



Procedures Regarding the Death of a Student and the Award of Posthumous Credentials

DEATH OF A STUDENT AND AWARD OF POSTHUMOUS CREDENTIALS

Effective Date: May 31, 2012
Originating Office: University Registrar
Supersedes: Policy 6.05 (approval date of September, 1988)

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of these Procedures is to ensure:

- 1) that the University's conduct following the death of a student shall be compassionate and respectful
- 2) that necessary administrative procedures are carried out as quickly, efficiently, and unobtrusively as possible.
- 3) that all appropriate University academic and administrative units are informed of the death of a student and know what is expected of them.
- 4) that the process and criteria for the award of a posthumous degree, diploma, or certificate to a deceased student are clear and consistent.

II. SCOPE:

These Procedures apply to the University of Saskatchewan's response in the event of a student death on or off campus. In general, a student refers to students registered in degree, diploma, or certificate programs/courses, or students registered in the University Language Centre (ULC).

III. PROCEDURE FOR DEATH OF A STUDENT:

Notification regarding the death of a student can be received at a variety of points of contact, both on campus and off campus. Upon receiving such notification, the Registrar should be immediately notified so that this procedure can commence.

Upon being notified of the death of a student, the Registrar will prepare a Memorandum for notification of the campus community, which will include contact information for the student's immediate next of kin, if available. The Memorandum will be sent to the following offices:

- University President
- University Secretary
- Vice-Provost, Teaching, Learning and Student Experience
- Dean of the College in which the student was registered
 - in the case of a graduate student, the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research will be notified, as well as the Dean of the College in which the student was taking graduate classes
- Academic Associate Dean of the College in which the student was registered

- Department Head of the Department in which the student was registered
- Instructors of the classes the student was registered in
- Director, Student Affairs and Services
- Manager and Associate Registrar, Registrarial Services
- Manager and Associate Registrar, Student Finance and Awards
- Manager of Student Wellness Centre
- Manager, Student Affairs and Outreach
- Associate Vice-President, Strategic Communications and Chief Communications Officer
- Director of University Communications, University Relations
- Operations Manager, Protective Services
- USSU and/or GSA President (as appropriate)
- President of the respective College student society (as appropriate)
- Any other individuals or offices as deemed appropriate, including:
 - Manager, Disability Services for Students (if registered with the office)
 - Manager, International Student and Study Abroad Centre (if an international student)
 - Manager, Aboriginal Student Centre (if an Indigenous student)
 - Coordinator of Convocation (if the student is eligible for a posthumous credential)
 - Director, Distance Education Unit (if the student was taking distance education classes)
 - Manager, Residences, Consumer Services (if the student was living in student housing)
 - Human Resources (if the student was also a U of S employee)
 - Staff located at off-campus locations (if an off-campus student)

The Registrar will prepare a letter of condolence to the student's family for signature by the President and will distribute the Memorandum to the above offices as appropriate. Any other office may also choose to send a letter of condolence to the family of the student.

The Registrar can delegate responsibility for executing the above procedure.

The Registrar will conduct procedures necessary to:

- withdraw the student from classes and reduce the assessment on the student's account to zero (i.e., no tuition and student fees). Any debt owed by the student to the University will be written off.
- finalize the student's academic record and place a deceased indicator in the student information system (if not already done).
- verify the death of the student with any government guarantors of loans
- finalize any business regarding scholarship, awards and bursaries (for undergraduate students; the College of Graduate Studies and Research would finalize for graduate students).

Student Finance and Awards, upon notification by the Registrar once the student's record is finalized, will conduct procedures necessary to:

- review the student's finalized financial records
- prepare and send a letter to the student's next of kin to accompany the issuance of:
 - any refund cheque for monies in credit on the student's account.
 - T4A or T2202A tax slips for the settling of the student's estate.

If the student was an employee of an academic unit, then action ending the student's employment must be initiated through a proper payroll authorization form submitted to Human Resources Division.

The University Secretary's office will, upon notification of the President's Office, authorize the University flag to be flown at half-mast at a future date and will notify the campus community.

If public statements need to be made on the circumstances of the student's death (if, for example, the death occurred on campus in a residence or elsewhere, off campus at a student event, or during the operation of an academic program), such communication will be coordinated between the Registrar, the Associate Vice-President, Strategic Communications and Chief Communications Officer and the Office of the Dean or the Vice-Provost, Teaching, Learning and Student Experience, as appropriate. The President's office may also be involved depending on the particular circumstances of the student's death.

IV. PROCEDURE FOR AWARD OF POSTHUMOUS CREDENTIALS:

Upon receiving notification of the death of a student, the College, in consultation with the Registrar and through approval of the appropriate Faculty Council, can determine if the student is eligible for the award of a posthumous degree, diploma, or certificate.

To be eligible for a posthumous degree, diploma, or certificate, the student:

- should have completed approximately 75% of the coursework toward a non-degree, undergraduate, or course-based graduate program (exceptions to this standard could be considered if the consultative process deems it appropriate).
- should be deemed in good academic standing of a high enough standard that eventual graduation was expected.
- for graduate students in thesis-based Master's programs, should have completed all coursework and have submitted a draft of the thesis deemed satisfactory by the supervisor and committee.
- for graduate students in PhD programs, should have completed all coursework, comprehensive examinations, and dissertation proposal, and have submitted a draft of the dissertation approved by the committee and an external examiner.

Upon agreement of all parties regarding the award of a posthumous degree, diploma, or certificate, the Dean's office of the College will communicate with the student's family to confirm whether they wish to have the credential awarded and if they wish to attend Convocation.

Upon confirmation that the family wishes the posthumous credential to be awarded, the Registrar will notify the President's office and the University Secretary's office that the award will take place at Convocation. The Registrar will also work with the family to arrange:

- meeting the family upon arrival at Convocation.
- reserved seating for the family and guests.
- whether a family representative wishes to cross the stage and accept the parchment.
- whether a College representative wishes to make a tribute speech at Convocation.
- answer any questions the family might have and generally provide support during the day.

Whether or not the family wishes to attend Convocation, the award of the student's posthumous degree, diploma, or certificate will be noted in the Convocation program. The parchment will be mailed to the family if they choose not to attend. If presented at Convocation, the degree, diploma, or certificate will be presented to the family representative after all other similar parchments have been presented (i.e., at the end of presentations for that particular degree, diploma, or certificate). Though the posthumous nature of any credential will be noted in the program and announced at the ceremony, no indication will be noted on the parchment or the transcript of the student.

V. CONTACT INFORMATION:

University Registrar,
E34 Administration Building
University of Saskatchewan
105 Administration Place
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5A2
Phone: (306) 966-6723
Fax: (306) 966-6730
registrar@usask.ca

Procedures are available at:

<https://teaching.usask.ca/documents/posthumous-credentials.pdf>