

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Graduate Study

The Department of Political Science offers programs leading to the Master of Science in Political Science and the Doctor of Philosophy.

Admission Requirements for Graduate Study

All applicants (<https://polisci.mit.edu/graduate/admissions>) must take the GRE general test. Non-native English speakers must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Applicants from all disciplines are welcome—an undergraduate degree in political science is not necessary. Applicants are encouraged, however, to complete significant coursework in political science or related subjects such as history, economics, philosophy, psychology, or sociology before applying to one of our graduate programs.

Master of Science in Political Science

The Master of Science in Political Science is a one-year program intended for students who wish to develop skills in applied research in preparation for a career in public policy or with a business or research organization. The master's program emphasizes intensive preparation in a single field of study. Applicants to the SM program should specify their field of specialization.

The minimum number of subjects required for the SM degree is six graduate subjects, at least four of which must be completed in the Political Science Department at MIT. The remaining two may be taken elsewhere at MIT or through cross-registration at Harvard University. A 3.5 GPA must be maintained. A master's thesis is required. See the section on Graduate Education for the general requirements for the SM (<https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/graduate-education>).

Accelerated Master of Science in Political Science

The department offers a five-year program leading to the Bachelor of Science and Master of Science, awarded simultaneously. This program is open to MIT undergraduate Political Science majors only, and requires a single combined SB-SM thesis written during the last three terms at the Institute. Undergraduate Institute requirements may be completed during the fifth year of the program.

Doctor of Philosophy

Doctoral students must complete the following requirements:

- One class for first-year students introducing principles of empirical and theoretical analysis in political science
- One class in statistics
- One class in empirical research methods
- One class in political philosophy
- Reading proficiency in one language other than English (demonstrated by two semesters of intermediate-level college

coursework or an exam) or knowledge of advanced statistics (demonstrated by three semesters of course work or an exam)

- A second-year paper and related workshop
- A doctoral thesis

In addition, doctoral students are required to elect two of the following major fields: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, models and methods, political economy, and security studies. In each of the two elected fields, students will take a written general exam followed by a single oral general exam covering both fields. Specific fields may have additional requirements.

Students may take subjects in other MIT departments. Cross-registration arrangements also permit enrollment in subjects taught in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University and in some of Harvard's other graduate schools. Students are encouraged to do field research and develop close working ties with faculty members engaged in major research activities.

Interdisciplinary Program

Political Science and Statistics

The Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Statistics provides training in statistics, including classical statistics and probability as well as computation and data analysis, to students who wish to integrate these valuable skills into their primary academic program. The program is administered jointly by the departments of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Economics, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Physics, and Political Science, and the Statistics and Data Science Center within the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society. It is open to current doctoral students in participating departments. For more information, including department-specific requirements, see the full program description (<https://catalog.mit.edu/interdisciplinary/graduate-programs/phd-statistics>) under Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs.

Inquiries

Additional information regarding graduate programs in the department and admissions may be obtained from the graduate administrator, Susan Twarog, 617-253-8336, Room E53-467.