



Policy Title	Posthumous Conferral of Degree or Certificate Policy
Policy Number	3004
Category	Academic
Applicability	College-wide
Responsible Office	Student Affairs
Effective Date	May 31, 2026

I. Policy Statement

Suffolk County Community College may confer a degree or certificate posthumously to honor the academic achievements of a deceased student. This recognition is granted upon request and subject to eligibility requirements, including active matriculation at the time of passing, good academic and disciplinary standing, and substantial completion of program requirements.

II. Rationale

To honor the academic achievements and commitment of a deceased student, provide recognition and comfort to their family.

III. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all Suffolk County Community College students who were actively enrolled in an associate degree or certificate program at the time of their passing. It governs the eligibility, request process, and conferral of posthumous degrees or certificates and applies to all College departments involved in academic records, graduation processing, and communication with the student’s family or legal representative.

IV. Responsible Office/Executive

The Vice President for Student Affairs has responsibility for the implementation of this Policy. Individuals with questions about this Policy should contact the Vice President for Student Affairs for more information.

V. Definitions

A **Posthumous Degree or Certificate** is a degree or certificate conferred by Suffolk County Community College to a deceased student.

VI. Policy

Upon request, Suffolk County Community College may confer a degree or certificate posthumously to recognize a deceased student’s academic achievement.

To be eligible, the student must have been actively matriculated in an associate degree or certificate program at the time of passing, maintained good academic and disciplinary standing, and completed at least 30 credits toward an associate degree, including a minimum of six (6) credits earned at the College, or 50% of the required credits for a certificate, including a minimum six (6) credits earned at the College.

The student's diploma and transcript will reflect the credential with the notation "Degree Awarded Posthumously," and no other changes will be made to the academic record.

Posthumous degree and certificate award counts will not be included in any reporting associated with the College's completion rates.

VII. Related Administrative Procedures

The Office of Student Affairs and Office of Academic Affairs are authorized to develop and issue joint guidance and administrative procedures to implement this Policy. As of the date of adoption of this Policy:

- The parent, legal guardian, partner, relative or legal equivalent must provide a request to the College Registrar or a campus representative may initiate the request in which case the College must obtain consent from a family member, survivor, or legal representative.
- Central Records Office will gather the appropriate academic documentation to verify that the deceased student has met the requirements for eligibility.
- Provided the deceased student has met the requirements, the College will award a degree or certificate. The Vice President of Academic Affairs may approve exceptions to cases that do not meet the requirements for a posthumous degree or certificate.
- Central Records Office will update the deceased student's academic records in the system of record to note the award day and that the award was made posthumously.
- The diploma or certificate and transcript will be issued in the standard format, and the Central Records Office will mail out an official transcript and order a diploma to be sent to a designated family member, survivor or their legal representative at no charge to the family.

VIII. Cross-References

- [Policy 3003: Graduation Requirements](#)

IX. References

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, 14th ed., [Standard III](#), [Standard IV](#)
- NYS Education Law § 355(2)(f-2) ("Mel's Law")
- SUNY Board of Trustees [Resolution 2023-65](#) re: Posthumous Degree Policy
- SUNY Memorandum to Presidents, Policy and Guidance: Posthumous Degrees (July 18, 2025)

X. History / Revision Dates

Adopted effective May 31, 2026 (approved by College Academic Standards Committee and campus governance bodies May 2026; approved by President's Cabinet on May 18, 2026)