



Senate Policy on the Awarding of Posthumous and Compassionate Credentials

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish the criteria under which the University may recognize and formally honour the academic achievements of a student who has died or been diagnosed terminally ill prior to the completion of their program requirements.

2. Jurisdiction/Scope

2.1 This policy applies to undergraduate and graduate students who die or are diagnosed with a terminal illness while registered at the University, or within twelve (12) months of their last registration or an approved leave of absence, and who were pursuing a credential program.

3. Definitions

Credential: A degree or diploma awarded to a student for a credit program.

Posthumous Credential: A credential conferred after the death of a student whose academic progress and standing indicate that completion of the credential would otherwise have been expected.

Compassionate Credential: A credential conferred, on compassionate grounds, to a student who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness that prevents them from completing the remaining requirements of their program, but whose academic progress and standing indicate that completion of the credential would otherwise have been expected.

Good Academic Standing: At Saint Mary's University, good academic standing is defined by maintaining a GPA of 1.70 or above as outlined in the University Academic Regulations.

4. Policy

A posthumous or compassionate credential may be awarded to a student under the following circumstances.

4.1. The student must have:

- 4.1.1. Died or have been diagnosed with a terminal illness while a student, or within 12 months of the last registration, or approved leave of absence;
- 4.1.2. Been in good academic standing of a high enough standard that eventual graduation was expected;
- 4.1.3. For an undergraduate student in a program requiring 120 credit hours, completed at least 90 credit hours;
- 4.1.4. For an undergraduate student in a program requiring 90 credit hours, completed at least 72 credit hours;
- 4.1.5. For an undergraduate student in a diploma program, completed at least 75% of the credit hours;
- 4.1.6. For a graduate student in a course-based Master's program, completed 75% of the coursework;
- 4.1.7. For a graduate student in a thesis-based Master's program, completed all classroom-based coursework and made significant progress in thesis research, normally including a draft of a substantive portion of the thesis, and received a unanimous recommendation from the supervisory committee; and
- 4.1.8. For a graduate student in a diploma program, completed at least 75% of the credit hours required; and
- 4.1.9. For a graduate student in a Doctoral program, completed all classroom-based coursework, comprehensive examination (or equivalent), and thesis proposal (if applicable), and made significant progress in the dissertation research, normally including a draft of a substantive portion of the

dissertation, and received a unanimous recommendation from the supervisory committee.

Additional Approval Information

- a) **Policy Number:** 8-1018
- b) **Approving Authority:** University Senate
- c) **Approved:** September 18, 2015
- d) **Responsible Office:** Enrolment Services
- e) **Responsibility:** Academic Regulations Committee
- f) **Revision Date(s):** April 10, 2026, September 18, 2015
- g) **Supersedes:** N/A
- h) **Next Required Review:** March 2031