

For Academic Policy &
Regulations Committee
3rd February 2009

University of Birmingham

**Changes to Regulations to clarify requirements for
aegrotat degrees and posthumous awards**

Purpose of Paper

1. To propose changes for effect in 2009/10 to the Regulations to enable qualifications to be awarded posthumously if specific criteria are met.

Proposals

2. APRC is requested to approve the following changes for effect in 2009/10 to Regulation 7.2.5 (h) (additions underlined, deletions struck through) :

7.2.5 (h) In exceptional circumstances, where a Board of Examiners considers that a Registered Student is unable to complete the requirements of his or her programme due to serious illness, death or other significant cause, the Board may recommend the award of an aegrotat degree, diploma or certificate. This recommendation replaces any decision to award a lower alternative qualification that the student may have obtained sufficient credit for. Such recommendations must be made in accordance with the Code of Practice on Taught Module Assessment ~~Assessment Protocols~~ and shall be subject to the approval of the Progress and Awards Board ~~Senate or a delegated authority~~. An aegrotat degree should be unclassified. Degrees which ~~entail qualification to practise in the field of medicine~~ are subject to Fitness to Practise requirements shall not be awarded as aegrotat degrees ~~in this manner~~.
3. APRC is requested to approve for effect in 2009/10 the addition of the following Regulation (additions underlined):

7.25 (i) In exceptional circumstances, where a Registered Student has died having fully completed the requirements of their programme of study but has not graduated or been formally awarded the qualification, Boards of Examiners may recommend the posthumous award of the qualification, subject to the approval of the Progress and Awards Board.

Background

4. University Ordinances already allow for the award of aegrotat degrees, although the exact methodology is not specific. On average, one aegrotat degree is awarded each academic session, normally for students who have a terminal illness and are unable to complete the final parts of their programme of study.
5. Furthermore, students have in the past completed the requirements for their full qualification but died either prior to the Board of Examiners and/or the graduation ceremony. Requests to make awards posthumously have been dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis by the Progress and Awards Board.

Arguments in Support of Proposal

6. This is obviously a sensitive area, and the lack of clear guidance creates the risk of potentially upsetting students and family. Furthermore, as the student population becomes more diverse, it is more likely that these scenarios will occur.
7. The regulations of six comparator HEIs were researched and they all awarded aegrotats and had provision for posthumous awards.

Chris Twine
Assistant Director, Academic and Student Administration
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