

D90: Granting Degrees for Posthumous, Memorial, and Extraordinary Circumstances

Approved By: Faculty Senate

Last Updated: **Draft 10/5/17**

Responsible Faculty Committee: Faculty Senate Policy Committee

Office Responsible for Administration: Office of University Secretary

Revisions to the Policy Rationale, Policy Statement, and Applicability sections of this document must be approved by the full Faculty Senate.

POLICY RATIONALE

The University of New Mexico (UNM) recognizes that ~~earning~~ an academic degree is a matter of legitimate pride in achievement not only for students themselves but also for the family members and friends who provide students with vitally important support and encouragement during the course of their studies. UNM also recognizes that not only the degree, but also ~~significant~~ progress in an academic program is, under certain circumstances, an achievement which warrants special recognition. Accordingly, UNM ~~will make available~~ may grant degrees posthumously, in memoriam, or in extraordinary circumstances. A degree of the appropriate type and level may to be bestowed upon a student who meets required criteria with appropriate approvals.

POLICY STATEMENT

Requests for granting degrees posthumously, in memoriam, or due to an extraordinary circumstance may be initiated by the student, student's family, the faculty of the department and/or college/school, or a UNM administrator. The request should be submitted to the Office of University Secretary who will facilitate review and approval by the appropriate faculty, college/school official(s), Faculty Senate (FS) Committees, and the Faculty Senate. Awarding of graduate and professional degrees requires approval of the Departmental faculty and the Faculty Senate Graduate and Professional Committee. Approved degree requests may be awarded under the following circumstances:

1. Posthumous

If approved by all levels as specified herein, UNM may grant posthumous degrees to a student who dies before he or she is able to complete his/her program. The student must be in degree status and either currently enrolled or enrolled in the academic year previous to his/her death. Normally, the student should must have completed ~~a minimum of~~ half of the credits required for the degree. The degree will be noted as "posthumous" on both the diploma and the transcript.

2. In Memoriam

If approved by all levels as specified herein, UNM may award a degree in memoriam to a student who was in good standing at UNM at the time of his or her death and who does not meet the requirements necessary to be awarded a posthumous degree. The degree will be noted as "in memoriam" on both the diploma and the transcript.

3. Extraordinary Circumstances

If approved by all levels as specified herein, UNM may grant a degree when extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control prevent the student from completion of his or her academic program. Normally, the student should have completed half of the credits required for the degree. If departmental faculty vote to waive remaining degree requirements, the student will be awarded a degree without special notation on the diploma and transcript. If degree requirements are not waived, a special notation will be added to the diploma and transcript.

a. Terminally Ill

If approved by all levels as specified herein, special consideration may be given for a terminally ill student as determined by a qualified healthcare provider. Prior to the death of a student, the student and family may be informed of the college's/school's and UNM's decision to award the degree. The dean, department chair, or other appropriate representatives may present the degree in a private gathering as a special gesture to the family and student. The family will receive the diploma as soon as it is produced.

b. Rare and Unusual Situations

If approved by all levels as specified herein, degrees may be awarded to a student or former student due to extraordinary circumstances. These situations are extremely rare and unusual, and the required criteria will be determined on a case-by-case basis by UNM. A request for consideration of granting a degree for an extraordinary circumstance, must describe the exceptional situation(s) that impacted the student's ability to complete the academic program.

APPLICABILITY

All academic UNM units, including the Health Sciences Center and Branch Campuses.

Revisions to the remaining sections of this document may be amended with the approval of the Faculty Senate Research Policy Committee and Operations Committee.

DEFINITIONS

No definitions specific to this Policy.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- Students
- Faculty members
- Staff in Office of the Dean of Students
- Academic administrators

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Regents Policy Manual RPM 1.1 "Responsibilities of the Board of Regents"](#)

CONTACTS

Direct any questions about this policy to Office of the University Secretary.

PROCEDURES

[Approval of these degrees by the Board of Regents will follow established degree approval processes.](#)

HISTORY

February 27, 2007--Approved by the Faculty Senate

DRAFT HISTORY

[September 13, 2017 Revised draft includes changes from Policy Committee meeting 9/6/17](#)

March 30, 2017 – Revised draft address graduate degree requirements.

March 6, 2017—Draft to add terminally ill students and extraordinary circumstances such as the World War II veteran who was granted a degree.

COMMENTS TO:
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