

## **CONFERRING AWARDS POSTHUMOUSLY: HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH POLICY**

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<b>Related Policies or Other Documents</b>	Conferring Awards Posthumously: Coursework Policy

### **1. Purpose**

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

### **2. Scope**

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.

### **3. Eligibility**

Conferral of the award may be granted under the following conditions:

- 3.1 The student was enrolled at the time of death.
- 3.2 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 on behalf of the family is necessary.
- 3.3 Where the student died before completing the final stages of their degree, and a request is made by the student's family or friends 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, the quality of the work has been judged by the Principal Supervisor to be of the required standard and a recommendation forwarded to the Higher Degree Research Committee (HDRC). The assessment should be carried out by two assessors, one of whom may be the Principal Supervisor and one who must be external to the University who has not been associated with the supervision of the student. It is imperative that both assessors reach unanimous agreement before proceeding to the examination stage. The recommendation forwarded to the HDRC must be able to confirm beyond doubt that the condition as specified in 3.3 (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 HDRC on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School.

#### **4. Application procedure**

An assessment of whether eligibility criteria under 3.3 are met will be made when an application is received under this clause:

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Applications should be made in writing providing the following details:
  - full name of the student
  - date of birth
  - student number
  - name of the award
  - names and addresses of next-of-kin
- 4.3 Applications should be addressed to:  
Chair of the Academic Board  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2351

#### **5. Process of Examination**

In applying eligibility criteria under 3.3, the following procedures for recommending that the posthumous award be conferred should be followed:

- 5.1 *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.
- 5.2 *Role of supervisor.* The Principal Supervisor may be requested by the Higher Degree Research Committee to submit additional supporting documentation to aid examiners' understanding of the student's contribution to the research.
- 5.3 *Recommendation to Academic Board.* Where the Higher Degree Research Committee, based on all evidence provided, determines that all relevant and necessary conditions have been met, a recommendation will be sent to the Academic Board that the award be conferred posthumously.
- 5.4 *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.

#### **6. Procedure for Conferring of Awards**

If and when the recommendation that the award be granted is approved by the UNE Council, the wishes of the next of kin will dictate whether:

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