



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSC OP: 77.20 **Honorary and Posthumous Degrees**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Health Sciences Center Operating Policy and Procedure (HSC OP) is to ensure the understanding of a standardized approach for awarding honorary and posthumous degrees.

REVIEW: This HSC OP will be reviewed on June 1 of every even-numbered year (ENY) by the Registrar, Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee, and Academics Council.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

The following policy on honorary degrees has been adopted by the Board of Regents (see Section 12.04, *Regents' Rules* for detailed procedures).

A. Honorary Degrees

1. Honorary degrees conferred by the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) must be recommended by the President to the Chancellor and authorized by the Board of Regents.
2. Nominations for honorary degrees may be made by faculty, students, staff, administrators, current or former members of the board, and alumni.
3. Nominations will be evaluated by an advisory committee appointed by the President, with administrative, faculty, and student representation, and recommendations will be made to the President.
4. Honorary degrees may be conferred for public service, scholarship, or other contributions in the area of public interest. The honorary degree designation shall be determined based on the accomplishments of the recipient and the degree programs offered by the institution, subject to approval by the Board of Regents.
5. Honorary degrees awarded by TTUHSC shall be designated *Honoris Causa*.
6. A person, or persons, may not be considered for an honorary degree if they are a current or former faculty member, administrator, or other employee or state officer affiliated with the Texas Tech University System (TTUS) unless the person has been separated from TTUS for at least two (2) years.
7. A person, or persons, may not be considered for an honorary degree if they have direct political, legal, or budgetary authority over TTUS, including elected officials or candidates for political office.
8. Honorary degrees are honorary distinctions and do not constitute earned academic credentials. Honorary degrees do not confer eligibility for professional licensure, certification, clinical privileges, prescribing authority, or any legal authority to practice a profession. Recipients of honorary degrees shall not represent the honorary degree as an earned academic qualification.
9. The chancellor will inform the Board of Regents of nominations at least one month prior to the Board meeting when there are candidates scheduled to be considered for approval.

10. Upon approval by the Board of Regents, the Chancellor, or the President of TTUHSC, will send an official notification to the nominee on behalf of the Board, informing them of the institution's desire to confer the honorary degree.
11. Honorary degrees may be awarded at commencement exercises or at another time and place approved by the President, Chancellor, and/or Board.
12. Confidentiality of the process
 - a. Prior to a public announcement by the chancellor or president of the institution awarding the honorary degree, all matters relating to a proposed honorary degree shall be held as confidential.
 - b. An agenda item for the board's consideration of an honorary degree shall not include the name of the person nominated.
 - c. Prior to an official notification made to the nominee, under no circumstances should a person nominated for an honorary degree be informed that the person's name has been put forward.
13. Under extraordinary and unusual circumstances, the board reserves the right to rescind an honorary degree that previously had been conferred.

B. Posthumous Degrees

A request to award a posthumous degree may be submitted by a family member of the student, the Dean of the college of the student's major, or a TTUHSC Registered Student Organization in the following circumstances and with the following conditions

1. A posthumous degree may be awarded to any student who, at the time of death, had substantially completed the work required for their degree, upon recommendation of the appropriate faculty and Dean.
2. A request must be submitted to the Dean of the appropriate college for consideration. The Dean of that college will recommend the candidate for a posthumous degree in the form of a written request to the Provost and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.
3. If supported, the Provost will submit the recommendation to the Registrar's Office via memorandum to begin the process for awarding the degree. Before a posthumous degree is awarded, the university shall obtain reasonable official verification of the student's death. Acceptable documentation may include a death certificate or other documentation deemed sufficient by the Registrar.
4. The Dean will inform the immediate family of the Institution's decision.
5. Posthumous degrees may be printed in the commencement program for the appropriate college and program.
6. The statement "awarded posthumously" will be printed on the student's official academic record (transcript) but not on the diploma.
7. When a student's death occurs while attending TTUHSC and all requirements for the awarding of the degree have been completed, then the posthumous degree will be awarded without following the procedures listed above.