

**ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Policy for Awarding Posthumous Degrees**

**Preamble**

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) desires to provide appropriate recognition of a student's academic achievement when the student's progress would have likely fulfilled the requirements of an undergraduate or graduate degree. This policy establishes standard requirements and procedures for awarding a posthumous undergraduate or graduate degree for those unfortunate occasions when students are deceased during their enrollment at ECSU, but are close to the completion of all requirements of the degree being pursued.

**1. Purpose**

ECSU may award undergraduate and graduate degrees posthumously. The Board of Trustees, upon recommendation from the Chancellor, may award a degree posthumously to any student who meets the eligibility requirements below. A certificate of attendance may be awarded posthumously by the Board of Trustees to a student who has completed at least one year of attendance at ECSU, but who does not qualify for a posthumous degree.

**2. Eligibility**

To be eligible for the award of a posthumous degree, the student generally must have met the following conditions:

**A. Undergraduate**

- i. The student was in good academic and disciplinary standing; and
- ii. The student was within 12 credit hours of completion of all requirements or was in the final term of completing of requirements.

**B. Graduate**

- i. The student was in good academic and disciplinary standing; and
- ii. Non-Thesis Program-the student had completed all course work and was eligible to take comprehensive exams; or
- iii. Thesis Program-the student had completed all course work for the program and was making sufficient progress toward completion of the thesis or project at the time of death.

C. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made when the student's death occurred during or as a result of participation in university-sponsored activities, or when chronic illness prevented current enrollment.

**3. Extraordinary Circumstances**

Cases that do not meet the above specified criteria may be considered when extraordinary circumstances prevail. For example, the student died while carrying out a heroic deed, or while performing outstanding service to the University or community, or after having completed an outstanding academic record, piece of original research, or creative project,

and other exceptional cases. In such cases, the appropriate faculty, department chair, and the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will be consulted prior to a recommendation being prepared for consideration by the Chancellor and Board of Trustees.

#### **4. Procedure**

- A. The deceased student's department chairperson, faculty member, or an immediate family member may request that the degree be awarded posthumously. The written request (in the form of a letter) must be sent to the student's department chairperson and received within twelve (12) months of the student's death. The student must have been continuously enrolled at ECSU until the onset of terminal illness, injury or death.
- B. The chair and department faculty will review the transcript of the student to determine if the student's overall record merits further consideration and recommendation that the posthumous award be granted. A written letter of recommendation from the department indicating that the student has met the criteria with supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
- C. The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will review the department's recommendation along with supporting documentation and will verify compliance with University policy governing the awarding of degrees posthumously. The Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs will forward the verified recommendation to the Chancellor for approval.
- D. The Office of the Chancellor will notify the Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the Registrar of the approval of the degree and present it at the next Board of Trustees meeting for approval. Upon approval by the Board, the department chairperson will notify the family of the student of the approval and will arrange for the family to attend the specified commencement ceremony. The Office of the Registrar will prepare the diploma for the commencement ceremony. If the family chooses not to attend the commencement ceremony, the degree will be mailed to the family.
- E. The Registrar will update the student's record in the system to reflect that the student was awarded the degree posthumously without meeting the requirements for the degree.