

Awards Policy - Aegrotat and Posthumous Conferral

November 2021 - This document is rescinded and replaced by the [Conferral and Graduation Policy](#).

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to establish the conditions under which aegrotat and posthumous awards can be granted.

Section 2 - Background

(2) The practice of granting an award to a student who has been overtaken by illness originated in Britain, and has a long history within universities, although such awards are not customarily made indiscriminately. Traditionally an aegrotat award was a degree or course considered as passed by a student too ill to complete all the course requirements. Within the Australian Higher Education system an aegrotat award is not customarily granted on grounds of illness alone. It is granted posthumously on occasion, where a student has met an untimely death. It is also appropriate in a situation where a student has sustained an incapacitating injury that precludes them from completing their studies.

(3) If a student has completed all course requirements, but dies before the ceremony at which they would normally have been presented with their award, the award can be presented to a member of the family (or other appropriate person) during the graduation ceremony.

(4) The granting of an award posthumously provides the opportunity to acknowledge a [deceased] student's contribution to the institution, and to recognise the role the University plays in the lives of those who work and study within it. It also provides a mark of distinction that is well received by both peers and relatives, and for the sharing of grief and support between surviving relatives, friends and peers.

Section 3 - Glossary

- a. "Aegrotat" - permanent incapacity that precludes the completion of an award course.
- b. "Posthumous" - awarded after the death of the student.

(5) An aegrotat award may be conferred upon a student who has sustained an incapacitating injury or illness that precludes the completion of their studies, or upon a student who has died before they are able to complete their studies (a posthumous aegrotat award).

(6) A posthumous award may be conferred upon a student who has died "in aegrotat" (see above - a posthumous aegrotat award) or who has completed the requirements for their award but died before they are able to graduate (a posthumous award).

Section 4 - Eligibility

Coursework Programs

(7) The granting of an aegrotat or posthumous award in a coursework program may be considered in cases where:

- a. a student has died or sustained an incapacitating injury or illness that precludes the completion of a course;
- b. at the time of injury, illness or death, the student must have had normally not more than the equivalent of one session of full time study remaining to the complete the course;
- c. the student's results whilst studying at the University were such that it is reasonable to conclude that the student would have successfully completed the course and qualified for the award in question;
- d. it can be confirmed that the conferral of an award will not cause offence or undue stress to the relatives of the deceased, the incapacitated student or others within the University or the community.

Research Higher Degree Programs

(8) The granting of an aegrotat or posthumous award in a research higher degree program may be considered in cases where:

- a. a student has died or sustained an incapacitating injury or illness that precludes the completion of the research higher degree program;
- b. at the time of injury, illness or death, the student must have completed sufficient literature reviews, laboratory work, papers and publications and thesis drafts or other assessable evidence to indicate that, had the death or incapacity not intervened, he or she would have satisfied requirements for the research higher degree program,
- c. the student's research whilst studying at the University was such that it is reasonable to conclude that the student would have successfully completed the research higher degree program and qualified for the award in question;
- d. it can be confirmed that the conferral of an award will not cause offence or undue stress to the relatives of the deceased, the incapacitated student or others within the University or the community.

Consent of Next of Kin

(9) In the interests of courtesy and sensitivity a posthumous award should only be made with the knowledge and consent of the next of kin and/or immediate family members.

Section 5 - Approval of Aegrotat or Posthumous Awards

Coursework Programs

(10) The process for the approval of an aegrotat or posthumous award in a coursework program should be initiated by the Course Director or Course Coordinator of the course the student was studying in, and endorsed by the relevant Executive Dean of Faculty.

(11) The request for an aegrotat or posthumous award should be submitted to Division of Student Administration by the Executive Dean of Faculty, before the closing date for applications to graduate. The application should make reference to the circumstances surrounding the submission for the award.

(12) Where the submission from the Course Director or Course Coordinator meets the criteria for an aegrotat or

posthumous award and has the endorsement of the Executive Dean of Faculty, Division of Student Administration will forward the request to Secretary of the University Council with a recommendation that the award be conferred.

Aegrotat Awards

(13) Where the granting of an aegrotat award has been approved, the student or relatives of the student should be contacted by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration in relation to whether the student will attend to receive the award or a relative will receive the award on behalf of the student.

Posthumous Awards

(14) Where the granting of a posthumous award has been approved, the relatives of the deceased student should be invited by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration to receive the award on behalf of the student.

Research Higher Degree Programs

(15) In the case of research higher degree programs, the student must have completed sufficient literature reviews, laboratory work, papers and publications and thesis drafts or other assessable evidence to indicate that, had the death or incapacity not intervened, he or she would have satisfied requirements for the degree.

(16) In such a case, the Principal Supervisor may submit a recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Engagement) providing details of the work completed and the current status of the thesis.

(17) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Engagement) may appoint two assessors, one of whom may have been the supervisor and one of whom may be external to the University, to review the available work in order to determine that primary requirements have been met.

(18) If such results in a unanimous recommendation to proceed, the supervisor may be requested to insert supplementary and/or explanatory material to facilitate the examiner's understanding of the candidate's research contribution, and to facilitate production of the thesis or body of work in preparation for examination. A statement should be appended to the thesis indicating the work was undertaken by the supervisor on the student's behalf.

(19) The thesis should then be submitted for examination in accordance with the Progress, Supervision and Assessment Policy: Theses and Other Examinable Research Works. Each examiner must provide unequivocal advice as to whether evidence exists to indicate that, if the death or incapacity had not intervened, in the normal course of events, requirements for the award would have been satisfied.

(20) Following the examination of the thesis or portfolio, the Executive Dean of Faculty will forward the thesis or portfolio, together with the examiners' reports and other documentation as required in the Progress, Supervision and Assessment Policy: Theses and Other Examinable Research Works to the Research Committee. Where the submission from the Executive Dean of Faculty meets the criteria for an aegrotat or posthumous award and has the endorsement of the Research Committee, Division of Student Administration will forward the request to Secretary of the University Council with a recommendation that the award be conferred.

Aegrotat Awards

(21) Where the granting of an aegrotat award has been approved, the student or relatives of the student should be contacted by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration in relation to whether the student will attend to receive the award or a relative will receive the award on behalf of the student.

Posthumous Awards

(22) Where the granting of a posthumous award has been approved, the relatives of the deceased student should be invited by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration to receive the award on behalf of the student.

Section 6 - Arrangements for the Conferral of an Aegrotat or Posthumous Award

Conferral at a Graduation Ceremony

(23) In those cases where a relative has agreed to accept the award on behalf of an incapacitated or deceased graduand, the relative receiving the award on their behalf should be encouraged to sit with other graduands participating in the ceremony, but given the option of sitting with relatives and friends if they would prefer.

(24) If the relative receiving the award elects to sit with the graduands, they should also be given the option of wearing a black academic gown (but not a hood and trencher or other applicable head wear).

(25) The University will present, to the relatives of the incapacitated or deceased graduand, an academic hood applicable to the award conferred as a memorial gift.

Conferral of Aegrotat Awards

(26) If an aegrotat award is to be presented, the relevant Course Presenter will read the graduates name as it appears in the alphabetical listing of graduates.

(27) The Course Presenter will pause to allow the graduate immediately preceding the aegrotat award to leave the stage before announcing the aegrotat presentation.

(28) An usher (marshal) will signal the student or the relative of the aegrotat graduate to approach the stage, and will direct them to the top of the stairs, stage left.

(29) The Course Presenter will announce the aegrotat presentation (see sample text below), then wait until the student or the relative has left the stage before recommencing presentation of awards with the words:

(30) CHANCELLOR, ALSO GRADUATING WITH A [Name of Course] ARE (read remaining names on the list).

(31) Sample script for presentation of an aegrotat award (Note: the wording of this part may be amended if, after consultation with the graduand or the family of the graduand, it is felt that more appropriate wording in relation to the incapacity of the graduand should be included):

(32) CHANCELLOR...[Graduate's Full Name] [DUE TO A SERIOUS ILLNESS/INJURY IS UNABLE TO COMPLETE] HIS/HER DEGREE. HOWEVER, HAVING COMPLETED ALL BUT HIS/HER FINAL SESSION OF STUDY, AND ATTAINING RESULTS THAT INDICATE HE/SHE WOULD HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE COURSE, THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL HAS APPROVED THE CONFERRAL OF THE AWARD [NAME OF AWARD] WHICH WILL BE RECEIVED TODAY BY [Name of Family Member and their Relationship to the Deceased]

(33) The graduand or relative will cross the stage, shake the Chancellor's hand, then proceed to the Executive Dean who will present them with the testamur (and where the award is to be received by a family member the graduation hood which will be presented in a gift-wrapped box).

The usher (marshal) will brief the graduand and relative about all procedures, and will also brief the graduate who will follow the aegrotat award, so they are made aware of what is to occur.

Conferral of Posthumous Awards

(34) If a posthumous award is to be presented, the relevant Course Presenter will read the deceased graduate's name as it appears in the alphabetical listing of graduates.

The Course Presenter will pause to allow the graduate immediately preceding the posthumous award to leave the

stage before announcing the posthumous presentation.

An usher (marshal) will signal the relative of the deceased graduate to approach the stage, and will direct them to the top of the stairs, stage left.

The Course Presenter will announce the posthumous presentation (see sample text below), then wait till the relative has left the stage before recommencing presentation of awards with the words:

(35) CHANCELLOR, ALSO GRADUATING WITH A [Name of Course] ARE (read remaining names on the list).

(36) Sample script for presentation of a coursework award (Note: the wording of this part may be amended if, after consultation with the family of the graduand, it is felt that more appropriate wording in relation to the incapacity of the graduand should be included):

(37) CHANCELLOR...[Graduate's Full Name] COMPLETED ALL ASPECTS OF THE DEGREE [Name Of Degree] BUT SADLY PASSED AWAY BEFORE THIS CONFERRAL CEREMONY. TO RECEIVE THE AWARD TODAY, I PRESENT [Name of Family Member and their Relationship to the Deceased]

(38) The relative will cross the stage, shake the Chancellor's hand, then proceed to the Executive Dean who will present them with the testamur and the graduation hood (the latter to be presented in a gift-wrapped box). The usher (marshal) will brief the relative about all procedures, and will also brief the graduate who will follow the posthumous award, so they are made aware of what is to occur.

Conferral In Absentia

(39) Not all students who have sustained an incapacitating illness will wish to attend the graduation ceremony and not all families will wish to attend the graduation ceremony to accept the award on behalf of an incapacitated or deceased graduand. If they do not wish to attend, the award will be sent to the graduate or family on request, as for in absentia awards. In such cases the relevant Student Administration Office should liaise with the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration to provide an appropriate letter to be included with the testamur when it is posted out.

Time Limit for the Conferral of Posthumous Award

(40) Wherever possible, posthumous awards should be conferred within two years of the death of the student, and preferably during the ceremony at which the student might otherwise have been expected to graduate.

Section 7 - Testamurs

(41) A testamur conferred in aegrotat or posthumously should not be differentiated from other testamurs, although a special mention during the conferral proceedings is appropriate.

Status and Details

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