
Compassionate Credential Policy

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 St. Mary's University recognizes that there may be circumstances where it is appropriate to award a compassionate credential from the University to a student who dies, or is diagnosed as terminally ill, before all program requirements are fulfilled.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Credential** – a degree, diploma or certificate awarded for credit programs.
- 2.2 **Next of Kin** – the family member or significant other responsible for advising the University on issues related to a potential compassionate credential.
- 2.3 **Parchment** – the physical document displaying credential details of a graduate.

3. POLICY AND PROCESS

3.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for consideration:

- 3.1.1 The University must have been notified of the death of the student within 12 months of the student's last term of registration.
- 3.1.2 The student must have been an active student in a credit program according to the University's Student Information System (and may be registered or not registered) at the time of death or terminal diagnosis.
- 3.1.3 The student must have been in good academic standing and eligible to graduate based on GPA requirements, with a reasonable expectation that eventual graduation would have occurred.

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revisited	Review Frequency
Academic Council	Academic	Dec 2, 2024	N/A	Every 5 years

3.1.4 The student would normally have completed 50% of the degree requirements at of the program in which they were registered at the time of death at St. Mary's University.

- For 120-credit programs, this equates to 60 credits completed
- For 90-credit programs, this equates to 45 credits completed
- For 60-credit programs, this equates to 30 credits completed
- For 30-credit programs, this equates to 15 credits completed

3.2 REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.2.1 Upon notification of the death or terminal diagnosis of the student, the Registrar will review the student's file and provide a written recommendation to the appropriate Dean regarding their eligibility for a compassionate credential. The recommendation will be based upon the eligibility criteria, but the Registrar may also consider individual circumstances not outlined within the policy.

3.2.2 If the Dean agrees with the recommendation to award a compassionate credential, the Registrar will contact the next of kin to inquire whether this course of action is desired. If the Dean does not agree with the recommendation of the Registrar, the process shall end, and no further action will be taken.

3.2.2.1 If the next of kin agrees to having a compassionate credential considered, the graduation fee will be waived, and this recommendation will be submitted to Deans' Council and Academic Council as part of the approval of graduands process.

3.2.2.2 If the next of kin do not agree to having a compassionate credential considered, the process will end, and no further action will be taken.

- 3.2.3 If the recommendation is approved by Academic Council, the Registrar will contact the next of kin to advise of the approval. If the next of kin agree, the student's name will be included in the program listing the graduands and a parchment will be printed for the Convocation ceremony. The Registrar will confirm the following:
- If the name of student will be read at the Convocation Ceremony
 - If the parchment will be presented at the Convocation Ceremony

Any alternate arrangements from those listed above would be subject to the approval of the Registrar.

- 3.2.4 The notation of "posthumous" or "compassionate" will be recorded on the student's transcript and in the Convocation program but will not appear on the credential awarded.

3.3 Timelines

- 3.3.1 If notified of a student's death or terminal diagnosis between Convocation and the following January 31, this student will be reviewed for eligibility for that year's Convocation ceremony.
- 3.3.2 If notified of a student's death or terminal diagnosis after January 31, the student's record will be reviewed for eligibility for the following year's Convocation ceremony.

4. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1.1 Special consideration for the early awarding of a credential will be given in terminal illness or end of life situations. These requests should be made to the Registrar, in writing, and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the Dean and VPA.
- 4.1.1.1 On recommendation of the Registrar, the proposed award will be submitted for approval to Academic Council. A special meeting of Academic Council may be called for this purpose; this meeting may be held virtually.