

Guideline: Petitions for Extension to the Seven-Year Graduation Rule

Overview

Normally, the student shall complete requirements within seven years of the time of initial registration for graduate study. The purpose of the seven-year requirement in graduate programs is to ensure currency of coursework at the time of graduation, and to deal with extenuating circumstances that may have prevented timely completion of degree.

At the master's level, all requirements for the degree must be completed within seven years of the date of the oldest course counted toward the student's master's degree. (For example, if the first course counted toward the degree is taken in the fall term of 2010, that degree must be completed by the end of the summer term of 2016.)

Responsibilities

In the College of Art and Design, the observance of the seven-year requirement is a joint responsibility of the graduate student, the graduate director, the Senior Associate Dean or equivalent representative, and the Office of Graduate School.

- **Graduate Student**

The student is responsible for management of any responsibilities in addition to his/her course or study that may have impact on the time for graduation. The student is responsible for maintaining frequent and timely communication with the graduate director and if applicable, his/her thesis advisor toward this end. The student initiates the seven-year extension request for a petition to the graduate director.

- **Graduate Director**

Provides confirmation of curricular relevance and approval of degree completion plan.

- **Senior Associate Dean or Equivalent Representative**

Provides concurrence of curricular relevance and degree completion plan.

- **Dean of Graduate School**

The dean of Graduate School, in coordination with the Registrar's Office, will conduct an Institute-wide independent yearly audit of all graduate students that have been in a program five years or longer, and provide this information to the graduate directors, recommending action as appropriate.

- **Graduate Council**

The Graduate Council is the oversight body charged with assuring the integrity of the process.

The Graduate Council assigns the Dean of Graduate School to act on its behalf in granting extensions to the seven-year rule. The Graduate Council assigns a subcommittee to decide on extension requests of unusual complexity.

Extension Process

In cases where the fulfillment of degree requirements may extend beyond the seven-year limit, the student's graduate director will petition the dean of Graduate School for a formal extension. The request must originate with the graduate student. The student **must** document extenuating circumstances that prevented completion of the degree within the seven-year limit.

When a student's program is projected to exceed the seven-year limit, the student should not be encouraged to take courses or work on a thesis or final project until a decision has been made by the dean of Graduate School or, when necessary, the Graduate Council.

Documentation

Documents included in the petition submitted to the Dean of Graduate School by the graduate director shall include the following:

1. Petition support signed by the graduate director
2. Petition support signed by Senior Associate Dean or equivalent representative
3. Detailed plan for completion of degree, addressing each unmet requirement. Generally, no more than one calendar year's extension will be granted. This should be developed and agreed to jointly by the student, student's advisor, and with oversight/concurrence of the graduate director.

Plan Requirements

Documents in the plan for completion **must** include:

1. Circumstances that delayed completion of degree
2. RIT graduate transcript and, where relevant, undergraduate transcript
3. Current Resume
4. A copy of the thesis proposal or final project proposal, if applicable
5. A list of courses that will be older than seven years (and by how much) at the projected date of graduation. As part of the petition, the graduate director will provide confirmation of the currency of courses beyond the seven-year limit.

Unique Cases

A seven-year extension is granted by the Dean of Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate Council. In cases of unusual complexity (appeals of an unfavorable decision by the Dean of Graduate School and/or Graduate Director, etc.), the request for an extension may be forwarded to the chair of the Graduate Council to be distributed to a subcommittee of the Graduate Council for consideration.

The subcommittee will consist of the following individuals or their representatives:

- Graduate Council representative from the requesting college
- Graduate Council representative from a second college
- Graduate Director who is submitting the petition
- Dean of Graduate School
- Chair of the Graduate Council

The student's graduate faculty advisor or graduate director may be present at this meeting. Decisions are usually made by the Graduate Council subcommittee at the time of the meeting and the student and graduate director are notified formally by the Dean of Graduate School.

Petitions for a one-year extension are considered on a case-by-case basis.