Process to Request exception to the 7-Year Rule for Graduate Course Expiration

Requests for exceptions to the 7-year time limit are rarely approved. Since the 7-year rule for the completion of a master's degree is a Title 5 requirement, we have to gather sufficient documentation to withstand an audit should the decision to waive the requirements be questioned. Therefore, the Office of Graduate Studies will only consider an exception if everything related to the delay is out of the student's control and detailed verifiable documentation of all issues raised by the student is submitted with the petition.

The Dean of Graduate Studies will not consider any appeal of the 7-year rule unless there is strong support from (1) the graduate advisor; (2) the chair of the thesis/project committee (if applicable), (3) the department-level graduate affairs committee (if applicable) , (4) the department chair, and (5) the associate dean of the college; who may want to involve the college-level graduate affairs committee (if applicable).

Student appeals need to be addressed first within the department and, if there is strong support at the department level, then the appeal needs to be considered by the college. If there is not support at these levels; then the department or college must inform the student that the petition has been denied. Any requests submitted directly to The Office of Grduate Studies by a student will be directed to the graduate student's department.

In sum, the Dean of Graduate Studies will not consider an exception to the 7-year rule unless the student begins at the department-level with their graduate advisor. If there is support at all levels, The Dean of Graduate Studies will review the petition for final approval. Please note that approval will not be granted in cases where the student mentions work-related demands that prevented the completion of a degree within the 7-year requirement. Working is a necessity for many of our students and not a sufficient reason to extend a two-year graduate program past seven years.

If you decide to support a student's request to waive the 7-year time limit please provide the following material:

1. The student must submit a "General Academic Petition for Graduate Requirements" with detailed verifiable documentation of all issues brought up by the student. Petition form is available on our website: http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/users/u209301/general_academic_petition_for_graduate_requirements_doc_final.pdf
2. Letter from the student's thesis/project committee members indicating that they are willing to review and approve the final revisions of the culminating project by a specified date (if applicable).
3. A letter of support from the department chair and approval of the associate dean.
4. If the petition is approved; then course validation forms must be submitted for each expired course (up to 9 units) to verify that the student remains current and competent in the discipline/curriculum associated with the expired course: http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Office%20of%20Graduate%20Studies/forms/course-validation-by-exam-_form.pdf
5. The student must be re-admitted/matriculated in order to submit their final project.