

# Guidelines for the Approval of New or Revised Graduate Degree Programs

## I. Characteristics of Graduate Degree Program Proposals

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

- Discuss why the program (or its 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.
- Describe the program. This description should detail the proposed curriculum and other aspects of the students' educational experience, emphasizing the coherence of the overall program.
- Assess the anticipated impact of the proposed program 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.
- Identify the core faculty who will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program and any broader advisory group that might be required to provide ongoing oversight and assure continuity over time.
- Provide a plan to oversee, monitor, and evaluate the proposed program.
- Discuss the academic and advising infrastructure that will be available to support the program.
- Include letters of support from:
  - **Heads and chairs of involved academic units**, including reports on discussion by affected faculty
  - **Relevant Deans**, including reports on relevant discussion by School Councils
  - **The Provost** (required for new degree proposals; may be required for revisions to existing degree programs)

These letters should discuss not only intellectual content, but also availability of resources (including faculty, administrative support, space, and fiscal resources).

**NOTE:** The faculty lead(s) are responsible for working with their department leadership to obtain letters from relevant deans and the Provost. All letters of support should be requested one month in advance of the proposal submission.

## II. Proposal Routing

All proposals, once completed as described above, are to be submitted online to the staff of the Committee on Graduate Programs (CGP) for consideration by the Faculty governance system.

Proposals for degree programs must be submitted to the CGP staff no later than September 30 for a program to admit students the following academic year to start the year after. By way of example: Assuming approval at all steps, a new degree proposal submitted by September 30, 2017 would enable a new program to accept applications during academic year 2018-2019 and admit students in spring 2019 who would begin at MIT in academic year 2019-2020.

The staff to the CGP will notify the Registrar's Office and the staff of the Faculty Policy Committee (FPC) of all new degree proposal submissions ready for review and offer an initial recommendation for the expected path for the review.

The review path for each proposal will normally be guided by the considerations articulated in section III below. Under these guidelines, the path followed by a given proposal will generally depend on the degree to which the proposal differs from existing graduate degree programs. 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. Guidelines for Proposal Routing

1. A proposal to **revise a current graduate degree program** is to be routed 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 committee staff for guidance.
2. All other proposals, including proposals to offer **a new degree program** or **a new degree type/designation** (e.g., MBAn, MASc, etc.), will be routed to the CGP. Upon approval from the CGP, a proposal will then be sent to the FPC.

The Office of the Chair of the Faculty will work with the Office of the President and the relevant Faculty to coordinate a presentation to Academic Council; this presentation is contingent upon approval of the proposed program by the CGP and the FPC. Academic Council's role is broadly to assess a proposal's impact on resources and the size of the graduate student body.

3. Once approved by the FPC and discussed before Academic Council, a proposal will then be brought for approval by the Faculty to two successive Institute Faculty Meetings: the first to present the proposal and related motion, and the second for the vote.

A proposal to offer **a new degree type/designation**, once approved by the Faculty, is also then brought to each of the Executive Committee and the Corporation for approval.

4. Either the CGP or the FPC has the authority at any point to put the process on hold if it is deemed that there is not enough of a structure in place for the new degree program to succeed.

#### **IV. Timing**

The CGP meets once per month, the FPC meets biweekly, Academic Council meets weekly, and Institute Faculty Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month from September through May, with the exception of January.

A new degree must be approved by the March Faculty Meeting in time to accept applications the following academic year for students to start the year after. This means that the February Faculty Meeting is the last opportunity to present a motion to approve a new graduate degree program to admit students during the following academic year.

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