

## PROPOSAL TO REVISE REVALIDATION POLICY

GSC presenter: Sarah Lubienski

This proposal is for a...

- program change    new program    policy change    new policy

### 1. What are you proposing and why?

Currently, there is no limit on the number of courses and the age of courses that may be revalidated. When courses are quite old, it is questionable whether revalidation methods adequately confirm that a student is current in the field. The following policy revisions are intended to address this.

#### Revalidation Policy Proposed Revisions:

##### Revalidation

To ensure that graduates have current knowledge in their field, coursework must be less than seven years old at the time a student passes the oral qualifying examination (for doctoral students) or at the time of graduation (for Ed.S. or M.S.Ed. students). However, if program faculty feel that a student can clearly demonstrate current knowledge of course material taken more than seven years previously, the faculty may allow course revalidation.

Revalidation is a process whereby a student demonstrates current knowledge of older course material ~~that was not taken within seven years of passing the oral qualifying examination.~~

Several methods of revalidating old courses are available:

- Passing an examination specifically covering the material taught in the course (such as a course final examination).
- Passing a more advanced course in the same subject area, taken more recently (within the seven years).
- Passing a comprehensive examination (e.g., a doctoral qualifying examination) in which the student demonstrates substantial knowledge of the content of the course. (Only two courses may be revalidated by this method).
- Teaching a comparable course.
- Publishing scholarly research that demonstrates substantial knowledge of the course content and understanding of fundamental principles taught in the course.
- Presenting evidence of extensive professional experience that requires the application of material taught in the course.

Departments have the right to limit the amount of old coursework to be included in graduate programs. E-docs for course revalidation are available in One.IU. Courses must be justified individually even if a common method is used. A Curriculum Vitae is required when revalidating coursework through professional experience, publications, and teaching.

The revalidation evidence for each must be assessed by an Indiana University faculty member who teaches the course being revalidated. The revalidating faculty member must be personally convinced, based upon present evidence, that the student has current mastery of basic course concepts and principles.

If the course instructor is not available, a faculty member in the same program specialization area may be substituted. Permission to use a part-time faculty member or a faculty member at another university for course revalidation must be secured from the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

Transfer credit must be transferred before it can be revalidated.

There are limits on allowable coursework revalidation:

- Students may revalidate no more than 50% of their coursework for an IU SoE graduate program.
- Students may not revalidate coursework that is more than 14 years old.
- In accordance with UGS policy/practice, no more than 2 courses may be revalidated via the qualifying exam. Additionally, no more than 3 courses may be revalidated with any single method.

A faculty member may petition the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for an exception to the above limits on behalf of a student if they believe the student can demonstrate current knowledge and the exception is in the best interest of the student and School. If a student withdraws from an advanced degree program with the intention of earning a less advanced degree, coursework used toward the less advanced degree will not require additional revalidation beyond that which would have been required for the more advanced degree.

Even when a revalidation request falls within established policy, faculty should require students to take current coursework if that is clearly the best way to ensure students have current knowledge in the field. Coursework age, content timeliness, and student performance should be considered in decisions of whether to support revalidation of old coursework.

### Rationale:

Similar to [UGS policy](#), the current SoE policy requires revalidation if a course is more than 7 years old at the time of taking qualifying exams (doctoral degrees) or at the time of degree conferral (other graduate degrees). (*Our policy is more generous than UGS policy, which only allows 5 years for UGS M.S. degrees.*)

Some former students have asked to return to graduate study after 10 or 20 years, assuming only a few courses are needed to complete their degree. There are three concerns about this:

1. Education is a fast-changing field. It seems problematic to confer a 2021 SoE degree for someone who hasn't had much coursework in the past 10 or 20+ years. In most cases, this isn't serving the field or the student well, and has risks for the SoE's reputation.
2. Faculty members and the school are not compensated for investing substantial time in helping students revalidate courses. Understandably, faculty may feel they have a duty to help students and therefore sometimes allow marginally related teaching experience or coursework to revalidate a large number of old courses.
3. UGS specifies that qualifying exams may be used to revalidate at most 2 courses. Although they do not spell it out in policy, they also prefer that multiple revalidation methods are used if several courses are being revalidated, with no more than a few courses per method.

The proposed revisions give faculty and administrators firmer grounds to decline unreasonable revalidation requests.

Still, there are cases in which faculty feel invested in helping a student complete their degree without requiring additional coursework, and there may be compelling reasons for doing so. Additionally, some courses age faster than others. So any policy limiting revalidation should have an avenue for exceptions.

A quick Google Search unearthed few relevant policies at peer institutions. But here are a few:

[Un of North Dakota](#): Courses older than 7 years need revalidation, no more than 50% may be revalidated, old courses from other institutions may not be revalidated.

[Cal State Long Beach \(philosophy dept\)](#): Students may revalidate up to 3 courses (> 7 years old) for a master's degree, but only if they earned a B or better.

[Arizona State](#): Similar to IU current policy (gives 8 years) but clearer that whether to allow revalidation is at the discretion of the Department.

[University of South Carolina](#), Courses older than 10 years must be revalidated for Ph.D., but courses from other institutions may not be revalidated.

1. **How will this impact enrollment?** It is possible that students with a substantial amount of expired coursework will be dissuaded from coming to IU. On the other hand, course enrollments could be boosted slightly if students are required to take additional coursework to ensure they have current knowledge in the field.
2. **How will this impact students' time to degree?** It is possible that this will extend some students' time to degree if they need to take additional courses.

**3. How will this impact specific student populations and/or DEI issues?**

Nontraditional students who have been out of school for some time will be most impacted. These students might be required to take additional courses, but they will be more current in their field upon graduation.

**4. How will this impact School of Education resources, including faculty loads?**

This will allow faculty to say no to extensive revalidation requests, which can require substantial faculty time. This policy also helps protect the School of Education's reputation in the field.

**5. How will this be effectively sustained over time?** NA

**6. What was the departmental vote tally for this proposal?** NA