

HDR - Conferring Awards Posthumously - Higher Degree Research Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this policy is to provide for the posthumous conferral of higher degree research awards.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to all higher degree research students enrolled in UNE courses at the time of their death. It operates in addition to the Policy on Conferring Awards Posthumously: Coursework.

Section 3 - Eligibility

(3) An award may be conferred posthumously when the student was enrolled at the time of death and one of the following conditions are met:

- a. The student had met all requirements of the award. Under these conditions conferral of the award should be automatic and no request from the student's family or friends is necessary; or
- b. Where the student died before completing the final stages of their degree, and a request is made by the student's family or friends or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research to consider whether the degree may be awarded, the following conditions should apply:
 - i. Basic requirement. At the time of death and as determined by the Principal Supervisor and Head of School, the student had completed research and work such as draft chapters, published work, papers prepared for publication, laboratory work, progress reports or other tangible evidence that indicates that had he/she lived to complete the degree, all requirements for the awarding of the degree would have been satisfied.
 - ii. Preliminary review. A preliminary assessment of the submitted work has been carried out and the quality of the work has been judged by the Principal Supervisor and another assessor, who is external to the University and has not been associated with the supervision of the student, to be of the required standard. It is imperative that both assessors reach unanimous agreement before proceeding to the examination stage. The recommendation is forwarded by the Principal Supervisor to the Graduate Research Examinations Board confirming beyond doubt that the condition as specified in Paragraph 4a (i) has been met.
 - iii. Examination. The submitted work will then be sent to examiners (three examiners for doctoral degrees and two for research masters' degrees). Examiners will be appointed by the Graduate Research Examinations Board on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School.

Section 4 - Application procedure

(4) An assessment of whether eligibility criteria under Paragraph 4a are met will be made when an application is received under this clause:

- a. Applications for conferral of a posthumous higher degree research award may be made by the family of the student in question or friend of the family on behalf of the family.
- b. Applications should be made in writing providing the following details:
 - i. full name of the student
 - ii. date of birth
 - iii. student number
 - iv. name of the award
 - v. names and addresses of next-of-kin

(5) Applications should be addressed to:

Chair of the Academic Board

University of New England

Armidale NSW 2351

Section 5 - Process of Examination

(6) In applying eligibility criteria under Paragraph 4, the following procedures for recommending that the posthumous award be conferred should be followed:

- a. Information to examiners. When the submitted work is sent out for examination, examiners will be informed of the situation of the candidate and copies of all relevant information, including guidelines for examination, provided. Examiners' recommendations must include a clear 'yes' or 'no' response as to whether there is sufficient evidence to indicate had the student lived to complete the degree, he/she would have satisfied the requirements for the awarding of the degree.
- b. Role of supervisor. The Principal Supervisor may be requested by the Graduate Research Examinations Board to submit additional supporting documentation to aid examiners' understanding of the student's contribution to the research.
- c. Recommendation to Academic Board. Where the Graduate Research Subcommittee, based on all evidence provided, determines that all relevant and necessary conditions have been met, a recommendation will be sent to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research that the award be conferred posthumously.
- d. Sensitivity issues. All situations throughout the entire process must be handled with utmost sensitivity and discretion by all parties involved and at no time should close relatives or friends of the deceased student be given undue expectations of the eventual outcome.

Section 6 - Procedure for Conferring of Awards

(7) If and when the recommendation that the award be granted is approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, the wishes of the next of kin will dictate whether:

- a. the degree is awarded in absentia

- b. the degree is awarded at a graduation ceremony at which a selected person represents the deceased student;
OR
- c. a representative of the university presents the testamur to the family on a private occasion that is mutually convenient.

Status and Details

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Unit Head	Chris Armstrong Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
Author	Heiko Daniel
Enquiries Contact	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) +61 2 6773 3715