



# Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Guidelines

The Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards guidelines are intended to outline the award of a degree in the event of (a) the death of a student prior to the completion of their degree (posthumous degree) or (b) a student being prevented from completing their degree due to a diagnosis of terminal or debilitating illness (aegrotat degree). These guidelines also outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in the process. These guidelines are applicable to both taught and research students of University College Dublin; distinct differences will be highlighted.

## 1. Definitions

---

- A **posthumous award** is an award, without classification, that may be considered on the death of a student where there is sufficient evidence based on the student's performance that the student would have qualified for the award.
- An **aegrotat award** is an award, without classification, that may be made if a student is prevented from completing their studies by illness or other special circumstances. The Board should be satisfied that the student's prior performance shows beyond reasonable doubt that they would have qualified for the award but for the illness/event which occurred.

## 2. Principles

---

### Posthumous award

A posthumous award can be awarded at any stage during a taught programme, once sufficient credit is accrued so that it is clear the student would have qualified for the award.

A posthumous award of a *research* degree can be awarded at one of two stages of the programme:

- After submission of thesis: the thesis can be examined as normal (without viva)
- Before submission of the thesis: the supervisor/s must consider whether there is a sufficient quantity of material to represent the thesis. The supervisor/s must be satisfied that there is enough to permit an academic judgement to be made.
- The student's supervisor may be invited to provide supplementary and/or explanatory material to assist in the understanding of the examiners of the research work conducted by the student.

In the interests of courtesy and sensitivity, a posthumous award should only be made with the knowledge and consent of the next of kin and/or immediate family members.

### Aegrotat award

An Aegrotat award is an unclassified qualification that may be conferred upon a student on the basis that the student would have satisfied the standard required for the award had they been able to continue.

The aegrotat award will be considered at the conclusion of a student's registration on a programme. If the student agrees to accept the aegrotat award, they will agree to waive the right to any further assessment/reassessment.

An aegrotat award of a *research* degree can be awarded at either of two stages of the programme:

- Before submission of the thesis: the supervisor/s must consider whether there is a sufficient quantity of material to represent the thesis. The supervisor/s must be satisfied that there is enough to permit an academic judgement to be made.

- After submission of thesis: the thesis can be examined as normal (without viva)
- The student's supervisor may be invited to provide supplementary and/or explanatory material to assist in the understanding of the examiners of the research work conducted by the student.

Aegrotat awards do not confer the entitlements which might otherwise be associated with the programme of study concerned, these could include any rights to practice, to register with a professional body or to gain exemptions from professional body requirements.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

---

**Programme Director/Programme Dean/Supervisor:** The Programme Director/Programme Dean/Supervisor in which the student was/is registered is responsible for initiating the process for the approval of an aegrotat or posthumous award. They (or their nominee) are also responsible for liaising with the next of kin/family member of the student.

**Governing Board:** The Governing Board should take account of the candidate's performance during the programme of study and other relevant evidence which would demonstrate that, had the student completed the assessments, they would clearly have reached a standard for the award of a degree. If agreed, the recommendation is to be recommended to ACCE for final approval.

**ACCE:** ACCE will, on behalf of the university, review and may approve the request for award and notify the nominator and Conferring unit of the outcome.

**Conferring Unit:** Is responsible for the amendment of the student's record and for liaising with the Governing Board on a conferral date.

In the case of a posthumous award, or where an aegrotat awardee is unable to attend graduation, a family member may attend the ceremony and to receive the award on their behalf. Alternatively, the degree award may be presented as part of a private meeting by a representative of the university, or sent by post, if this is the wish of the next of kin.

### 4. Procedure

---

In order to submit an application for an aegrotat or posthumous award to the ACCE an [Aegrotat and Posthumous Form](#) will need to be completed and emailed to [ACCE@ucd.ie](mailto:ACCE@ucd.ie)

If approved, the ACCE will contact the relevant staff member to confirm the award and will liaise with the UCD Conferring Unit to inform them of the approved award.

### 5. Version History

---

Consultation and Approval				
Committee/Group	Meeting Date	Version	Change description	Decision
Academic Council Executive Committee	11 June 2008	V1.0	Policy submitted for approval	Approved
Academic Council	7 May 2015	V1.1	Minor revisions required	Approved
Academic Council Committee on Examinations	24 June 2021	V2.0	Guidelines revised to update definitions and identify clear roles and responsibilities	Approved
<b>Owner:</b> Academic Council Committee on Examinations				
<b>Approval date &amp; body:</b> ACCE, 24 June 2021				