2012 Graduate Alumni Survey

Highlights

The following report is based on data collected from the 2012 MIT Graduate Alumni Survey. The survey was open to recipients of graduate degrees in the years 1987, 1988, 1992, 1993, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008, representing classes approximately 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years out. Of the 15,806 alumni from these years for whom we had an email address, we received 3,692 valid responses, yielding an overall response rate of 23% (31% for Doctoral alumni and 20% for MBA alumni and other Master’s alumni). Full results are available on our website: http://web.mit.edu/ir/surveys/

Satisfaction with Degree

Overall Satisfaction

- 92% of Doctoral alumni, 96% of MBA alumni, and 95% of other Master’s alumni report being Somewhat or Very satisfied with being a graduate student at MIT.
- Alumni respondents in all degree categories gave high ratings to their academic experience at MIT, with 89% saying it was Very good or Excellent. Ratings for student life experience, personal development opportunities, and professional development opportunities were lower, but still received ratings of Very good or Excellent from over two-thirds of respondents.

Career

First post-graduate position

- 96% of MBA alumni and 89% of other Master’s alumni said that their first post-graduate activity was employment or military service. All Doctoral alumni were working or in military service as their first post-graduate position, with 37% reporting working as a post-doc.
- 15% of Doctoral alumni, 35% of MBA alumni, and 19% of other Master’s Alumni reported that their first post-graduate position was outside the U.S.
- Among current US citizens, 8% of Doctoral alumni, 8% of MBA alumni, and 6% of other Master’s alumni reported that their first post-graduate position was outside the U.S.
- Among current non-citizens, 65% of Doctoral alumni, 26% of MBA alumni, and 43% of other Master’s alumni reported that their first post-graduate position was inside the U.S.
- For Doctoral alumni, the top three methods of obtaining their first post-graduate position were: networking (32% of respondents), through their faculty advisor (27%), and directly applying to a posted job (18%). For MBA alumni, the top three methods were: MIT on-campus recruiting or career fair (33% of respondents), networking (26%), and returning to pre-program employment (24%). For other Master’s alumni, the top three methods were: networking (29% of respondents), MIT on-campus recruiting or career fair (25%), and directly applying to a posted job (14%).
Current position
- 97% of Doctoral alumni, 91% of MBA alumni, and 90% of other Master’s alumni are currently working, doing a post-doc, or are in military service.
- 22% of Doctoral alumni, 39% of MBA alumni, and 25% of other Master’s Alumni reported that their current position is outside the U.S.
- Among current US citizens, 8% of Doctoral alumni, 11% of MBA alumni, and 8% of other Master’s alumni reported that their current position is outside the U.S.
- Among current non-citizens, 43% of Doctoral alumni, 19% of MBA alumni, and 27% of other Master’s alumni reported that their current position is inside the U.S.
- 39% of Doctoral alumni say they work in Industry (for-profit), and 27% work for a U.S. 4-year college or university (non-medical school).
- The average annual salary for a Doctoral alumnus is $144,320, $214,488 for an MBA alumnus, and $142,039 for an alumnus with another type of Master’s degree.
- 73% of Doctoral alumni, 74% of MBA alumni, and 64% of other Master’s alumni say that their graduate program at MIT Very well or More than adequately prepared them for their current career.

Career path
- Alumni were asked to describe the course of their career so far with regard to their field. Over half of Doctoral alumni have remained in the same field (e.g., consistently in chemistry) while two-thirds of MBA alumni and 58% of other Master’s alumni have changed fields at least once.
- Alumni were also asked to describe the course of their career with regard to their role. 47% of Doctoral alumni have stayed in the same role (e.g., consistently a professor) while 48% of MBA alumni and 35% of other Master’s alumni have changed roles two or more times.

Entrepreneurial Activities
- 12% of Doctoral alumni, 21% of MBA alumni, and 17% of other Master’s alumni say that their current company is a startup.
- 10% of Doctoral alumni, 21% of MBA alumni, and 16% of other Master’s alumni say they are a founding member of their current company.
- 21% of Doctoral alumni, 40% of MBA alumni, and 29% of other Master’s alumni say they have started a company.
- 11% of Doctoral alumni, 23% of MBA alumni, and 16% of other Master’s alumni are working on a start-up in addition to their current position.
- 18% of Doctoral alumni, 41% of MBA alumni, and 23% of other Master’s alumni have invested in a startup.
Start-ups

- Of those respondents who said that they had started a company, 24% of Doctoral alumni, 12% of MBA alumni, and 19% of other Master’s alumni say that they have started a company based on their research at MIT.
- Of those who have started a company, the average number of companies started is 1.7 overall, with MBA alumni having a slightly higher average of 2.0. Five percent of Doctoral alumni, 10% of MBA alumni, and 5% of other Master’s alumni report having started four or more companies.
- Of those who have started a company, 8% of Doctoral alumni, 27% of MBA alumni, and 10% of Master’s alumni had started their first company before coming to MIT.
- Over 28% of Doctoral alumni and a third of MBA/other Master’s alumni had started their first company within five years of their most recent MIT degree, while an additional third of alumni started their first company longer than five years after completing their degree.

Innovation

- 41% of Doctoral alumni, 12% of MBA alumni, and 27% of other Master’s alumni have at least one patent or invention, and 9% of Doctoral alumni have more than 10 patents or inventions.
Importance of Skills

Alumni were asked to rate the importance of a variety of skills to their current work on a scale from Not Important to Essential. The skills were grouped into thematic areas such as “Communication” and “Intrapersonal.”

Overall importance

- For doctoral alumni, the top five skills, as rated by combining the ratings of “Essential” and “Very Important” are Communicating effectively one-on-one (95%), Critical thinking (95%), Time management (92%), Prioritization (91%), and Taking initiative (90%).
- For MBA alumni, the top five skills are Communicating effectively one-on-one (99%), Being flexible and adaptable, responsive to change (98%), Prioritization (96%), Taking initiative (95%), and Resourcefulness (94%).
- For other master’s alumni, the top five skills are Communicating effectively one-on-one (97%), Being flexible and adaptable, responsive to change (95%), Resourcefulness (94%), Prioritization (94%), and Critical thinking (93%).
- See charts on following pages for all of the skills in descending order for each degree category.
Importance of Skills: Doctoral Alumni

- Communicating effectively one-on-one
- Critical thinking
- Time management
- Prioritization
- Taking initiative
- Resourcefulness
- Being flexible and adaptable, responsive to change
- Being creative, coming up with new ideas
- Solving open-ended problems
- Continuing learning
- Understanding and applying knowledge in broad context
- Writing
- Planning and implementing a project from start to finish
- Big picture and systems thinking
- Staying current in my field
- Identifying and cultivating your unique talents
- Information literacy, filtering, critical evaluation, and synergy
- Leveraging constructive criticism
- Understanding knowledge across disciplines
- Use research methods to solve problems
- Leadership
- Adapting and using new technologies
- Persuading people of your ideas, advocacy
- Working with people from diverse backgrounds
- Self-reflection and self-improvement
- Presenting technical information to non-technical audiences
- Mentoring/advising
- Fostering collegiality
- Building a network
- Teaching or training groups of people
- Creating purposeful, compelling, and transformative visions for...
- Negotiating and compromise
- Building consensus
- Incorporating ethical considerations into decisions
- Delegating responsibility
- Managing a budget
- Identifying group conflicts and solving them positively
- Outreach and public relations activities
Importance of Skills: MBA Alumni

- Communicating effectively one-on-one
- Being flexible and adaptable, responsive to change
- Prioritization
- Taking initiative
- Resourcefulness
- Critical thinking
- Time management
- Leadership
- Solving open-ended problems
- Planning and implementing a project from start to finish
- Persuading people of your ideas, advocacy
- Big picture and systems thinking
- Being creative, coming up with new ideas
- Negotiating and compromise
- Understanding and applying knowledge in broad contexts
- Building consensus
- Building a network
- Leveraging constructive criticism
- Creating purposeful, compelling, and engaging content
- Working with people from diverse backgrounds
- Self-reflection and self-improvement
- Continuing learning
- Identifying and cultivating your unique talents
- Writing
- Staying current in my field
- Delegating responsibility
- Understanding knowledge across disciplines
- Incorporating ethical considerations into decisions
- Fostering collegiality
- Mentoring/advising
- Identifying group conflicts and solving them
- Information literacy, filtering, critical evaluation, and analysis
- Adapting and using new technologies
- Presenting technical information to non-technical audiences
- Managing a budget
- Teaching or training groups of people
- Use research methods to solve problems
- Outreach and public relations activities
Importance of Skills: Other Master's Alumni

- Communicating effectively one-on-one
- Being flexible and adaptable, responsive to change
- Resourcefulness
- Prioritization
- Critical thinking
- Time management
- Taking initiative
- Solving open-ended problems
- Big picture and systems thinking
- Planning and implementing a project from start to...
- Understanding and applying knowledge in broad...
- Being creative, coming up with new ideas
- Continuing learning
- Persuading people of your ideas, advocacy
- Leadership
- Understanding knowledge across disciplines
- Leveraging constructive criticism
- Writing
- Identifying and cultivating your unique talents
- Negotiating and compromise
- Adapting and using new technologies
- Self-reflection and self-improvement
- Staying current in my field
- Working with people from diverse backgrounds
- Building consensus
- Presenting technical information to non-technical...
- Information literacy, filtering, critical evaluation,...
- Building a network
- Creating purposeful, compelling, and...
- Incorporating ethical considerations into decisions
- Fostering collegiality
- Delegating responsibility
- Mentoring/advising
- Teaching or training groups of people
- Use research methods to solve problems
- Identifying group conflicts and solving them...
- Managing a budget
- Outreach and public relations activities

Importance of Skills: Other Master's Alumni
The MIT Experience

Perception of Graduate Experience

- When asked how likely they would be to recommend MIT to a prospective graduate student like themselves, on a scale of 0 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely), the average response was 9 for all three degree categories.
- The charts below detail the responses by degree type to four questions related to program climate.
- Doctoral alumni report feeling less positive about their social environment, more isolated, and higher incidence of not feeling up to their intellectual tasks.

Connection to MIT

- 37% of Doctoral alumni, 45% of MBA alumni, and 38% of other Master’s alumni say they currently feel Moderately or Very connected to MIT.
- 88% of respondents are in touch with someone they met during their program at MIT. The majority say they are in touch with another student. 62% of Doctoral alumni report still being in touch with their advisor.