

## Graduate Student Surveys

In conjunction with the Graduate Students Office, the Provost's Office administers:

### Incoming Graduate Student Survey

This survey, administered in late summer, asks incoming graduate students about why they choose to apply and to enroll at MIT, their preliminary career plans, their perceptions of their abilities in relation to other graduate students, and how prepared they feel for graduate work.

### Midterm Graduate Student Survey

This survey, administered in early spring, is administered to graduate students in or around their third year of study. The survey asks students to rate the quality of their academic experiences, their satisfaction and usage of campus resources, their participation in various academic and social activities, and their plans for the future.



### Exit Graduate Student Survey

The exit survey is administered three times per year, before each graduation period. The survey asks students to evaluate the quality of their graduate program, their interactions with their advisor and fellow students, and their post-graduation plans.

To date, we have completed three entering student surveys, one midterm survey, and two years' worth of exit surveys. The response rates for these surveys are presented below.

Graduate Student Survey Response Rates

	Overall		Gender		School				
	N	Percent	Female	Male	Architecture and Planning	Engineering	HASS	Management	Science
<b>Incoming Survey</b>									
2003	630	39%	41%	38%	30%	45%	41%	32%	44%
2006	996	56%	56%	56%	57%	58%	71%	45%	64%
2007	1171	68%	68%	68%	64%	69%	67%	72%	67%
<b>Midterm Survey</b>									
2007	275	41%	52%	36%	28%	41%	38%	36%	47%
<b>Exit Survey</b>									
2005-06 (combined)	523	27%	25%	27%	19%	26%	31%	26%	35%
2006-07 (combined)	693	33%	34%	33%	35%	35%	38%	31%	29%

Overall frequencies are posted at <http://web.mit.edu/ir/surveys/grad.html>. Separate reports will be generated for each school and academic department, sample size permitting.

In addition to the three graduate student surveys mentioned above, the Provost's Office assists the MIT Careers Office with administering and analyzing the annual Graduating Student Survey, which is administered to both undergraduate and graduate students.

## **Select Findings:**

### Incoming Graduate Student Survey

Immediately prior to coming to MIT, more than half of doctoral students and a quarter of master's students were undergraduate students at MIT or elsewhere. Almost two-thirds of master's students were employed before starting graduate school.

On the survey, students were asked why they decided to begin a graduate program now, why they chose to apply to MIT, and why they chose to enroll at MIT. Personal intellectual enrichment and academic challenge and skill development were the top two reasons for attending graduate school now. More than two-thirds of doctoral students rated these reasons as extremely important. 40% of master's students said income-earning potential was extremely important, compared with 15% of doctoral students.

The reputation of MIT faculty in a student's field was the most important reason for applying to MIT for graduate school, followed by national ranking of MIT in a student's field. Similar reasons surfaced for why students decided to enroll at MIT; MIT's reputation and the reputation of the student's program topped the list.

Almost half of doctoral students said that they were very confident that they are well prepared for coursework; 41% were very confident that they are well prepared for research and scholarly work. About a quarter of doctoral students were very confident that they are well prepared for teaching.

Almost two-thirds of doctoral students say that they expect to finish their degree in five years; about the same percentage of master's students expect to complete their degree in two years.

33% of doctoral students say that expect to be a postdoctoral researcher or fellow immediately after graduation. Another 29% say that they expect to be a researcher in an academic or nonacademic setting.

### Midterm Graduate Student Survey

Third year students are generally satisfied with their graduate school experience. If they were going to begin graduate school again, most students said that they would choose MIT. 50% of students said definitely, 32% said probably. In addition, 83% of students said that they would recommend MIT to someone considering their program.

When asked how important various skills and abilities were to them, students ranked critical thinking, research, and communications skills as the top three. 90% of students said that critical thinking and research skills were very important to them. Less than half of students said that ethical issues and leadership were very important.

Similar to findings regarding the importance of different abilities, students reported that their skills in the areas of research, critical thinking, and communication were most enhanced during their graduate program. Two-thirds of students said that their research skills were greatly enhanced; 56% said critical thinking, and a quarter said communications skills. About ten percent said that ethical issues and leadership were greatly enhanced.

On the survey, students were asked to report their usage and satisfaction with various university and department resources. Of the list of 37 university resources, students said that they were most satisfied with athletic facilities, followed by the main office of their current program. Students tended to be dissatisfied with dining services and availability of parking for students, relative to the other items.

With regards to a list of nine department resources, students said that they were most satisfied with administrative staff who work with graduate students. Three-quarters of students rated administrative staff as very good or excellent.

### Exit Graduate Student Survey

In general, both doctoral and master's students report positive experiences with their graduate education at MIT.

In rating a variety of dimensions of their graduate programs, doctoral students tended to give slightly higher ratings than did master's students. Overall, students gave the highest ratings to intellectual quality of the faculty, intellectual quality of fellow students, and helpfulness of staff members in their departments. 92% of graduate students rated the intellectual quality of the faculty as very good or excellent, 85% rated the intellectual quality of their fellow graduate students as very good or excellent, and 72% rated the helpfulness of department staff as very good or excellent.

While all ratings were relatively high, the lowest ratings went to the quality of academic advising and guidance, amount of financial support, program and space facilities, and assistance in finding employment.

Similar to the midterm survey, 82% of doctoral students and 84% of master's students report that if they were to start their graduate career again, they would probably or definitely select MIT.

Generally, both doctoral and master's students gave similar ratings to various aspects of their specific degrees. There were, however, three areas with gaps between ratings from doctoral and master's students. Master's students tended more than doctoral students to report that the program structure encourages student collaboration or teamwork. Doctoral students, however, were more likely than master's students to report that the financial support for students is distributed fairly, and that there are tensions among faculty that affect students. 17% of doctoral students strongly agree that there are tensions among faculty, compared to 9% of master's students.

75% of doctoral students and 63% of master's students say that they are employed or are involved in employment negotiations. 44% of doctoral students and 35% of master's students report that since entering graduate school, they have changed their mind about the type of position they expect to have after graduation.