



To: Ph.D. Students

From: Rick Green, Faculty Chair, Ph.D. Program

Date: November 5, 2007

Subject: All But Dissertation (ABD) Status

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The University has recently revised its ABD policies, so that students now must sign a form on attaining ABD status and electing "in absentia" or "in residence." I would encourage you to review these policies, which are on the University's web site.

The University policy includes, and always has included, a time limit for ABD status. It reads as follows:

Once students achieve ABD status, their doctoral degree candidacy shall continue for a maximum of seven full academic years, unless terminated earlier by conferral of the degree, by academic or administrative action, or by a lapse of candidacy due to more restrictive department or college policy. At the expiration of the seven-year period, candidacy status shall lapse. Once candidacy has lapsed, the person may resume work towards a doctoral degree only if newly admitted to a currently offered doctoral degree program under criteria determined by that program.

Under extraordinary circumstances, such as military or public service, family or parental leave, or temporary disability, a school or college may, upon the relevant department's recommendation and with the written approval of the dean, defer the lapse of candidacy status for a period commensurate with the duration of that interruption.

Our teaching requirement renders the standard clock awkward, if we interpret ABD status as achieved only after all requirements are met besides the dissertation. The teaching requirement is often met late in the program, or after a candidate has left campus and accepted a position at another university. We have, therefore, in recent years interpreted the clock as nine years from entering the program. Several students recently have run up against the clock, and either left the program or successfully defended.

On consulting with the Ph.D. committee about the University's policy changes, we decided to make our policies formal in a memo such as the current one, so that there is no ambiguity about how the clock works.

Candidacy will lapse 9 years from entry into the program, which is normally 7.5 years after qualifying exams. The only exceptions will be for the "extraordinary circumstances" outlined in the university policy. Students whose candidacy is lapsed must apply for readmission to the program, and a condition of that readmission would be retaking qualifying exams.

Students become ABD after finishing successfully passing the two summer papers, qualifiers, and the external minor course requirement. At that point they must fill out the form and elect "on campus" or "in absentia." The teaching requirement must be met before a degree will be granted, but can be satisfied by teaching off campus, and therefore can, in principle, be satisfied while a candidate is "ABD in absentia."

Cc: Deans Ravi, Baybars, and Dunn