

Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees

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Effective from September 2025

Read This If:

You are a staff member or student who needs to understand the general principles, definitions, and procedures related to the award of posthumous and aegrotat undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees.

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Definitions

These definitions ensure clarity, and a common understanding of terms and abbreviations used throughout the procedures document.

Key Terms

Aegrotat degree: an award granted when a student has been prevented from completing their degree due to a diagnosis of terminal or debilitating, long-term illness.

Posthumous degree: an award granted when a student has died prior to the completion of their degree.

Classification: At the University of Manchester, Undergraduate degrees may be awarded the following classifications: First Class (Honours), Upper Second Class (2:1) (Honours), Lower Second Class (2:2) (Honours), and Third Class (Honours). Postgraduate Taught Degrees may be awarded the following classifications: Distinction, Merit and Pass. For classification thresholds, please refer to the relevant [Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate Taught](#) Degree Regulations.

Acronyms

FHEQ: [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

PSRB: Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Detailed procedures

1.0 Introduction

1.0.1 The University is committed to providing a supportive environment for students experiencing ill health. Where it is no longer possible for a student to continue their programme of study due to health reasons, the University will consider whether it is appropriate to offer an aegrotat award to the student. When a student has died prior to the completion of their degree, if the student has completed sufficient elements of the programme, they may be eligible to be awarded a posthumous degree in recognition of their achievement.

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a consistent approach is applied across the University for the award of a posthumous or aegrotat taught degree.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The information contained within these procedures should be read alongside the relevant [Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate Taught](#) Degree Regulations and the [Guidance for staff responding to a student death](#).

1.3 Applicability

1.3.1 These procedures apply to the award of posthumous and aegrotat taught degrees. Arrangements for the award of posthumous and aegrotat degrees for Postgraduate Research (PGR) students can be found in the [Posthumous and Aegrotat Award of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy](#).

2.0 General Principles

2.1 Aegrotat Degrees Procedure

2.1.1 The Head of School in which the student is registered should formally make a request that the relevant Examination Board recommend the award of an aegrotat degree to the student in question.

2.1.2 Examination Boards may recommend the award of an aegrotat degree if it is considered that a student's diagnosis of a terminal/debilitating illness would prevent

them from successful completion of their degree programme. The student should confirm that they will accept an aegrotat degree before confirmation of the award.

- 2.1.3 The aegrotat award will be considered as the conclusion of a student's registration on a programme. The student must be offered the opportunity to accept the aegrotat award or continue on the programme of study in order to achieve the intended programme outcome. If the student agrees to accept the aegrotat award, they will agree that they waive the right to any further assessment/reassessment.
- 2.1.4 Where the student is currently registered on a programme of study which includes a professional component, with the support of the professional body the award will be accredited, otherwise an alternative exit award will be offered.
- 2.1.5 Where a claim for Mitigating Circumstances has been upheld due to ill health, and students are prevented from completing their degree due to a diagnosis of terminal or debilitating illness, Examination Boards can agree to award an aegrotat degree.
- 2.1.6 Examination Boards can issue a relevant award in cases where there is strong evidence, based on academic performance, that the student in question would have successfully completed such an award; normally this would mean that a student had completed over half the credits required for the award. This is necessary to demonstrate that the student would have met the appropriate standards for the award.
- 2.1.7 Aegrotat awards may be given a classification, subject to the approval of the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students or their nominee.

2.2 Posthumous Degrees Procedure

- 2.2.1 The Head of School, or another representative, in which the student was registered should formally make a request that the relevant Examination Board recommend the award of a posthumous degree to the student in question.
- 2.2.2 Examination Boards may recommend that a posthumous award should be made following the death of a student. Posthumous awards should have the support of the deceased student's family/next of kin before confirmation of the award.
- 2.2.3 Examination Boards can issue a relevant award in cases where there is strong evidence, based on academic performance, that the deceased student would have successfully completed such an award; normally this would mean that a student had completed over half the credits required for the award. This is necessary to

demonstrate that the student would have met the appropriate standards for the award.

- 2.2.4 Examination Boards can agree to grant a posthumous award which is higher than the student's entitlement, based on the credits they have gained. Such applications should be supported by evidence of academic achievement, at the level of the requested award.
- 2.2.5 Posthumous awards may be given a classification, if the student was in the final year of study and subject to the approval of the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students or their nominee.

2.3 Certificates

- 2.3.1 If a posthumous or an aegrotat degree is awarded, it is not required that the resulting certificate is marked as 'posthumous' or 'aegrotat', unless at the request of the family/student.
- 2.3.2 In the case of an aegrotat award, where the awardee is unable to attend graduation, or for a posthumous award, a family member/next of kin can attend the ceremony to receive the award on their behalf. Alternatively, the degree certificate may be presented as part of a private meeting by Programme Director, or another representative, or sent by post, if this is the wish of the student or family/next of kin.

3.0 Monitoring Compliance

- 3.0.1 Adherence against this procedure is expected and should be monitored by Heads of Schools (or their delegates) as part of a wider quality assurance process which supports the Annual Academic Assurance Process including, Schools, Faculties, Teaching and Learning Strategy Group, the Academic Quality Sub-Committee for Teaching, Learning and Students, and Senate.

4.0 Supporting documents and sources of support

- 4.0.1 Alongside these procedures, staff may also wish to refer to the [Guidance for staff responding to a student death](#).
- 4.0.2 [Students affected by any of the subjects covered in these procedures may wish to refer to the support pages on the Counselling and Mental Health Service \(The University of Manchester\)](#)

4.0.3 The Samaritans offer a 24/7 Helpline Freephone (116 123) as well as an informative website including things that might help when times are tough: [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

4.0.4 Colleagues affected by any of the subjects covered in these procedures may wish to refer to staff support pages on the Counselling and Mental Health Service website: [Staff Support \(The University of Manchester\)](#).

Version amendment history box and Document control box

Version amendment history: Procedures for the award of posthumous and aegrotat undergraduate and postgraduate taught awards		
Version	Date	Reason for change
1.0	June 2020	Creation and approval of procedures by TLG Executive
1.0	August 2024	Transfer to new template and minor changes to language
1.1	June 2025	Minor updates during the policy review cycle

Document control box	
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Policy owner:	Head of Student and Academic Services (SAS)
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