Formal Policy on ABDs  
(adopted 12/03)

Rationale

The Graduate Bulletin states that "Students must complete the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree within six years of the first term of registration in the program."

The American Psychological Association (APA) Committee on Accreditation of clinical programs explicitly expresses misgivings about programs that allow students to be in the program for longer than 7 years. The Committee on Accreditation, upon granting re-accreditation status to MU's clinical psychology doctoral program in 2003, required a formal statement of how the program will handle students who take excessively long periods of time.

Accordingly, the Department of Psychology Clinical Psychology Program formally adopts the following policy regarding students timely completion of dissertation requirements.

Policy Statement

Students are categorized as an ABD ("all but dissertation") if (1) they are in their seventh year or later or they have completed their internship, regardless of their current year, and (2) they have not completed their dissertation.

1. ABDs are expected to work to complete their dissertation as quickly as possible.

2. The Graduate School requires that ABDs be continuously enrolled, which requires the permission of the DCT or the Department chairperson.

3. In order for ABDs to obtain permission to be continuously enrolled from the DCT, the following stipulations must be met:

   (1) Students must submit a contract, co-signed by the dissertation supervisor, specifying the completion dates of various stages of their dissertation.

   (2) Neither the DCT nor the Department chairperson will sign the continuous enrollment sheet without first meeting with the student to discuss progress and plans.

4. Students can appeal to the Graduate Committee if they need an extension of their contract with the Program. The Graduate Committee will require that students attend a meeting to discuss their situation with the whole committee.

5. If the Graduate Committee will not extend the deadline, students may appeal to the Graduate School Dean.