

GENERAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Doctoral Degree

Doctoral degrees are offered by various departments and programs within each of MIT's five schools and the Schwarzman College of Computing; see each school's description for the lists of degrees. A list of the interdisciplinary graduate degrees offered at MIT (<https://catalog.mit.edu/interdisciplinary/graduate-programs>), including those offered by the MIT-Harvard Health Sciences and Technology Program and the Joint Program with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, is available in the section on Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs. MIT offers the degrees of Doctor of Science and Doctor of Philosophy interchangeably in the engineering and science departments (except biology and brain and cognitive sciences) and from the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology Program. These degrees certify creditable completion of an approved program of advanced study in addition to a research dissertation of high quality based on original research.

The two Institute requirements for a doctorate are completion of a program of advanced study, including a general examination, and completion and oral defense of a thesis on original research.

The course of advanced study and research leading to the doctorate must be pursued under the direction of the departmental committee on graduate students for at least four academic terms. In some cases, the required period of residence may be reduced, but in no instance can it be reduced to less than two regular academic terms and one summer session.

A student is enrolled in a program of advanced study and research approved by the department. The thesis research is in this same area, but the program often includes subjects reaching into several departments. If the field requires substantial participation by two or more departments, an interdepartmental faculty committee, approved by the Office of Graduate Education, should be appointed to supervise the student's program.

Each doctoral candidate must take a general examination in their program of study at such time and in such manner as the departmental or interdepartmental committee approves. This examination consists of both oral and written parts.

Nonresident Doctoral Thesis Research Status

Thesis research is ordinarily done in residence at the Institute. However, on some occasions, it may be essential or desirable that the student be absent from the campus during a portion of thesis research or writing. Nonresident doctoral thesis research status allows thesis research to be carried out while not in formal residence at the Institute. Nonresident status is intended for doctoral students who have completed all requirements other than the thesis. Permission to become a nonresident doctoral candidate must be obtained from the Office of Graduate Education at least

one month prior to Registration Day of the term during which the student wishes to register in this category (a fee will be assessed for late requests). A student who is permitted to undertake nonresident thesis research must register as a nonresident doctoral candidate and pay a substantially reduced tuition. For the first three regular academic terms, tuition is approximately 5 percent of regular full tuition. Thereafter, it is charged at approximately 15 percent.

For only the first three semesters of nonresident status, a student may receive fellowship support from MIT (or from an external funding source, with MIT acting as administrator) for an amount that is no more than 5 percent of tuition per semester. The intention of the fellowship is to cover reduced tuition charged to students approved for this status. Departments and programs may, at their discretion and depending upon availability of funds, cover student health insurance for the duration of the nonresident period, including after the first three semesters. Students experiencing unexpected financial emergencies and students with children may be eligible to receive financial assistance during the nonresident period. Eligibility for federal loans and sponsored billing (<http://sfs.mit.edu/billing-repayment/your-billing-statement/how-to-pay-your-bill/#sponsorbilling>) remain unaffected for the length of nonresident tenure.

Nonresident doctoral candidates have limited access to the facilities and academic life of the Institute. However, they are permitted access to the libraries and athletic facilities, and may be eligible to use office, design studio, laboratory, or computer facilities of the Institute. Nonresident doctoral candidates also have the same student health privileges and options as resident students upon payment of the health insurance premiums. Consult the Office of Graduate Education (<https://oge.mit.edu>) or see Graduate Policies and Procedures (<https://oge.mit.edu/gpp/advanced-degrees/thesis/nonresident-doctoral-thesis-research-status>) for additional information on nonresident status.

Minor Program

Although there is no Institute requirement of a minor for the doctoral degree, certain departments require that candidates take a number of subjects outside their major field.

Language Proficiency

There is no Institute language requirement; however, several departments require that a candidate be able to read or speak a second or third language with intermediate competence. A student may satisfy the requirement in one of three ways: by fulfilling the requirement before entrance by passing one or more intermediate or advanced subjects with a grade of C or better; through examination by MIT Global Languages; or by taking language subjects offered by MIT Global Languages or its affiliated cross-registration partners according to the requirements of the candidate's home department.

Normally, introductory subjects in a language cannot be used to satisfy a requirement for language proficiency.

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MIT Global Languages offers a variety of intermediate and advanced language subjects, stressing the ability to read and speak in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, or Spanish. For the purpose of meeting the requirement through examination, MIT Global Languages gives written examinations each semester prior to pre-registration (November and April) in any language offered at MIT. If a candidate wishes to be examined in a language not offered at MIT, the candidate's home department will have to arrange for this examination.

For more information, visit the MIT Global Languages Graduate Language Exam website (<https://languages.mit.edu/language-placement-proficiency>).