



POSTHUMOUS AWARDS – GUIDELINE

BACKGROUND

Posthumous awards are awarded to students in certain circumstances who have died while studying at the University. Such awards are made in accordance with the [Posthumous Awards and Aegrotat Grades Policy](#). The following guide provides further information on the procedures and options for the family in receiving a posthumous award.

DEALING SENSITIVELY WITH THE FAMILY

The decision to bestow a posthumous award should take into account the wishes of the immediate family. At all times interactions with the family must be undertaken sensitively and with discretion, avoiding the possibility of giving the family unreasonable or incorrect expectations as to the eventual outcome.

The number of University staff contacting the family must be kept to a minimum and contact should be coordinated through the Student Death Response Coordinator in the School. Consequently, the Graduation Team does not contact the family directly.

REQUIREMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN UPCOMING GRADUATIONS

Once a decision to grant a posthumous award is made, the School should contact the Graduation Team at least eight (8) weeks prior to graduation ceremonies to facilitate the inclusion of the posthumous award in upcoming graduations.

At least six (6) weeks prior to upcoming ceremonies, the School should provide:

- The minutes recording the relevant Academic Committee's approval of the award;
- A record that notification of approval of a posthumous award has been forwarded to the Academic Senate and Senate Assessment Committee; and
- Confirmation of how the family wishes to accept the award, having regard to the options for conferral of posthumous awards detailed below.

OPTIONS FOR CONFERRAL OF POSTHUMOUS AWARDS

The following options are available to the family for the conferral of the posthumous award:

1. **Graduation ceremony** - a family member representing the deceased student is presented with the Testamur by the Chancellor or their representative as part of the graduation ceremonies; or
2. **In absentia** - where the Testamur is issued directly to the family.

The family should have the discretion as to how the posthumous award should be conferred.

1. Conferral at Graduation Ceremony

If the family wishes to attend the Graduation ceremony for conferral of the award, the Graduation Team will confirm the ceremony details with the School once ceremony allocations have been finalised. In general, the posthumous award will be scheduled with the relevant cohort of the student's course.

Prior to the ceremonies, the Graduation Team will request the School to provide the following details:

- The number of guests who will attend. The standard protocol is a maximum of 4 guests. Schools should contact the Graduation Team regarding additional capacity where requested.
- Names of all guests
- Name of the person accepting the award
- Name of the school representative who will sit with the family during the ceremony

The School should discuss with the family what they would like to do after the ceremony and make any appropriate arrangements e.g. meet the Dean or members of the University Executive.

On the day, the School representative and family should come to a security officer in the Auditorium and ask for the Assessment & Graduation Manager or Graduation Coordinator. A graduation officer will run through the award presentation process with the family member accepting the award.

The Graduation Team will organise for the testamur to be framed and available at the ceremony to present to the family representative. The award will be presented early in the ceremony, after introductions and presentations of any PhDs. The family representative will be presented with the award by the Chancellor (or their representative) on stage, and offered congratulations by the Dean of the School.

2. Conferral *in absentia*

If the family wishes to receive the Testamur *in absentia*, the Student Death Response Coordinator in the School should advise the Graduation Team who the testamur is to be sent to and the address, or whether the family wishes to collect the testamur in person.

The Graduation Team will organise to have the testamur framed and sent to the family via Registered Post. Note – conferral and production of awards occur during graduation rounds, so the testamur will be sent or available for collection *after* the relevant graduation ceremony.