



POLICY STATEMENT 86

Awarding of Honorary Degrees and Posthumous Recognitions

POLICY DIGEST

Monitoring Unit: Office of Academic Affairs

Initially Issued: July 1, 1993

Last Revised: June 27, 2018

I. PURPOSE

To define the policy pertaining to the awarding of honorary degrees, posthumous degrees, and posthumous commendations in memoriam.

II. GENERAL POLICY

A. Honorary Degrees

The university awards honorary degrees to individuals of outstanding character and notable distinction who have made significant contributions to their field of endeavor or to society in general.

1. The university awards five honorary degrees associated with the individual's field:
 - a. *Doctor of Arts (D.A.): the creative and performing arts, music, design, and architecture*
 - b. *Doctor of Engineering (D. Eng.): the engineering fields and computer sciences*
 - c. *Doctor of Laws (L.L.D.): the law and politics*
 - d. *Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.): the humanities, including education, history, philosophy, language, literature, religion, and cultural studies*
 - e. *Doctor of Science (Sc.D.): the science fields such as medicine and the natural, clinical, social and behavioral sciences, and mathematics*
2. Honorary degrees are not awarded to candidates for public office or current public office holders other than the sitting President of the United States or other heads of state, as determined by the President of LSU and the Board of Supervisors. Past members of the LSU Board of Supervisors are not eligible until two years have elapsed from the end of the member's term on the Board of Supervisors.

B. Posthumous Degrees

The Board of Supervisors may grant baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees posthumously. Students who have completed most of the required work toward a degree at the time of death may be considered for a posthumous degree, via procedures outlined below.

C. Posthumous Commendations in Memoriam

An enrolled undergraduate, graduate, or professional student who dies before meeting the criteria for earning a posthumous degree may be nominated for a posthumous commendation in memoriam without regard to the likelihood of completing the requirements for the degree program.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Honorary Degrees

1. Nominations for conferral of honorary degrees normally originate from the faculty of an academic unit. Deans will forward recommendations to the Office of Academic Affairs, which will then facilitate consideration by the campus committee on the awarding of honorary degrees. Nominations from the campus-wide committee are submitted to the Executive Vice President & Provost, who will forward nominations to the Office of the President for initial consideration. Refer to PM 7 for further steps to final consideration.

B. Posthumous Degrees

1. Baccalaureate degrees

- a. At the time of death, the student was enrolled in courses during his/her last term in pursuit of the degree. The student was also in good standing, as defined in the *LSU General Catalog*.
- b. If the student's death occurs during a break between academic periods immediately prior to the student's final period of coursework, he/she is eligible for recommendation by his/her academic department.
- c. The recommendation for awarding the degree must be by the appropriate faculty in the student's major department and approved by the chair and the dean.

2. Graduate degrees

- a. At the time of death, the student was near completion of the work required for the degree.
 - i. If in a non-thesis program, the student was enrolled in his/her last term.
 - ii. If the student's death occurs during a break between academic periods immediately prior to the student's final period of coursework, he/she is eligible for recommendation by his/her graduate committee.
 - iii. If in a thesis program, the student had written papers or recorded sets of research results that are able to be assembled into a form equivalent to a thesis or dissertation.
- b. The student was in good standing, as defined in the *LSU General Catalog*.

- c. The recommendation for awarding the degree must be made by the student's graduate committee and subsequently approved by the appropriate department chair and dean, the Graduate Council, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

3. Extraordinary Circumstances

Cases that do not meet the above criteria may also be considered when extraordinary circumstances prevail. In these cases, requests for awarding the degree must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate faculty, department chair, dean or deans, as well as the Graduate Council, if applicable.

All recommendations for awarding posthumous baccalaureate and graduate degrees must be submitted to the Executive Vice President and Provost for approval. If approved, the recommendation will be submitted to the President. When the President approves the recommendation, it is then forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for final action.

C. Posthumous Commendations in Memoriam

1. At the time of death, the student was enrolled in a degree program.
 - a. An enrolled student is a student who has completed registration and attended at least the first day of classes of the first semester or term of enrollment.
2. Students whose deaths occur during a break between semesters or terms may be eligible for nomination to receive the commendation.
3. For an undergraduate student to be eligible, the LSU and cumulative grade point average each must be at least a 2.00.
4. For a graduate student to be eligible, the LSU and cumulative grade point average each must be at least a 3.00.
5. After review of the academic record and consultation with the student's major department, the student's dean forwards a recommendation to award the posthumous commendation in memoriam to the Executive Vice President & Provost for approval. For graduate students, the recommendation must also be reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School before submitting to the Executive Vice President & Provost for approval. Once approved, both the dean and the Office of the University Registrar will be notified.
6. The posthumous commendation in memoriam may be presented at ceremonies other than commencement.

IV. SOURCES

- A. [LSU General Catalog](#)
- B. [Permanent Memorandum 7](#)

