



Policy AC025: Posthumous Awards

Recommended for Approval by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Engstrom", written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Engstrom, Ed.D.
Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs,
Pennsylvania Western University

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Lorraine Bernotsky", written over a horizontal line.

R. Lorraine Bernotsky, D.Phil., Interim President,
Pennsylvania Western University

Effective Date: 08/07/2023

A. Intent

To define circumstances by which a degree or diploma may be posthumously awarded.

B. Definition(s)

Degree: An academic award at the associate, baccalaureate, or graduate level denoting the completion of all requirements of an academic program. An example is the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree.

Diploma: The ceremonial document reflecting the awarding of a particular degree.

C. Policy

Upon the death of a student, Pennsylvania Western University may grant a degree or diploma posthumously to the family of the student if the student was in good academic standing. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis. At the time of death, the student must have met the following criteria:

- Minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.00;
- No negative dispositional history, nor active or pending disciplinary actions;
- The death must not be a result of illegal behavior by the student

The registrar and academic dean will evaluate the student's record to determine whether a degree or diploma may be awarded.

D. Procedure(s)

1. Student Affairs will inform the family of the Posthumous Award process during the initial phone conversation following the student death. Should the family request the Posthumous Award, the process will be initiated by Academic Affairs.
2. Upon request for the Posthumous Award by someone outside the family, Student Affairs will contact the family for approval to start the process.
3. The university registrar will initiate the evaluation of the possible awarding of a degree or diploma by completing a degree audit of the student's record.
4. The appropriate academic dean will review the degree audit and student's progress, academic standing, disciplinary or dispositional status and make a recommendation to the Provost.
5. The possible awarding of a degree will be first considered to determine if the student has met all requirements for a degree from the university. If requirements have been met, the student will be awarded the degree posthumously.
6. If all requirements have not been met, the Provost may provide a recommendation to the President regarding the granting of a posthumous diploma.
7. Upon approval, the registrar is responsible for printing the diploma, which will indicate that it is a posthumous award.
8. The degree or diploma will be provided to the family in a manner determined by the President.

E. Related policies

Graduation Requirements Policy (AC028)

F. Contact Information

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Registrar, or Office of the Provost.

G. Policy Review Schedule

All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in BOG, PASSHE or Pennsylvania law would create the need for an immediate change.