For more than a century, MIT graduate programs have provided ideal environments for advanced study by faculty and students working together to extend the boundaries of knowledge. Traditionally a leader in engineering and science graduate education, MIT has also attained national prominence for its doctoral programs in mathematics and the physical and life sciences. Top-ranked graduate programs in economics; political science; linguistics; science, technology, and society; architecture; media studies; urban studies; and management have broadened the spectrum of graduate education.

The most important factor in the effectiveness of graduate programs at MIT is the quality of the faculty. MIT is proud of its nationally and internationally recognized faculty of scholars and academic leaders, who are also effective teachers and research collaborators.

The broad scope and high quality of its graduate education have made MIT an international leader. More than a third of its graduate students come from foreign nations. Significant efforts have been made, with some success, to increase the numbers of minority and women students attending MIT’s graduate programs. This representation of students from diverse backgrounds contributes greatly to the richness of the MIT community and to the excellence of its graduate academic programs.

Graduate education at MIT places special emphasis on the relevance of science and technology to the complex problems of society. Such problems frequently require an interdisciplinary approach involving expertise in several different departments.

Extensive resources for graduate study have developed naturally at MIT from a long tradition of emphasis on contributions to new knowledge. The wealth and diversity of teaching and research resources are described in the school and departmental sections.

Although most graduate students find their interests served by programs available within a single department, many elect to work in interdisciplinary fields (described in the sections on Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (http://catalog.mit.edu/interdisciplinary/graduate-programs) and Research and Study (http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/research)), which may reach into two or more departments and involve work in any of MIT’s laboratories and centers.

An additional resource for graduate study is cross-registration in programs with Harvard University and Wellesley College, and joint degree programs with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Limited study opportunities are also available at Boston University, Brandeis University, Tufts University, and at local institutions through the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies.

Graduate students are encouraged to use MIT’s extensive athletic facilities. Teams comprised of both undergraduate and graduate students participate in intercollegiate competitions and the intramural athletic program.

Graduate students also share in the cultural and social activities and recreational facilities at MIT. Concerts and dramatic performances are frequently given by Institute groups and professional performers. Leaders in many fields give on-campus lectures and seminars, which are open to all members of the Institute community. MIT students also take advantage of the numerous cultural and intellectual opportunities in the Boston area, including free admission to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Science. A more detailed description of campus activities can be found in the section on Campus Life (http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/campus-life).

Independent Activities Period

During the January Independent Activities Period (IAP) (http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/academic-research-options/independent-activities-period), graduate students may pursue their own interests, including thesis research and preparation for qualifying exams. They also may lead or participate in special activities during this four-week period.

Graduate students should read the section on Independent Activities Period in the Undergraduate Education portion of this catalog for details concerning academic credit and grades, and special-student status.

Office of Graduate Education

The Institute has a single faculty that is responsible for both undergraduate and graduate instruction. The administration of graduate education rests with the president, provost, chancellor, vice chancellor, senior associate dean for graduate education, and the Committee on Graduate Programs (a standing committee of the Faculty).

Each department exercises a large measure of autonomy for its graduate programs, under general guidelines established for the Institute as a whole. Each department has a departmental committee on graduate students, including one or more graduate registration officers, to administer department and Institute graduate procedures.

More detailed information about the organization, rules, regulations, and procedures of graduate education is given in the publication, Graduate Policies and Procedures (http://odge.mit.edu/gpp).
Career Development

Global Education and Career Development (GECD) (http://gecd.mit.edu) helps students make informed decisions about career goals and find opportunities related to their professional objectives. Graduate students are encouraged to visit GECD during their first year to learn what career resources are available.

GECD is located in E17-294 and can be reached by phone at 617-715-5329 or by email (gecd@mit.edu).

See also the GECD description (http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/career/global-education-career-development) under Undergraduate Education.