

Guidelines for the Approval of New or Revised Graduate Degree Programs

Graduate degree programs at MIT are housed within academic units and some research centers. Graduate degree programs admit students directly, deliver a curriculum that is reviewed and approved by faculty governance, and award advanced degrees. Joint degree programs are those established between MIT and another institution. Interdisciplinary degree programs are those established between one or more academic units at MIT.

All proposals, once completed as described below, must be submitted through the [Program Management system](#) to the [Committee on Graduate Programs \(CGP\)](#).

I. Characteristics of Graduate Degree Program Proposals

Degree program proposals must be led by a tenure-track member of the MIT Faculty, as defined in *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty*, and should do the following:

- A. Discuss why the new program or program revision makes sense from a graduate educational perspective as well as from the perspective of the evolving intellectual trends in the relevant field(s). The discussion should include some reasonable estimate of both student and professional demand for this degree, such as market studies and prospects for post-grad employment.
- B. Describe the new or revised program. This description should detail the size, proposed curriculum, degree chart, and other aspects of the students' educational experience, emphasizing the coherence of the overall program.
- C. Include a detailed description of any planned nonresidential component or digital content.
- D. Assess the anticipated impact of the proposed program or revision on existing components of related graduate programs including, but not limited to, other degree programs and minors, as well as degree programs in other departments.
- E. Discuss the academic and advising infrastructure that will be available to support the program.
- F. Provide a plan to oversee, monitor, and evaluate the program.
- G. Identify the core faculty who will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the new program and any broader advisory group that might be required to provide ongoing oversight and assure continuity over time.

- H. Include letters of support from heads and chairs of involved academic units and relevant school deans, including reports on relevant discussion by school councils. Proposals for new degree programs require a letter of support from the provost.

These letters should discuss intellectual content and availability of resources: faculty, administrative support, space, fiscal plan, and potential impacts on campus services.

Proposals that involve collaboration with other institutions must include letters of support from that institution's faculty leadership.

II. Proposal Development and Submission

Proposal authors are encouraged to contact the CGP chair and executive officer early with initial ideas as departments explore the creation of new programs or major revisions to existing programs.

A. New degree programs

1. Proposal authors should submit to the CGP by **June 30** a letter of intent, co-signed by the relevant department head(s), to propose a new graduate program. This step provides an opportunity for initial review by the CGP chair, CGP executive officer, and the Registrar's office. The CGP will acknowledge this letter and respond with a timeline for full review.
2. Proposals for a new degree program must be submitted to the CGP with all required letters of support by no later than **October 1** (or the next business day) to admit students in the next academic year's admissions cycle, and then matriculate students at the start of the following academic year.
For example: Assuming approval at all steps, a new degree proposal submitted by October 1, 2026 would enable a new program to accept applications during the 2027-28 admissions cycle and admit students who would begin at MIT in the academic year 2028-29.
3. The CGP executive officer will confer with the Registrar's Office and the executive officer of the Faculty Policy Committee (FPC) on all new program proposal submissions ready for review and offer an initial recommendation on the expected path for the review. The review path for each proposal will normally be guided by the considerations articulated in section III below.

B. Major revisions to existing degree programs

1. Proposals for major revisions to an existing program must be submitted to the CGP with any required letters of support by no later than **November 1** (or the next business day)

C. The Chairs of the CGP and the Faculty Policy Committee (FPC), acting jointly, have the authority to depart from these guidelines as they deem appropriate.

III. Proposal Routing

A. New degree programs

1. Proposals to offer a new degree program are submitted to the CGP.
2. Upon approval from the CGP, a proposal is brought by the academic department sponsors to the Provost's Cabinet for discussion and feedback. The executive officer of the CGP will work with the Office of the Provost and the relevant faculty to coordinate a presentation to the Provost's Cabinet; this presentation is contingent upon approval of the proposed program by the CGP.
3. Following discussion at the Provost's Cabinet, a proposal goes to FPC for discussion and approval.
4. Once approved by the FPC a proposal will then be brought by the academic department sponsors to two successive Institute Faculty Meetings for approval by the Faculty: the first meeting to present the proposal and related motion, and the second meeting for the vote.
5. Either the CGP or the FPC has the authority at any point to put the review process on hold if it is deemed that there is not enough of a structure in place for the new degree program to succeed.

B. New degree types

A proposal to establish a *new graduate degree type* in conjunction with a new degree program, once approved by the Faculty, will also require approval by the MIT Executive Committee and MIT Corporation.

C. Major revisions to existing degree programs

Proposals to *revise a current graduate degree program* are submitted first to the CGP. The Chair of the CGP, in consultation with the Chair of the FPC, will determine whether the revision is sufficiently substantial to warrant review beyond the CGP. Proposal

authors who have questions about this distinction are encouraged to contact the CGP chair and executive officer for guidance.

- D. The Chairs of the CGP and the Faculty Policy Committee (FPC), acting jointly, have the authority to depart from these guidelines as they deem appropriate.

IV. Timeline for new degree programs

Step	Timing	Purpose/Action
Initial inquiry	Any time	Department sponsors contact CGP chair and executive officer to discuss ideas and review process.
Brief letter of intent	June 30	Department sponsors submit a brief letter of intent to CGP to establish a new degree program. Letters should be co-signed by the faculty leads and department head.
Full proposal submission	Oct 1	Department sponsors submit a full proposal to CGP with all required support letters.
CGP and Registrar review	Oct/Nov/Dec	Department sponsors present proposal to CGP for approval. Registrar and CGP review any related new or revised subject proposals.
Provost's Cabinet discussion	Dec/Feb	Department sponsors present proposal to Provost's Cabinet for discussion with academic deans.
FPC review	Feb/March	Department sponsors present proposal to FPC for approval to bring to MIT Faculty.
Faculty meeting motion	Feb/March	Department sponsors present proposal to MIT Faculty.
Faculty meeting vote	March/April	Faculty votes on proposal.

MIT Bulletin updates	March/April	Approved programs are approved in Program Management system. Program description and degree chart changes flow to MIT Bulletin for next academic year.
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V. Timeline for program revisions

Step	Timing	Purpose/Action
Initial inquiry	Any time	Department sponsors contact CGP chair and executive officer to discuss ideas and review process.
Full proposal submission	November 1	Department sponsors submit a full proposal to CGP via Program Management with any required support letters.
CGP and Registrar review	Nov/Dec/Feb	Department sponsors present proposal to CGP. Registrar and CGP review any related new or revised subject proposals.
MIT Bulletin updates	March/April	Approved programs are approved in Program Management system. Program description and degree chart changes flow to MIT Bulletin for next academic year.

- CGP meets once per month from September through May, with the exception of January.
- FPC meets weekly or biweekly
- Provost's Cabinet meets weekly
- Institute Faculty Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month from September through May, with the exception of January, and in December and May they are held on the Wednesday of the last week of classes.

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