THE SEVEN-YEAR RULE

D12.0. E. MASTER’S DEGREE Suggested Modifications:

Reorder 2. as 1. and make current 1. related to seven-year rule as 5.

Replace:

1. Successfully complete all required courses of the university and the college. Normally, the student should complete requirements within seven years of the time of initial registration for graduate study. Extensions of the seven-year rule may be granted through a petition to the Dean of Graduate Studies who decides on behalf of the Graduate Council. In cases of unusual complexity, the Dean of Graduate Studies may refer the matter to the Graduate Council for review. The Dean of Graduate Studies will report annually to the Graduate Council, including all decisions for extensions. Students can apply through the Dean of the College offering the master’s program. Students may appeal any decisions of the Dean of Graduate Studies to the Graduate Council.

With:

5. Successfully complete all required courses of the university and the college. Normally, the student should 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 Masters level, all requirements for the degree must be completed within seven years of the date of the oldest course counted toward the student’s program. (For example, if the first course counted toward the degree is taken in the fall quarter of 2010, that degree must be completed by the end of the summer quarter of 2016.)

Responsibilities
The observance of the seven year requirement is a joint responsibility of the graduate student, the Graduate Program Director, and the office of Graduate Studies.

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 program director and thesis advisor toward this end. The student initiates the seven year extension request to the Graduate Director.

Graduate Studies Office – The Dean of Graduate Studies, 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 program 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 Studies 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.

**Petitions for Extensions to the Seven-Year Graduation Rule**

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 Studies 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. Please note the following important requirements for these petitions:

- Application for an extension should be submitted by the student to the Dean of Graduate Studies prior to the expiration of the seven-year time 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 Studies or, when necessary, the Graduate Council.

Documents included in the petition submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies by the Graduate Director should include the following:

- Petition support signed by Dean’s office.

- 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 Program Director.

- Circumstances that delayed completion of degree.

- RIT graduate transcript (and, where relevant, undergraduate transcript).

- Current resumé.

- A copy of thesis proposal or final project proposal.

- A list of courses that will be older than seven years (and by how much) at the projected date of graduation. At the time of certification, Graduate Director will provide written documentation of the currency of overdue courses.
Letter of support from graduate director or faculty advisor.

A seven year extension is granted by the Dean of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Graduate Council. In cases of unusual complexity, the request may be forwarded to a subcommittee of the Graduate Council to consider the petition. The subcommittee will consist of the following individuals:

- Graduate Council representative from requesting college
- Graduate Council representative from another college
- Graduate Director submitting the petition
- Dean of Graduate Studies
- Chair of Graduate Council

The graduate advisor may be present at this meeting to advocate for the extension. Decisions are usually made at the time of the meeting and the student and Program Director are notified formally by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

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

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D12.0.F. DOCTORAL DEGREE Suggested Modifications:

Replace:

2. Requirements for the degree must be completed within seven years of the date students pass the qualifying exam.

With:

2. At the Doctoral level, all requirements for the degree must be completed within seven years of the date students pass the qualifying exam. (For example, if the student passes the qualifying exam in the fall quarter of 2010, the degree must be completed by the end of the summer quarter of 2016.) Responsibilities and Petitions for Extensions to the Seven-Year Graduation Rule at the Doctoral level are the same as outlined in Policy D12.0.E MASTER’S DEGREE Section 5.

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