

Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy specifies the requirements for awarding and conferral of aegrotat and posthumous awards.

Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all students enrolled in a Macquarie University coursework or higher degree research award at or near to the time of their permanent incapacity or death.

(3) This Policy does not apply to short courses and microcredential courses.

Section 2 - Policy

(4) In certain circumstances, for example where a student dies or sustains a permanent incapacity, the University Council may confer an aegrotat or a posthumous award prior to completion of all requirements of the award by the student. By issuing such an award the University recognises that, but for permanent incapacity or death, the student would have been expected to have satisfactorily completed their studies.

(5) For an aegrotat or posthumous award to be considered, it is a requirement that the student's representative, executor, or immediate family member consents to the aegrotat or posthumous award being considered.

Part A - Eligibility

(6) The University Council may confer awards on the recommendation of Academic Senate following Academic Senate's consideration of advice from the faculty in which the student was enrolled or the Academic Senate Research Committee (ASRC) in the case of higher degree research awards.

(7) Wherever possible, an aegrotat award or a posthumous award should be conferred within two (2) years of the permanent incapacity or death of the student, and preferably during the ceremony at which the student might otherwise have been expected to graduate.

Awards by Coursework

(8) At the time of permanent incapacity or death, the student must normally have had completed a minimum of 50 per cent of their award requirement or part time equivalent.

(9) If it is not possible to confer the full award in which the student had been enrolled, the faculty will consider whether the student had fully qualified for an alternative exit award. In this case the Executive Dean will recommend to Academic Senate that the student receive the alternative qualification as an exit award.

(10) Where the student was undertaking a double degree across more than one faculty, it is the responsibility of each faculty to assess the eligibility of the student for the award.

(11) Eligibility for awards recommended by the faculty is to be assessed by the Progression team.

Awards by Research

(12) At the time of permanent incapacity or death the student must have completed sufficient laboratory work, papers and publications, literature reviews, or other tangible evidence to indicate that, had they lived or not sustained a permanent incapacity, they would have satisfied the requirements for the award.

(13) A preliminary assessment of the student's work must be carried out and the quality of the work judged by the supervisory panel and Head of Department / School or nominee to be of the required standard for examination to proceed.

(14) The work will then be sent to examiners and assessed under the respective degree requirements as prescribed in the [Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy](#). The degree award recommendation must then be determined to be one of the following:

- a. Award: there is sufficient evidence to indicate that had the student not been permanently incapacitated or died prior to completing the degree, they would have satisfied the requirements for the awarding of the degree; or
- b. Not Award: there is not sufficient evidence to indicate that had the student not been permanently incapacitated or died prior to completing the degree, they would have satisfied the requirements for the awarding of the degree.

(15) The supervisor may be requested to provide a brief document outlining the extenuating circumstances and details of the research project to facilitate the assessors' understanding of the candidate's research contribution.

Part B - Nomination and Consideration

(16) A proposal for an aegrotat or posthumous award may be made by a family member / next-of-kin or a staff member from the University.

(17) All proposals must be submitted through a formal request to the relevant Executive Dean or the Research Degree Subcommittee in the case of higher degree research awards.

(18) Faculty Boards will consider nominations for a coursework award. If the faculty determines that the student is eligible for the conferral of a coursework award, the Executive Dean will recommend this action to Academic Senate.

(19) If the Research Degree Subcommittee determines that the student is eligible for the conferral of a higher degree research award, this will be recommended to the Academic Senate Research Committee for endorsement. If endorsed, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will recommend the conferral of the award to Academic Senate.

(20) Academic Senate may, after considering the recommendation of the Faculty Board / Executive Dean or Academic Senate Research Committee / Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), resolve to recommend that the University Council approve conferral of the award.

Part C - Approval

(21) The University Council will receive and consider a proposal for an aegrotat or posthumous award only on the recommendation of the Academic Senate.

(22) The extract of the minutes of approval will be provided to the faculty and to the Registrar and the Manager, Graduation and Student Engagement for completion notification.

Part D - Conferral

(23) Conferral of an aegrotat or posthumous award will be evidenced by both:

- a. a testamur in a form approved by the University Council and executed under the Common Seal of the University; and
- b. a citation written by the Executive Dean (or nominee) from the Faculty who will confer the student approved by the University Council.

Part E - Confidentiality

(24) The decision to bestow an aegrotat or posthumous award will take into account the wishes of the immediate family.

(25) 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.

(26) The number of University staff contacting the family must be kept to a minimum and such contact is to be coordinated through the Registrar.

Part F - Appeals

(27) An appeal may be made against the decision making process relating to the award of an aegrotat award under the provisions of the [Academic Appeals Policy](#).

Section 3 - Procedures

Registrar

(28) The Registrar is responsible for coordinating contact with the family / next of kin of the student and ensuring the implementation of University Council decisions to confer an aegrotat or posthumous award.

Head of Student Shared Services

(29) The Head of Student Shared Services is responsible for coordinating the administrative support for actions required to confer an aegrotat or posthumous award as directed by the Registrar.

Conferral and collection of aegrotat or posthumous award

(30) Where University Council determines the conferral of an aegrotat or posthumous award for a student, the Manager, Graduation and Student Engagement will:

- a. update the student management system with award details;
- b. update records to indicate that the award was conferred and awarded as an aegrotat or posthumous award;
- c. confirm the ceremony date and time with the Registrar for communication to the student representative / family; and
- d. provide options for the representative / family regarding the collection of the award including:
 - i. in absentia where the graduation documents are posted to the family or made available for collection at the University; or
 - ii. at a graduation ceremony where the person representing the student is presented with the testamur on behalf of the student; or

- iii. at a private ceremony where a University representative presents the testamur to a representative / family member on behalf of the student.

(31) Where practicable, the award will be presented early in the ceremony after introductions.

Head, Student Wellbeing (or nominee)

Management of graduation ceremony

(32) If the representative / family wishes to attend the graduation ceremony for conferral of the award, the Head, Student Wellbeing (or nominee) will assist. Where possible, the ceremony will be scheduled with the relevant cohort of the student's course and there will be no cost associated with attending a ceremony for the representative / family.

(33) The Head, Student Wellbeing (or nominee) will confirm the following details with the representative / student's family if they wish to attend a ceremony:

- a. the number of guests who will attend;
- b. names of all guests; and
- c. name of the person accepting the award.

(34) The Head, Student Wellbeing (or nominee) should discuss with the representative / family what they would like to do after the ceremony and make any arrangements, such as meeting the Executive Dean, or members of the University Executive.

(35) On the day of the ceremony, the Head, Student Wellbeing (or nominee) will run through the award presentation process with the representative / family member accepting the award.

(36) A staff member will be seated with the representatives / family to provide such support as necessary, including escorting them from the venue if they experience strong emotional or other reactions.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(37) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(38) The following definitions apply for the purposes of this Policy:

- a. Aegrotat award means an award conferred where a student has sustained a permanent incapacity arising from illness or injury which prevents them from completing their course or program of study.
- b. Award means the qualification resulting from the satisfactory completion of a specific course or program of study that aligns with a level of the AQF. Also known as qualification or Degree. Awards include undergraduate and honours Degrees, postgraduate coursework and research Programs / Courses of study, certificates and diplomas, graduate certificates and diplomas, at all campuses and locations of the University.
- c. Posthumous award means an award conferred where a student has died before completing their course or program of study, or where the student has died prior to being able to graduate.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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