

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
GRADUATE SCHOOL
TIME LIMITS FOR MASTER'S AND SPECIALIST DEGREES**

The procedures below are based on existing policy concerning time limits for Master's and Specialist degrees. They are intended to provide a clear mechanism for the petition process supporting this policy. The time limits discussed below define the maxima for all graduate programs: individual programs are free to establish more stringent limits, providing they are openly promulgated and equitably applied.

SEVEN YEAR (MASTER'S) AND TWELVE YEAR (SPECIALIST) TIME LIMITS

The Master's degree must be completed within seven years from the date of the oldest coursework on the degree program, including any transfer work. Note that in all cases, Plan A and Plan B Master's are treated identically.

The Specialist degree must be completed within twelve years of the date of the oldest coursework on the degree program, including any transfer work.

It is assumed that the adviser, the director of graduate studies, and the student will all cooperate in a responsible manner to keep track of the student's individual time limit and the progress required to meet that deadline.

PETITION PROCESS

If the student is unable to complete the degree by the deadline, he or she may petition the Graduate School for an extension of the seven or twelve year time limit. To insure timely consideration by the Graduate School, petitions should be filed no later than early in the term in which the time limit will expire.

An extension may be requested for a period of one additional term or one additional year. A special Graduate School Dean's Committee will review all petitions.

An extension of one term should be requested if the degree can reasonably be completed within that period of time. Such a request would be appropriate if, for example, the final written or oral examination has been scheduled for that term, or if final revisions to the text of the Plan A thesis or Plan B papers are in progress. An extension of one year should be requested in most other cases.

Only under the most extraordinary circumstances (e.g., severe student illness, adverse conditions for field research, or adviser-related difficulties) will a petition be considered to extend the deadline more than eight years (Master's) or thirteen years (Specialist) from the date of the earliest program coursework. Master's students presently eight or more years beyond the date of their earliest program coursework, and Specialist students thirteen or more years beyond the date of their earliest coursework, may petition for a final extension of up to one additional year beyond their current deadlines.

A Master's or Specialist program form submitted to the Graduate School with coursework already more than seven or twelve years old will not be considered unless it is accompanied by a petition for extension of the time limit specifying the student's anticipated graduation date.

If the petition is approved, the Committee will stipulate a time limit by which all degree requirements must be completed.

If the petition is denied, the program will be returned to the student and the adviser for substitution of more recent coursework.

At the time a student applies to graduate, a petition will be required

- if the student's program contains coursework that is older than seven or twelve years that has not already been approved by the Committee; or
- If the term for which the student is being cleared to graduate is beyond the time limits stipulated in any earlier petition decision.

Please note that since these procedures support long-standing Graduate School policy, they will apply in all cases. There are no "grandfather clauses" for programs which have already been approved.

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FILING THE PETITION

All requests for extension of the deadline for completion of the degree should be submitted on a Graduate School petition form (GS Form 59).

A petition for a one term extension should include the following information:

- an explanation for delay in completion of the degree
- a schedule for completion of the degree, including anticipated graduation date

A petition for a one year extension should include the above information plus:

- an explanation of how the factors causing the delay in completion of the degree have been resolved, if they have been resolved;
- an abstract of the Plan A thesis or Plan B research completed to date, as well as a report on the progress made in writing the thesis or plan B papers (chapters or papers completed in final or draft form, chapter or papers still to be written, etc.);
- an attached letter from the adviser clarifying and/or substantiating the student's request.

In either case, both the adviser and the director of graduate studies for the major field must sign the petition (and the director of graduate studies for the minor field, if the student has a declared minor). The Dean's Committee may consult with the adviser or the director of graduate studies for additional information.

PETITION RESULTS

If the petition for extension of time is approved, a letter from the Dean of the Graduate School will specify:

- the expectations for progress and completion of the degree;
- the consequences of non-completion of the degree within these expectations, including the unlikelihood of future extensions.

If such a petition is denied, the student may be required to submit a revised program. In approving such a revised program, the graduate faculty may also impose additional conditions requiring, for example, that the student register for additional coursework, retake departmental qualifying examinations, or complete the degree within a specific period of time.

(GS14, rev 8/99)