

GRADUATE COUNCIL — NOVEMBER MEETING
AGENDA ITEM 4A – MOTION ON OVERAGE COURSE POLICY

Date: November 10, 2016

From: Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, Professor, Department of History
Graduate Council, Arts & Humanities Council Member

To: Members of Graduate Council

Re: Overage Course Limits

The following motion seeks to address issues raised in the October Graduate Council meeting about the need to increase the time limit on allowable overage courses in a POSC.

Motion: Increase age limit on overage courses allowed in a student's POSC and define the process for requesting exemptions from the Graduate College for courses beyond age limits. This motion also proposes limits on the number of overage courses allowed.

CURRENT HANDBOOK POLICIES

6.3.4 Overage Courses

A course is considered overage if it was taken beyond the time limit for the master's or doctoral program (see [Chapter 4 for time limit requirements](#)) unless there was an exemption for the student's specific program.

A written request for acceptance of overage courses should be submitted as an attachment to the POSC form. It should include the following:

- a justification for why the courses are still relevant,
- an assurance that the student has kept current with the information covered in the overage, and
- an explanation of how the student will be evaluated on overage material. Evaluation could include a written examination (a preliminary, qualifying, or comprehensive examination), evidence of satisfactory performance in course(s) for which the overage courses are prerequisites, or the completion of an audit in one or more current courses in the areas encompassed by the overage course. The object should be to determine whether the material learned in those courses is still timely and adequate. The evaluation method should be specified by the committee at the time the POSC form is submitted.

4.4.5 Time-to-Degree Limit

- The Graduate College's time-to-degree limit for all graduate students, both master's and Ph.D., is seven years. **Graduate programs may establish more restrictive time-to-degree limits.** For example, at the program's discretion, a student beginning a Ph.D. degree program at ISU with a master's degree could be expected to complete the program within three or four or five years, while a student beginning a Ph.D. degree program without the master's degree could be expected to complete the program within five or six or seven years. This is an option that would be enforced at the department level. Requests to extend the seven-year time limit will only be considered in the event of rare circumstances involving medical or other extenuating situations.
- Cases in which the student leaves ISU during his or her graduate career and later returns are dealt with individually by the POS committee and the Graduate College. The inclusion in the program of study of course work that is beyond the time limit ("over-age" courses) must be justified by the POS committee in a statement accompanying the submission of the program of study.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO OVERAGE COURSE POLICY 6.3.4

6.3.4 Expired Courses

The age of a course used on a POSC is defined as the time between when the credits were earned and when the student graduates. A course is considered expired when its age is greater than the time limit for the master's or doctoral program. As indicated in section 4.4.5 of the Graduate College Handbook, the Graduate College Time-to-Degree Limit is seven years. **Graduate programs may establish more restrictive policies for both time-to-degree limits and expired course limits.**

Typically, POSC forms include only age-compliant course credits, no older than seven years. Occasionally, a student and her or his POSC committee members may believe expired credits should be counted toward degree requirements. Recognizing the wide diversity of graduate programs at Iowa State University, and the fact that students embark on graduate study under many different circumstances and with varying degrees of prior experience and/or education, the Graduate College offers the following procedure for the review of expired courses for possible inclusion on a POSC:

1. Although the time-to-degree limit is seven years, graduate courses (those taken for graduate credit at Iowa State University, or those documented as graduate-level from other appropriately accredited institutions) that are between eight to ten years old may be used toward a graduate degree with the approval of a student's program of study committee and program DOGE(s). See item 4 below for limits on these credits.
2. Up to 24 expired graduate credits that are eleven to sixteen years old may be used on a doctoral POSC with approval of the Graduate College. Requests for approval are forwarded to the Graduate College from the student's major professor(s) according to the following procedure:

Prior to approval of a POSC form, a written request for acceptance of the expired courses must be submitted to the program's Director of Graduate Education for approval using the following form: [link to form]. The expired course request must be approved by the student's program of study committee prior to the submission of the request to the DOGE, and it should include the following:

- a justification for why the courses are still relevant,
 - an assurance that the student has kept current with the information covered in the expired courses, and
 - an explanation of how the student will be evaluated on content from expired courses. Evaluation could include a written examination (a preliminary, qualifying, or comprehensive examination), evidence of satisfactory performance in course(s) for which the expired courses are prerequisites, or the completion of an audit in one or more current courses in the areas encompassed by the expired courses. The object should be to determine whether the material learned in those courses is still timely and adequate. The evaluation method should be specified by the committee at the time the POSC form is submitted.
3. Expired courses beyond sixteen years of age are prohibited on all master's POSC forms, but up to 12 credits from such courses may be included on doctoral POSC forms when the courses were taken in pursuit of an earned graduate degree and the student has been professionally engaged in the discipline continuously since the prior graduate degree was earned. Requests in this category must be directed to the Graduate College for consideration by completing a standard form.

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AGENDA ITEM 4A – MOTION ON OVERAGE COURSE POLICY

4. ~~The following guidelines will be followed by the Graduate College for the number and age limits of expired credits allowed in a POSC:~~

	<u>8-10 Years</u>	<u>11-16 Years</u>	<u>17+ Years</u>
Master's degrees:	6 credits	0 credits	0 credits
Ph.D.:	no limit	24 credits	12 credits

5. If the Graduate College approves the use of expired courses, it does so based in part on the year of expected graduation on the POSC. If a student does not graduate by the term indicated on the POSC, the approved use of expired courses is void. Students and faculty advisors should plan in advance for the possibility that additional courses will be required due to delays in graduation.

Note: No changes proposed to current policy, **4.4.5 Time-to-Degree Limit**

Links to Relevant Policies in Graduate College Handbook:

Chapter 4: <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=4>
Chapter 6: <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=6>

Proposed Timeline:

Discussion:	October 19 th Meeting
Motion Made:	November 16 th Meeting
Slated for GC Vote:	December 14 th Meeting

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