



**Policy and Procedures for
Conferral of Aegrotat and Posthumous
Awards
2021-2022**

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION AND POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) The purpose of this Policy is to establish the conditions under which aegrotat and posthumous awards can be granted.
- (2) The following policy and procedures relate to the award of an Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught degree, and a Postgraduate Research Degree in the event of (a) the death of a candidate prior to the completion of their degree (*posthumous degrees*) or (b) a candidate being prevented from completing their degree due to a diagnosis of terminal or debilitating illness (*aegrotat degrees*).
- (3) 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.
- (4) 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.
- (5) The information contained within these guidelines should be referred to alongside the relevant [Regulations](#) and the Guidance for Staff Responding to a Student Death.

SECTION 2 - ELIGIBILITY

Taught Programmes

- (6) The granting of an aegrotat, a posthumous aegrotat, or posthumous award (Regulations J4 and J5) in a taught programme may be considered in cases where:
 - a. a student has died or sustained an injury or illness that precludes the completion of a course;
 - b. 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, or an appropriate exit award. A Certificate of Achievement may be awarded where these conditions are not met.
 - c. Assessment Boards may recommend the award of an aegrotat degree if it is considered that a student's diagnosis of a terminal/debilitating illness would prevent them from successful completion of their degree programme. The student should confirm that they will accept an aegrotat degree prior to confirmation of the award.
 - 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 student or others within the University or the community.

Research Degree Programmes

- (7) The granting of an aegrotat or posthumous award in a research degree programme may be considered in cases where:
 - a. a student has died or sustained an injury or illness that precludes the completion of the research degree programme;
 - b. at the time of injury, illness or death, the student must have completed sufficient assessable components to indicate that, had the death or incapacity not intervened, they would have satisfied requirements for the research 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 degree programme 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.

Partner Programmes

- (8) The granting of an aegrotat or posthumous award for a student studying at a Partner Institution may be considered in cases where:
 - a. a student has died or sustained an incapacitating injury or illness that precludes the completion of the registered taught or research degree Programme;
 - b. Eligibility will be as per (6) and (7) above

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 (or other appropriate individual).

SECTION 4 - APPROVAL OF AEGROTAT OR POSTHUMOUS AWARDS

Taught Programmes

- (10) The process for the approval of an aegrotat or posthumous award in a taught Programme should be initiated by the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment) and endorsed by the relevant Programme Leader and Dean of Faculty or nominee. The application should make reference to the circumstances surrounding the submission for the award
- (11) A posthumous degree shall normally be a named award, as appropriate, except in those cases where professional body requirements dictate otherwise.
- (12) If the student had completed all the assessment requirements for the award, the case should be considered by the appropriate Assessment Board.
- (13) The aegrotat award will be considered as the conclusion of a student's registration on a programme; the student must be offered the opportunity to accept the aegrotat award, or continue on the programme of study in order to achieve the intended programme outcome. If the student agrees to accept the aegrotat award, they will agree that they waive the right to any further assessment/reassessment. If evidence is required it should be from a recognised health professional with sufficient knowledge of the nature and extent of the student's medical situation.
- (14) Where the student is currently registered on a programme of study which includes a professional component, an alternative exit award will be offered; the aegrotat degree will not include the professional award.
- (15) Where the submission meets the criteria for an aegrotat or posthumous award and has the endorsement of the Dean of Faculty, the Academic Registrar (or nominee) will recommend that the award be conferred via an Assessment Board (if there are no grades to be confirmed then an extraordinary assessment board may be convened).
- (16) Awards may be classified, subject to approval of the Academic Registrar.

Research Degree Programmes

- (17) In the case of research degree programmes, the student must have completed sufficient assessable evidence to indicate that, had the death or incapacity not intervened, they would have satisfied requirements for the award for which they are registered.
- (18) In such a case, the Director of Studies may submit a recommendation to the DVC Research, Knowledge Exchange and Engagement, providing details of the work completed and the current status of the thesis.
- (19) The DVC Research, Knowledge Exchange 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.
- (20) If this results in a unanimous recommendation to proceed, the supervisor may be requested to supply explanatory material to facilitate the examiner's understanding of the candidate's research contribution, and to facilitate production of a thesis or body of work in preparation for examination. A statement should be appended to the thesis or body of work indicating it was undertaken by the supervisor on the student's behalf.
- (21) The thesis or body of work should then be submitted for examination in accordance with Research Degree Regulations. 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.
- (22) Following the examination of the thesis or body of work, the Research Degrees Admin Team will forward the examiners' reports, recommendations and other documentation as required in the Research Degree Regulations to the Chair of the Research Degrees Board. Where the submission meets the criteria for an aegrotat or posthumous award and has the endorsement of the Research Degrees Board, the award will be conferred.

Partner Programmes

- (23) The process for the approval of an aegrotat or posthumous award in a validated or joint Programme should be initiated by the Academic Partnership Office or Research Degrees Administration Team as appropriate and endorsed by the relevant Link Tutor and Dean of Faculty. The application should make reference to the circumstances surrounding the submission for the award.
- (24) Where the submission meets the criteria for an aegrotat or posthumous award and has the endorsement of the Dean of Faculty (or nominee), the Academic Registrar (or nominee) will recommend that the award be conferred.

SECTION 5 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONFERRAL AND PRESENTATION OF AN AEGROTAT OR POSTHUMOUS AWARD

Aegrotat Awards

- (25) Where the granting of an aegrotat award has been approved, the student or representative of the student should be contacted by the Dean of Faculty or Partner Institution in relation to whether the student or a representative will attend a graduation ceremony to receive the award.

Posthumous Awards

- (26) Where the granting of a posthumous award has been approved, the next of kin of the deceased student should be invited by the Dean of Faculty or Partner Institution to nominate a representative to receive the award on behalf of the student.

Presentation at a Graduation Ceremony

- (27) In those cases where a representative has agreed to accept the award on behalf of an incapacitated or deceased graduand, they should be invited to sit with other graduands participating in the ceremony, but given the option of sitting with invited guests if they would prefer. (See Graduation Ceremony notes on detailed procedures for presentation of an aegrotat or posthumous award at the ceremony)

Conferral in Absentia

- (28) Not all students who have sustained an illness will wish to attend the graduation ceremony and not all families, or representatives 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 representative on request. In such cases the relevant Assessment Officer should liaise with the Director of Programmes and Dean of Faculty to provide an appropriate letter to be included with the Certificate when it is posted out.

Time Limit for the Conferral of Posthumous Award

- (29) 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 6 - CERTIFICATE

- (30) A Certificate conferred in aegrotat or posthumously should not be differentiated from other Certificates, although a special mention during the Graduation Ceremony is appropriate.

Version 1.0
Approved July 2021
Review date July 2024