

Procedures for Awarding Posthumous Degrees

USSS-03



About This Policy

Effective Date:

01-01-1111

Last Updated:

Responsible University Office:

University Student Services and Systems

Responsible University Administrator:

Executive Vice President for University Academic Affairs

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Policy Statement

A candidate must have completed 85% of credit hour requirements and most of the requirements for the major.

Requests to award a posthumous degree should emanate from the dean's office and must receive the approval of the campus vice chancellor for academic affairs, and the campus chancellor or provost.

Copies of the written request, plus the requisite approvals, should be sent to the student's school recorder, the registrar, the campus alumni director and University Ceremonies.

Generally, posthumous degrees are conferred during Commencement season, but not at the main graduation ceremonies. The intent is to honor the student and to celebrate his or her accomplishments in a meaningful way while avoiding an awkward public event that may not be of comfort to the family.

Several campuses have found that a small and dignified conferral before or after the main ceremony provides the right mix of celebration and condolence. At IU South Bend, for example, a degree was presented to a family in a private room before the start of Commencement. The president spoke and presented the degree and the chancellor greeting the family. It took about 10 minutes, and was extremely moving. The family then attended the main ceremony. Their student was listed in the program and, in this case, was mentioned by the chancellor in her remarks.

Posthumous degree conferrals vary case by case. Thus, each campus will be responsible for working with the family to determine the time and place for the conferral and for providing pertinent information about the candidate to University Ceremonies, which will write a brief script. Generally, the president will preside, with the chancellor and appropriate dean in attendance. The president, chancellor and dean should robe. There may be occasions when the president is not able to attend. In those cases the chancellor or provost may confer the degree with advance approval of the president.

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