

8888 University Drive  
Maggie Benston Centre, RM 1100  
Burnaby B.C. Canada V5A 1S6

TEL + 1 778 782 3042  
SFU.CA/GRADUATE-STUDIES

MEMORANDUM

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ATTENTION Senate

DATE August 21, 2025

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



RE: Graduate General Regulation 1.12 Time Limit for Program Completion

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**For Approval:**

At its meeting on May 6, 2025, SGSC reviewed and approved the revision Graduate General Regulation 1.12 Time Limit for Program Completion. This gives rise to the following motion, effective Summer 2026:

**Motion:**

That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.12 Time Limit for Program Completion effective Summer 2026.



GRADUATE STUDIES


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

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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

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**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 **include, but are not limited to, leaves for military service or those** ~~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** ~~agreed upon~~ by the **student's supervisor** ~~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 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.