

Context for Faculty Senate

- 1) We currently have an age-of-courses policy
https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_general.html#age
- 2) These policies help ensure that graduating students are current in their knowledge.
- 3) This proposal changes the time periods for different degrees.
 - a. Reduces the masters age-of-courses from six to five years and doctoral from ten to seven years.
 - b. New is that online programs have an additional two years to acknowledge that many people enrolled in these courses are also working professionals.
- 4) One goal is to encourage continuously enrolled students to complete their degree in a timely manner.
- 5) Balancing the shorter time limits is to make it as easy as possible for students to appeal for one-year extensions to the age-of-courses, especially if they need to step away from their program for health, family obligations, arrival of child, military service, etc.
- 6) The age-of-courses policy is applied course-by-course, i.e., an aged-out course needs to be replaced on a students' program-of-study. The students still graduate.
- 7) The change would not take effect until Fall 2024, to provide time for current students to finish.
- 8) The new time-limits would put us towards the lower end of our peer group.

School	Age Courses Masters	Age Doctoral	Link
Univ of Arizona	6 years	5 years from completion of comp	https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/time-limits-graduate-course-work
Univ Hawaii Manoa	7 years	7 years	https://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/time-allowed-for-completion-of-degree/
Univ of Nevada-Reno	6 years	8 years	https://www.unr.edu/grad/student-resources/program-of-study-requirements
Oregon State Univ	7 years	9 years	https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/current
Colorado State Univ	10 years	10 years	https://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/graduate-bulletin/graduate-study/procedures-requirements-all-degrees/#time-limit
Washington State Univ	6 years	10 years but also 3 years from time of completion of comp	https://gradschool.wsu.edu/documents/2020/09/2020-21gradschoolpoliciesandprocedures.pdf/
Univ of California, Riverside	varies, min 6 quarters, then 7, 8, and 9	12 quarters (3 years) till candidacy	https://graduate.ucr.edu/graduate-student-employment#time limits to degree

Proposed item for graduate handbook

5.1.1 Age of Courses



CERTIFICATE — The age of courses at the time of certificate completion may not exceed five (5) years.

MASTER'S and SPECIALIST — The age of courses at the time of graduation may not exceed five (5) years.

DOCTORAL and MFA — The age of courses at the time of graduation may not exceed seven (7) years.

Online programs have an additional two years to these limits, e.g., online masters the limit is seven (7) years. Online programs are typically geared toward working professionals and therefore time to completion may be extended.

Students can submit an appeal for courses that are beyond these limits.

- In the event of the birth or adoption of a child, military service, or medical leave of absence, a student can request an extension to Age of Courses policy up to one year by submitting a letter providing dates of e.g. birth/adoption or military service and claiming the exception. They do not need to submit an entire appeal packet.
- For other scenarios, e.g. a student changed their field of research after an en-route masters, or students have been working full-time in a profession related to their degree, the student should submit an “appeal packet” (see [Policy Appeals](#) for specific appeal information).
 - Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of scenarios and students/faculty are encouraged to contact The Graduate School with questions.
 - For appeals for courses up to one year beyond the age of courses limit, the appeal packet should include a rationale written by the student and a letter of support from the student’s committee chair.
 - For appeals for courses beyond one year, the appeal packet should additionally include documentation from the student of current knowledge of the appealed courses (e.g. working in the field of study) and letters of support from both the chair and department head.

Course credits from a conferred or en-route master’s degree to be used toward a doctoral program at MSU are not subject to Age of Courses policy. See [General Doctoral Credit Requirements](#) for more information. See [En Route and Continuing Students](#) for definitions.

This up-date to the age-of-course policy will take effect at the start of the Fall 2024. Up till then the age-of-course policy that was in place during Fall 2021 is applicable ([link](#)).