



Guidelines for Granting Extensions to Graduate Programs

NB: The following Guidelines are based upon comments received from the Graduate Studies Committee on an original document circulated in June 2005.

Circumstances may sometimes justify an Extension to a student's Graduate Program beyond the normal maximum period identified in the SMU Calendar.

- 1) An Extension to a Graduate Program may be considered under any of the following conditions which have interfered with the student's ability to complete her/his Program within the normal maximum period:
 - a) Illness, family strife, or unforeseen family responsibilities*
 - b) Pursuit of an employment opportunity which was a positive experience towards the student's Graduate Program*
 - c) Unforeseen difficulties beyond the control of the student in pursuit of the thesis research.

*Note: In cases (a) and (b) above, it is highly preferable that the student apply for a Leave of Absence from their Programs at the time of the incident/situation which "stops the clock" on their normal time-to-completion for their Program.

- 2) A student applying for an Extension should submit a written request on the proper FGSR form (available on the FGSR website) to the Coordinator or Chair of his/her program or department (the latter normally in the case of interdisciplinary programs). The request should include a letter of support from the student's research supervisor or supervisory committee where this is applicable, together with a letter describing in detail the reasons for the requested leave and supporting documentation, where applicable, certifying the facts surrounding the request. After the program or department has reviewed the leave application and has approved it at the departmental or program level, it will then be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research along with a letter of support from the program Coordinator or departmental Chair.
- 3) The Extension to a Program will be for a maximum of 1 year in length per request. Extensions can be granted at maxima of only twice for Master's programs and only three times for PhD programs.
- 4) A student at or beyond her/his normal maximum Program period who is denied an Extension will normally be required to withdraw.