



## Jeffrey Epstein and MIT: FAQs

**MIT News Office**  
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Today, January 10, 2020, the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation released the fact-finding report it commissioned to help the Institute understand the origins, nature, and extent of Jeffrey Epstein's ties to MIT and learn from them. The questions and answers below provide context.

**Q:** What prompted Goodwin Procter's review?

**A:** In September, in response to revelations about engagements between MIT and Jeffrey Epstein, President Reif and the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation asked MIT's general counsel to retain a law firm to design and conduct a review of the facts surrounding those engagements. The general counsel retained the firm Goodwin Procter to lead the process and report to the Executive Committee and to President Reif. The review focused on what donations Epstein made to MIT; who in MIT's senior leadership was aware of or approved the donations; when and why Epstein visited MIT; and whether MIT's leadership was aware of or approved those visits.

**Q:** What did MIT release today?

**A:** The Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation released Goodwin Procter's full fact-finding report regarding MIT's interactions with Jeffrey Epstein, as well as a statement. President Reif released a response. And *MIT News* published an article summarizing the materials, all of which are available here.

**Q:** What is the Executive Committee of the MIT Corporation, and why did Goodwin Procter

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report to it and to President Reif?

**A:** The Executive Committee is the MIT Corporation's principal governance committee. It has responsibility for overseeing the performance of the president, just as the president is responsible for overseeing the performance of his direct reports. Because the fact-finding was likely to uncover facts both about President Reif and his direct reports, Goodwin Procter reported both to the Executive Committee and to him. President Reif and Executive Vice President Israel Ruiz, who are *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee, recused themselves from the Executive Committee's oversight of the fact-finding. In October, when the fact-finders discovered that Chair of the Corporation Robert Millard had spoken with former Media Lab Director Joi Ito about Epstein, Chairman Millard recused himself as well.

**Q:** Why did this process take so long? The MIT community expected that this report would be issued last fall.

**A:** The Executive Committee wanted the fact-finding to be as thorough as possible. As new facts emerged, additional time was needed to investigate them fully. The report is the product of considerable work involving 73 interviews of 59 people and more than 610,000 documents and emails. Many of the interviews were with former employees whose schedules Goodwin Procter needed to accommodate. Since the Executive Committee decided to release the report in its entirety and with names, additional time was needed to address issues related to the privacy of those named. The Committee also did not want to release the report during final exam period or over the holidays.

**Q:** The report refers to certain people by name and other people only by title or function. How was it determined who to name and whose privacy to respect?

**A:** The report names current and former professors who solicited funds from Epstein, people from outside MIT who played a role in soliciting such funds, current and former members of the senior administration, and every professor known to have met with Epstein on campus. The names of junior staffers and others whose actions were not central to the events are not named, so as to protect the privacy of those who may have engaged briefly with Epstein in the course of doing their jobs. In his letter to the community, President Reif called for decency, fairness, and understanding in return for the report's transparency.

**Q:** On August 22, President Reif committed to contribute "an amount equal to the funds MIT received from any Epstein foundation to an appropriate charity that benefits his victims or other victims of sexual abuse." At that time President Reif estimated that the donations were approximately \$800,000. In the report we now see that the donations totaled \$850,000. Has MIT made this donation yet? If not, why not? And who is choosing the organizations?

**A:** In the fall, President Reif asked MIT's Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response (CSMPR) to assess the landscape of charities that benefit survivors of sexual abuse and advise him on a suitable recipient for the donation. CSMPR is a faculty-led standing Institute committee of faculty, students, and staff, many of whom work closely with survivors of sexual abuse. The Committee is diligently working to formulate a recommendation, which President Reif expects to receive shortly. MIT will donate the full \$850,000.

**Q:** What steps is MIT taking to ensure that its fundraising processes and practices are consistent with Institute values?

**A:** In October, Chair of the Faculty Rick Danheiser and Provost Martin Schmidt announced the creation of two related committees that will examine MIT's external engagements and review its policies and processes for soliciting and accepting gifts. The committees are charged with recommending new guidelines for the Institute's relationships with funding sources, and will deliver their recommendations in the spring.

**Q:** What is President Reif's response to the report?

**A:** President Reif's response is available here.

**Q:** Media reports suggested that Epstein was coded as "disqualified" in MIT's donor system. Was he? And what does "disqualified" mean in this context?

**A:** Contrary to media reports, Goodwin Procter's review found that neither Epstein nor his foundations were ever coded as "disqualified" in MIT's donor database. Further, the report notes that designation as "disqualified" does not mean that a person or entity is prohibited from donating to the Institute; rather, the term refers to any donor who is inactive or no longer interested in giving to MIT.

**Q:** Goodwin Procter's report references a second law firm. Why was another firm involved?

**A:** When Epstein's donations to MIT were revealed, MIT's general counsel retained Goodwin Procter, a law firm that has worked with the Institute in the past and that has extensive experience conducting internal investigations at academic institutions. That background allowed the firm to get up to speed quickly as it began its review. Soon thereafter, the Executive Committee engaged the law firm Paul Weiss, which also has extensive experience leading internal investigations and advising boards of directors but no prior relationship with MIT. From a governance perspective, the Executive Committee felt Paul Weiss's independence from the Institute was valuable.

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