student. These awards provide appropriate symbols of academic accomplishment that both recognize a student's achievements and preserve the academic integrity of degrees awarded by UMW.</i>
PROCEDURES:	
* General Procedures for Implementation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Posthumous or <i>In Memoriam</i> Degrees may be awarded to either undergraduate or graduate students. 2. A student receiving either a Posthumous or an <i>In Memoriam</i> Degree must have been enrolled in classes and in good academic standing at the time of her/his death. 3. The approval process for a Posthumous Degree is as follows:

A. At the time of her/his death, the student must have been enrolled in the necessary credits required to have completed the degree had the student completed those courses.

B. The academic department in which the student was majoring must make a recommendation in writing to the College Dean requesting the award of a Posthumous Degree. In the Colleges of Business and Education, which are not organized by departments, this request is made by action of the faculty. Undergraduate education students must be nominated for consideration by the academic program in which they were earning their undergraduate major.

C. If the College Dean agrees that the award of a Posthumous Degree is appropriate, the Dean will request verification from the Office of the Registrar that the deceased student would have been able to graduate had she/he completed the semester of enrollment at the time of the student's death. The College Dean will also consult with the Dean of Students in to ensure that there were no pending student conduct or disciplinary issues that would negatively affect the decision to award a Posthumous Degree.

D. If the College Dean decides that the degree should be awarded posthumously, the Dean writes a letter to the Provost requesting the approval of the degree. If the Provost approves the request, the College Dean is notified in writing with a copy provided to the University Registrar.

4. The **approval process for an *In Memoriam* Degree** is as follows:

A. At the time of her/his death, the student must have earned at least 60 credits toward an undergraduate degree or at least 18 credits toward a graduate degree.

B. The academic department in which the student was majoring must make a recommendation in writing to the College Dean requesting the award of an *In Memoriam* Degree. In the Colleges of Business and Education, which are not organized by departments, this request is made by action of the faculty. Undergraduate education students must be nominated for consideration by the academic program in which they were earning their undergraduate major. Students who have not declared a major at the time of their death may be nominated for consideration, either by an academic department, a College faculty, or the College Dean.

C. Upon receiving a request for the award of an *In Memoriam* degree, the College Dean will review the student's record and consult with the Dean of Students.

D. If the College Dean decides that an *In Memoriam* degree should be awarded, the Dean writes a letter to the Provost requesting the approval of the degree. If the Provost approves the request, the College Dean is notified in writing with a copy provided to the University Registrar.

5. Conferring the degrees.

A. **Posthumous Degree** – Because this is an official UMW degree, a diploma is provided and it may be awarded at the Commencement ceremony where the student would have been eligible to receive the

degree if the student's family wishes for this to occur. Or the family may request for the degree to be awarded at a smaller, private gathering to be arranged between the family and the Office of the President.

1. The official UMW diploma provided to the family receiving the Posthumous Degree bears the date of the Commencement ceremony and it does not state that diploma was awarded posthumously.
2. Any Latin Honors or awards of "Academic Distinction" for which the student would have been eligible will be made and listed in the Commencement program.
3. Other awards the student earned (such as membership in Phi Beta Kappa) will be included in the Commencement program if so desired by the family. The award of departmental honors may also be noted if the student was eligible and the department has agreed to award those honors. However, the student will not be eligible for the Colgate Darden Award.
4. The Office of the Registrar will note the award of a posthumous degree on the student's transcript, using the wording "Degree Awarded Posthumously" in the comments section on the official transcript.

B. ***In Memoriam Degree*** – This degree is awarded with a document that is similar in design to a UMW diploma but different enough to distinguish it from the official UMW diploma. The document is signed by the College Dean, the Provost, the University Registrar, and the President and bears the wording "*In Memoriam Degree*."

1. Because this degree is not an official UMW diploma, it is not usually awarded at Commencement but is instead given to the student's family at a ceremony arranged by the family and the Office of the Present. In any case deemed appropriate by the President, the award may be presented at a Commencement ceremony, assuming that the family wishes for that to be the case.
2. Latin Honors or awards of "Academic Distinction" are not made to students receiving an *In Memoriam Degree*.
3. The Office of the Registrar will note the award of an *In Memoriam Degree* on the student's transcript. A definition of the term "*In Memoriam Degree*" will be added to the Transcript Key that appears on the back of the official transcript.
4. This document provided does not use the word "diploma" in any way. In place of the language appearing on a UMW diploma, the *In Memoriam* degree will instead state the following:

[student name]

as a student in good standing at her (his) untimely death, and having met the established qualifying criteria, was hereby awarded this *In Memoriam Degree* in recognition of her (his) significant academic achievements and in honor of having made substantial progress toward an undergraduate (a graduate) degree at the University.

Provided under the seal of the University, the signatures of the duly authorized officers are hereunto affixed. Given on this date [insert date]

6. Additional provisions regarding the awarding of Posthumous or *In Memoriam* Degrees:

	<p>A. For courses they were enrolled in at the time of their death, students approved to receive a Posthumous Degree will be issued either at the grade for which they were eligible at the time of their death or a passing grade (PA). Grade determinations are made following discussion with the faculty member teaching the course in question.</p> <p>B. For courses they were enrolled in at the time of their death, students approved to receive an In Memoriam Degree will be issued grades of W. Any courses that the student was pre-registered in for a subsequent semester will be erased from the student’s record.</p> <p>C. Full status as alumna/alumnus of the University is accorded to those receiving Posthumous or <i>In Memoriam</i> degrees. Family members will be added to the mailing list for receipt of all alumni mailings and publications. If the family wishes not to receive these communications, their names will be removed from such lists. The Office of Alumni Relations is charged with ensuring that the family is made aware of these options.</p>
<p>* Process for Developing, Approving, and Amending Procedures:</p>	<p>The Office of the Provost is responsible for oversight of this agreement. Reviews, adjustments, and/or amendments will be undertaken on an as needed basis.</p>
<p>* Publication and Communication:</p>	<p>The Office of the Provost will be responsible for notifying faculty and staff about this new policy.</p>
<p>* Compliance Monitoring and Reporting: <small>(How is compliance with the policy monitored and reported?)</small></p>	<p>The Offices of each College Dean, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of The Registrar are responsible for ensuring compliance with all provisions of this policy.</p>
<p>RELATED INFORMATION:</p>	
<p>Policy Background:</p>	<p>While UMW has in the past presented posthumous degrees to the families of students who have died in their final semester, there was no complete outline of the procedures to be followed. This policy addresses that gap. Realization of the fact that the families of other students who have made substantial progress toward a degree would appreciate a recognition of their student’s effort led to the development of provisions for awarding an <i>In Memoriam</i> Degree.</p>
<p>* Policy Category:</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Category Cross Reference:</p>	<p>Leave Blank – this will be filled in by the University Policy Manager.</p>

Related Policies:	
HISTORY:	
* Origination Date:	July 2015
* Approved by:	[Faculty governance will need to approve. Because the Code of Virginia gives the power to confer degrees to the Board, this policy should go all the way to the Rector and Visitors of the University of Mary Washington for final approval.]
* Approval Date:	[added when the agreement is approved]
* Effective Date:	Academic year 2015-16
* Review Process: <i>(How is this policy reviewed to ensure that it is effective? By whom? How often?)</i>	When conditions necessitating review arise, policy review starts with the Provost's Academic Affairs Council, proceeds through the necessary levels of faculty governance, and is then finally reviewed and approved by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Mary Washington.
* Next Scheduled Review:	As needed.
Revision History:	