

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION Academic Affairs		POLICY NUMBER ACAF 3.80
POLICY TITLE Posthumous Degrees and Diplomas in Memoriam		
SCOPE OF POLICY USC System		DATE OF REVISION December 18, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost		ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Office of the Provost

PURPOSE

Establishes a formal policy for awarding posthumous degrees and diplomas across the USC system.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Posthumous Degree: A conventional University of South Carolina degree which is awarded posthumously to a deceased USC student and is recognized in the University’s official count of degrees. Diplomas will be issued for these degrees.

Undergraduate Degree: A formal award presented to students upon successful completion of a bachelor’s degree at the Undergraduate level.

Graduate/Professional Degree: A formal award presented to students upon successful completion of a master’s, specialist, or doctoral degree at the graduate, law, medical or pharmacy educational levels.

Diploma in Memoriam: Recognizes the progress towards degree for deceased students who were in good standing at the University at the time of death but did not complete the hour requirements for a Posthumous Degree. A Diploma in Memoriam is not recognized in the University’s official count of degrees.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is student- and family-centered, ensuring that the university recognizes the academic journey of its students with dignity and consistency. It empowers Deans to make thoughtful decisions while maintaining system-wide standards.

PROCEDURES

Posthumous Degrees

A Posthumous Degree is a conventional USC degree which is awarded posthumously to a deceased USC student and is recognized in the University’s official count of degrees. Diplomas will be issued for these degrees.

Undergraduate Degrees: Any student, who at the time of death, was in good standing in an undergraduate degree and reached at least 90 overall earned credit hours shall, upon recommendation by the student’s Dean, be awarded a Posthumous Degree.

Graduate/Professional Degrees: Any student who, at the time of death, was in good standing in a graduate/professional degree program and had completed approximately two-thirds of the requirements toward the degree at USC shall, upon recommendation by the student’s Dean, be awarded a Posthumous Degree.

Diploma in Memoriam

A Diploma in Memoriam recognizes the progress towards degree for deceased students who were in good standing at the University at the time of death but did not complete the hour requirements for a Posthumous Degree. A Diploma in Memoriam is not recognized in the University’s official count of degrees. The registrar’s office will issue a diploma and enter a transcript notation regarding the issuance of a “Diploma in Memoriam”.

Any student who was in good standing at the University at the time of their death, who did not meet the requirements necessary to be awarded a posthumous degree, may be awarded a Diploma in Memoriam, upon recommendation by the student’s Dean.

Requests for a Posthumous Degree or Diploma in Memoriam should be addressed to the University Registrar and generally should take place within 12 months of the student’s death.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
December 18, 2025	New policy approval

APPENDICES