

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
GRADUATE SCHOOL
TIME LIMITS FOR THE COMPLETION OF DOCTORAL DEGREES**

The procedures below are based on existing policy concerning time limits for Doctoral 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, provided they are openly promulgated and equitably applied.

FIVE YEAR TIME LIMIT

All requirements for the Doctoral degree must be completed by five years from the end of the fall or spring term following the term in which the student passes the preliminary oral examination. For example, if a student passes the preliminary oral examination during spring term 1995, all requirements for the degree must be completed by the end of fall term 2000. There are no provisions for a "leave of absence" or other means of suspending candidacy.

At the end of the fourth year following the preliminary oral examination, the Graduate School will notify the student, the adviser, and the director of graduate studies that the student has one year remaining in which to complete all requirements for the degree. This notification will serve as a reminder that the deadline is near, will explain the consequences of non-completion of the degree by the deadline, and will outline the procedures to be used to petition for an extension of time, should one be required. 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 five 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 oral examination has been scheduled for that term, or if final revisions to the text of the thesis 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 to more than six years beyond the date of the preliminary oral examination. Doctoral students who are at present six or more years beyond their preliminary oral examinations may petition for a final extension of up to one additional year beyond their current deadlines.

FILING THE PETITION

All requests for extension of the deadline for completion of the degree will continue to be submitted on a Graduate School petition form (G.S. 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 attached abstract of the research work completed to date, as well as a report on the progress made in writing the thesis itself (chapters completed in draft or final form, chapters still to be written, etc.);
- an attached letter from the adviser clarifying and/or substantiating the student's request.

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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 will consult with the adviser or the director of graduate studies for additional information as appropriate.

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 the petition for extension is denied, the student's doctoral candidacy in the Graduate School program is terminated.

REINSTATEMENT AFTER TERMINATION

The faculty may recommend to the Graduate School that a terminated student be reinstated to doctoral candidacy. Normally such a recommendation will include conditions requiring, for example, that the student retake the preliminary oral examination, register for additional coursework, or complete all degree requirements within a period less than five years from the date of reinstatement.

If the faculty are unwilling to readmit the student to candidacy, or if the student is unwilling to meet the conditions set by the faculty, the student will be dropped from the graduate program and the Graduate School file will be deactivated.

For those students who are required to retake the preliminary oral examination to qualify for reinstatement, the following conditions will apply:

- If the student passes the examination, doctoral candidacy will be restored under specific conditions, including a new time limit which may be shorter than the five years allowed after the initial preliminary oral examination.
- If the student fails the examination, he or she will be allowed one retake of the examination, under the same rules governing a retake of the initial preliminary oral examination.

(GS15, rev 8/99)