

To: Dr. Christine Haynes, Chair of Graduate Council

From: Dr. Katherine Hall-Hertel, Associate Dean of the Graduate School

Date: December 4th, 2017

RE: Proposed Changes to **Time Limits** and **Course Revalidation** Policies

These two policies are intertwined and must be addressed together. A review of peer institutions shows that all set an upper limit on how long a student has to complete a graduate program. This typically varies from 5-7 years for master's degrees and 6-10 years for doctoral degrees. These policies either take the form of a limit based on the student's "time in program", or based on the age of the courses. This proposal represents a hybrid model of the "time in program" and course age models, keeping the time limits on the courses themselves, but allowing for extensions that are not course-specific.

This proposal creates additional flexibility for both students and faculty. It extends all time limits by one (1) year, and allows the Graduate School to approve extensions of the time limits by up to one (1) year with appropriate justification. It forces students and programs to follow mutually established deadlines for completion, and it outlines the ramifications for failure to adhere to those deadlines.

This change will eliminate the course revalidation process. Course revalidation is problematic. Although intended to allow students to demonstrate currency in a given topic, there is no institutional policy for what this process should look like. In most cases, students who exceed the time limits do so with multiple courses, meaning they must produce additional work at a time they need to focus on completing their program. Lastly, there are some courses which faculty argue have not changed significantly in many years and should not require revalidation. Given that a minority of peer institutions offer a course revalidation process, it seems that permitting extensions of the time limits makes is more practical for graduate education.

Please consider this substantive change to the graduate-level academic policies on time limits and course revalidation for the 2018-19 *Graduate Catalog*.

1. Proposal for modification of time limits and course revalidation - Master's degrees

Catalog location: *Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Master's Degree Requirements*

Current catalog copy:

Time Limit

No course older than six years may be applied towards a master's degree (including transfer credit). This policy is in place because of the University's interest in a degree being current when it is

awarded. Courses that exceed this time limit must be revalidated or retaken, whichever the graduate program decides necessary, if they are to count in a degree program.

To revalidate a course, the student, along with the program coordinator and the course instructor, prepare a revalidation plan that must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate School. This plan often involves taking a special examination designed by the faculty of the graduate program. Once the plan has been completed, the program coordinator must notify the Graduate School in writing. The Revalidation Form is available on the Graduate School website at graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms.

Students may not revalidate courses with a grade of C or lower, courses that are internships or other forms of practica, or courses taken at other institutions. **Additionally, no more than 25% of the courses on a student's program of study may be revalidated and for master's students no course older than eight years may be revalidated.**

Proposed catalog copy:

Time Limit

Time limits exist to ensure that degrees are current when they are awarded. All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within seven (7) calendar years, beginning with the student's first term in the program. The time limit cannot be paused, even if the student takes an approved leave of absence. No course older than seven years may be applied towards a master's degree (including transfer credit). Any course that exceeds this limit must be retaken. Failure to adhere to the time limit may result in the termination of a student's enrollment.

In rare cases a request for extension may be considered by The Graduate School. Such requests must include an explanation of the extenuating circumstances that resulted in the student's inability to complete the program within the time limit. If approved, an extension may not exceed one (1) year. In such cases, the student and graduate program must provide a signed timeline for program completion. Failure to adhere to the approved timeline will result in automatic termination of the student's enrollment for a lack of satisfactory academic progress. Multiple extensions will not be approved.

2. Proposal - Modification of time limits and course revalidation for Research Doctoral Degrees (requires a research dissertation)

Location: *Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Ph.D. Degree Requirements*

Location: *Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/DBA Degree Requirements*

Location: *Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Ed.D. Degree Requirements*

Current catalog copy:

Time Limit

No course older than eight years may be applied towards a Ph.D./DBA/Ed.D. (excluding transfer credit). Courses that exceed this time limit must be revalidated or retaken, whichever the graduate program decides necessary, if they are to count in a degree program.

To revalidate a course, the student, along with the program coordinator and the course instructor, prepare a revalidation plan that must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate School. This plan often involves taking a special examination designed by the faculty of the graduate program. Once the plan has been completed, the program coordinator must notify the Graduate School in writing. The Revalidation Form is available on the Graduate School website at graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms.

Students may not revalidate courses with a grade of C or lower, courses that are internships or other forms of practica, or courses taken at other institutions. **Additionally, no more than 25% of the courses on a student's program of study may be revalidated, and no course older than ten years may be revalidated.**

Proposed catalog copy:

Time Limit

All requirements for a research doctoral degree (Ph.D., DBA, Ed.D.) must be completed within nine (9) calendar years, beginning with the student's first term in the program. The time limit cannot be paused, even if the student takes an approved leave of absence. No course older than nine years may be applied towards a research doctoral degree (including transfer credit). Any course that exceeds this limit must be retaken. Failure to adhere to the time limit may result in the termination of a student's enrollment.

In rare cases a request for extension may be considered by The Graduate School. Such requests must include an explanation of the extenuating circumstances that resulted in the student's inability to complete the program within the time limit. If approved, an extension may not exceed one (1) year. In such cases, the student and graduate program must provide a signed timeline for program completion. Failure to adhere to the approved timeline will result in automatic termination of the student's enrollment for a lack of satisfactory academic progress. Multiple extensions will not be approved.

3. Proposal – Modification of time limits and course revalidation for Professional Doctoral degrees (does not require a research dissertation)

Location: *Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/DNP Degree Requirements*

Current catalog copy:

Time Limit

No course older than six years may be applied towards the DNP degree (including transfer credit). Courses that exceed this time limit must be revalidated or retaken, whichever the graduate program decides necessary, if they are to count in a degree program.

To revalidate a course, the student, along with the program coordinator and the course instructor, prepare a revalidation plan that must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate School. This plan often involves taking a special examination designed by the faculty of the graduate program. Once the plan has been completed,

the program coordinator must notify the Graduate School in writing. The Revalidation Form is available on the Graduate School website at graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms.

Students may not revalidate courses with a grade of C or lower, courses that are internships or other forms of practica, or courses taken at other institutions. Additionally, no more than 25% of the courses on a student's program of study may be revalidated, and no course older than ten years may be revalidated.

Proposed catalog copy:

Time Limit

All requirements for a professional doctoral degree (DNP) must be completed within seven (7) calendar years, beginning with the student's first term in the program. The time limit cannot be paused, even if the student takes an approved leave of absence. No course older than seven years may be applied towards a professional doctoral degree (including transfer credit). Any course that exceeds this limit must be retaken. Failure to adhere to the time limit may result in the termination of a student's enrollment.

In rare cases, a request for extension may be considered by The Graduate School. Such requests must include an explanation of the extenuating circumstances that resulted in the student's inability to complete the program within the time limit. If approved, an extension may not exceed one (1) year. In such cases, the student and graduate program must provide a signed timeline for program completion. Failure to adhere to the approved timeline will result in automatic termination of the student's enrollment for a lack of satisfactory academic progress. Multiple extensions will not be approved.

4. Proposal – Modification of time limits and course revalidation for Graduate Certificates

Location: *Degree Requirements and Academic Policies/Graduate Certificate Requirements*

Current catalog copy:

Time Limit

No courses older than four years may be applied towards a graduate certificate. Courses that exceed this time limit must be retaken.

Proposed catalog copy:

Time Limit

All requirements for the graduate certificate must be completed within five (5) calendar years, beginning with the student's first term in the program. The time limit cannot be paused, even if the student takes an approved leave of absence. No course older than five years may be applied towards a graduate certificate. Any course that exceeds this limit must be retaken. Failure to adhere to the time limit may result in the termination of a student's enrollment.

In rare cases, a request for extension may be considered by The Graduate School. Such requests must include an explanation of the extenuating circumstances that resulted in the student's inability to complete the program within the time limit. If approved, an extension may not exceed one (1) year. In such cases, the student and graduate program must provide a signed timeline for program completion. Failure to adhere to the approved timeline will result in automatic termination of the student's enrollment for a lack of satisfactory academic progress. Multiple extensions will not be approved.