

**Interim Graduate Council Posthumous Awarding of Graduate Degrees Policy**  
**Santa Cruz Division**

*Approved by Graduate Council on November 21, 2024*

**Introduction**

In fall 2024, Graduate Council (GC) considered a proposed systemwide policy (Senate Regulation 627) that would govern the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees to students who pass away prior to their completion of the degree. GC supported the proposed policy with some recommended adjustments. In their discussion, GC members determined that a more generous and compassionate policy is needed on our campus to replace the one currently in use for the awarding of posthumous graduate degrees.<sup>1</sup> As such, GC adopts the following UC Santa Cruz policy, which will remain in effect for 2024-25 unless superseded by a systemwide policy. Should a systemwide policy not be adopted prior to the 2025-26 academic year, GC will revisit this policy in fall 2025.

**Posthumous Awarding of Graduate Degrees Policy**

- A. Graduate students of the University of California, Santa Cruz who pass away while working towards their degrees may be awarded a posthumous degree, contingent upon having started their studies and being currently enrolled or on leave at the time of death.
- B. Degrees to graduate students whose actions may have led to dismissal from the university may be granted under exceptional circumstances and require the specific approval of the Chancellor.
- C. Although the request of the degree may be initiated by a family member, a faculty member, a dean, a partner, a friend, or a fellow student, the family of the deceased graduate student might be consulted out of a sense of respect.
- D. The degree awarded under this policy shall be represented by a standard-issue diploma, and any fees associated with the administration of the degree shall be waived.

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<sup>1</sup> The standard by which Graduate Division awarded posthumous degrees prior to this policy taking effect (in the absence of any GC or systemwide policy): “A graduate degree may be awarded posthumously in cases where it is determined that the student has successfully completed a substantial portion of their program at the time of death. The student’s thesis or dissertation committee and the department or IDP chair makes its recommendation for posthumous degree conferral to Graduate Division, which will determine whether the eligibility criteria have been met. The Graduate Council is responsible for approving such requests and instructing the Registrar to issue the degree.” (Assistant Dean Casher to Analyst Schultz, email, 9/23/24.)