COMMON PRINCIPLES of the Graduate Student Experience

Common Values on the Graduate Student Experience should guide faculty and students in their academic relationship, which is crucial to the success of graduate study. The ideal relationship is a collegial one, in which the common goals are the completion of the student’s degree program in a reasonable time frame and the ongoing success of the faculty member’s research program.

Graduate students constitute the majority of the MIT student body, and their involvement has a significant influence on the Institute. Therefore each graduate student bears a responsibility for respect and maturity in their behavior towards all members of the MIT community.

The following enumerated statements are intended as a resource for advisors and students on how to build and maintain a healthy, rewarding and productive relationship. Clearly, such a list cannot be exhaustive; the following guidelines address concerns that arise in the context of a research environment, such as a course of graduate study at MIT. For more general concerns and for situations requiring immediate response, MIT offers a variety of resources (see resources.mit.edu).

1. Faculty members and their graduate students are strongly encouraged to build their relationship by establishing common expectations on the major elements of their professional interactions, such as:
   A. Requirements for achieving and maintaining an acceptable academic standing as well as graduation requirements for each academic unit;
   B. A regular time for meeting;
   C. Lead times for feedback on work such as thesis and manuscript drafts;
   D. A shared understanding of what constitutes sufficient notice and reasonable scheduling of events the student is expected to attend following a request from their advisor;
   E. A shared understanding of academic integrity and responsible conduct of research.

2. Faculty and students are strongly encouraged to attempt to resolve conflicts through direct discussion and other informal procedures.

3. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to keep their advisor apprised of academic progress and seek their advisor’s input on the same subject on a regular basis.

4. Graduate students should receive attribution for scholarly assistance to faculty, and vice versa, including contributions to publications and patents.

5. Faculty are expected to be supportive of their students’ participation in extra-academic activities and to recognize the value of such activities for their intellectual and professional development. Depending on the discipline, these activities might include training in job interviews, information on academic and non-academic career options, and internships.

6. A number of resources are available for graduate students who wish to terminate their relationship with their advisor and search for a new research group. These include their departmental or program graduate administrator, program head or departmental graduate officer, a dean in the OGE, or an Institute ombudsperson.

7. Graduate students share with the faculty the responsibility for securing, maintaining, and protecting the integrity of grades, scholarship, and research.

8. Faculty members have the responsibility to inform graduate students of the source and amount of their financial support and of all expectations associated with any funded position. Faculty members should inform graduate students promptly of matters that affect their funding status.

9. Graduate students and faculty have a responsibility to inform each other as soon as they have knowledge of a possible change in their status. Graduate students should provide reasonable notice to their advisor if they intend to leave or change advisors; have a medical or personal issue that interferes with study and research; or are experiencing other academic or life issues that an advisor might reasonably need to know about. When circumstances require leaving a research project, graduate students should provide a summary of their work so that any delay associated with continuation of the project is minimized.

10. Beyond the responsibility to provide an evaluation once per term via a thesis grade, advisors should consider providing additional periodic feedback on academic progress, performance and professional potential, preferably in the form of a written evaluation.

11. Graduate students are protected by a variety of policies and procedures, as summarized in the document “Institute Policy Guiding the Graduate Student Experience.” If a student feels that they have been unfairly treated, or treated in a way that is in violation of MIT policies, and attempts at informal solutions were unsuccessful, the student can appeal by means of Institute complaint resolution procedures.
MIT RESOURCES AND OFFICES

Faculty members and their students are encouraged to resolve conflicts and seek assistance through a variety of MIT resources and offices, compiled in resources.mit.edu. These include:

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM GRADUATE OFFICERS
oge.mit.edu/gpp/oversight/officers

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM HEADS

OMBUDS OFFICE
Room 10-213
Phone 617-253-5921
ombud.mit.edu

GRAD SUPPORT
OFFICE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION (OGE)
Room 3-138 (Headquarters), 35-338
Phone 617-253-4860
Email grad-ed@mit.edu
oge.mit.edu

RESOURCES FOR EASING FRICTION & STRESS (REFS)
refs.mit.edu

OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT
Room W20-507
Phone 617-258-8423
Email citizenship@mit.edu
studentlife.mit.edu/osc

TITLE IX & BIAS RESPONSE
Room W31-223
Phone 617-324-7526
Email titleix@mit.edu
t9br.mit.edu

INSTITUTE COMMUNITY & EQUITY OFFICE
Room 4-250
Phone 617-324-7319
Email iceo@mit.edu
diversity.mit.edu

COMMUNITY WELLNESS AT MIT MEDICAL
Room E23, 3rd Floor
Phone 617-253-1316
Email wellness@med.mit.edu
medical.mit.edu/services/community-wellness

MIT MEDICAL
Building E23
Phone 617-253-4481
medical.mit.edu

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & COUNSELING @ MIT MEDICAL
Building E23, 3rd Floor
Phone 617-253-2916 weekdays
617-253-4481 nights/weekends
medical.mit.edu/services/mental-health-counseling
INSTITUTE POLICY
Guiding the Graduate Student Experience

1. MIT does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its education policies, admission policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs and other Institute administered programs and activities.
   Section 7.1 : web.mit.edu/policies

2. Graduate students are protected from harassment, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, gender-based harassment, stalking, and retaliation.
   Section 9.4 : web.mit.edu/policies
titleix.mit.edu/policies/sexual_misconduct

3. Faculty, academic instructional staff, principal investigators, and staff supervisors are prohibited from having a sexual or romantic relationship with an MIT graduate student if they have or might reasonably be expected to have any type of authority over that student.
   Section 9.5 : web.mit.edu/policies

4. Any graduate student who believes that they have been unfairly treated is encouraged to resolve the concern through the Institute’s complaint resolution procedures.
   Section 9.7 : web.mit.edu/policies

5. Pending approval by the Office of Graduate Education, eligible graduate students may have access to childbirth accommodation and/or parental leave.
   oge.mit.edu/gpp/registration/changes/childbirth-accommodation-parental-leave/

6. As with all members of the MIT community, graduate students are to be treated with evenhanded respect for their dignity, individual qualities, and property.
   Section 9.1 : web.mit.edu/policies

7. Graduate students have a right to and responsibility to maintain a safe and clean working environment.
   Section 9.11 : web.mit.edu/policies

8. Graduate students have the right to conduct research in an environment free from conflicts of interest and the responsibility to maintain their research free of conflicts of interest.
   Section 4.4 : web.mit.edu/policies

9. Graduate students are protected from personal exploitation. In the case of full-time research assistants, services required of the graduate student must contribute to the student’s research or professional training.
   oge.mit.edu/gpp/roles/student-and-faculty/
   Section 8.2 : web.mit.edu/policies

10. Graduate students in a paid assistantship have a right to paid vacation in accordance with Institute policy.
    Section 8.3 : web.mit.edu/policies

11. Graduate students must be notified of the work requirements for each subject, including grading criteria and procedures, at the beginning of each term.
    web.mit.edu/faculty/teaching/termregs.html

12. Each academic unit should ensure that students have ready access to the following information.
    A. Degree requirements
    B. Academic deadlines
    C. Time limits for seeking advanced degrees
    D. Departmental procedures for general and/or qualifying exams
    E. Guidelines for resolving concerns or conflicts within the department
    F. Individuals available for consultation regarding student issues and problems
    G. Criteria for termination or withdrawal of a graduate student
    H. Rules governing teaching assistant and research assistant appointments and fellowships
    oge.mit.edu/gpp/roles/department/

13. If a department or program is considering terminating a graduate student, that student should be made aware at an early stage of the reasons for such consideration, and should be notified in writing when formal consideration of termination is initiated.
    oge.mit.edu/gpp/roles/department/