

Simon Fraser University
Maggie Benston Centre 1100
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6

TEL 778.782.3042
FAX 778.782.3080

gradstudies@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/grad

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate

DATE May 16, 2025

FROM Mary O'Brien,
Chair of Senate Graduate Studies
Committee (SGSC)

RE: Graduate General Regulations 1.12 Time Limit for Completion and 1.7 Program
Requirements



For Approval: At its meeting on May 6, 2025, SGSC reviewed and approved the revision Graduate General Regulations 1.12 Time Limit for Completion (**effective Spring 2026**) and 1.7 Program Requirements (**effective Summer 2026**). This gives rise to the following motion:

Motion 1*:

That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulations 1.12 Time Limit for Completion (**effective Spring 2026**) and 1.7 Program Requirements, (**effective Summer 2026**).

***This item was referred back to SGSC by Senate on July 7, 2025**

Senators wishing to consult a more detailed report of curriculum revisions may do so on the Senate Docushare repository at <https://docushare.sfu.ca/dsweb/View/Collection-12682>

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MEMORANDUM —

ATTENTION Mary O'Brien, Chair of Senate **DATE** 4 April 2025
Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)
FROM Pamela Stern, Graduate Studies
Associate Dean, Curriculum
and Policy
RE: Graduate General Regulation Change:
1.12 Time Limit for Program
Completion



Motion:

That SGSC approve the amendments to GGR 1.12 Time Limit for Program Completion

Summary and Rationale:

The proposed changes are primary editorial, meant to improve readability and clarify intention. The language around program accommodations for disability is revised to remove any language that pathologizes disability.

Recommendations:

That SGSC approve this modification to GGR 1.12.

1.12 Time Limit for Program Completion

1.12.1 Time Limit

The time limit for students in a graduate certificate, diploma, or master's program to complete all of the requirements is nine terms from the start of the program. The time limit for students in a doctoral program to complete all of the requirements is 18 terms from the start of the program. In the case of a student who has transferred from a master's into the doctoral program, without completing the master's degree, the time limit is 18 terms from the start of the master's ~~program credential~~.

The time limits for program completion are not intended to be the normal times for completion **but rather the maximum number of terms students should take to complete a given credential**. These limits take into account a wide variety of **extraordinary** circumstances and events that may delay completion. It is expected that most students will complete their program before reaching the time limit. Individual academic units may specify their expectations of normal program completion times as a guide for determining whether a student's progress is satisfactory.

Some students may find it necessary to interrupt their studies by taking a leave of absence. Depending upon the **reason for the leave type**, it may count towards time to completion. **Examples of leaves that do not count towards time to completion may include, but are not limited to, leaves for military service or those for medical, compassionate or parental reasons. Examples of leaves that do not count towards time to completion are leaves taken for medical, compassionate, or parental reasons (see 1.4.5).**

Students who need a modification in the time limit or other program accommodation due to illness or disability with long term disabilities should discuss their situation with the Centre for Accessible Learning ~~early in their graduate studies or as soon as possible they are aware of the need. after the condition is diagnosed~~. The Centre will assist the student and their ~~department academic unit~~ in developing a plan for program completion, which may include an extension beyond the normal time limits. Extended completion plans must be approved by the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies following consultation with the student's academic program.

1.12.2 Extensions

Master's and doctoral students who have reached the time limit for their program may apply for an extension to the time limit if needed to complete the program requirements. A single extension may be for one to three terms, and students may be granted more than one extension. Except in exceptional circumstances, a master's and doctoral program should be no longer than the time limit plus six terms of extended time. Extensions **may be less than the maximum of six terms** and must meet the criteria established by the academic

unit. Students should contact their academic unit to confirm the specific extension policy for their program.

Applications for an extension must be submitted no later than the term in which the time limit or current extension expires. Students may initiate a request for a time limit extension by preparing a plan for completion. The completion plan should be discussed with and **approved by the student's supervisor or program director, agreed upon by the supervisory committee or program director** and is to be submitted along with the request for extension.

Extensions are not available to students who are discontinued from their program. Students are required to maintain continuous enrollment throughout their extension and are eligible to go on ~~medical/compassionate or parental leave~~ **leaves that do not count towards time to completion** (see 1.4.5). Examples of leaves that do not count towards time to completion may include, but are not limited to, leaves for military service or those for medical, compassionate or parental reasons. Extensions are approved by the supervisor or program director, graduate program chair, and the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Mary O'Brien, Chair of Senate **DATE** 4 April 2025
Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)
FROM Pamela Stern, Graduate Studies
Associate Dean, Curriculum
and Policy
RE: Graduate General Regulation Change:
1.7 Program Requirement



Motion:

That SGSC approve the amendments to GGR 1.7 Program Requirements

Summary and Rationale:

The proposed changes to GGR 1.7 are an outcome of comprehensive review of Graduate General Regulations by 2 working groups – one concerned specifically with theses and the other looking at more general issues of clarity and purpose.

The majority of the proposed changes are purely editorial to improve clarity; however, the following is a change of substance:

- 1) 1.7.2 – the combination 1.7.2a & 1.7.2b into a single category (1.7.2a) – both are externally examined and both are “harvested by” Library and Archives Canada. Other capstones may be archived at our Library (currently in Summit), but do not go LAC.

Recommendations:

That SGSC approve these changes and additions to GGR 1.7.

1.7 Program Requirements

The minimum university requirements **for graduate credentials** are outlined in GGRs 1.7.1-1.7.6. **1.7.7.** A graduate program committee may require additional graduate or undergraduate work, either on an individual basis or, with Senate ratification, for all students in the program. One half of the minimum course work required for a credential must be completed at this university.

See [1.7.7](#) for regulations concerning courses completed at other institutions.

[...]

1.7.2 Minimum Program Requirements for the Master's Degree

Master's students must complete a minimum ~~requirement~~ of 30 graduate units, in one of the following ways:

- a) Successfully complete a minimum of 12 units of graduate course work plus a thesis **(18 units)** ~~that is examined as per 1.9.1, or a minimum of 20 units of course work plus a research project (10 units). Both are examined publicly as per 1.9.1. Academic programs may require additional units of course work.~~
- b) ~~Successfully complete a minimum of 20 units of graduate course work plus a project that is examined as per 1.9.1.~~
- c) ~~b) Successfully complete a minimum of 24 units of graduate course work plus two extended essays, or a project, that are examined by two readers. a capstone (e.g. project, examination, portfolio, or extended essay(s)) that is examined internally as per 1.9.1. Academic programs may require additional units of course work.~~
- d) c) Successfully complete a minimum of 30 units of graduate course work. ~~A capstone (e.g. project, examination, portfolio, extended essay) is not required but may be added to the program. Academic programs may include other or additional written components or examinations as part of the program requirements.~~

Not all ~~of these~~ options are available for every program.

Theses, research projects, or other written program requirements are normally completed in English or French. SFU is inclusive of language diversity. Theses, research projects, or other written components can be provided in other languages if the supervisory committee has the proficiency to supervise in that chosen language and the external examiner also has the necessary proficiency in the oral and/or written language.

1.7.3 Minimum Program Requirements for the Doctoral Degree

There are no university course requirements for the doctoral degree. **The course**

requirements for the doctoral degree are set by the academic unit offering the program, subject to approval by the Senate Graduate Studies Committee. However, a student's supervisory committee or graduate program committee or the faculty graduate studies committee, may require a student to complete specified specific or additional courses or units as part of the degree program. All doctoral programs require a doctoral thesis based on substantial original research.

1.7.4 Minimum Program Requirements for the Cotutelle Degree

Admission to Cotutelle Degree has been suspended effective Fall 2024.

A cotutelle is a single doctoral degree awarded jointly by two institutions. Each cotutelle has an individualized agreement between the student, supervisors, and both institutions.

Cotutelle students must complete at least half of their course work requirements at this university. Cotutelle students have a minimum residency requirement of four terms of full-time enrollment at Simon Fraser University.

[...]

1.7.7a Transfer Credit

Transfer credit refers to course credits earned at another university while the student is enrolled in a graduate degree or credential at Simon Fraser University. This includes credit for courses taken through the Western Deans Agreement. For graduate courses taken prior to enrollment in a graduate program see [GGR 1.7.7b Advance Credit](#) or [1.7.7c Laddering Credit](#).

A student may apply to receive transfer credit towards the requirements at Simon Fraser University if they are planning to take courses at another institution.

To receive transfer credit, the following conditions apply:

- a) Application shall be made at least one month before the course/courses start and shall be reviewed by the graduate program committee and be sent to the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies for final approval.
- b) The student shall maintain enrollment, ~~not on leave~~, at Simon Fraser University while completing the course(s) at another university under these provisions.
- c) The **student achieves a minimum grade required is a of B or its equivalent, as transfer credits cannot count toward meeting degree requirement unless a grade of B is achieved.** although the **The** grade achieved will not be included in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average.

[...]

1.7.7c Laddering Credit

A student may have completed courses as part of a previous credential that are eligible to be applied to their current credential. Two types of approved laddered pathways are recognized: internal laddered pathways and approved external laddering credit pathways.

INTERNAL LADDERED PATHWAYS:

An internal laddered pathway allows for students who have completed an approved SFU graduate certificate or diploma to progress into a subsequent diploma or master's program and carry forward the credits from their previously completed credential. As the courses and their unit-values are already reflected on the transcript, no additional credit is awarded; however, students receive recognition for each completed credential including a separate parchment. Please refer to the list of current recognized laddered pathways at SFU.

In the case of unrecognized laddered pathways, individual students who have completed an SFU certificate or diploma may apply to have those credits recognized as laddering. Approval must be provided by the Dean and Vice-Provost of Graduate Studies.

EXTERNAL LADDERING CREDIT:

A student may be eligible to receive credit for courses completed as part of a credential at an institution outside SFU under the following conditions:

- a) A partnership agreement, transfer pathway, or memorandum of understanding has been formally established and approved by the appropriate SFU approval body.
- b) The courses must have been completed within three years of starting the Simon Fraser University graduate credential.
- c) The minimum grade required must be equivalent to a B, although the grade achieved will not be included in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average. Cases where the grading basis is pass/fail or equivalent will be considered but must be approved in advance as part of the partnership agreement, transfer pathway or memorandum of understanding by the appropriate office(s).
- d) Application for laddering credit must be approved by the graduate program committee and the Dean and Vice-Provost of Graduate Studies, before admission.

A list of approved laddered pathways can be found at <https://www.sfu.ca/gradstudies/apply/programs/pathways.html>.

~~RECOGNIZED LADDERED PATHWAYS AT SFU:~~

- ~~GDBA to MBA programs~~
- ~~graduate diploma in education (GDE) to MEd EP~~

- ~~Mitaes Skills Training to i2I (graduate certificate in science and technology commercialization) three year pilot~~