

# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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## FERRIS FORWARD

### Student Affairs Policy

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#### Posthumous Degree Policy

Draft: October 3, 2025

#### Background

The Posthumous Degree Policy provides guidelines for awarding recognition to current Ferris students who, regrettably, pass away while pursuing their education. This commemorates the student's connection to the Ferris State University community while recognizing the student's goals and the personal and financial support of their family and friends. Deceased students meeting the guidelines below may posthumously be awarded a degree for their academic program. In rare circumstances, when a student is unable to complete an academic program due to severe (likely terminal) illness/injury, they may also be considered for a Posthumous Degree.

#### Definitions

- **Academic Program:** A structured ensemble of courses and/or requirements designed to achieve significant educational outcomes. Majors, minors, certificates, and degrees are examples of academic programs.
- **Current Student:** A student with an active student status in accordance with other University policies and procedures.
- **Degree:** An academic credential conferred on students who complete an academic program.
- **Posthumous Degree:** A recognition of a student's academic progress toward their degree-seeking academic program. Deceased students meeting guidelines for a posthumous degree will receive the degree and major aligning with their academic program.

#### Requirements for Nomination

- **Posthumous Degree**
  - To be eligible for this University recognition, a student must have met a minimum of 50% of the degree requirements at the time of termination of study.

#### Process

1. The Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) is notified of the request for a Posthumous Degree by a Dean, faculty, staff, member of the University community, family or friend.
2. The VPSA will forward the request to the Provost and the applicable Dean so they can review the student's degree audit, verify the plan, status and degree completion and consult with the program faculty.
3. If the student is eligible, the Dean and/or Provost will confirm the award, and the VPSA will reach out to the students' family and work with them to determine how they want to receive the award.

#### **NOT PART OF POLICY but Miscellaneous Process Details**

- The following will be determined in collaboration with the family of the student receiving a posthumous degree:
  - A Posthumous Degree will be printed in commencement programs within the appropriate college section in adherence to commencement program deadlines.
  - Posthumous Degrees can be awarded in any of the following ways:
    - University Commencement ceremonies
    - Smaller meetings with the following including but not limited to the President, Provost, VPSA, Dean(s), and others including Faculty, Staff, Internship site coordinators.
    - As a part of pinning or hooding ceremonies
    - Diplomas can be mailed to families
- Exceptions to the aforementioned minimum requirements or process may be considered in special cases with the support of the academic program, college dean, Provost, or President.
- The Registrar's Office will award and print diplomas for students awarded a Posthumous Degree.