

Effective Date	1/23/2026
Policy Number	ACA-PL-106
Sponsor	Provost
Responsible Office	Provost's Office
Next Review Date	1/23/3031

I. REASON FOR POLICY

It may be requested of the University that academic recognition be bestowed posthumously to a deceased student who did not complete degree requirements and who did not meet the prescribed criteria for an honorary degree.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy establishes the conditions and procedures for awarding posthumous degrees to students who pass away before completing their academic programs in accordance with SUNY system-wide guidance. It ensures compassionate recognition of academic achievement while maintaining academic integrity.

Initiating a Request

A request for a posthumous degree may be initiated by the deceased student's family, spouse, significant other, or legal representative. Alternatively, a SUNY Fredonia faculty or staff member may initiate a request, provided the student's family or legal representative consents to the request.

Conditions for Award

- Verification:** The University must verify the student's passing.
- Standing:** The student must have been in good academic and conduct standing at the time of their passing, with consideration given to extenuating circumstances related to their passing that may have impacted their standing.
- Minimum Credits:**
 - Baccalaureate Degree:** A student pursuing a Bachelor's Degree shall normally have completed a minimum of 60 credits with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher.
 - Master's Degree:** A student pursuing a Master's Degree shall normally have completed a minimum of 20 graduate credits with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and substantial progress toward degree completion as determined by the academic department and Dean.
- Latin Honors:** Latin honors may be awarded with a posthumous degree if the student's academic record warrants it.
- Fees:** The diploma and academic transcript shall be issued at no charge to the student's family or legal representative.
- Reporting:** The student's academic record will be marked "Degree conferred posthumously" and coded so that the posthumous degree is not reported in SUNY or external reports (e.g., IPEDS).

7. **No Additional Restrictions:** No additional restrictive criteria or deadlines for requesting a posthumous degree shall be imposed beyond what is stated in this policy.
8. **Exceptions:** The University President, or the Provost as designee, may approve exceptions to these conditions in extraordinary circumstances.
9. **Alternative Honors:** In cases where a posthumous degree cannot be awarded and an exception is not approved, the University may consider alternative forms of recognition to honor the student’s memory and academic contributions.

Approval Process

A request shall be submitted to the student’s Academic Department Chairperson. The Chairperson will review the request, make a recommendation, and forward it to the appropriate Dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost), and President for final approval.

Commencement and Diploma Procedures

If approved, the academic department or appropriate contact person will coordinate with the student’s designated representative(s) or other appropriate individual(s), as determined by the institution, to confirm attendance at the student’s expected commencement ceremony. The President’s Office will arrange VIP seating and coordinate with a department representative to escort the family representative to the stage to accept the degree at the appropriate time.

The President’s Office will instruct the Registrar to order the diploma and update the student’s academic record accordingly. The commencement program and diploma will note that the degree was awarded posthumously. The Registrar will release a copy of the academic record, if requested, to an attorney representing the student’s estate or to the parents or legal representative.

III. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

[Academic Honors University Catalog](#)

IV. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Term	Definition
Good Academic Standing	A status indicating that the student was meeting the academic requirements of their program at the time of their passing, including GPA and progress toward degree completion.

Good Conduct Standing	A status indicating that the student was not under disciplinary action or sanction for violations of the student code of conduct at the time of their passing.
Latin Honors	Academic distinctions (cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude) awarded based on GPA and other criteria, which may also be granted posthumously if the student qualifies.
Posthumous Degree	An academic degree awarded after a student’s death, recognizing the academic work completed and honoring the student’s commitment to their education.

V. CONTACT & ENFORCEMENT

ROLE	CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL - Website
Responsible Office	Provost’s Office	(716) 673-3335	provost@fredonia.edu
Enforcement	Registrar	(716) 673-3171	registrar@fredonia.edu
Policy	University Policy Office	(716) 673-4828	policy@fredonia.edu policy.fredonia.edu